

Dr. Hoda Ali Ali

The Effect of a Suggested Project-Based Blended Learning Program on Developing University Students' EFL Writing Skills and Reducing their Writing Apprehension

Dr. Hoda Ali Ali

Lecturer of Curriculum and Methods of Teaching English
Faculty of Languages and Translation
Ahram Canadian University

Abstract

This study aimed at exploring the impact of a suggested project-based blended learning program on improving EFL Mass Communication students' writing skills and decreasing their writing apprehension. The participants of this study were (50) third-year Mass Communication students enrolled in the journalism section at Ahram Canadian University. The study employed the quasi-treatment design using two equal groups randomly assigned to the treatment and control groups. To collect data, three instruments were developed and validated; an EFL writing skills test, an EFL writing skills scoring rubric, and a writing apprehension test. They were administered as a pre- post-test for both groups before and after the eight weeks training program. The treatment group received the suggested project-based blended learning program treatment, while the control group followed their regular method of teaching writing. Results revealed that the project-based blended learning program effectively developed the treatment group's EFL writing skills and reduced their writing apprehension. Therefore, this research recommended that project-based blended learning should be incorporated into language pedagogy programs at different educational stages.

Keywords: *Project-based learning, blended learning, EFL Writing Skills, Writing Apprehension.*

فاعلية برنامج مدمج مقترح قائم على التعلم المبني على المشروعات في تنمية مهارات الكتابة في اللغة الإنجليزية وخفض الرغبة منها لدى طلاب المرحلة الجامعية

د. هدى علي علي
مدرس المناهج وطرق تدريس اللغة الانجليزية
كلية اللغات والترجمة
جامعة الأهرام الكندية

الملخص

استهدفت الدراسة الحالية الي توضيح أثر استخدام برنامج مدمج مقترح قائم على التعلم المبني على المشروعات لتنمية مهارات الكتابة باللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية وخفض الرغبة منها لدى طلاب كلية الاعلام. وتكونت عينة الدراسة من خمسين طالب من طلاب الفرقة الثالثة كلية الاعلام شعبة صحافة جامعة الأهرام الكندية. واشتملت أدوات الدراسة على قائمة بمهارات الكتابة باللغة الإنجليزية اللازمة لطلاب الفرقة الثالثة، واختباراً للكتابة باللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية وكذلك اختبار رهبة الكتابة لدالي وميلر. ولقد استخدمت الدراسة التصميم التجريبي ذو المجموعتين (التجريبية والضابطة). وقد تم تطبيق اختبار الكتابة واختبار رهبة الكتابة قبليا وبعديا على كل من المجموعتين الضابطة والتجريبية. تلقى طلاب المجموعة التجريبية تدريبا استمر ثمان اسابيع على الكتابة باستخدام البرنامج المدمج القائم على التعلم المبني على المشروعات، بينما تلقى طلاب المجموعة الضابطة تدريبيهم بالطريقة المعتادة. وأشارت نتائج الدراسة الى وجود فروق ذات دلالة احصائية بين متوسطات درجات طلاب المجموعة الضابطة وطلاب المجموعة التجريبية في التطبيق البعدي في مهارات الكتابة ككل واختبار رهبة الكتابة لصالح المجموعة التجريبية. وترجع هذه النتائج الى فاعلية استخدام البرنامج المدمج القائم على التعلم المبني على المشروعات. وتوصى الدراسة الحالية باستخدامه في المراحل التعليمية المختلفة لتنمية مهارات اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التعلم القائم على المشروعات - التعلم المدمج - رهبة الكتابة- مهارات الكتابة باللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية.

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I-Introduction:

Writing is known as using graphic symbols to represent specific linguistic utterances. In other words, writing is not language; it is a representation of language. It entails making a statement visible to the reader (Rogers,2005). Writing is a crucial language skill which allows family members, societies, and countries to connect and communicate with each other. It encourages personal growth and self-expression. Furthermore, writing enables writers to collect, modify, share, discuss, and restore knowledge and understandings. However, it is time-consuming and necessitates activities like brainstorming, listing, outlining, drafting, revising, editing and proofreading. It is also enhanced via group collaboration during the different stages of the writing process (pre-writing, during writing, and post-writing) (Zaza & Ahmed, 2020).

Writing is an active and productive skill and one of the indicators of academic success (Vonna et al., 2015). It is influenced by many cognitive, metacognitive, social, and affective factors (Qian, 2007). As a result, teaching writing is both a complicated and challenging task. It necessitates a wide range of cognitive abilities, as the writer should be able to comprehend, synthesize, and utilize knowledge in order to produce appropriate and authentic written work. A good writer should be innovative as well as possess reflective and communicative abilities (Piamsai, 2020).

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Moreover, writing is viewed as a two-dimensional process that includes cognitive and emotional abilities in which students learn to write and develop an attitude toward writing (Cheng, 2002). Writing apprehension is a state of psychological interaction that combines emotions, attitude, and behaviour (Daly & Miller, 1975, p. 11). Writing apprehension, anxiety, and blocking have all been used interchangeably in recent research (Singh & Rajalingam, 2012). Writing apprehension is viewed by researchers as a complex term describing a real problem that could impair the performance of both native speakers and foreign language learners (Bruning et al., 2013).

Writing is an important and critical skill that university students must learn properly. They must be well equipped with the most proficient method to be able to write important pieces such as academic papers, technical reports, critical reviews, etc. in order to express their opinions efficiently academically (Abdallah, 2015).

Many scholars and educators have strongly advocated for the use of project-based learning (PBL) in the classroom to improve students' twenty-first-century skills. According to Syarifah and Emiliasari (2019), PBL not only helps learners improve their language skills, but it also improves other skills such as creative and critical thinking. For Sultan and Javaid (2018), learners who were instructed using PBL performed better in the classroom and had higher levels of motivation and subject awareness than those who were traditionally instructed. PBL aims to develop students' collaboration, problem-solving, and critical thinking skills and encourage them to participate in projects that are tailored to their personal interests and needs (Kapp, 2009).

Furthermore, participating students in active learning allows them to search, solve problems, produce, and present their work. Students are the centre of the learning and teaching processes in this type of learning. According to Boudersa and Hamada (2015), project-based learning is essential for the following reasons: it gets

students ready for the workplace, improves student motivation, connects classroom learning to students' real-life experiences, provides opportunities for collaborative knowledge construction; improves social, communication, and problem-solving skills, boosts students' self-esteem, offers chances for students to contribute to their community, enables students to employ their personal learning strengths and different learning strategies, and offers a practical, real-world application of technology.

Project-based learning is intended to build an entertaining and exciting classroom environment while also offer students real opportunities to enhance their English skills. Writing is regarded as one of the English language skills that should be developed. Writing is a cognitive domain-based skill that entails acquiring, applying and reconstructing new knowledge (Defazio et al., 2010). In addition, writing necessitates adhering to writing conventions as well as reflection, creative inspiration, critical thinking, problem-solving, and revision, all of which lead to a completed manuscript.

Moreover, the use of technology has shifted teaching methods away from the teacher and toward the learner. Blended learning will be used in this study to maximize the benefits of PBL, which is especially important nowadays. Blended learning is one of the emerging and promising approaches that can enhance and develop learning. It allows students to gain face-to-face learning experience in the regular classroom setting and online learning tools. This helps increase and maximize learning time and can cope with the spirit of the twenty-first century (Porter et al., 2016). Furthermore, Xu et al. (2020) believe that blended learning is a distinctive approach because, when properly implemented, teachers can still use traditional face-to-face instruction alongside technology-mediated online learning tools and environments.

As a result, this study combines face-to-face learning with online learning to create project-based blended learning. It was hoped that this combination would improve students' writing skills as well as reduce their writing apprehension.

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Context of the Problem:

Writing as an integral skill in foreign language learning (FLL) settings is very important in language learning. Although EFL writing skills are important, writing in a foreign language is considered one of the highest challenging activities for EFL learners. Accordingly, the more learners are required to write in English, the more they experience an advanced level of difficulty. Hence, many researchers investigated the most common difficulties and challenges that EFL University students encounter. Ahmed (2010), for instance, summarizes the difficulties encountered by Egyptian EFL students at the Faculty of Education from both students' and teachers' perspectives while writing essays as follows: planning difficulties; organizational difficulties, including coherence and cohesion; lexical and stylistic problems; and technical difficulties, including spelling, grammar, punctuation, revising, and editing.

Similarly, Abu Rass (2015) lists the following aspects of non-native speakers' writing difficulties: providing supporting details such as examples and reasons is not fully mastered, and the English style is not fully acquired. EFL students, particularly Arab students, convey the stylistic characteristics of Arabic as their mother language. They, for instance, have a habit of writing long sentences with coordinating conjunctions in order to repeat themselves and argue through presentation and elaboration (Younes & Albalawi, 2015).

To document the current study's problem, the researcher also conducted a writing test as a pilot study in Fall 2021 to identify the difficulties that third-year EFL Mass Communication students at Ahram Canadian University face and determine the extent to which these students lack those skills. The pilot study's sample was 31 students. The pilot study results revealed that most students could show their thoughts and opinions in an eloquent and well-structured manner, including explanations and details, appropriate word

choice, and correct structure and mechanics. In addition, most of them had negative and anxious feelings toward writing.

Thus, teachers need to reduce these issues by creating a friendly environment in the EFL classroom and employing various effective strategies to provide opportunities for their students to write freely and express themselves in front of their peers.

Statement of the Problem:

The study problem can be identified in “ EFL Mass Communication students lack necessary writing skills and frequently avoid submitting the assignment for fear of receiving a negative evaluation”.

Thus this study sought the effect of a suggested project-based blended learning program on developing EFL Mass Communication students' writing skills and reducing their writing apprehension.

Questions of the Study:

This research attempted to answer the following questions:

1. What are the EFL writing skills required for third-year Mass Communication students?
2. To what extent do third-year Mass Communication students acquire these skills?
3. To what extent do third-year Mass Communication students have writing apprehension?
4. How can a suggested project-based blended learning program be used to enhance EFL writing skills among third-year Mass Communication students?
5. What is the effect of a suggested project-based blended learning program on enhancing EFL writing skills among third-year Mass Communication students?
6. What is the effect of a suggested project-based blended learning program on decreasing writing apprehension among third-year Mass Communication students?

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Hypotheses of the study:

The current study hypothesized the following:

- 1- There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the treatment group and those of the control group on the post-administration of the writing skill test, favoring the treatment group.
- 2- There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the treatment group in their performance in the pre and post administrations of the writing skill test, favoring the post-administration.
- 3- There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the treatment group and those of the control group on the post-administration of the writing apprehension test, favoring the treatment group.
- 4- There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the treatment group in their performance on the pre and post administrations of the writing apprehension test, favoring the post-administration.

Aim of the study:

The current study aims to develop EFL third-year Mass Communication students' writing skills and reduce their writing apprehension via a suggested project-based blended learning program.

Significance of the study:

The current study would contribute to:

- 1- Highlighting the importance of using project-based blended learning to improve third-year Mass Communication students' EFL writing skills and reduce their writing apprehension.
- 2- Providing EFL teachers with a teacher guide for teaching writing skills using project-based blended learning.
- 3- Offering EFL curriculum designers a new approach to teaching writing skills.

4- Making it possible for other researchers to conduct additional studies on the effectiveness of project-based blended learning in developing other English language skills.

5- Drawing the attention of EFL teachers to the significance of creating a relaxing and encouraging learning environment in order to decrease their students' writing apprehension.

Delimitations of the study:

This study was delimited to:

- 1- Some EFL writing skills required for third-year Mass Communication students, journalism section enrolled in ENG 102 writing course, which the jury members have approved.
- 2- A group of fifty EFL students enrolled at the faculty of Mass communication, Ahram Canadian University.
- 3- A project-based blended learning program.
- 4- Daly and Miller writing apprehension test (WAT).
- 5- The Fall semester of the academic year 2021-2022 as the time duration of the experiment; two lectures per week (120 minutes each).

Definition of terms:

Writing Skill:

Nunan (2003, p. 88) defined writing as “the process of thinking to develop ideas, thinking about ways to express those ideas in good writing, and clearly placing these ideas into statements and paragraphs”. Writing, according to Sokolik (2003, p. 35), is “the mental work that includes generating ideas, considering how to express these ideas, and arranging them into sentences and paragraphs that should be clear to readers”. Writing in this study is defined as students' ability to put their ideas on paper in a clear, organized manner, using correct sentence structure, grammar, word choice, and writing mechanics.

Writing Apprehension:

Writing apprehension is defined as “individuals' general avoidance of writing situations followed by the possibility of evaluating that writing” (Daly, 1979, p. 37). Salem (2007) defined Writing apprehension as “the tendency of an individual to avoid

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situations requiring writing assignments and may be accompanied by some form of evaluation”. In this study, writing apprehension is defined as an individual's negative, anxious feelings towards writing assignments, especially with the possibility of evaluating that writing.

Project-Based Learning (PBL):

Markham et al. (2008, p. 4) defined project-based learning (PBL) as “a systematic teaching strategy in which students learn information and acquire skills through an inquiry process that focuses primarily on deep, authentic questions and projects”. While Hallermann et al. (2011, p. 5) defined it as “an instructional teaching method that actively engages learners in the acquisition of essential knowledge and 21st-century skills via an extended, student-centered inquiry process focused on intricate, authentic questions and carefully designed products and learning tasks.”

In this study, PBL is operationally defined as an instructional teaching strategy that includes a number of activities such as planning, data collection, problem-solving, and evaluation that seeks to engage students to work in groups focusing primarily on deep, authentic questions and projects in blended learning environments that combine both online and face to face learning to write properly.

Blended learning:

Lim and Morris (2009, p.283) defined Blended learning as “the appropriate mix and use of face-to-face instructional methods and various learning technologies to support planned learning and develop subsequent learning outcomes”. Blended learning, according to Bonk and Graham (2012, p. 5), is “a type of instruction that combines face-to-face instruction with computer-mediated instruction to create a more effective teaching and learning environment”.

In this study, blended learning is a type of learning that incorporates physical learning with online learning via video conferencing applications to improve the delivery of PBL to improve writing skills.

II- Literature Review:

Writing is regarded as an essential skill not only for students, throughout their educational path but also for EFL, as well as ESL learners as it is deeply required to reach their academic success. Furthermore, it is a potential tool for enhancing the proficiency level of their language. This is because it paves the way for learners to be more conscious of knowledge gaps and elaborate mental demonstrations of knowledge that can be more easily retrieved. Moreover, writing gives teachers the opportunity to comprehend the thought processes and knowledge levels of their students. This, in turn, allows them to adjust instructions as needed. (Aljumah, 2012).

In addition, Toci (2014) considers writing to be the most important factor in academic language success. Students begin learning a foreign language at a young age. It is first learnt through simple systems, such as letters and easy words. Then learners gradually start to advance their language level; they begin to experience longer sentences and paragraphs until they reach the highest level, namely writing a full paper. On the contrary, nowadays, using foreign and international languages, like English, is considered a primary skill. It is essential to allow students to communicate, learn, and show their creativity. Furthermore, assisting students in acquiring skills remains a critical instructive goal because writing plays a vital role in the learner's theoretical and mental development (Isleem, 2012). According to Elashri (2013), it can be assured that writing is one of the most essential skills in the English language. It helps writers look into the viewpoints and ideas and make them clear and tangible. In accordance with this, writing drives people to think and learn, instigates correspondence, and drives thought to be reflective. Thoughts can be studied, reexamined, added to, revised, and modified when they are written down.

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On the contrary, Hamadouche (2010) clarifies that one of the most difficult skills for many students is EFL writing. Learning to write is more difficult and challenging than listening, speaking, or reading. Writing is a difficult task for EFL student-writers because it requires the use of various aspects of writing skills, e.g. vocabulary, content, organization, language use, word spelling, punctuation, and accurate capitalization. Furthermore, Abu shawish (2009) considers writing to be a complex skill because it requires a variety of mental activities such as thinking, composing, creating ideas, assessing the relationship between these ideas and the main idea of the topic, memorizing, and organizing these ideas in order of importance. Writing as a skill promotes critical thinking and learning for communication, as well as making ideas available for reflection. Ideas can be checked, organized, rearranged, and changed when they are written down. Writing, according to Sahin and Genc (2015), is the only productive learned skill that is regarded exceedingly challenging for native speakers; it, in turn, becomes even more problematic and nerve-racking when the issue is writing in a foreign language.

According to Nunan (2003), writing is an intellectual activity involving gathering ideas and deciding how to express and organize them into a statement and paragraph easy for the reader to understand. This means that students are expected to demonstrate their ideas and organize them into a good composition. Similarly, Ryan (2014) considers writing as a complicated but learned activity because it contains conveying our thoughts through the use of words and texts apposite for the aim, audience, and medium of various communicative forms. Thus, writers should regularly decide how to represent topics and themselves through language. Hence, writing can be regarded as the activity in which writers form and express their identities, referring to their social structures and thoughts.

EFL writing skills have been investigated and defined by many researchers. For instance, Al-Buainain (2009) defines writing as “a psycho-socio-mental linguistic skill that needs mastery of vital processes and other sub-skills like handwriting, appropriate word usage, vocabulary, structure, punctuation, and spelling. In addition, the need to effectively use strategies such as planning, organizing, revising, and assessing text”. In addition to Al-Buainain, Brown (2001) views writing skills as “a diverse set of competencies that EFL learners should have, such as how to produce and unify ideas coherently, how to incorporate discourse markers and rhetorical conventions cohesively into the composition, how to review and edit for the sake of clarity, and how to produce a final product”.

For these reasons, writing as an integral skill in foreign language learning (FLL) settings is very important in language learning. For Alfaki (2015), much writing in the EFL classroom is done to aid learning, such as consolidating new structures or vocabulary learning or helping students memorize new language items. Writing in this context allows students to notice their progress and receive feedback from the teacher, as well as allows teachers to guide and monitor their students and diagnose problems that arise. As a result, EFL students should master the written form of the language as well as certain structures that are essential for effective written communication.

Moreover, writing is an emotional and cognitive task, which means that we think and feel while we write. Second language writing is also affected by the learner's cultural, educational, and contextual forces, as well as human characteristics such as institutional criteria, parental or educational expectations, inspiration, attitude, self-confidence, teaching and evaluation methods, and even gender and school years (Cheng, 2002). Thus, the reasons why second language learners may feel apprehended when writing can be diverse and varied, but some general causes ranging from highly personal (such as self-confidence) to formal

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(such as classroom practises and teaching methods) can be established.

It is well recognised that how a student thinks about a learning task significantly impacts how well this student performs on that task. In the past, teachers of writing tended to blame students' poor performance on their negative attitude toward writing. However, the same teachers believe that students who have a positive attitude toward writing are more likely to perform well in any assignment. Therefore, instead of using this simple method of analysis, teachers are strongly encouraged to improve students' attitudes. On the other hand, professional teachers recognise the importance of positive writing interactions and reviews and typically strive to increase students' motivation in their writing classes (Atay & Kurt, 2006). For some students, putting their thoughts or ideas on paper is a pleasurable experience. In contrast, for students who are hesitant to express themselves in writing, this activity can be a very uncomfortable, if not terrifying, experience each time they are assigned a written assignment (Vanhille et al., 2017). This condition is known as writing apprehension. Thus, students with varying levels of writing ability may experience varying degrees of anxiety when writing.

Writing Apprehension:

Writing is both an emotional and cognitive activity (McLeod, 1987). Its affective components have a strong and significant influence on all the writing process stages. Emotions, feelings, attitudes, and motivation are all examples of affect. Writing apprehension is defined as “individuals' general avoidance of writing situations followed by the possibility of evaluating that writing” (Daly, 1979, p. 37). This definition investigates the correlation between three concepts: individual attitudes (e.g., positive or negative judgement); feelings and emotions (e.g., fear or anxiety); and avoidance behaviours (e.g., blocking or resistance).

Writing apprehension, according to (Chuo 2004), is a language-skill specific anxiety that is unique to communicating with writing. It is a condition that many people experience when faced with a writing task. Different people experience varying degrees of anxiety when it comes to writing. People who have a high level of written apprehension avoid writing and compose with great anxiety when required to do so. Writing apprehension is a person's tendency to flee a situation that is thought to theoretically entail writing activities that some form of appraisal may follow. Extremely apprehensive authors regard writing as an unsatisfying experience. They are afraid to judge their writings because they expect to be rated negatively. As a result, in order to maintain their self-esteem, they stop publishing as much as possible. This impacts students' writing success standards and their ability to join writing courses (Salem, 2007).

Furthermore, writing apprehension is a psychological context disorder associated with reluctance, inability to write, or unwillingness to write. Unlike students with lower levels of written apprehension and resistance perceive writing as helpful and constructive. Writing apprehension is negatively affected self-efficacy (Pappalardo, 2010). Writing apprehension has been described as an extremely complex concept and has become a critical concern for both native and non-native writers (Al-Ahmad, 2003). It was also described as writing-specific anxiety (Daly et al., 1988). As a result, writing apprehension can be defined as “negative, anxious feelings toward writing that is influenced by many factors, i.e. social, psychological, cognitive, and academic factors, and these factors influence writing performance.”

On the other hand, Hassan (2001) sums up a number of potential linguistic and cognitive explanations for writing anxiety, such as an absence of role models, a lack of comprehending the writing process, and an authoritative, teacher-centered, product-based teaching model. He emphasizes the importance of self-confidence in determining learners' affective responses to the role of writing. While some studies revealed that no matter how competent

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or skilled people are in writing, if they believe they will fail or do not want to take stress writing classes, their skills or abilities are unimportant (Holladay, 1981; cited by Hassan, 2001: 4). Another study reported that low self-confidence students may not see themselves as professional writers, even with strong L2 writing skills and may experience writing apprehension (Cheng, 2002).

Other studies have revealed other critical factors that influence writing apprehension, such as (Al-Ahmad, 2003), who associates complexity with the lack of formal definitions of writing apprehension elements (e.g. the cognitive and affective method, the intellectual sense, and the writer's own personal views). This study also discovered that feedback played a significant role in writing apprehension. While Huwari & Al-Shboul (2015) conducted interviews with 21 Jordanian Ph.D. students at Utara Malaysia University to learn about their experiences with writing discomfort. Three key trends were discovered regarding the impact of writing apprehension: personal impact, social effect, and intellectual impact. However, their analysis revealed four significant causes of writing apprehension: a lack of awareness of the English framework, a negative attitude toward learning, a previous negative learning experience, and a lack of expertise in academic writing. Furthermore, Huwari and Abd Aziz (2011) contend that it is critical and necessary to investigate writing apprehension, particularly among Arabic EFL learners.

Daud et al. (2016) suggest several techniques to help students overcome their writing apprehension. Teachers should concentrate more on how they teach, motivate their students to complete the writing task or help them in finding the answer to the given problem or topic, use different methods to develop students' language, give enough time for writing activities, teach writing as fluency rather than precision, and finally ask students to correct their errors.

It is widely accepted that anxiety or apprehension impairs students' writing ability and may impair their academic

achievement. As a result, examining writing apprehension and attempting to reduce it is a demand that research should pursue.

Project-Based Learning:

Project-based learning (PBL) is a constructivist teaching strategy that improves students' learning by involving them in a collaborative process aimed at problem solving (Vaca Torres & Gómez Rodríguez, 2017). It is a comprehensive instructional technique that engages students in a long-term, collaborative inquiry process focused on real-world challenges and suits students' personal interests in order to improve their critical thinking and reflection (Grant, 2002; Railsback, 2002). PBL, according to Estrada Oliver et al. (2020), is a pedagogical model that can improve the required skills of the twenty-first century through constructivist education that provides concrete evidence through a project.

PBL is a practical application of constructivism's principles and philosophy. It is claimed that constructivism implies that students can construct meaning and learn more effectively from their life experiences. It advocates for practical and hands-on learning experiences by immersing students in real-world problems, which is at the heart of PBL (Bell, 2010). PBL is based on three constructivist assumptions. These three principles are as follows: learning should be delivered in specific and appropriate contexts, students should be deeply engaged and participated in their instruction, and students should be engaged in collaborative and social processes to better achieve their learning goals. PBL creates a flexible learning environment in which students can demonstrate their knowledge (Cocco, 2006).

Larmer (2012) proposes some basic guidelines for making a project successful based on constructivism theory. First, the project should depend on a real-life situation that goes beyond the scope of the classroom. In other words, the project's outcomes can be used by ordinary people in society outside the classroom. Second, the project should centre on a problem, issue, or topic related to the curriculum content that students are learning. Third, the project

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should introduce a scenario or simulation similar to what is shown in the real world. Finally, the environment in which the project is carried out should include real-world tools, tasks, or processes.

Similarly, Dewi (2016) presented seven characteristics that can be considered the key components of PBL. First and foremost, a learner-centered environment; adopting PBL necessitates a shift in the roles of both the student and the teacher. Second, collaboration; PBL encourages learners to practise collaboration by participating in group work, collaborative decision-making, and peer feedback. Third, curriculum content; projects should be designed according to the curriculum's objectives and content. Fourth, authentic tasks; projects should be linked to real-world issues relevant to the students' lives and interests. Fifth, numerous presentation modes; this component allows students to use various technologies in the planning, development, or presentation of their projects. Sixth, managing your time; students should consider the allotted time to complete their projects. Finally, innovative evaluations; project evaluations should be an ongoing process. It should include teacher, student, and peer assessments, as well as reflection.

PBL has several advantages. It encourages social learning, communication, bargaining, and collaboration. Furthermore, it fosters the development of learning responsibility, goal setting, independence, and discipline. When PBL is implemented, the active learning process considers learners' various learning styles and preferences. PBL allows students to discover their identities as learners. Finally, recent research has shown that using PBL effectively engages learners in real-world tasks, which deepens their learning (Aksela & Haatainen, 2019; Bell, 2010).

Sumarni (2015) adds the following benefits for project-based learning in the same vein:

- PBL improves the ability to communicate. PBL can help students improve their communication skills. Learners can gain an understanding of how to listen to other partners carefully and how to

communicate effectively and accept different opinions through PBL.

- PBL increases students' motivation to learn. When PBL is implemented successfully, students become highly motivated and involved in their learning.

- PBL fosters collaboration. Throughout the implementation of PBL, students work in teams, interact, and develop collaborative learning skills (Yalcin et al., 2009).

- PBL improves learners' ability to use available learning resources. For example, PBL teaches students how to conduct research. They can access the internet, libraries, go on field trips, and make observations.

- PBL improves students' attitudes toward education. Recent research has found a link between PBL and a more positive attitude toward learning in general (Baş, 2011).

- PBL promotes enjoyable learning. PBL creates a fun classroom environment by bringing students out of their traditional classroom routine (Yalcin et al., 2009).

- PBL fosters students' creativity and problem-solving abilities.

- PBL reduces learners' anxiety during the learning process. Learners' anxiety levels can be reduced by involving them in PBL (Erdem, 2012).

Similarly, Goodman (2010) concluded that PBL is vital because it allows students to apply what they learn, and it is fun. It effectively assists students in understanding, remembering, and applying information. Furthermore, PBL allows students to work together with experienced people of high calibers who improve and support the knowledge of the teacher and relate it to real contexts. It is also more efficient than traditional instructions, increasing the chance of academic success. In addition, PBL advances critical thinking, communication, and collaboration. This, in turn, allows students who work on projects to be more motivated and engaged.

Regarding the teacher's role in implementing PBL, teachers are expected to guide and support students, set the plan for the classroom, and attempt to complete the project successfully. PBL

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also requires teachers to be enthusiastic about implementing the project, have a variety of skills that keep them current, and not consider themselves the only source of information in the classroom. The teacher's role should be a facilitator, consultant, and advisor and abandon the concept of leadership in favour of the concept of collaboration (Markham et al., 2003).

As a result, project-based learning has received a great deal of attention and investigation among scholars and educators in the twenty-first century due to its numerous benefits and positive impact on students. Gustiani et al. (2021) investigated whether project-based learning effectively improves students' writing on project reports at the English Department of Sriwijaya State Polytechnics. This study used a quantitative approach. To collect data, participants were instructed to put their ideas into graphs. The scores of the students' writing skills obtained with the approaches project-based learning and guided writing procedure were 78 and 73, respectively. Thus, students' writing skills improved with project-based learning compared to the guided writing procedure approach.

Moreover, Praba et al. (2018) examined the impact of project-based learning on grade 9 students' writing skills at SMPN 3 Kuta Selatan. This study used an embedded mixed-method design, with quantitative data serving as the primary source of information. The information was gathered through a guided interview, observation, and a writing test. The quantitative data was analysed using the paired sample t-test. The findings revealed that project-based learning significantly impacts students' English writing skills. Similarly, Ramadhani & Sir (2018) investigated the use of PBL to improve students' writing abilities. This research is a collaboration between an English lecturer and a development economics lecturer, and the result is a module (a material collection of writing business letters technique including the sample). This study was conducted on third-semester Development Economics Department students. A

quasi-treatment design was used for this study. One group of 20 students was assigned to this study. The findings indicated that teaching through PBL positively impacts students' ability to write business letters.

In addition, Putri et al. (2017) examined the impact of project-based learning on students' English productive skills, as well as how these activities affect both the teaching and learning process. The study's sample was 28 students in Bali, Indonesia's public junior high school. Speaking and writing tests, an interview guide, an observation checklist, a questionnaire, and a field note were among the study's instruments. The study's findings revealed that PBL significantly impacts students' English productive skills. It also boosted the students' self-esteem, enthusiasm, creativity, and collaborative learning abilities. Furthermore, it developed the teacher's teaching motivation and satisfaction. Similarly, Sadeghi et al. (2016) discovered that PBL had a positive impact on improving EFL Iranian students' comparison/paragraph writing skills. A total of 36 female students from a language institute took part in the study.

On the other hand, Blended learning is highly recommended for better project-based learning implementation. Blended learning has emerged as a critical approach to language learning. The term “blended learning” refers to an approach that combines face-to-face learning with technology-mediated teaching. Regular learning is supported by appropriate learning technology tools in blended learning. Using technology in conjunction with the traditional classroom setting results in creating an innovative learning environment that assists teachers in better introducing and organising their content (Ata, 2016). However, there are varied definitions of blended learning; educators and scholars agree that blended learning incorporates a combination of face-to-face learning and the use of technology (Whitelock & Jelfs, 2003). According to Stacey and Gerbic (2007), the term “blended learning” refers to combining any instructional method that includes virtual resources and face-to-face sessions.

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Various studies have demonstrated that blended learning benefits students' learning. Overall, these studies found that students perform better when they receive learning in a blended format instead of face-to-face or fully online learning. In the United Arab Emirates, Hussein Al Noursi (2020) investigated the impact of blended learning on 12th grade students' English language proficiency. Sixty-three male students participated in this study and were distributed into treatment and control groups. The treatment group (31 students) received the treatment, while the control group (32 students) used the traditional method. In addition, IELTS was administered as a pre- post-test for both groups to obtain the study's goal. The results revealed significant improvement in the treatment group students' English language proficiency level. While Carreon (2018) explored the effect of utilizing Facebook as an integrated blended learning tool in Technology and Livelihood Education (TLE) classroom. 15 grade 7 students participated in this study. The treatment group was taught in a contextualized blended learning approach, while the control group was taught in a traditional classroom setting. A thirty-item test was used as the research instrument. The study's findings revealed that students in the treatment group improved their learning outcomes significantly.

As a result, incorporating technology in general and blended learning, in particular, may enhance PBL. For example, using online tools such as WebQuests, forums, Zoom, blogs, Microsoft teams, and online platforms in addition to face-to-face instruction may assist teachers and instructors in enriching the PBL environment. Simeonov (2016) conducted a case study to determine the impact of project-based learning and blended learning on developing students' 21st century skills. This case study included 26 students (aged 13 to 14) from the 8th grade at the Secondary School 'Sava Savov' in Pirdop, Bulgaria. The class studied English as well as ICT. He gathered information through the ethnographic method of observation. According to the study's findings, blended project-

based learning improved students' learning and motivation. In a similar vein, Elsadek (2020) used electronic project-based learning to help faculty of education students improve their EFL speaking fluency (EPBL). The study's sample was 27 first-year students enrolled in the English department at the faculty of education, Benha University. The study's primary tools were an EFL fluency skills checklist, an EFL fluency test, and an EFL fluency skills rubric. The quantitative analysis revealed that implementing the EPBL significantly improved the participants' EFL speaking fluency skills.

Furthermore, many researchers and scholars have some suggestions for structuring blended learning. They suggested that the first session be face-to-face in order to familiarise students with the online learning tools and that at least one more face-to-face session be scheduled in the middle and at the end of the program. The remaining sessions could be conducted online using any available tools (Garrison & Kanuka, 2004; Michinov & Michinov, 2007).

The aforementioned reviewed studies confirmed the effectiveness of project-based learning in improving language skills, whether it is face-to-face, electronic, or blended. Furthermore, PBL demonstrated effectiveness in increasing students' motivation and attitude toward learning English.

Since project-based learning and blended learning have so many benefits and advantages, the researcher used them in the current study to improve students' writing skills. In other words, the current study attempted to implement project-based learning using some assisted online learning applications in conjunction with a traditional classroom setting in order to improve students' writing skills and reduce their writing apprehension.

III- Method, Instruments, and Procedures:

A- Design of the study:

The study adopts a quasi-treatment design, comparing the treatment group's performance to that of the control group, to investigate the effectiveness of a suggested project-based blended learning program

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on developing EFL Mass Communication students' writing skills and reducing their writing apprehension.

B- Instruments and materials of the study

- 1) A checklist of EFL writing skills required for third-year Mass Communication students.
- 2) An EFL writing skills test to measure students' writing skills.
- 3) The EFL writing skills scoring rubric.
- 4) The writing apprehension test.
- 5) The suggested project-based blended learning was implemented to enhance EFL writing skills and decrease writing apprehension among third-year Mass Communication students.

1- The EFL Writing skills checklist:

a. Aim of the checklist:

The EFL writing skills checklist was designed to identify the writing skills relevant to third-year Mass Communication students (see Appendix. A).

b. Description of the EFL writing skills checklist:

The EFL writing skills checklist, in its final form, included five main writing skills; the following skills were chosen based on their high percentages, namely: Content, Organization, Vocabulary, Sentence Structure (Grammar), and Mechanics.

c. Validity of the EFL writing checklist:

It was designed and developed after reviewing the literature and the studies related to EFL writing skills. The checklist initially included seven main writing skills. It was addressed to jury members in the field of Curriculum and EFL methods of teaching to determine its appropriateness to the students' level; changes and modifications concerning the skills were considered. Based on their feedback, 5 main writing skills were agreed upon.

2- The EFL Writing Skills Test:

a. Aim:

The EFL writing skills test was pre and post used to measure EFL students' assigned writing skills. It was used before the program's

implementation to ensure that students in both groups had nearly the same level of language writing proficiency. As a result, if the treatment group students made any recognizable progress, it could be attributed to the suggested project-based blended learning program.

b. Description of the Test:

The final version of the pre-posttest of EFL writing skills was modified based on the feedback and recommendations of the jury members. The test was designed to measure the five EFL writing skills addressed in the ENG 102 course description and assigned by the jury members as very important for Mass Communication students' future careers. The test consisted of four writing tasks; The test's four questions addressed five skills: Content, Organization, Vocabulary, Sentence Structure (Grammar), and Mechanics (see Appendix. B).

c. Piloting the test:

Prior to the treatment, the test was administered to a randomly chosen group of (31) third-year Mass Communication students. These 31 students did not take part in the study. The goal of the piloting was to assess the test's validity and reliability, check the clarity of the questions, examine the language level's suitability for the participants, and determine the suitable time required to complete the test.

There were no reported issues with the language level of the questions being appropriate for third-year Mass Communication students. In order to determine the appropriate time for the EFL writing test, the researcher calculated the sum of all the students' duration divided by their number. As a result, the appropriate time for the test was 120 minutes.

Validity of internal consistency of the EFL writing test

To measure the internal consistency of the EFL writing test, the correlation coefficient between the score of each individual skill and the overall test score was calculated, and the results of the correlation coefficient were as follows:

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Table 1
**Correlation Coefficients between the Score of Each Individual
Skill and the
Overall Test Score of the EFL Writing Test**

N	Skill	Correlation coefficients	Level of significance
1	Content	0.90	0.01
2	Organization	0.89	0.01
3	Vocabulary	0.84	0.01
4	Sentence Structure (Grammar)	0.88	0.01
5	Mechanics	0.76	0.01

Table (1) confirms that all correlations were statistically significant at 0.01. So, the test items were internally consistent and valid.

Reliability of the test:

The following measures were used to establish test reliability:

- Cronbach's Alpha: The Alpha coefficient was calculated, and its value was (0.85), indicating that the EFL writing test was consistent and reliable.
- Split-half reliability (Spearman-Brown Coefficient): The correlation coefficient between the two halves of the EFL writing test was calculated, and its value was (0.74). Meanwhile, after calculating the effect of the split using Spearman- Brown, the correlation coefficient was (0.85), indicating that the EFL writing test is consistent and reliable as a measuring instrument.

d. Scoring the test:

The total score for the EFL writing skills test is “100.” The researcher designed the writing skills scoring rubric which was used to score all questions. Students' responses were sent to another rater along with the rubric for inter-rater reliability.

3- The EFL Writing Skills Scoring Rubric:

The researcher created an EFL writing skills scoring rubric based on various resources in order to evaluate students' performance in the pre/post writing test (see Appendix. C). The

rubric aims to assess students' writing skills and assign appropriate grades in the writing pre-posttest. The rubric was submitted to a jury of curriculum and instruction specialists to determine its validity. They demonstrated that the rubric's components were both valid and comprehensive.

The rubric rates students' writing abilities on a scale of exemplary (5) to unacceptable (1). In addition, each rating value has specific criteria covering the following writing sub-skills: Content, Organization, Vocabulary, Sentence Structure (Grammar), and Mechanics. The inter-rater reliability of the EFL writing skills scoring rubric was estimated by computing the correlation coefficient between the researcher and another rater who scored the study groups' EFL writing skills test. The correlation coefficient between the scores of the two raters was 0.89.

4- Writing Apprehension Test (WAT):

Daly and Miller writing apprehension test (WAT) was used to evaluate the students' level of writing apprehension (see Appendix. D). The WAT consists of 26 sentences with responses ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree on a five-point Likert scale. For example, strongly agree=1, agree=2, uncertain=3, disagree=4, and strongly disagree=5. Cronbach's alpha coefficient estimates of high reliability ranged from .89 to .94. The WAT developed by Daly and Miller is widely used and regarded as a precise and appropriate tool for measuring students' writing apprehension. The level of apprehension decreases as the score rises and vice versa. The lower the score, the greater the writing apprehension. Students with higher levels of writing apprehension frequently lack confidence in their ability to perform well, even if they possess the necessary skills. To calculate the Writing Apprehension score, use the following formula:

$$WA = 78 + PSV - NSV$$

The maximum possible score is 130, and the minimum possible score is 26.

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The duration of the WAT was estimated by summing up the times of the first and the last students in answering the test divided by two. So, the time specified for the test was $20+30/2= 25$ minutes.

5- The Study Material (The Suggested Project-Based Blended Learning Program)

a. Aim of the program:

The program's aim was to enhance EFL third year Mass Communication students' writing skills and reduce their writing apprehension.

b. Objectives of the program:

The program was expected to develop students' writing skills; content, organization, vocabulary, sentence structure (grammar), and mechanics, and decrease their writing apprehension levels.

By the end of this program, students would be able to:

- Produce clear relevant content
- Support the main idea with specific evidence & facts, as well as examples and specific details
- Provide smooth and effective transitions within and between paragraphs
- Use a wide range of sentence types, structures and lengths to serve the topic.
- Construct complete and grammatically correct sentences.
- Use varied vocabulary range.
- Use strong, effective and lively words.
- Use appropriate words and expressions for the topics, audience, and settings.
- Provide an effective introduction, a well-developed body and a clear and identifiable conclusion.
- Organize ideas logically.
- Use a single main idea in each paragraph relevant to the topic.
- Use correct punctuation, capitalization, and spelling
- Avoid run-on or wordy sentences.

- Identify the negative impact of writing apprehension on EFL writing success.

c- Content of the program:

The program's content is project-based, and it is delivered in a blended learning environment in which students participate in both online and face-to-face sessions. The face-to-face sessions took place in regular classroom settings at Ahram Canadian University, while the online sessions took place through Microsoft teams. The program's content was adapted from various materials, sources and websites related to project-based learning and the targeted writing skills. (See Appendix. E)

d- Description of the program:

The program consisted of fifteen sessions. The first session was an orientation session, followed by fourteen instructional sessions in which EFL writing skills were practised using a suggested project-based blended learning program. The program lasted for 8 weeks (two sessions per week except week one)

e- Implementation of the Program:

Before introducing the suggested project-based blended learning program to the treatment group, the researcher administered the research instruments (the writing test and the writing apprehension test) to the study groups (control and treatment) who were randomly selected on week 2 of the first semester of the academic year 2021-2022. The treatment group began receiving the suggested project-based blended learning program both face to face and online in the third week as follows:

-Procedures for program orientation

The instructor demonstrated the suggested project-based blended learning program's aims and objectives to the treatment group. Then, the instructor introduced students to blended learning and the tools used in this program and project-based learning.

Finally, the instructor discussed the significance and necessity of developing Mass Communication students' writing skills.

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-The Suggested steps for implementing the proposed program:

The suggested project-based blended learning in the present study was implemented through a six-stage project; classroom planning, defining the problem (writing project), investigating the project, implementing the project, presenting the project, reviewing and giving feedback, and a follow-up activity, followed by the final publication in the college magazine. In this study, steps 1, 2, 3 and 6 of the program were completed online using a video conferencing application (Microsoft teams), while the remaining steps were completed face to face in regular classroom settings.

- Assessment of the program:

After finishing the treatment sessions, the study groups were given the writing and writing apprehension post-tests to measure the impact of the suggested project-based blended learning program. The scoring rubric described earlier was used to evaluate and calculate each student's writing answers and writing apprehension responses. SPSS was used to calculate the data to detect any differences in the study groups' pre and post-test scores.

IV. Data Analysis and Results:

To compute the program's results, the researcher adopted parametric statistical techniques and the Statistical Package for Social Sciences programm (SPSS) (version 26). The study's quantitative findings are presented by relating them to the study hypotheses.

To verify the first hypothesis which stated: “There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the treatment group and those of the control group in their performance on the post-administration of the writing skill test, favoring the treatment group”, independent samples t-test was used. The results are presented in table (2).

Table (2)
T-Test Results Comparing the Performance of the Treatment and Control Groups on the Post-Administration of the EFL Writing Skills

EFL Writing Skills	Group	N	Mean	Std Deviation	“t. value”	df	Sig	Effet size η^2
Content	Treatment	25	13.44	1.38	8.05	48	0.000	0.57
	Control	25	10.36	1.31				
Organization	Treatment	25	13.4	1.53	7.55	48	0.000	0.54
	Control	25	9.4	2.16				
Vocabulary	Treatment	25	15.08	1.57	9.64	48	0.000	0.66
	Control	25	10.56	1.73				
Sentence Structure (Grammar)	Treatment	25	14.48	1.85	7.30	48	0.000	0.53
	Control	25	10.72	1.79				
Mechanics	Treatment	25	13.72	1.31	9.40	48	0.000	0.65
	Control	25	10.48	1.12				
Total	Treatment	25	70.16	3.77	15.89	48	0.000	0.84
	Control	25	51.56	4.47				

The previous table demonstrates that there was a significant difference in the post-administrations of the EFL writing skills test between the treatment and control groups. In addition, the mean score of the treatment group (70.16) is higher than the control group score(51.56), and this also indicates that the program's implementation contributed to improving EFL writing skills. As a result, the study's first hypothesis was confirmed and accepted.

To verify the second hypothesis which stated: “There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the treatment group in their performance in the pre and post administrations of the writing skill test, favoring the post-administration”, Paired t-test sample was used. The results are presented in table (3).

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Table (3)
T-Test Results Comparing the Performance of the Treatment Group on the Pre and Post-Administrations of the EFL Writing Skills

EFL Writing Skills	Mean pre	Mean post	Std Deviation pre	Std Deviation post	“t. value”	df	Sig	Effet size η^2
1- Content	9.24	13.44	1.30	1.39	9.81	24	0.000	0.80
2-Organization	8.08	13.48	1.98	1.53	12.77	24	0.000	0.87
3- Vocabulary	9.44	15.08	1.33	1.58	12.95	24	0.000	0.87
4- Sentence structure (Grammar)	8.28	14.48	1.81	1.85	14.35	24	0.000	0.90
5- Mechanics	9.48	13.72	1.12	1.31	13.57	24	0.000	0.88
Total	44.52	70.16	3.81	3.77	24.09	24	0.000	0.96

The previous table shows that the students' mean scores on the post-application of the writing test, for both overall writing skills and each sub-skill separately, is higher than the pre-application, indicating that students' writing skills were developed after receiving the proposed program. As a result, the study's second hypothesis was confirmed and accepted

To verify the third hypothesis which stated: “There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the treatment group and those of the control group on the post-administration of the writing apprehension test, favoring the treatment group”, independent samples t-test was used. The results are presented in table (4).

Table (4)

T- Test Results Comparing the Performance of the Treatment and Control Groups on the Post-Administration of the Writing Apprehension Test

Test	Group	N	Mean	Std Deviation	“t. value”	df	Sig	Effect size η^2
Writing Apprehension	Treatment	25	100.60	10.07	11.12	48	0.000	0.72
	Control	25	67.04	11.25				

The previous table demonstrates that there was a significant difference in the post-administrations of the EFL writing apprehension test between the treatment and control groups. This also indicates that the program's implementation contributed to decreasing the writing apprehension levels. As a result, the study's third hypothesis was confirmed and accepted.

To verify the fourth hypothesis which stated: “There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the treatment group in their performance on the pre and post administrations of the writing apprehension test, favoring the post-administration”, Paired sample t-test was used. The results are presented in table (5).

Table (5)

T- Test Results Comparing the Performance of the Treatment Group on the Pre and Post-Administrations of the Writing Apprehension Test

Test	Mean pre	Mean post	Std Deviation pre	Std Deviation post	“t. value”	df	Sig	Effect size η^2
Writing Apprehension	68.52	100.60	11.69	10.07	18.30	24	0.000	0.93

The previous table shows that the students' mean score on the post-application of the writing apprehension test is higher than the pre-application, indicating that students' writing apprehension level was reduced after receiving the proposed program. As a result, the study's fourth hypothesis was confirmed and accepted.

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V- Discussion of the Results:

- Project-based learning gratifies students' interest in learning. In addition, it quickly motivates them to pursue their own learning because it keeps them busy and allows them to engage in a learning-by-doing process. Project-based learning allows students to take on various roles such as coordinator, communicator, leader, investigator, and practitioner, allowing them to become more self-directed learners.
- PBL promotes enjoyable learning. PBL creates a fun classroom environment by bringing students out of their traditional classroom routine. PBL increases students' motivation to learn. When PBL is accomplished successfully, students become highly motivated and involved in their learning.
- PBL fosters collaboration. During the implementation of PBL, students work in teams, interact, and develop collaborative learning skills. PBL inspired students to learn from one another via the collaborative learning environment and the interaction processes produced in the classroom between different teams, which in turn developed their communication and collaboration skills. Despite disagreement and conflict between team members, learning always occurred in a friendly and healthy environment.
- Through implementing PBL, writing embedded in natural settings helped raise awareness on topic organization, genre principles, linguistic features, word choice and vocabulary, and sentence structure, all are processed simultaneously. As a result, PBL allows students to practise more for academic success.
- The project-based blended learning program gives students multiple opportunities to communicate with one another in order to complete their projects, whether online or face to face. As a result, they learned to listen to one another, express their opinions, and freely present their thoughts and ideas, which aided them in improving their writing skills.

- The use of group discussion as a major technique was an important factor in achieving these results. For a predetermined amount of time, each group had the opportunity to discuss the projects. They looked for relevant information, answered specific questions about the projects, and formed an opinion about the final project. In addition, every group member was encouraged to openly express their ideas and opinions in response to their colleagues' written products.
- PBL allows students to learn and demonstrate their knowledge through a series of processes and steps that are followed when implementing PBL, as it reduces teacher talk and makes more room in the classroom for student talk.
- Blended learning as an instructional approach provided the study group with more time to practice critical thinking skills and gave the teacher a better opportunity to follow up on students' learning.
- Project work is regarded as a natural language learning context in which language learning, particularly writing, is contextualised and introduced in such a way that learning becomes incorporated with the task of communicating about a particular topic. Because project-based learning places emphasis on communication, students concentrate on conveying their message while also applying knowledge of conventions to their writing. The conventions are used and practised in an authentic setting at various stages throughout the project. Project-based learning provides a framework for students to investigate, inquire, and create. As a result, project-based learning creates a learning environment that promotes writing skills.
- Finally, providing students with an encouraging and supportive learning environment motivated them to complete the writing projects. The English class was relaxing, motivating, and engaging. This was due to using various learning aids, such as powerpoint presentations, videos, and photos. Furthermore, allowing students to freely participate in classroom discussions and be accountable for their choices. Moreover, all groups were rewarded for each project completed, not just the winning project. Working in groups,

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assisting and learning from one another, increased student engagement and reduced their writing apprehension level.

VI- Conclusion:

It can be concluded that the suggested project-based blended learning program is beneficial and effective in developing writing skills among third-year Mass Communication students. Students' writing apprehension was significantly reduced after the program implementation. In addition, project-based learning in a blended learning environment helps students become more independent learners, collaborate effectively, and communicate better, whether online or face-to-face. Finally, project-based blended learning is an effective strategy that EFL teachers and coursebook designers can use to improve EFL language skills in various contexts.

VII- Recommendations:

Regarding the study findings, the following recommendations for EFL teaching should be considered:

- 1- Training EFL teachers to apply project-based learning in a face-to-face or online setting to develop students' writing skills.
- 2- Preparing EFL teachers to take on roles other than lecturing in the classroom.
- 3- Training students to work together to achieve a common goal.
- 4- Engaging students in creating projects related to their study lessons to maximize their learning opportunities.
- 5- Emphasizing and giving much care for writing activities in EFL courses.
- 6- Cooperative learning, particularly group work, should be encouraged both in and out of the classroom.
- 7- EFL teachers should pay close attention to their students' psychological aspects, e.g. writing apprehension, as they play an essential role in their learning process.
- 8- EFL teachers should encourage students to learn valuable skills using the internet and social networking sites.

VIII- Suggestions for further research:

The study represents the following suggestions for future research.

- Current study's main focus was to examine the effect of a suggested project-based blended learning program on developing writing skills; additional research is needed to address other language skills.
- Investigating the impact of a project-based blended learning program on developing writing skills in other educational stages and larger samples.
- Exploring the effect of project-based blended learning on developing other psychological aspects such as motivation and self-confidence.
- Implementing a project-based blended learning program to enhance communication skills.
- Utilizing hybrid learning on improving EFL skills.

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