

**Blended learning for developing writing skills to primary pupils.**

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## ملخص البحث

إن الهدف من هذه الدراسة قياس فاعليه التعلم المدمج في توير مهارات الكتابة باللغة الانجليزية لتلاميذ المرحلة الابتدائية. تم تحديد عينه تجريبية لتحقيق اهداف هذه الدراسة وقد قام الباحث باستخدام التعلم المدمج لتنمية مهارات الكتابة لتلاميذ المرحلة الابتدائية. كانت العينه مكونه م 58 تلميذ واختار الباحث العينه بشكل عشوائي من إحدى المدارس الخاصة بحلوان ثم قسمت لعدد 29 تلميذ للمجموعة التجريبية و 29 تلميذ للمجموعة الضابطة. وتتضمن أدوات التجربة قائمة لمهارات الكتابة لتلاميذ الصف الخامس الابتدائي واختبار قبلي بعدي. واثبت التحليل الإحصائي فاعلية التعلم المدمج لتنمية مهارات الكتابة. وبذلك تحقق هدف هذه الدراسة.

**الكلمات الافتتاحية: التعلم المدمج و مهارات الكتابة.**

## **Abstract**

The purpose of the present study was to investigate the effect of blended learning on developing the required writing skills in English language for the primary school students. A pre-post experimental group design was designed to achieve the study objectives, as the researcher used blended learning to develop writing skills for primary school pupils. A sample of 58 primary school pupils were randomly selected and divided into two groups (29 for the experimental group and 29 for the control group) from one of the private schools in Helwan, namely Orman Smart School. Instruments of the study included writing skills checklist to determine the writing skills that were mostly needed to the fifth primary pupils, a pre –post test in writing skills. The statistical analysis of the assessed data from the two administrations of the targeted writing skills' test emphasized the effect of using blended learning on developing the experimental group's targeted EFL writing skills. Thus, the aim of the study was achieved as using blended learning showed a large effect size and was effective in developing the necessary EFL writing skills for primary school pupils. Discussion of the findings, recommendations and suggestions for further research are presented

**Keywords** blended learning, writing skills

## 1-Introduction:

Writing is essential in education today, that's why everyone wants to know the best way to teach it. But it can be a challenge because there are so many different ideas. Fortunately, over the past decade, there has been a national consensus on the essentials of successful teaching. (Seow, 2012).

Boser (2020) mentioned that Writing is a significant skill.

The ability to put words on paper is an essential skill for success in school and college, but very few high school graduates have the ability to write fluently. Less than a third of high school students are good writers. According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), low-income students, black and Hispanic students have significantly worse academic performance and have proficiency levels below 15%.

Teaching writing is a corer because written communication is a fundamental life skill. Students may need to take notes, fill out forms, and write letters, reports, stories, and more. Many had to complete detailed questionnaires related to health, education and employment. The ability to write adequately gives confidence and marks one's mastery in a particular language. (Stanley, G., 2013)

Hailemariam (2011) found that L2 writers encounter a number of problems when writing such as vocabulary choice, punctuation errors, idea generation, organizational problems, spelling errors, and appropriate use of grammar. Furthermore, Zamroni (2013) clarified some of the problems encountered by students of English as a foreign language (EFL) by writing as follows:

- Unable to express and organize ideas in good sentences.
- Cannot construct the text in chronological order.
- Unable to write grammatically correct sentences.
- Inability to use mechanics appropriately.

This is why Mehdiabadi and Arabmofrad (2015) call for a different way of teaching writing, arguing that if writing is taught based on traditional methods, learners will lose motivation and perceive writing lessons as difficult and boring. To solve this problem, teachers must take a different look at written instruction and use initially supported collaborative tasks. Therefore teachers should use different ways to solve this problem, such as using blended learning.

Teacher, National University Of Uzbekistan, Uzbekistan (2020), stated that using blended learning in education and the essential elements of a successful blended learning course. The quality of a blended course can be enhanced by combining the advantages of face-to-face and online learning. Overall, blended learning is an effective, flexible and accessible teaching method.

Blended learning programs may include some form of learning tool, such as real-time virtual/collaborative software, self-paced online courses, Electrical Performance Support Systems integrated element (EPSS) in the task environment and knowledge management system. Blended learning combines a variety of event-based activities, including face-to-face classes, live online learning, and self-paced learning. (Harvey Singh, 2013)

Blended learning is the growing third wave of learning environments that improve the learning process by combining the capabilities, features, tools, and practices of online and online learning. As such, blended learning is not a random combination of teachers, facilities, and online training methods, but its implementation in the design and implementation phase requires giving decisions and various actions. (Mahboubeh Fannakhosrow&Soolmaz Nourabadi, 2019)

The successful implementation of blended learning poses a number of challenges. First, despite the many potential benefits, the

success of blended learning still depends on the motivation of teachers and students. Teaching staff may be reluctant to accept blended learning due to a lack of technical skills and the increased workload required to develop resources for blended learning programmes. Students must develop appropriate discipline and time management skills, and some may have difficulty adjusting to new forms of instruction. (Cristan Herbert, 2017)

Blended learning is an approach to meet the challenges of individualized learning and development by absorbing technological and innovative advances. The combination of online learning and traditional learning brings interaction and engagement at its best. This helps to combine traditional physical classes with virtual educational elements. (Dr. Shailesh Badre, 2020)

Blended learning allows learners to see, hear, feel, and interact with the learning material. This takes them from theory to practice. They can gain a deeper understanding of all the abstractions they go through. They can learn at their own pace, which makes for a more personalized education. Good students can expand their learning and learn things that are not part of the school curriculum. However, slow learners can repeat, revise their notes, and get feedback from their teachers to overcome the problems and challenges they face. (Bailey & Martin, 2013).

## 2. Context of the problem:

The researchers' feeling of the problem of the weakness of EFL critical writing skills for primary school was emphasized through a number of steps as follows:

### A-Classroom observation:

Despite the importance of writing skills, the researchers during their work as a teacher of English noticed that those skills did not receive much attention of the teachers.

## **B) Unstructured interview:**

In order to be sure of the weakness of the 5th primary schools writing skills, the researcher directed an unstructured interview with some of English primary school teachers. She asked them the following questions:

1. What is the importance of developing writing skills in 5th graders?
2. What pedagogical methods and strategies can be used to develop primary school students' writing skills?
3. What difficulties do students have when writing?
4. How can teachers assess writing skills?
5. How do teachers encourage students to develop writing skills?

Interview results show that most teachers have not paid much attention to developing writing skills.

They focus on improving vocabulary and general grammar, not writing. Teachers point out that the methods used to teach writing are traditional. Teachers don't really know what appropriate strategies and methods can be used to effectively develop students' writing skills.

Teachers' feedback also shows that students have poor writing skills because most students can't write complete sentences and most of their writing is difficult to understand.

Most students have problems even in lower level skills (spelling, grammar, vocabulary and punctuation) and higher level skills, organization and content. Most students do not connect sentences coherently.

In addition, they complain that most students cannot correctly apply the rules of punctuation. Most students consider writing to be

the most difficult task when studying English. Most students lack vocabulary and cannot express their thoughts and ideas in a simple and organized manner. Teachers use achievement tests to assess writing skills, and there are no specific tests to assess writing skills. Teachers also do not use different activities to encourage students to develop writing skills. They only focus on traditional methods of teaching writing.

### **C) Previous Studies:**

The existence of the research problem is supported by a review of previous relevant studies. Teacher, National University Of Uzbekistan, Uzbekistan (2020), Boser (2020), Samina Sarwat et al, (2021), Aref NasserAs, (2016), Ms. V Satya Sri Durga&Dr. C S Rao, (2018), and Ola Mohamed (2015) reveals the persistence of real problems in teaching and learning to write for both teachers and students.

### **3. Statement of the Problem:**

The problem of this study was concerned with 5th grade primary school pupils' weakness in the required writing skills. Thus, the present research attempted to develop the required writing for the fifth grade primary school pupils throughout the use of peer tutoring and blended learning.

### **4. Questions of the Study**

In order to addressing the above problem, the present study tried to answer the following main question: What is the effect of blended learning on developing writing in English language for the primary stage pupils?

From this main question, the following sub-questions were derived:

1-What are the required writing skills that should be developed for 5th grade primary School pupils?

2-What is the effect size of blended learning on developing each of the required writing skills for the 5<sup>th</sup> grade primary School pupils?

## **5. Hypotheses of the study**

The present research tested the following hypotheses:

1-There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group on the post-administration of the writing skills test as a whole, in favor of the experimental group.

2-There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group pupils on the pre and post administrations of the writing skills test at the level of (0.01), in favor of the post administration.

3- There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group pupils on the pre and the post administrations of the writing test on each writing skill, in favor of the post administration of the test.

## **6. Method of the Study:**

The present study employed the following two methods:

1. The descriptive analytical method: To review the previous literature and studies concerned with blended learning and writing skills.
2. The quasi-experimental method: To measure the effect of blended learning on developing the required writing skills for the 5<sup>th</sup> grade primary school pupils.

## **7. Definition of Terms**

### **Blended Learning**

Jackie Kim stated that Blended learning is a formal education program in which students learn at least in part through the delivery

of online content and instruction with some element of student control over time, pace, and time.

Jusuf Zeqiri et al, (2020) defined Blended learning is a new teaching and learning method. As the name suggests, it is a combination of classroom learning and online learning.

This way of learning gives students some control over the learning process.

Jessica Bowyer (2017) pointed out that Blended learning is a combination of online learning and face-to-face learning.

In the literature, blended learning is also known as “associative learning” or “reversed classroom”.

Out of these definitions, blended learning is face-to-face instruction with online or digital components such as using online videos, what's up group.

### **Writing skills:**

Samina Sarwat, et al, (2021) stated that Writing is a means of communication that involves representing a language in written symbols. This is said to be a very effective skill; various writers put their creative ideas and thoughts into writing.

Ola Mohamed (2015) defined Writing is a cognitive process in which students generate ideas about a certain topic and then convert those ideas into true and meaningful sentences by considering organization, content, use the correct language and mechanism.

Out of these definitions, writing skills are defined operationally in this study as the 5th grade primary school pupils abilities related to expressing ideas through the written word.

## **8.The tool of the study:**

### **The pre - post test**

### **Objectives of the test**

The main aimed of the pre - post test was to identify the writing level of the 5<sup>th</sup> grade and to make sure that students in both the two experimental groups and the control group have the same writing level.

On the other hand, the post-test aimed at measuring the effectiveness of blended learning on developing writing skills for 5<sup>th</sup> grade.

### **Piloting the test**

Piloting the test aimed at estimating the proper time for the writing test. Thus, 29 students were randomly chosen for the pilot study from Orman Smart School.

Question	Type of question	Items	Targeted skills	Score
The first question	Circle the odd one and replace it.	5	using appropriate vocabulary Spelling the words correctly	10
The second question	Choose the correct answer	4	State the main idea correctly. Writing the concluding sentences	4
The third question	Fill in the gaps using the words in the box	4	Use appropriate vocabulary	4
The fourth question	Rearrange the following words to make correct sentence	7	Writing well -formed sentences Applying grammatical rules correctly Using punctuation marks.	7
The fifth question	Rearrange the following paragraph	4	Setting the paragraph elements (beginning, middle, and end)	4
The sixth question	Punctuate the following	6	Using punctuation marks and capitalization rules.	6
The seventh question	Look and write a paragraph of six sentences	1	Using simple appropriate vocabulary. Writing well- formed sentences. Spelling the words correctly. Using punctuation marks, and capitalization rules. Keeping the indentation of the paragraph. State the main idea clearly. Writing the concluding sentence that related to the main idea. Presenting a well -formed idea that related to the topic. Setting the paragraph elements (beginning, middle, and end)	9

### **Validity of the test**

The first version of the writing skills test was submitted to the jury members. They were asked to read the test and validate it. They recommended that all the questions of the writing test should cover all the writing sub- skills tackled in the writing skills checklist.

### **Description of the test**

Blended learning for developing writing skills to primary pupils.

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The final version of the test included 7 questions; each question was designed to examine one, two or three writing skills. The description of the test was shown in table

### **Test specification**

## **The Suggested Framework for using blended learning to Develop EFL Writing Skills** **The Aim of the Modified Units**

The main aim of the modified units was to developing writing and social skills in English language for 5<sup>th</sup> year primary school pupils using blended learning.

### **Instructional Aids**

- Flash cards
- white board –smart board
- School's application ( Ed-world)
- School's what's up group.
- online videos

### **Experimental Procedures of Teaching the Modified Units:**

1- Before the experiment, the researcher administered the writing skills checklist and the writing test to identify the students' level on writing skills before the experiment.

### **Writing sub- skills:**

- Use clear and simple appropriate vocabulary.
- Write well- formed and complete sentences.
- Apply grammatical rules correctly.
- Spell the words correctly.
- Use punctuation marks, and capitalization rules.

- Keep the indentation of the paragraph.
- State the main idea clearly.
- Write the concluding sentence that related to the main idea.
- Present a well -formed idea that related to the topic.
- Set the paragraph elements (beginning, middle, and end).

2-The researcher implemented two orientation sessions with the experimental group only at the beginning of the experiment. In the first orientation session, the researcher identified the students the writing. In the second orientation session, the researcher learned the students how they can use online videos. Also informed the students about blended learning and describe the steps of the experiment.

### **Pre –writing:**

1. The teacher asked the students to watch the online videos on Ed-world. That helped the students to learn the new vocabulary and structure.
2. Inside the classroom the teacher asked the students to answer some questions related to these vocabulary and structure such as circle the odd word and replace it with the correct one, fill in the gaps using the words in the box.

### **Drafting:**

- 3- The teacher asked the students to watch the online videos on Ed-world. That helped the students to write a correct sentence, and punctuate it.
- 4- Inside the classroom the teacher asked the students to rearrange some sentences and punctuate other sentences.

### **Writing:**

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- 5- The teacher asked the student to try to write a paragraph and sent it on what's up group. The teacher correct it for the students
- 6- Inside the classroom the teacher helps the students to write another paragraph and correct it.

## **Statistical Analysis of the obtained data**

### **Answering the questions of the study**

#### **Answering the first sub-question**

The first sub-question of the study was: —What are the required writing skills that should be developed for 5th grade primary School pupils?

In order to answer this question, the researcher designed a writing skills checklist introducer to jury members to determine its validity.

#### **The second sup-question of the study was:**

The sub-question of the study was "What is the effect size of blended learning on developing each of the required writing skills for the 5<sup>th</sup> grade primary School pupils?"

In order to answer this question, the effect size of blended learning on developing each of the required writing skills for the 5<sup>th</sup> grade primary School pupils?

#### **It was large on each writing skill**

Writing skills	$\eta^2$	Effect Size
Language	.9	large
Mechanics	.87	large
Content	.9	large
Organization	.96	large

### **Verifying Hypotheses of the Study:**

The first hypothesis of the present study stated that

“There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group on the post-administration of the writing skills test as a whole, in favor of the experimental group”.

In order to verify this hypothesis, the independent samples t- test was used to compare the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group on the post-administration of the writing skills test. The findings of the independent samples t-test proved to be statistically consistent with the hypothesis.

"t" = (10.215) significant at the (0.01) level

Table (2): shows that there as a difference between the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group on the post-administration of the writing skills test as a whole, in favor of the experimental group

Group	N	Mean	Std .Deviation	t- calculated value	Tabulated T	Significant Level
Experimental	29	42.5	3.28	3.18	10.215	(0.01) level
Control	29	24.2	63.24			

### **Verifying the second Hypothesis**

The second hypothesis of the present study stated

"There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group pupils on the pre and post administrations of the writing skills test at the level of (0.01), in favor of the post administration."

The mean scores of the experimental group students in the pre and post administration of the writing skills test were compared and t-value was calculated according to the following t formula of:

T-test of the mean scores of the pre and post administrations of the test on the experimental group in the writing test

Table: t-test Results Comparing the pre- post administration of the test Mean Scores of the Experimental Group in the Writing Test.

Experimental	Tabulated T	(t) calculated value	Std .Deviation	mean	N	Significant Level
Pre- test	3.552	20.3	49.08	12.8	29	(0.01) level
Post- test			3.28	42.5	29	

As shown in table above, the calculated t-value (20.3) indicated that there was statistically significant difference at (0.01) level between the mean scores of the experimental group on the pre- and post-administrations of the writing test in favor of the post test. Also the mean scores of the experimental group on the post administration bypassed those of the pre administration of the total writing test, the mean scores of the post administration of the test (42.5) with a standard deviation (3.28) while the mean scores of the pre-test (12.8) with a standard deviation (49.08). The estimated t value of the difference between the mean scores of the experimental group's pre and post administrations on the total writing skills test was significant at the level of (0.01) as indicated by its t value (20.3) which was higher than the T-tabled value (3.552) .

### **Discussion of the results**

Based on the results of the present study the verification of all the hypotheses of the study and answering the study's questions. It also proved the achievement of the study's main aim, the effectiveness of blended learning on developing writing in English language using blended learning for 5<sup>th</sup> grade primary stage pupils.

The comparison between the experimental groups and the control group showed the improvement achieved by the experimental group in the required writing skills over the control group in the post – writing test.

### **Conclusions**

Based on the results of the study, the following conclusions were made:

- 1- Using blended learning enhanced writing skills for the 5<sup>th</sup> grade primary School pupils.
- 2- Blended learning presented a unique chance to improve writing for the 5<sup>th</sup> grade primary School pupils.
- 3- Using blended learning helped to change the learning process to focus on the student not the teacher.
- 4- Using blended learning helped the teacher and the students to communicate with each other inside and outside the school.

## Recommendations

Based on the results of this study, the following recommendations are suggested:

- 1- Writing should be valued and emphasized as an act of communication.
- 2- Use blended learning to help students become more involved in the learning process because they learn well when they are actively involved in their learning.
- 3- EFL teachers need support to understand and adapt to new ways and methods of instruction.
- 4- In addition, it is important for teachers to understand the evolution of the role of authority over that of a facilitator or counselor, as required by blended learning.
- 5- We strongly recommend that EFL teachers train themselves to teach writing as a process and not

as a product and apply the writing process to teaching and assessment of writing.

- 6- Organize workshops to familiarize teachers with different teaching/learning techniques and strategies.
- 7- Integrating writing skills with other language skills is highly recommended as it helps learners develop the ability to communicate effectively.
- 8- Students should be given enough opportunities to practice writing on a daily basis using real-life exercises in EFL lessons.
- 9- Students are encouraged to participate in collaborative writing, pair work and group work to promote interaction, discussion, negotiation, coordination, integration, communication, planning, composition and edit.

### **Suggestions for further research:**

Based on the results of this study, the following recommendations for further research are recommended:

- Further research is needed to measure the effect of blended learning on the development of other language skills such as listening, reading, and speaking in elementary school students.
- Further research is needed to investigate the effectiveness of using blended learning to develop writing skills in students at different school levels.
- A program for the development of English writing skills based on blended learning should be provided to elementary school students. EFL teachers should be active

and encourage students to practice writing more in and out of the classroom for fluency.

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