Using engagement-based activities to enhance EFL preparatory stage students' writing skills and motivation

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Abstract

This research aimed at studying the impact of the Engagement-based activities on improving EFL preparatory stage students' writing skills. The participants of this research were (60) first year preparatory stage students at Al- Wady Language School for Girls, Mansoura. The research adopted the quasi- experimental design using two groups: an experimental group (n= 30) and a control one (n= 30). To collect data, the researcher used two instruments: an EFL writing skills test and writing motivation scale. The researcher taught both groups: the experimental group was taught through the Engagement based activities, while the control group was taught through the regular method of teaching. Research results revealed that there were statistically significant differences between the mean score of the experimental group and the control group in the EFL writing skills test in favor of the experimental group. Moreover, the effect size of the Engagement based activities was found to be high. Thus, this research recommended using Engagement based activities as a useful in teaching the writing skills of the English language at different educational stages.

Key words: *writing skills, motivation, engagement-based activities, EFL*

Introduction

Writing skills

Writing is a great challenge whether performed in the mother tongue or in a second or foreign language (L2/FL). Studies in L2 writing show that writing is a complex cognitive activity comprising a number of processes which includes the use of various strategies.

Polkinghorne (2013) described Writing as a major cognitive competence for communicating, organizing, and developing thoughts and ideas. Graham (2003) defined the writing skill as the ability of the person to produce written language that will be expressed by them.

In spite of the importance of writing , studies proved that students are not doing well in writing because they face numbers of difficulties : (Westwood, 2008) Claimed that writing can be an extremely daunting task when the main focus of a writing task is the final product from the very beginning ,writers face many difficulties such as producing a much smaller amount of work than more proficient writers, spending a little time thinking

and planning before they start to write ,usually reluctant to review, edit and polish a first draft ,tend to be preoccupied with the mechanics of writing, and having problems with spelling. Moreover, incomplete understanding of the subject matter makes writing hard.

Writing is a difficult skill for native and nonnative speakers alike because writers must balance multiple topics in their writing such as content, organization, purpose, audience, vocabulary and mechanics which means using the right punctuation, spelling and capitalization. Writing in a second language is even more ordering because it is "a complex, challenging, and difficult process" (Alsamadani, 2010) since writers are expected to produce written samples that are syntactically accurate, semantically acceptable and culturally appropriate. Arab students are not an exception. They face many difficulties writing well- developed paragraphs and essays in English. Since English and Arabic linguistic and orthographic systems differ, it is accepted that Arab learners of English encounter difficulties learning English as a second/foreign language (Alsamadani, 2010). They usually transfer the stylistic features of Arabic as their first language. For example, they tend to write long sentences with coordinating conjunctions (Al-Khatib, 2001; Oshima & Hougeas cited in Almehmadi, 2012), repeat themselves and argue through presentation and elaboration (Johnstone as cited in Almehmadi, 2012). They often talk around the topic and repeat phrases before stating the main points (Dweik as cited in Alsamadani, 2010).

Writing approaches

Khater (2002) and Raimes (2003) tackled the issue of writing approaches according to different areas as follows: -

1. The product approaches

According to Badger & White (2000) outlining the text, planning and collecting the ideas are neglected by the product approach. According to Hyland (2003) indicated that there are four stages for the product approach: familiarization, controlled writing, guided and free writing. Silva & Leki (2004) mention that the negative effect of product writing is that it does not pay attention to writing purposes or readers.

2. The process approach

Process approach to the teaching of English Writing has been supported in contrast with the traditional product-oriented method of teaching writing, and has been generally accepted and applied by English teachers in their classroom teaching of English writing, though controversy

occurs occasionally among researchers concerning which is better, the process approach or the product method.

Silva (2003: 28) presents an overview of ESL (English as a Second Language) writing throughout time, focuses on the four most influential approaches, controlled composition, current-traditional rhetoric, the process approach, and English for academic purposes. In his article he refers to the process approach as a "non-linear, exploratory and generative process whereby writers discover and reformulate their ideas as they attempt to approximate meaning".

Mucie (2000) viewed writing as a many drafts process which consists of thinking of writing (pre-writing); writing a first draft with an emphasis on content (to discover author's ideas); second and third drafts to revise ideas and their connections. Readers ' feedback and these drafts press the writer completely through the writing process on to the final product. Therefore, feedback is important to this process. In addition, Min and Li (2007) indicated that the process writing refers to learning to write by writing. In other words, concentrating on the writing as a process rather than a final product. The main aim of process writing is the ability to write. Nasir,Naqvi and Bhamani (2013)indicated that the process of writing looks like a road map through which students actions and thoughts can be monitored right from the beginning till the end.

Nunan (2001) clearly stated that there are different of the process approach which is from the product one. The process approach puts the main focus on the steps involved in creating a piece of work, whereas the product approach focuses on writing tasks which the learner imitates and copies teacher supplied models. Process writing allows for the fact that no text is perfect, but by using producing, discussing and reworking successive drafts of a text, the writer may be close to perfection.

3. The genre approach

Burns (2001) explained that the genre approach depends on social theories and its result that pupils may benefit from the various types of texts. Similarly, Harmer (2001) determined genres as writing for different purposes through different contexts such as poems, seminars and lectures.
Badger & White (2000) mentioned that there are similarities between this approach and the product approach in their concern with linguistic knowledge, the main interest of the genre approach is to write about various social contexts, they also explained that the genre approach has three stages (teacher introduces to the text, the teacher helps pupils to form the text, and finally produces it).

Studies related to developing writing skills

Mester*(*2011). Investigated the effect of the instructional strategy known as writer's workshop on students' writing achievement. Writer's workshop is an instructional strategy involving daily writing and systematic lessons. The research question guiding this study examined the writing achievement of students taught through writer's workshop versus students taught through the county's writing curriculum which utilizes journal writing on a regular basis but does not involve systematic lessons or daily writing.

Tsiriotakis IK, et al. (2016). Implemented a writing instructional model so as to investigate its effects on the writing anxiety levels of English Foreign Language learners. The study was conducted with 177 participants, who were administered the Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory. This study supports the effectiveness of strategy-based procedural facilitative writing environments that foster cognitive apprenticeship, so as to enhance language skill development and reduce feelings of Foreign Language writing anxiety.

Engagement

It is difficult to define engagement as it is not a simple construct. Willms (2003) used the term engagement to refer to the extent to which students identify with and value schooling outcomes, and participate in academic and nonacademic school activities. Children who are engaged show behavioral involvement in learning activities connected with a positive emotional tone.

The consequences of not engaging students in learning are reportedly dire (Prensky, 2001; Tapscott, 1998; Gilbert, 2007; Willms, 2003, p. 56; Claxton, 2007). "Some educationists consider engaging disengaged pupils to be one of the biggest challenges facing educators, as between 25% (Willms, 2003) and over 66% (Cothran & Ennis, 2000) of students are considered to be disengaged" (as cited in Harris, 2008, p. 57).

Kuh (2009 (a), 683) has defined student engagement as "the time and effort students devote to activities that are empirically linked to desired outcomes of college and what institutions do to induce students to participate in these activities (Kuh, 2001, 2009)." Coates (**2007**, 122) defined engagement as a "broad construct intended to encompass salient academic as well as certain non-academic aspects of the student experience" including "active learning, participation in challenging academic activities, formative communication with academic staff, involvement in enriching educational experiences, and feeling legitimated and supported by university learning communities."

Engagement is an important predictor of success. The more students engage themselves in academic activities, the more they will be successful (Harboura, Lauren, Chris & Lindsay, 2015). The fact that students focus on assignments and subjects means that teachers have achieved their intended purpose and students are actively engaged in the learning process. An engaged student dedicates himself to the subject and performs with enthusiasm and care during the learning process because he attributes a value to it. Even when faced with challenges while doing the assignment, a student continues to study and finds a personal value and meaning in his assignment (Schlechty, 2002).

Student engagement recognizes the complexity of engagement beyond the domains of cognition, behavior, emotion or affect, and in doing so encompasses the historically situated individual within their contextual variables (such as personal and familial circumstances) that at every moment influences how engaged an individual (or group) is in their learning. This paper's significance is that it proposes to analyze which type of motivation—intrinsic or extrinsic—is more aligned to and related with authentic student engagement as defined by Schlechty (2001, 2011) where the "…task, activity, or work the student is assigned or encouraged to undertake is associated with a result or outcome that has clear meaning and relatively immediate value to the student" (Schlechty, 2011).

Dunleavy (2008) & Harris (2011), define three types of student engagement:**Behavioral**: value of schooling outcomes, participation in extracurricular and nonacademic school activities. Students who have high levels of behavioral engagement are effortful and persistent, and actively involved in their learning (Guthrie, Wigfield, & You, 2012).

Academic –cognitive: time on task, homework completion, response to challenges in learning, cognition and strategic learning. Cognitive engagement is an investment in learning, the ability to self-regulate, and the ability to be strategic (Fredricks et al., 2004). A student who is cognitively engaged has an investment in his/her own learning, has a desire to go above and beyond what is asked of him or her, and is not opposed to taking on a challenge.

Social – psychological: Willms, Friesen, Milton (2009, p. 7) defined engagement: Social Engagement is a sense of belonging and participation in school life. sense of belonging relationships. perception of capacity for success of competence, motivation, need for choice and autonomy.

The importance of engagement

Balfanz, Herzog, and Mac Iver (2007) found that 60% of students who dropped out of high school could have been predicted with early warning signs at the middle school level. Although certain risk factors can give schools an idea of the particular needs of students, the path to school dropout is not entirely clear or predictable.

Bryson and Hand (2007) found that students are more likely to engage in school if their teachers engage with them and the materials being taught. Teachers who are engaged are those who show enthusiasm, are concerned with students' success, and provide academic support for students.

Another important benefit of student engagement is that students who are engaged in school are less likely to fall victim to potential adolescent troubles. For example, O'Farrell and Morrison (2003) have suggested that student engagement protects against behaviors that are not a part of the school environment, such as substance abuse, risky sexual behaviors, and delinquency

Learning engagement is essential for effective learning; as a result, students who engage in learning activities are more likely to consider their learning effective than those not engaging in such activities, regard – less of the medium.

Studies Related to engagement

Many studies investigated how to increase students' engagement through new techniques. Some of these studies are illustrated as follows:

(Brewster & Fager 2000; Marks 2000). Psychologically, motivated learners are more inclined to pursue their own academic or personal objectives because they are organically motivated by curiosity, enthusiasm, and enjoyment. The child who is engaged also exhibits the traits of focus, investment, passion, and effort. The students in the opening example show engagement by their curiosities, efforts, and tenacity. They can be regarded as active and focused. However, they are also learning with their hearts, minds, and even bodies.

Monem, R. (2013). Discussed the relationship between interest and metacognitive functions and its effect on engaging students in the writing process. Results indicate students who are interested in their writing activities engage in metacognitive strategies, remain focused, and complete their tasks.

Lo& Hyland (2007) describes an action research project which involved the implementation of a new ESL writing programmed designed to

enhance students' motivation and engagement in Hong Kong by taking more account of the young learners' own socio-cultural context. The study examined both the students' and teacher–researcher's perspectives on the new programmed and looked at its impact on students' engagement and motivation and their writing performance. The result: this study showed the strong relationship between writing, engagement and motivation.

Weldin (2001) observed that there is the relationship between students' level of engagement and the quality of their EFL written work attending to teachers, following instructions, participations in learning activities and completing the tasks is strong.

Ketonen, E. E., Malmberg, L-E., Salmela-Aro, K., Muukkonen, H., Tuominen, H., & Lonka, K. (2019). Investigated the dynamic nature of students' daily experiences and general study engagement using intra-individual assessment. Specific value and situational emotions were examined, as well as whether first-year study engagement would moderate this association during the first two years of studies. This investigation focused on the motivation and involvement of EFL college students during English vocabulary learning activities. Students in both years were questioned about the significance of their current activity, as well as their positive and negative feelings, five times a day for two weeks. Finally, the findings indicated that overall study engagement, measured at the beginning of the first academic year, predicted between-person differences in these within-person relationships both years.

Wang et al. (2015). self-determination theory is used. The study examined the effects of task motivation and engagement with vocabulary learning activities as well as overall English learning motivation on college students. Sample: At a university in northern Taiwan, 48 English majors consented to take part in the study. They were largely 18 to 20-year-old. The participants had an average of 11 years of formal English teaching at the time of the study. The Vocabulary Levels Test is a popularly used standardized vocabulary test. the outcome Due to the customized nature of vocabulary learning, the impact of autonomy on task motivation was significant. Learners' independence can considerably improve

Motivation

Motivation is defined as "some kind of internal drive which pushes someone to do things in order to achieve something" (Harmer, 2001, p.51).

According to Ryan and Deci (2000), to be motivated means to be moved to do something. A person who feels no impetus or inspiration to act

is thus characterized as unmotivated, whereas motivated person who is activated toward the end. (p. 54).

Motivation is an essential element of successful language acquisition in general and writing in particular. Do¨rnyei (2001). Motivation is also influenced by learners' sense of agency and feelings of mastery and control over the learning activity and their interest in it. According to Noels (2001), three psychological needs have to be met in order to enhance motivation: ''(1) a sense of competency achieved through seeking out and overcoming challenges; (2) autonomy; (3) relatedness—being connected to or esteemed by others belonging to a larger social whole'' (p. 54). According to Polkinghorne (2013) motivating young pupils may be difficult through traditional methods. To help students become life-long writers, teachers can use new strategies, techniques, activities, differentiated instruction and programs to help promote writing. Pupils are impacted by visually seeing the writing and manipulating items accordingly. Pupils enjoy the games, applications, and website activities, through teaching students how they could compose writing in a fun way, incorporating writing samples and modeling effective writing.

Learners are more motivated and engaged when writing is used as a means for cognitive and social development, especially learners in elementary school eager to share their writings with peers. It is so crucial to control learners' writing process to obtain from this interaction and sharing to keep the management of the writing process. Children are already motivated naturally when he/she starts learning. However, because writing and learning are complicated, unsuccessful writing techniques may change to ready for writing using an extrinsic motivation tool. (McCormick and Busching, 2001).

Motivation and language learning

The importance of motivation in enhancing foreign language is clear. Brown (2000) and Gardner (2006) said that motivation is one of the important elements' influences in the success of the language learning.

Dornei (2001) believed that motivation facilitates the process of acquiring language for learners. Most studies enhanced the connection between the level of learners' motivation and their achievement. Crystal (2003) and Dornei (2005) assured that learners need a reason to continue their studies.

Studies related to motivation

Dörnyei (2002) investigated how Hungarian learners' internal and external task motivation was constructed using oral argumentative tasks,

and confirmed that there was a strong relationship between language variables and situation-specific variables such as attitude to the task and the course. In particular, Dörnyei (2002) illustrated that there was a significant relationship between the interlocutor and learners' motivation and linguistic variables. In addition, Dörnyei (2002) focused on the interlocutor's "motivational disposition" as a major factor affecting learners' appraisal and action control processes.

Bahous, et al. (2011) investigated that using some motivation strategies in the classroom can help students, adopt more positive attitudes and become more motivated in the learning process. Sample: We chose to interview thirty students attending the different English language courses in the English as Foreign Language (EFL) Program at the University: Semi-structured interviews were conducted individually and face-to-face. Coordinators were asked to select six students at random from each English course (5 courses in all) to be interviewed. The majority of the students who answered are between the ages of 18 and 21. Of the thirty interviewed students, twenty students are majoring in business, three are majoring in graphic design, two in education, two in computer science, one in engineering, one in pharmacy, and one in communication arts. The result: students have proved to be effective in their learning.

Wang, et al. (2015) investigated EFL college learners' motivation and engagement during English vocabulary learning tasks. By adopting self-determination theory. The study looked into the impact of autonomy on college students' task motivation and engagement with vocabulary learning tasks and their general English learning motivation. Sample: Forty-eight English majors at a university in northern Taiwan volunteered to participate in the study. They were mostly freshmen and sophomores whose ages ranged from 18 to 20. At the time of research, the participants had on average 11 years of formal English instruction. A widely used standardized vocabulary test, the Vocabulary Levels Test. The result: The impact of autonomy on task motivation was significant probably due to the individualized nature of vocabulary learning. learners' autonomy can greatly enhance their motivation in completing vocabulary learning tasks.

Sanad, H. (2014)   emphasized oneself- regulation and self-regulated strategy development as an instructional approach designed to enhance EFL learners' strategic behavior, knowledge, and motivation, which in turn may affect their EFL writing skills. The paper depends on the descriptive method that covers the theoretical background of using the SRSD in developing EFL writing skills. Furthermore, the researcher

depended on her experience in teaching reading and writing to Saudi college students and the results of their achievement tests. The paper tried to investigate different definitions of self-regulation and metacognition as its main aspect, beside different self-regulated strategies.

Zhang and Gue (2013) analyzed the relationships between English writing and domin-specific motivation and self – efficacious of Chinese EFL learners. Participants were 66 Chinese EFL from two grades. It was found that the students were largely not self –efficacious with respect to English writing although they had a relatively high motivation for English writing. The result of correction analysis indicated that English writing motivation, self –efficacy and English writing proficiency were positively and significantly correlated with each other in addition to having the important effect on teaching EFL writing.

Khodashenas, Amouzegar, Farahani, Hasheminasab and Kazemian (2013) stress on the role of motivation in EFL learning by reviewing some of the most effective and significant research. The study dealt with the meaning of motivation from different views, and the scope of motivation within the context of language learning. It showed the relationship between gender differences, learning strategies, and materials with the concept of motivation. Finally, it was concluded that motivation has an effective role in all aspects of language learning in general and in developing language skills, specially reading and writing.

Pilot study

In order to provide evidence for the problem of the study, the researcher conducted a pilot study to determine first year preparatory

The following tables show the result of this pilot study.

Table (1) Writing sub-skills test:

Writing sub-skills	Mean score	Std. Deviation	Percentage
Punctuation and capitalization	1.83	0.68	18%
Grammar	1.33	1.35	13 %
Vocabulary	1.42	0.41	14 %
Spelling	1.64	0.40	16%
Coherence and cohesion	0.83	0.48	5 %
Total	6.93	3.34	

Table (1) shows the mean score of the writing test is (6.9) that is considered an indication that the students need to improve their writing Skills (vocabulary – grammar - spelling – coherence and cohesion).

Table (2) shows the results of the motivation scale as follows:

Statements	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree
1-I'm a good writer.	15 %	60 %	25 %
2- I use correct grammar, spelling and punctuation in my writing.	45 %	20 %	35 %
3- I am able to clearly express my ideas in writing. It is easy for me to write a good paragraph or a letter.	55 %	20 %	25 %
4-I like classes that require a lot of writing.	65 %	10 %	25 %
5-Becoming a better writer is important to me.	30 %	15 %	55 %

Results of the motivation scale show that 1st year preparatory stage pupils 'motivation towards writing needs to be enhanced.

Statement of the problem

Based on the previous literature review, related studies, and the results of the pilot study, it is apparent that 1st grade preparatory stage pupils' writing skills need to be enhanced. Students lack the ability of using punctuation and capitalization (mean = 18%), they do not use grammar properly (mean = 13%) and their writing need improvement in coherence and cohesion (mean =5%). Students' low level in writing seem to demotivate them to be engaged in writing tasks. Therefore, the researcher proposed using engagement-based activities to enhance EFL preparatory stage students' writing skills and motivation.

Questions of the research

The study is trying to answer the following questions:

1- What are the engagement activities appropriate for 1st year preparatory students for developing their writing and motivation?

2-What is the impact of using engagement activities on improving for 1st year preparatory students' writing skills?

3-What is the impact of using engagement activities on improving for 1st year preparatory students' motivation?

Hypotheses of the research

In order to answer the questions of the study, the following hypotheses were posed.

1- There is a statistically significant difference at the 0.05 level in the mean score of the experimental and the control group on the EFL writing post-test in favor of the experimental group.

2- There is a statistically significant difference at the 0.05 level in the mean score of the pre-post application of the EFL writing test in favor of the post administration.

3. There is a statistically significant difference at the 0.05 level in the mean score of the experimental and the control group on the motivation scale in favor of the experimental group.

4- There is a statistically significant difference at the 0.05 level in the mean score of the pre-post administration of the motivation in favor of the post administration.

Purposes of the research

There are four purposes of this study:

1. Determining the most appropriate engagement based on activities for 1st year preparatory students to enhance their writing and motivation.

2. Investigating the impact of using engagement activities in the EFL writing skills for the 1st year preparatory students**.**

Significance of the research:

This research was significant for a number of reasons:

1-Enhancing writing skills among 1st year preparatory students.

2-Developing the appropriate engagement activities for 1st year preparatory students.

3-Providing them with engagement and motivation activities to improve the students' performance in writing skills.

Delimitations of the research:

The present study will be delimited to:

1. A sample of the second-year preparatory students at Al Wady Language School for Girls.

2. Some motivation and Engagement activities to develop EFL writing skills through units in the prescribed textbook close up.

3. Some EFL writing skills assigned in the teacher's guide.

Methodology:

Participants

The participants of the study were sixty -first year preparatory stage pupils from "Al Wady Language School" in Mansoura city. The participants were divided into two groups (control and experimental group) each group consisted of thirty (N= 30) pupils. It was hypothesized that first grade preparatory stage pupils' performance in writing and their motivation towards writing would be improved through such new engagement activities.

Design of the research

This study adopted a quasi-experimental design using two first year preparatory school students. Two groups were selected from Al Wady Language School for Girls. One group of 30 students was the experimental group and received training in engagement-based activities. The other group of 30 students served as a control group and was taught through the regular teaching method.
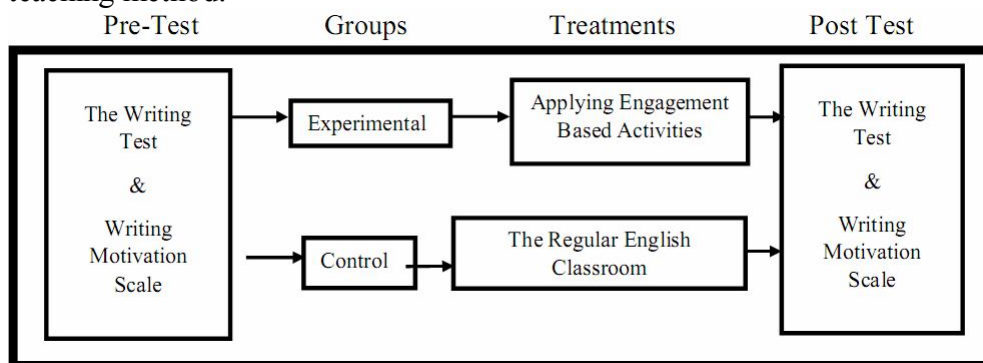

Figure (1) *The quasi-experimental design of the research*

Instruments of the research:

For meeting the purposes of this study, the following instruments will be used:

1- pre and post writing Test to assess 1st year prep stage students' EFL writing skills; An analytic rubric will be designed to score the test.
2- A motivation scale for assessing students' motivation.

Definition of terms:

Writing skills:

In this study, writing is a mean of expressing one's own feeling, ideas and thoughts in a written way. Basic sub skills and processes of writing include spelling, a rich knowledge of vocabulary, mastery of the conventions of punctuation, capitalization, word usage, and coherence and cohesion.

Motivation:

For the purpose of this research the operational definition of motivation is

Motivation stimulating pupils' intrinsic and extrinsic desire to write through the use of interactive activities and games via engagement activities. Engagement' activities motivate students to be actively involved in the writing lessons

Engagement:

For the purpose of this research, engagement makes students active and indulged in learning to improve their writing skills through some activities.

Results and Discussion

Results

The results of the research are statistically analyzed in terms of its hypotheses and they are discussed in the light of the theoretical background and related studies. Research results were reported as follows:

Verifying the first hypothesis:

The first hypothesis stated that *"There is a statistically significant difference at the 0.05 level in the mean score of the experimental and the control group on the EFL writing post- test in favor of the experimental group"*.

Table (3) reports the results of the t-test comparing the pupils' mean score in the writing sub-skills post writing test and the overall performance for the experimental and control group.

Table (3)Comparing the writing performance of the control and the experimental groups

Skills	The group	N.of cases	Means	S. D	df	t.value	Sig.
Coherence	Control	30	2.56	0.44		-2.96	0.01
	Experimental	30	2.85	0.26			
Cohesion	Control	30	2.18	0.60		-4.17	0.01
	Experimental	30	2.73	0.38			
Organization	Control	30	4.41	0.93		-10.44	0.01
	Experimental	30	6.80	0.82			
Grammar	Control	30	3.66	0.47	58	-6.54	0.01
	Experimental	30	4.66	0.68			
Vocabulary	Control	30	2.16	0.47		-4.07	0.01
	Experimental	30	2.65	0.43			
Mechanics	Control	30	2.88	0.62		-8.65	0.01
	Experimental	30	4.45	0.76			
All Test	Control	30	17.88	2.38		-10.72	0.01
	Experimental	30	24.15	2.13			

Table (3) reveals statistically significant difference at the .01 level in the EFL writing performance of the control and the experimental group. Favoring the experimental group on the total test score (m= 24.1compared to 17.8).

A closer look at the table indicate that the experimental group outperformed the control group in all writing sub-skills. Notably, the experimental group best performance was in the organizational skill (m =6.8 compared to m =4.4 for the control group), grammar (m=4.6 compared to 3.6), and mechanics (m=4.4 compared to 2.8).

These results can be ascribed to the effect of the engagement – based activities used to teach writing skills to the experimental group.

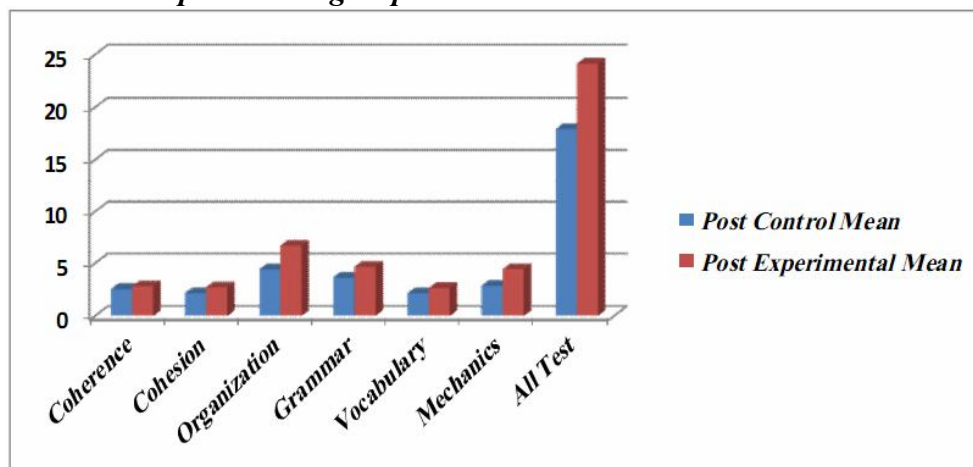*Figure (2) Comparing the writing performance of the control and the experimental groups*

Figure (2) shows that the significant difference was in favor of the experimental

group which indicates the effectiveness of the engagement-based activities on pupils' writing skills. In other words, the experimental group pupils outperformed the control group pupils in EFL writing skills (coherence, organization, mechanics of writing, vocabulary, and grammar).

In the light of these results, the experimental group showed a clear superiority over the control one in the total score of the test. This means that the engagement activities had enhanced writing learning more than traditional method.

2-verifying the second hypothesis

"There is a statistically signifcant difference at the 0.05 level in the main score of the pre-post administration of the EFL writing test in favor of the post adminstration"

To test the second hypothesis, the t-test for paired samples was used to compare the difference between the mean score of the Experimental group pupils in the writing test before and after administering the study

intervention (using engagement-based activities) to determine the effect of the study intervention on their writing sub-skills.

Table (4) *Comparing the writing performance of pre – test and the post – test on the EFL writing skills test*

Skills	administration	N.of cases	Means	S.D	df	t.value	Sig.
Coherence	pre – test	30	1.51	0.48		-15.83	0.01
	post – test	30	2.85	0.26			
Cohesion	pre – test	30	1.20	0.40		-16.02	0.01
	post – test	30	2.73	0.38			
Organization	pre – test	30	2.45	1.14		-24.88	0.01
	post – test	30	6.80	0.82			
Grammar	pre – test	30	2.50	0.78	29	-16.97	0.01
	post – test	30	4.66	0.68			
Vocabulary	pre – test	30	1.71	0.25		-11.88	0.01
	post – test	30	2.65	0.43			
Mechanics	pre – test	30	2.01	0.60		-14.84	0.01
	post – test	30	4.45	0.76			
All Test	pre – test	30	11.40	2.35		-45.81	0.01
	post – test	30	24.15	2.13			

Results in Table (4) revels statistically significant differences at the .01 level in the EFL writing performance of the experimental group in the pre and post skills test (m=24.1 compared to 2.1) The table indicates that the experimental group outperformed the control group in all writing sub skills. These results could be attributed to the implementation of the engagement-based activities which was effective in improving each writing sub-skill.

Figure (3) Comparing the writing performance of pre – test and the post – test on the EFL writing skills test
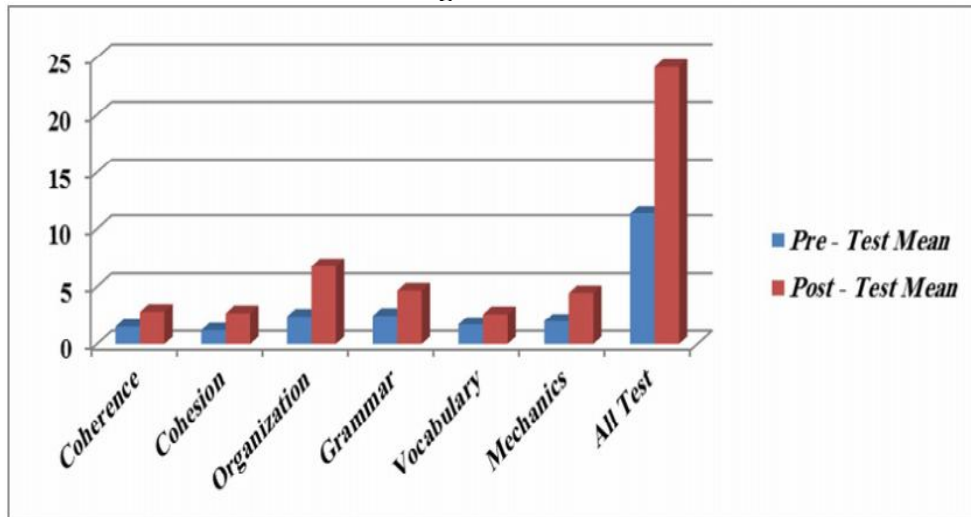
This figure shows **(3)** shows that the significant difference was in favor of the experimental group which indicates the effectiveness of the engagement-based activities on pupils' writing skills. In other words, the experimental group pupils in the pre-post outperformed the control group pupils in EFL writing skills (coherence, organization, mechanics of writing, vocabulary, and grammar).

In the light of these results, the experimental group in the pre- post showed a clear superiority over the control one in the total score of the test. This means that the engagement activities had enhanced writing learning more than traditional method.

Estimating the effect size (η2):

In order to determine the effect size of the engagement -based activities on the pupil's writing performance Eta square was used to To calculate the effect size, the researcher used the effect size scale (η2). According to and Hatab and Sadiq (1991: 442) evaluate the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable the rule is as follows:

1- IF $\eta^2 \geq (15\%)$ then Effect size is High

2- IF $(6\%) \leq \eta^2 < (15\%)$ then Effect size is Medium

3- IF $\eta^2 < (6\%)$ then Effect size is Low

Table (5): Values of (η^2) and the effect size of the treatment on writing skills

Coherence	**0.89**	High
Cohesion	**0.89**	High
Organization	**0.95**	High
Grammar	**0.90**	High
Vocabulary	**0.83**	High
Mechanics	**0.88**	High
Total Test	**0.98**	**High**

$$\eta^2 = \frac{t^2}{t^2 + df} \quad *$$

It is clear from the table (5) the strength of the effect of the activities on the total score of the writing test and its sub-skill, skills of the test ranged between (0.83, 0.98). the total effect size was (0.98). This means that the engagement -based activities were responsible for 83-95% of the improvement of the experimental group writing sub skills and 98% of the total writing performance.

3-verifying the Third hypothesis:

"There is a statistically significant difference at the 0.05 level in the mean score of the experimental and the control group on the motivation scale in favor of the experimental group".

Table (6) *Comparing the performance of control and the experimental groups on the Motivation scale*

Scale	The group	N.of cases	Means	S.D	Df	t.Value	Sig.
All Scale	Control	30	27.9	2.12	58	4.88	0.01 Sig.
	Experimental	30	29.93	0.82			

It is clear from the results of the table (6) that there are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the students of the experimental and control groups in the total score of the motivation scale in the post application in favor of the experimental group (highest mean = 29.93), where the value of (T = 4.88) is statistically significant when Significance level (0.01) and degree of freedom (58). These results agree with the third hypothesis or confirm its validity. The researcher attributes these differences.

Figure (4) The mean scores of the experimental and control groups in the post administration on the scale of motivation as a whole
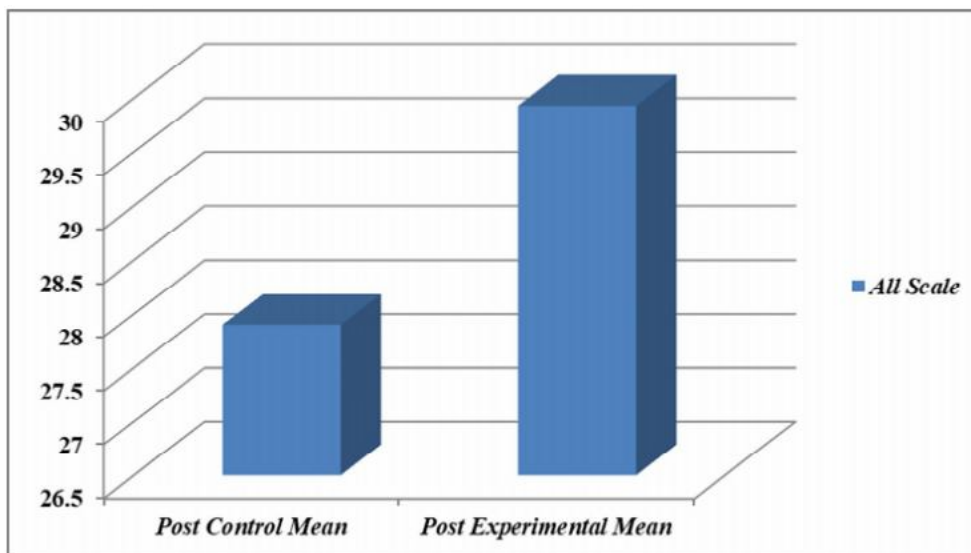

Figure (4) The increase in pupils' motivation after administering the activities of engagement mainly as a result of mixing the cognitive and social factors in which they were visually stimulated and often have great hand-eye coordination as a result of the several interactive activities that they performed during the sessions.

4-verifying the Forth hypothesis

   "There is a statistically significant difference at the 0.05 level in the mean score of the pre-post administration of the motivation in favor of the post administration".

Table (7) *t- Test of the Experimental group comparing the pre – test and the post – test in overall Total score of Motivation Scale*

| Scale	administration	N.of cases	Means	S.D	df	t.Value	Sig.	η2	Effect size
All Scale	pre – test	30	27.6	1.905	29	6.164	0.01 Sig.	0.567	High
	post –test	30	29.93	0.828					

It is clear from the results of the table (7) that there are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group students in the pre and post administration in the total score of the motivation scale in favor of the post administration (highest mean = 29.93), where the value of (t = 6.164) is statistically significant when Significance level (0.01) and degree of freedom (29). The size of

the effect of the experimental treatment (the engagement-based activities) on the total score of the motivation scale was (0.567), which indicates that 56.7% of the variance of the total score of the motivation scale is due to the effect of the experimental treatment, and the rest is due to other factors, and this indicates the size of the effect Great interpretation of the researcher. These results agree with the second hypothesis or confirm its validity. The researcher attributes these differences to implement using engagement-based activities. These results are illustrated in the following figures.

Figure *(5): The mean scores of the experimental group in the two administrations, pre and post, on the motivation scale*
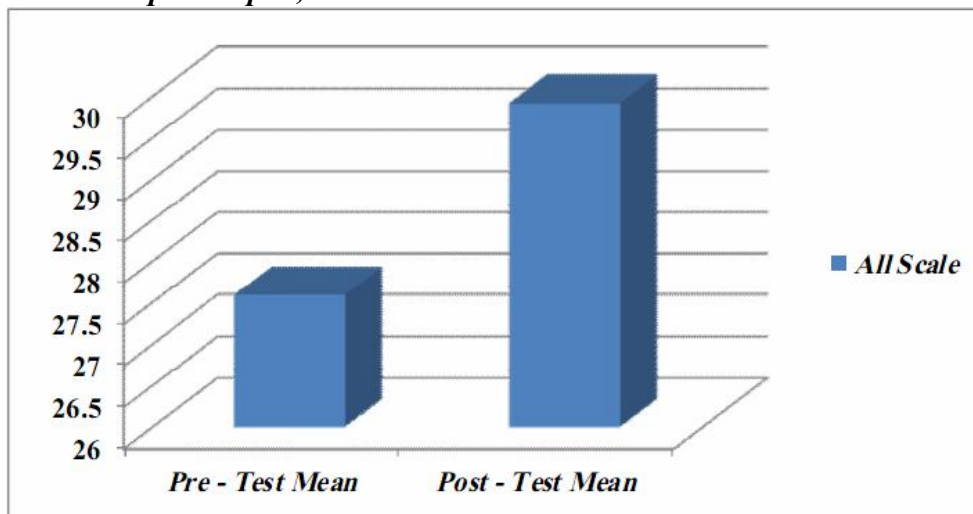
Figure (6) The impact size of the treatment on the motivation scale
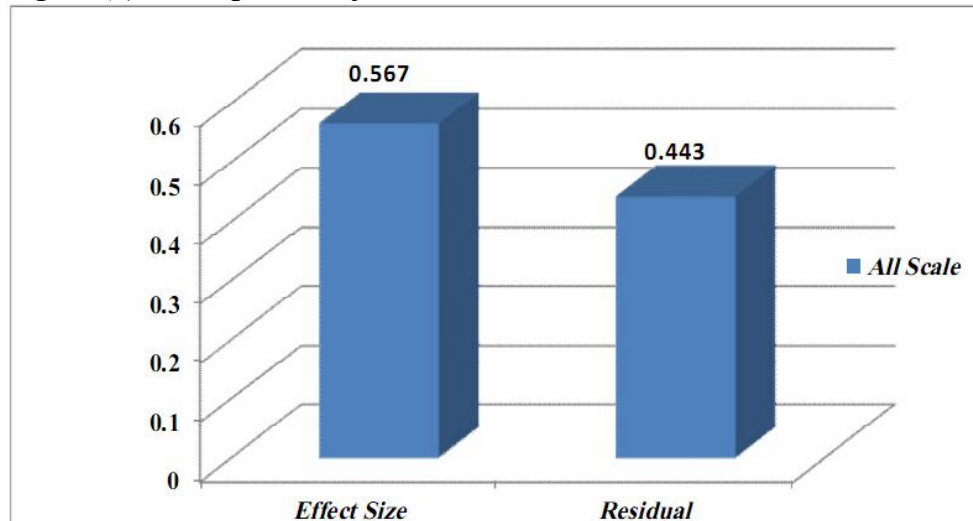
Discussion of Results

As a result of using the engagement-based activities the following points about the experimental group were discussed:

Improved Writing Skills: engagement was found as an instrumental strategy in raising participants' writing levels and their motivation, provided varied opportunities for interaction and discussion in the classroom than other means of traditional teaching. It provided the researcher with many facilities that were simply not possible with the traditional teaching.

Increased Interaction, enjoyment and higher motivation of the participants during instruction process. Prep 1 at Al Wady Language School was enhanced by the element of surprise that Engagement based activities can bring to a lesson as it left pupils wondering what will happen next. It contributed to making lessons "more enjoyable and fun," which in turn increased motivation. It provided directed learning; pupils took control of their own learning and were actively engaged in the learning process, where teachers were considered as the facilitators of learning. Pupils were active and motivated during the program implementation because they thought about every step they did and reflected on these thoughts in solving writing problems through interactive activities.

Similar results were conveyed by Lo& Hyland (2007) this study showed benefits in terms of increased motivation and engagement, in general the students' language accuracy and organization scores. Therefore, similar future projects could provide more scaffolding to help students to organize their texts and improve their language accuracy. While it is important to avoid restrictive guidelines like those of the traditional program it appears that these young writers could have benefited from more input and familiarization tasks (Hyland, 2003, p. 125) which focused on language and text organization.

Participants made positive comments. For example, some of them mentioned that "having the opportunity to practice engagement activities helped them in organizing and conveying thoughts more quickly". Others said that "through using the engagement activities they were able to gather ideas and come up with a plan to guide their writing".

On the other hand, the researcher noticed that the participants in the control group were not paying attention in the writing lesson, and they only cared about the exams' score. Moreover, there was not much interaction between the pupils and the researcher. The teacher gave them the main idea to write about and they just followed their teacher's instructions and models of writing she provided. This in turn did not help them to improve their writing skills.

The literature on engagement and writing revealed that it supported new opportunities for reexamining how pupils learn. By using engagement, pupils could learn in a relaxed learning environment. They could write, think, debrief, and assess their writing through activities. Really, engagement is one of the amazing ways for learners to be good writers from the beginning. Pupils' writing was impacted by visually seeing the writing and manipulating items. Their handwriting was perfect and writing skills such as use of grammar and vocabulary improved based on writing samples.

The previous results and discussion indicated that EFL 1st prep grade pupils' writing skills (coherence – cohesion – organization – vocabulary-grammar- mechanics of writing) had been improved. The experimental treatment (engagement- based activities program) was effective in improving pupils' writing skills and their motivation. The high increase in the Motivation level in the experimental group post-administration was mainly due to employing specific activities. Also, the engagement activities made the pupils enjoy learning and have tendencies towards writing and expressing their thoughts. The effective use of engagement-based activities resulted in a collaborative productive and interactive platform that improved the writing process and supports

the social constructivism of learners. engagement provided a setting where pupils were collaborating together and ideas with activity.

With reference to the results of the study, the following points were concluded:

Extending the practice of EFL writing skills outside the regular classroom made a great develop in students' level and increased their motivation. One of the best ways for students to practice writing effectively is to virtually communicate with their colleagues and teacher. It is also significant for students to be responsible for their own learning. If students practice extra writing outside the regular classroom, they will gain more vocabularies and knowledge which enable them to write in any topic. Moreover, when students search for information about a specific topic, take notes, and discuss it with their colleagues and the teacher, they develop their own independence and build their confidence. They became active, autonomous, and motivated learners. All of the mentioned positives can be achieved through adopting Engagement based activities as a mean of communication outside the school. Learning virtually can overcome students' lack of practice, difficulties in grasping ideas, and obstacles in expressing their thoughts correctly.

The study proved that Engagement based activities is effective in attracting students' attention and activating their knowledge. It was proved

that Engagement based activities also supported involving students actively in practicing EFL writing skills; it allowed students to discuss information, exchange ideas, actively interact with the text, write in different kinds of topics, and dependently search for extra information and gain knowledge.

Moreover, when students search for information about a specific topic, take notes, and discuss it with their colleagues and the teacher, they develop their own independence and build their confidence. They became active, autonomous, and self-directed learners.

The researcher benefited from the review of literature and related studies in formulating the hypotheses of the research in addition to determining the suitable design and instrument.

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