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**Formative Assessment as a Basis for Promoting the Writing Skill:
A Case Study of First Year LMD Students at the University of Ibn Khaldoun
-Tiaret-**

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to my parents, my sisters «Nacéra, Fatima, Soumia, and Nadia», my brothers «Abdelkadeur and Hamza», my soul mates «Sabrina and Yasmine», and my departed uncle «HEDNA Achour».

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Abstract

One of the major aims of higher education is to enable all the students with different learning backgrounds and multiple levels master English, which has become the medium language of international communication, science and technology. Therefore, new trends in the educational arena have advocated the importance of fostering quality learning that does not only provide learners with the adequate knowledge, but also with the essential skills that help them pursue their learning outside the class setting. In this respect, the educational system overlooks the significance of developing the writing skill through the inclusion of the practices of formative assessment, which are believed to have great undiscovered potentials on the process of learning as well as teaching this productive skill. This research tends to explore the best ways that assist the teachers of writing in integrating the practices of formative assessment in the daily sessions of the writing skill so that the students are informed about their writings and they are able to take steps towards improvement. Furthermore, it aims at involving them in assuming responsibility of their own learning so that they would be proficient autonomous writers. This dissertation is composed of four chapters. The first chapter is devoted to highlight the situation of teaching writing to the first year LMD students at the University of Ibn Khaldoun –Tiaret- as well as the demands and challenges of learning this skill. It ends with a description of the research tools to conduct the research. The second chapter explores the milestones of formative assessment and provides a thorough description of the different practices of formative assessment as well as their functions. The third chapter reports the results of the three data collection methods and at the same time it provides the analysis of the obtained data. Finally, the last chapter provides some suggestions and pedagogical implications about conducting successful writing sessions, implementing the practices of formative assessment to promote the writing skill and advancing the importance of reflecting on teaching practices in every writing class.

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

Term	Explanation
ACT	Assessment College Test
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ELL	English Language Learners
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ESL	English as a Second Language
ESP	English for Specific Purposes
IELTS	International English Language Test System
L02	Second Language
LMD	Licence Master Doctorat
MELAB	Michigan English Language Assessment Battery
NCTE	National Council of Teachers of English
QIA	Quality Improvement Agency
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
TOEFL	Test of English as a Foreign Language
ZPD	Zone of Proximate Development

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General Introduction

General Introduction

One of the fundamental aims of higher education is preparing students for real life. Hence, higher education equips them with the necessary assets and helps them develop skills and strategies they need inside and outside university. Similarly, having a good mastery of English as a foreign language entails students' ability to write effectively by the end of their instruction. At this higher level, a good command of the writing skill is extremely crucial because it is a medium of learning when it comes to writing assignments in various genres as well as a dominating medium for assessment at all stages of the educational system.

Writing, compared to the other skills, constitutes a challenge for students. This is due to a set of reasons. The first reason is that many students are not aware of the fact that writing in a foreign language is completely different from writing in one's first language. Consequently, their final drafts may not match the expectations of their readers unless they understand the systems of English by recognizing the differences between the conventions of both languages, and manage to overcome them. Besides, the writing skill is a toiling form of language production particularly the prominence of the required elements to build a coherent and a cohesive message namely the manipulation of language involving the ability to demonstrate a control over it, a mental activity consisting of the ability to plan relevant ideas related to the topic being developed. Thus, writing in a foreign language is highly demanding and time-consuming which, in fact, needs to be supported and worked on.

In recent times there has been a major shift from structural and teacher-centered classrooms to communicative and learner-centered ones. Within this remarkable change, the roles of the agents of the teaching and learning processes as well as their objectives and goals follow new dimensions. For instance, the constructivist principle regards teaching as a process of facilitating learning through the active engagement of both; teachers and learners; in knowledge construction.

At the core of the constructivist view, learners are no longer considered as empty vessels in need of being filled with knowledge and thus being mere recipients of shallow learning to which they do not show deep understanding and commitment. On the contrary, they are believed to be active elements in a position to be capable of constructing their own knowledge and relating it to an already existing one. Besides, learners' needs and interests are taken into account as the starting points to determine the actual level of students, the goals to be reached

and how to support students so that they can succeed at any course.

As supporting students' learning is taking ground, helping students to improve their writing skills ought to be placed at the heart of their instruction. The major mission of the teacher in this context is making use of all the favouring factors inside and outside the classroom environment in order to help students learn and how to learn effectively. Therefore, supporting learning ought to be seen as an opportunity to fulfill each single student's needs because students have different levels, abilities, learning styles and strategies and above all they all must have fair chance to undertake a journey from their actual level towards improving their level and meet their goals. However, it is sometimes too late for students to take action for improvement particularly when they receive their assessed work at the end of the semester. Therefore, one of the most significant aspects of supporting learning which is advocated by many scholars to bridge the gap is the integration of formative assessment in instruction.

Formative assessment or assessment for learning is a multi-dimensional purposeful process. Its advantages lay in its power not only in locating students' strengths and weaknesses, but also in using the obtained information to reinforce the good aspects of writing, diagnosing the unsatisfactory responses and finding realistic feasible solutions to remediate them. Moreover, it holds the principle that through the feedback and the feedforward, students are allowed to build their skills step by step. Hence, determining students' level in writing and their needs can help effectively in giving insights to teachers to set short-term goals and draw a systematic plan to reach them.

In fact, there is an urgent need to place formative assessment practices at the heart of the practice of teaching the writing skill as well as learning how to write academically due to the deficiency of many students at the level of higher education in demonstrating an acceptable level of writing even in their final years when they are supposed to write their own graduation research papers.

For such a statement about the current situation of the writing skill in the Algerian universities, the following research questions are suggested:

1. Is it the teachers' perception of the importance of the writing skill in the mastery of English that urges them to look for solutions to promote it?

2. Do the teachers' attitudes about formative assessment affect its integration in their writing class?
3. Do the teachers relate the integration of the practices of formative assessment to fostering their students' involvement in writing which leads to autonomy?
4. Are the students ready to embrace the inclusion of the practices of formative assessment in their writing if they perceive their purposes?

From the above questions, the following hypotheses were put forward:

1. The implementation of formative assessment practices is closely related to teachers' attitudes and perceptions about the importance of helping students master the written form of English
2. The implementation of formative assessment is related to the teachers' perception of their benefits.
3. The teachers of writing see the link between the inclusion of the practices of formative assessment and the advancement of intentional learning and independence in every class.
4. The students can be willing to rely on the practices of formative assessment in their writing if they are informed about their advantages in assisting them learn how to write successfully.

The chief interests from leading this research study are to achieve the following objectives and aims. First of all, it aims at fostering the need to improve the quality of teaching and learning the writing skill in higher education. Besides, it emphasizes the significance of paving the way for the students' autonomy in writing by becoming active participants in setting their own learning targets and finding the appropriate strategies to realize them.

It is worth mentioning that this research is about exploring the possibility of entrenching the practices of formative assessment in teaching and learning the writing skill right from the students' first year at university. To do so, the researcher is going to closely investigate the teachers' and the learners' attitudes about implementing assessment for learning tools by relying on three data collection methods: systematic observation, a questionnaire directed to the students of first- year LMD system and interviews with teachers.

The utility of this research study lies in its endeavour to seek the best ways to take every advantage of formative assessment so as to promote the practice of teaching the writing skill in the Algerian universities and enable each learner acquire essential skills to write and to be an independent learner by the end of their enrolment in university.

Chapter One
Learning Situation and Research
Methodology

Chapter One: Learning Situation and Research Methodology

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1.1. Introduction

There is a shared consensus among educators and practitioners in teaching English as a foreign language about the fact that having a good command over the writing skill is an indispensable factor for students' success in their studies as well as an invaluable tool for those who have aspirations to lead impressive careers in any domain or profession. However; not all the Algerian students, even at the level of higher education, are able to demonstrate a mastery of the writing skill due to reasons embodied in the challenges that students need to go through so as to generate an academic piece of writing and partly because of other factors related to students' attitudes and willingness to acquire the writing skill. So in this respect, our research is concerned with shedding light upon exploring the students' needs and potentials concerning the writing skill, and more precisely on supporting their writing through formative assessment practices and the incorporation of other aspects in teaching and practicing writing. The chapter will end with a brief presentation of the methodology and the research tools that the researcher is going to rely on in this thesis.

1.2. The Importance of the Writing Skill for Students of English as a Foreign Language:

Thanks to the scientific and the technological advancement, the world becomes a small village in which English is enjoying a prestigious status as the most widely used language. In fact, English is regarded as the leading language for science, technology and computing. It is, therefore, crucial not only to acquire English for obtaining information about technology and the new devices it innovates, or keeping pace with the latest discoveries in significant fields such as medicine, genetics and physics....etc but also to allow students to participate or contribute to the technological or scientific research and enrich their knowledge. This is mainly because most of the academic and scientific publication and conferences are in English. Furthermore, the growing need for English in professional fields has led to the emergence of English for Specific Purposes in order to serve the international purposes. Thus, syllabus designers, teachers and administrators can get advantage from the field of Needs Analysis which owes its emergence to ESP. In this context, it is assumed that educational agents will gain insights related to education from its source as Needs Analysis will provide them with publications about the latest practices in teaching English as a foreign language. Finally, education is not only about providing learners with knowledge, but also to make them able to communicate and get knowledge for themselves. In this respect, learning English is

very useful as it helps them not only to learn about English language and its culture, but also to extend their horizons.

Hence, because of the advantages that learning English offers, it was imperative to entrench it in educational programs to help learners have a good mastery of the four skills, especially writing which is likely to help learners move towards efficient English acquisition.

In this respect, the writing skill is of a major importance in the Algerian universities and at miscellaneous levels. Thus; perceiving the importance of this skill may be the first hallmark which boosts students to be actively engaged in writing and make them strive to have a good command of it. First of all, Harmer (1998:79) points out that writing contributes immensely to the students' language development that means that writing as a productive skill requires the students to put a range of linguistic items together such vocabulary which consists of the selection of the appropriate diction for the right genre of text as well as the need for the correct spelling, another noteworthy aspect is the grammar mechanics such as the application of different sentence structures, tenses, and punctuation to construct a proper text. In this context, whenever students are generating different texts, they are endowed with opportunities not just to be exposed to words, terms and expressions, but also to widen their linguistic horizon in English through the acquisition of this vocabulary and structures and the know how to explore them in their suitable context.

Another dimension of the value of the writing skill is that it is a means of learning (Ur, 1996:162). Students at all the phases of their learning need to perform a range of different kinds of tasks that their purposes is not writing itself but to practise other aspects of the language. For instance: students can respond to a reading text or a listening script by writing in order to show their point of view towards what has been said or to develop their critical thinking. Besides, teachers can assign writing activities to students in which they can practise grammatical points. Moreover, the need to demonstrate a good command of the writing skill grows as the learners advance in their academic career.

"The value of being able to write effectively increases as students progress through compulsory education on to higher education. At the university level in particular, writing is seen not just as a standardized system of communication but also as an essential tool for learning." (Cushing, 2000: 04-05)

Furthermore, skilled writing is highly regarded as a key factor for academic success in higher education.(Graham and Perin, 2007:03) due to the fact that writing is the dominant medium of assessment at all the stages of the educational system. Therefore, it is compulsory to have students demonstrate their ability and skill when they write their essays, and for which they will be scored.

"Good writing is essential to college success. New college students are expected to be able to write a summary of information from multiple sources, present and defend a point of view in writing, organize information into a coherent written report and use writing as a tool for learning."

(Act: 2005, cited in Graham et al, 2011:09).

Moreover, mastering the writing skill is no longer an exclusive need for students of English as a foreign language, but also to those students pursuing an academic career or a profession that requires this skill, besides it is a prerequisite for those who aspire to enrol in outstanding foreign universities where English is the medium of instruction. So the last few decades witnessed an appreciation of the crucial role of the writing skill in institutions and school settings in which English is considered as a second or a foreign language. Indeed, this recognition has been demonstrated in three procedures: the first one was through the enclosure of writing tests in standardized tests of English language proficiency such as the TOEFL Test of Written English, the University of Michigan's MELAB written sub-test, and the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate / British Council's IELTS writing sub-test. In addition, a great deal of attention has been drawn towards the inevitability of better course preparation in composition classes which has led to a remarkable increase in designing coursework in graduate TESOL programmes and developing materials for L2 writing instruction. Finally, L2 writing has been the centre of interest for many researchers, publishers and conferences. (Reid, 2001: 29). In fact, many research papers were conducted to investigate the nature of L2 writing, theories of teaching the writing skill, teachers' roles and students' parts in writing classes, challenges of writing in a foreign language and other sides that keep the door open for more research in the field of writing in English as a foreign language. Hence, because of the immense role that the writing skill plays in the academic career of students, the Algerian universities attach great weight to teaching the writing skill appropriately.

1.3. Teaching the Writing Skill in Ibn Khaldoun University:

There is no doubt that the value of the writing skill is perceived by the staffs of the departments of teaching English as a foreign language in Algeria. Thus, a set of measures was taken both administratively and pedagogically. The last decade witnessed a reformation concerning the introduction of the LMD system in the Algerian universities. Within this change, the writing skill has ranked among the skills that have the highest coefficient and amount of time devoted for instruction.

Teaching the Writing Skill in the LMD System	
The Coefficient	04
The number of years	1 year LMD and 2 year LMD
Hours per week	3 hours

1.1. Time Devoted for Teaching Writing in LMD System

Pedagogically speaking, each university has its own conventions and policy in organising the contents of the curriculum into teaching units. As far as the teaching of the writing skill in the University of Ibn Khaldoun in Tiaret is concerned, teaching the writing skill stems from the belief that each student is able to learn the writing skill effectively and efficiently. Besides, students are regarded as *learners of a language* and *creators of texts* (Oswald, 2006:05). That means that they are instructed and at the same time they practise writing in its different genres. In this context, instruction in the first year of the LMD system takes a series of effecting factors into considerations during the teaching process. One of the major factors is that: though the majority of students were exposed to learning English and its different skills at least for seven years, they still have deficiencies not only in writing coherent and cohesive texts, but even at the basic level of producing meaningful sentences. Therefore, the concept of instructing students is mainly eclectic in which no theory is granted supremacy over the other theories and teachers are given the opportunity to introduce their insights in the teaching of this skill. In fact, three approaches namely the process, the genre and the product approaches are adopted for the sake of creating a balance in teaching writing and to reach a set of objectives.

1.4. The Demands and the Challenges of the Writing Skill in EFL:

Not all students share the pleasure of approaching writing with enthusiasm and easiness. However, reaching the level of having a good command over the written form of English can be a bonus for any student striving for brilliant academic career. Yet, the journey in the quest for having the craftsmanship in the writing skill is full of challenges as well as rewarding gifts. Compared to the other skills, learning to write in a foreign language is highly demanding due to multiple factors ranging from the students' potentials to the kind of instructing them in the writing class especially in a context like the Algerian one in which English is not widely used outside educational settings.

1.4.1. The Nature of the Written Discourse:

Facing a blank sheet of paper or the screen of a computer and letting ideas be transformed into words and sentences is not an easy task to fulfil. According to Nunan (1995), part of the difficulty of producing a readable text is that the rules of the written discourse need to be acquired through means of *instruction* and *practice* that means that most of the time writing is learnt in formal settings and there should be a teacher in charge of instructing his/her students. In this respect, the responsibility of the teacher of writing is a huge one because the writing module is a multi-dimensional one as it encompasses the teaching of other skills, along with techniques involved during the different phases of writing and the genres of texts. Furthermore, the teacher plays an effective role in responding to students' written pieces and assignments. For instance, in the writing sessions, students have to be introduced to the various parts of speech, the basic sentence patterns and all what they need to build their grammar and be capable of using it later on. Moreover, if the notion of teaching the writing skill is really understood, the teacher can integrate other skills which can help students advance in the process of learning EFL. Hence, the writing session can be a precious opportunity for students to read and share their written productions with their peers. The act of reading can also build bridges among students through discussions about the content and organization of each others' written productions. Another characteristic that is closely related to the written discourse is that it is a *lengthy* learning process that requires knowledge on how to approach a writing task right from the beginning i.e. the writer ought to be aware of the fact that there are useful techniques to be involved in each phase of the writing process such as the kind of brainstorming that can facilitate amassing pieces of information related to the topic of the writing assignment then moving to the phase of outlining in which the relevant pieces of

information are put in an organized way to be developed into a final readable text. The mentioned characteristics of the written discourse are not exclusive to learners over others. They are the same in native and foreign context of learning how to write.

Olson (1995) suggests that any written discourse is meant to express explicit autonomous statements. The goal of writing is to transmit a message which is completely clear and precise because the writer may not have the chance to encounter his audience to receive feedback or to be able to make clarifications. Thus, writing has to provide its own context to help the reader grasp its meanings and intentions. In fact, those meanings are expressed through language which is in turn a product of many cognitive operations. As a matter of fact, it is highly pronounced that producing an optimum written text is an extremely difficult task. This encountered challenge is mainly due to the fact that the process of writing involves a set of interrelated operations (Clark & Clark, 1977: 226-258).

1.4.2. The Process of Language Production:

According to Levelt (1989), the process of language production is subdivided into three major components:

A-Conceptual Preparation:

From the outset of any writing activity until finishing the last touches, the production of a message relies on what is called higher level thinking skills (Richards & Renandya, 2002: 303). Thus, any written text is the representation of complex operations which do not proceed in a linear way. However, they function simultaneously. It is well recognised that generating any ideas or thoughts depends a great deal on the writer's understanding of two key elements which are *the topic* of the writing task that means that the writer grasps exactly what was required from him when he is going to tackle this subject and if he has a prior knowledge about the topic which going in turn to help him explore the topic further (Schoonen, 2005). The preparation of a writing piece also requires a core operation which is planning. Part of the significance of this process is that the quality of the ultimate written product requires a careful planning of the ideas being developed along the piece and because of its recurrence in all the stages of writing (Hayes & Nash, 1996: 79).

According to Canale (1982), there exists another fundamental notion which has to do with higher level of organisation that is the pattern of coherence. Coherence refers to the

overall semantic structure and unity of the text. For a text to be judged as coherent, it must reflect the writer's capability at meeting the following four conditions in his writings:

1~ Development: when the writer presents his thoughts, they need to be in order and proceed in a logical way; from general to specific, then to the most specific one and give the reader a sense of direction to expect what will come next.

2~ Continuity: the writer should pay attention to the consistency of the presented facts and ideas. The ideas should be working in accordance and harmony with the main defended idea and any newly developed thoughts need to be relevant.

3~ Balance: the developed ideas should have equal supportive emphasis.

4~ Completeness: the writer should develop his ideas properly and thoroughly.

B- Linguistic Formulation:

The communication of ideas to an audience also depends a great deal on writing. However, translating words into writing is a challenging process. Hence, linguistic competence is a prominent requirement for the quality of the ultimate written production (Kruse, 2003: 25). In formulating any message, the writer transforms his thoughts into language which demands a careful selection of appropriate forms from the writer's mental lexicon. And even in choosing these forms, there are other factors to be taken into account such as the morphosyntactic restrictions which need to be regarded as a crucial factor in constructing grammatically correct sentences. Even at this stage, the construction of these sentences is effected by other factors which influence content like register and rhetorical considerations (Schoonen et al, 2009: 79).

The value of vocabulary in the process of writing is highly remarkable as a means of expression. It is important for the writer to have a wide repertoire of lexis, collocations and sentence frames in order to be able to use them effectively and immediately. For this process to be easy, it relies strongly upon the memory factor. This means that the linguistic formulation depends on two elements which are the availability and the accessibility of linguistic means (Flynn & Stainthorp, 2006: 57). As a consequence, writing in an FL context seems to be a highly demanding activity especially when it comes to be a struggle for the writer to retrieve the adequate vocabulary which sometimes hinders the writing process.

The multiplicity of the operations functioning simultaneously during the writing process also involves *lower level skills*. Lower level skills are the rules of spelling and punctuation. (Richards, 2001:303). Any writer of EFL, especially in formal settings, must be able to spell and use words effectively. These two tasks are very demanding due to the fact that the writer's knowledge of parts of speech, the list of misspelled words, and the strategies of using dictionaries is very crucial in ensuring the quality of the written text. (Wilson and Glazier, 2011: 03). Furthermore, understanding the function of punctuation and its power at delivering the intended meaning and enabling the reader grasp the message is another skill that has to be mastered and practiced. (Brandon and Brandon, 2011: 501).

C-Physical Production:

It simply refers to the ability of the writer to use his hand in writing, or his knowledge of manipulating a computer in order to write any text because it is very essential to be aware of the up-dating technologies and using them.

1.4.3. Motivation to Write.

It is assumed that the writing skill is solitary in nature. That means that the writer goes through self-disciplinary qualities which are hidden from the reader of his text (Zimmerman and Kitsantas, 2007:51). So becoming a successful writer in academic settings depends a great deal on high levels of self-regulation such as planning, organisation and revision, and on a boosting power which is self-motivation.

According to Seifert (2009), it is challenging for any teacher to detect the level of his students' *intrinsic motivation* because their presence in the classroom is not a sufficient indication of their willingness to learn and develop in any subject matter. Furthermore, students hold diverse attitudes towards learning. Thus, they set goals and direct their energies differently towards realizing them. However, some students do not find any interest in learning how to write and internalise the feeling that success in this subject matter is beyond their reach and start to adopt this attitude towards writing. Consequently, they become self-handicap students doing some writing which is not at the level of their teacher's expectations and just trying to avoid the teacher's anger.

Though lack of motivation seems to be a heavy burden on any teacher's back, the key to overcome this hindering problem can be found if some strategies are to be introduced to the writing class and if the focus is targeted to students as individuals full of potential.

1.5. The Promotion of the Writing Skill in Higher Education:

The sector of higher education in Algeria is witnessing massive reformations nowadays. The first reformation was, of course, the introduction of the LMD system into the Algerian universities. Within this change, there has been also an urgent need to reconsider the syllabuses and the curricula of the different modules. Hence, higher education is facing new challenges that have to be met with success in order to improve the effectiveness of the newly adopted system of LMD.

As it was mentioned before that the ultimate goal of higher education institutions is to ensure the production of well-educated citizens who are equipped with the necessary assets to build their nations. In order to start this process, it is inevitable to take into accounts the different indicators of the current situation in higher education settings, particularly the students recently graduated from high school.

As a matter of fact, higher education constitutes a new world for students who, firstly, have different backgrounds and educational qualifications (Gosling, 2003: 162). Secondly, students are supposed to double their efforts in a highly demanding field in which they would progress and succeed in the course on which they registered. So it becomes of a paramount importance to adopt a systematic approach on how to support students learning specially in a decisive factor for success which is the mastery of the writing skill.

In recent times, the status of the writing skill has altered tremendously from being a support skill for other skills in language learning into a skill of its own (Reid, 2001: 28). Besides, there is a huge emphasis on the fact that the focus of teaching at higher education ought to be on making teaching effective by supporting students' writing in order to bring learning about (Fry et al, 2009: 03).

In fact, there has to be an organized plan and clear practices that aim at supporting students' learning of the writing skill.

1.5.1. Creating and Establishing a Positive Atmosphere for Writing:

According to Zemelman (1998), it is the responsibility of the teacher to create a positive environment for students in the writing class. At the outset of the academic year, the teacher designs a code of conduct including the rules as well as the patterns that regulate the motion in the classroom. In addition, this code of conduct takes into account the fact that the

classroom is a small society that is going to be built on mutual respect and the encouragement of exchanging views and accepting the other for the sake of promoting learning. Besides, the teacher shares his expectations with his students because doing so can really make them aware of their responsibilities and make them put goals.

1.5.2. Learning Needs:

Part of the task of supporting students' writing lies mainly in the teacher's belief of the fact that students approach their writing assignments differently because each student has his own perspective of learning, past educational experiences, class, goals, interests, language skills and so on. Therefore, this diversity among students demands an appropriate response to students' needs and performances equally. That means that each student has the right to be engaged in the process of supporting his learning and pursuing a journey from his existing level of knowledge and skills to the level required to pass or achieve higher grades. Furthermore, students should be assisted from their teachers to recognise their potentials and to find the proper strategies to meet their goals in relation to the programme of writing (Gosling, 2009: 163-4). As a matter of fact, teachers at the Algerian universities are really concerned about the level of students that is why they design diagnostic tests at the beginning of each academic year in order to have clear indications about the potentials and the weaknesses of their students concerning the writing skill. Moreover, recognizing the importance of understanding and working to assist students in their writing classes to fulfil their needs is also the basis for an everyday process which is planning.

1.5.3. Planning Writing Courses:

Another powerful component that can really support students' writing is the design of the writing courses. Effective planning and teaching are focused on a set of principles that must be taken into account. The governing principle, of course, is the considering the fact that each student inside the classroom setting has the right to be helped and supported throughout the academic year. In this context, Algerian teachers at the level of higher education are well aware of the crucial role of planning purposeful writing courses that can meet the dichotomy between fulfilling students' needs and meeting the goals of the module of written comprehension and production embodied in the curriculum and imposed on teachers by the ministry of higher education. In addition, the courses are already prescribed; however, the teachers are free to select the content of their writing classes, either from the

range of books suggested in the curriculum by the teacher in charge of the module, or from their own references that they think can better serve his objectives. Furthermore, the teachers recognise the necessity of stimulating students' interest that is why they devote a great time to select the appropriate topics that students like to write about. Furthermore, planning also includes the procedures that they adopt to deliver the lesson and decide on the roles that students take during the instruction phase and the practice one. The main adopted method for practice in the Algerian universities is the writing workshop. In this class activity, students are engaged in writing about a topic with the supervision of their teacher. In this situation, the teacher is in charge of guiding his students in their processes of generating a text, reading their work, making suggestions, and responding to their work properly.

1.5.4. Responding to Students' writing.

The cycle of teaching the writing skill also involves an element that has an enormous effect on students' writing performances, attitudes, and willingness to pursue writing. This element which has this powerful influence is responding to students' writing by their teacher.

The manner of responding to students' writing remains a challenge for many teachers especially for novice ones because of the fact that most of the research done on the various ways to respond to writing assignments tackled the issue in relation to native speakers only (Leki, 2008: 58). Thus, the teachers of the writing skill are required to extend any existing body of knowledge on the dynamics of responding to the students' writing as long as there are factors in their favour, for instance, the setting of learning EFL is available and appropriate for testing any hypotheses about the topic.

For some teachers, the notion of responding is mainly associated with correcting the errors and mistakes committed by students. However, responding to students' written performances need to encompass two sides which are: giving them feedback by informing them how well or badly they performed and providing them with guiding remarks on how to improve (Ur, 2009: 242).

1.5.5. Supporting Students' writing Through Formative Assessment Practices:

Besides all the mentioned factors that are adopted in the Algerian universities to foster students' written performances, there is another factor which seems to be capable of supporting students' writing and leading them towards assuming responsibility of their own

writing and paving the way for autonomy. This refers to the concept of formative assessment and the integration of its practices in teaching the module of writing comprehension and expression and in responding to students' writing.

Besides, this kind of assessment which is also called *assessment for learning* is taking ground in many writing curricula across the world after it has proved its effectiveness in improving learning and teaching in several schools. However, the implementation of such a practice in teaching the writing skill is still an underdeveloped area due to the demanding conditions to conduct research in this domain and the lack of desire to reform traditional practices especially in higher education (Yorke, 2003: 483).

As one of the major goals of higher education in Algeria is to produce students who are able to demonstrate a proficiency in the written form of EFL by the end of their instruction, it was therefore imperative to actively engage students in the process of taking responsibility of their own learning gradually through the introduction of the system of formative assessment instructional framework and the adoption of its practices.

1.6. The Curriculum of Written Expression:

As far as the learning situation is concerned, it is significant to present a clear account of the First Year LMD curriculum of the module of written expression. The aim is shed light upon the objectives, the contents and the modes of assessing students' performance in this module as well as its design and organization.

The curriculum is basically designed either for students who recently graduated from high school after passing their Baccalaureat Exam, or the category called 'free candidates' who do not pursue their studies in high school but choose to enrol in distant learning. At high school, the schedule of learning English is different between the three main branches: the Scientific Streams, the Philosophy Stream and Foreign Languages Stream as well as the units of studying the subject of English as shown in the following table:

Branch	Hours per week	Number of units
Scientific stream	03hours	04
Philosophy stream	04hours	04
Foreign languages stream	04hours	04

Table 1.2. Time Devoted to Studying English at High School

The free candidates also have books which are like the ones designed for students enrolling in middle or secondary school.

The curriculum is divided into three fundamental units. Each unit consists of two parts:

- 1/ A set of objectives intended to be reached at short and long terms.
- 2/ The content of the fundamental unit.

The goals of teaching the module of written comprehension and expression are multi-purpose and they aim at:

- Enabling students demonstrate a proficiency over the competences of comprehending and producing various texts.
- Helping students develop their self-confidence and trust others in helping them in their learning.
- Enabling learners develop their general culture.

Studying at university is totally a new experience for students who graduate from high school. The chief change is that each skill (receptive, productive, linguistic, and cultural) has its own curriculum, amount of time, and teacher. Besides, it is noticeable that there is no continuity between high school and university when it comes to the syllabi, the curricula and their contents. For instance, the module of written comprehension and expression meant for students of first year LMD students is partly intended to instruct students and enable them to have full control over the basic grammatical notions of English namely:

- The various parts of speech. (nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, and determiners,...etc)
- Expanding basic sentence patterns. (adjectives, adverbs, phrases, and clauses.)

Moreover, it is an opportunity for students who have weak proficiency in English to develop their linguistic competence. The next objective has to do with assisting and guiding students to be able to utilize the rules of orthography, morphology, and syntax appropriately. In addition, students ought to be capable of demonstrating their proficiency at generating grammatically free-error sentences in its different forms: simple, compound, complex, and compound complex sentences. Finally, students need to be introduced to the components of the paragraph as well as the rules governing the use of punctuation and capitalization. The remaining part of the unit is composed of:

- Complex sentences.
 - Subordinating conjunctions.
 - Main versus subordinate clause.
- Compound sentence.
 - Coordinating conjunctions.
 - Correlative adverbs.
- Compound complex sentence.

The second unit moves towards a new direction as it focuses on attaining two objectives which are developing students' productive and receptive competences. In this respect, students are going to be trained on how to acquire some of the basic skills of writing. So this unit is organized in the following way:

Part One:

- Written Expression.
 - Taking notes.
 - Paraphrasing ideas and thoughts.
 - Making a summary.
 - Writing a report.
 - Making a research (designing a plan, organizing information coherently).
- Written Comprehension:
 - Processing information as a part of problem-solving situation.

Part Two:

- Punctuation.
- Introduction to paragraph writing.
- Common paragraph structure: topic sentence/ development/ restatement.

Once the students acquire the basic notions of writing and some skills, they will move to an advanced level which is writing coherent paragraphs in its different types. Moreover, students need to be exposed to different types of texts. The major objective of this activity is not reading for the sake of understanding the message intended from writing this text. However, it aims at developing reading techniques and encouraging students to develop a reading habit that would contribute progressively to their writing. This unit incorporate the following items:

- Introduction to writing.

- Writing as a skill.
- Writing as a process.
 - Making the point.
 - Supporting the point.
 - Organizing the support.
 - Writing clear, error-free sentences.
 - Writing auto-monitoring.
- Writing auto-monitoring.
 - Unity.
 - Support.
 - Coherence.
 - Sentences skills.
- Patterns of paragraph development.
 - Exemplification.
 - Description.
 - Narration.
 - Process.
 - Cause and effect.
 - Comparison and contrast.
 - Definition.
 - Division-classification.
 - Argument.
- From paragraph to Essay.

At the end of each unit, a range of books is suggested as guidance for teachers to use as a material or to count on during the preparation of the lessons and the activities. Besides, there is a note about the percentage devoted for each mode of assessment. One can notice that summative assessment is granted 60% of the final mark and the remaining percentage is devoted to formative assessment with a 40%. It well known that summative assessment has its own agenda during the academic year,

1.7. Research Methodology and Research Methods:

One of the main reasons that lies behind this research study is to explore closely the major causes and factors that led to the failure of many students in demonstrating, at least,

an acceptable level in the writing skill especially at university though the writing skill was a part of their instruction in middle and secondary schools as well as university. An equally essential investigation is about finding out about promoting students' writing through the implementation of the various practices of formative assessment in their instruction and responding to their writing, and above all how to create an appropriate environment in which students' autonomy in writing is fostered.

Any research questions depends a great deal on selecting the appropriate means that help collect the relevant data which enable the researcher lead a deep inquiry to analyse them and find satisfactory answers. In this context, a case study was selected so as to assist us in understanding the issue of students' failure in having a good command of the writing skill and how it can be overcome through the integration of the tools of formative assessment.

In this regard, the reliance on case study to conduct the research study was due to multiple reasons. According to Yin (2003), the relevance of the use of case studies as research strategies depends immensely on the type of the research questions being posed. For instance, if the posed question is "how", then it would be better to rely on a case study because this kind of question is more explanatory. That means that the situation under study is traced over time in order to investigate how operational relationships and links act with each other and what they lead to at the end.

Another powerful side of the use of case studies in research is that they provide detailed information in its context. As Neale et al (2006:04) pointed out, "*Case studies are appropriate when there is a unique or interesting story to be told. Case studies are often used to provide context.*"

It is assumed in the above quotation that case studies are about telling unique stories which is in fact a reliable point of view. If light is shed on a group of student studying in the same classroom, every single student has his own story of learning experiences, his own learning needs and style, his own perspective and attitudes towards learning and so on...Besides, Gillham (2000) also emphasized the significance of examining a case in its "natural" context. He explained that one of the underlying philosophical bases of qualitative research is built upon the understanding of the impact of environment on human behaviour, thoughts and feelings. For the sake of understanding students' failure in having a command over the writing skill, the researcher has to study them in their context which is the classroom

so as to have a clear picture of what is really happening, to be capable of investigating the phenomenon deeply, and to perceive the matter from his own perspective and from those involved as well.

Furthermore, some researchers in the realm of research methodology such as Altrichter et al (2005) assumed that it is very beneficial for a research question to use the triangulation method in the procedure of data collection. Triangulation consists of combining various methods of research whereby data is collected from three perspectives. The following figure illustrated the above concept.

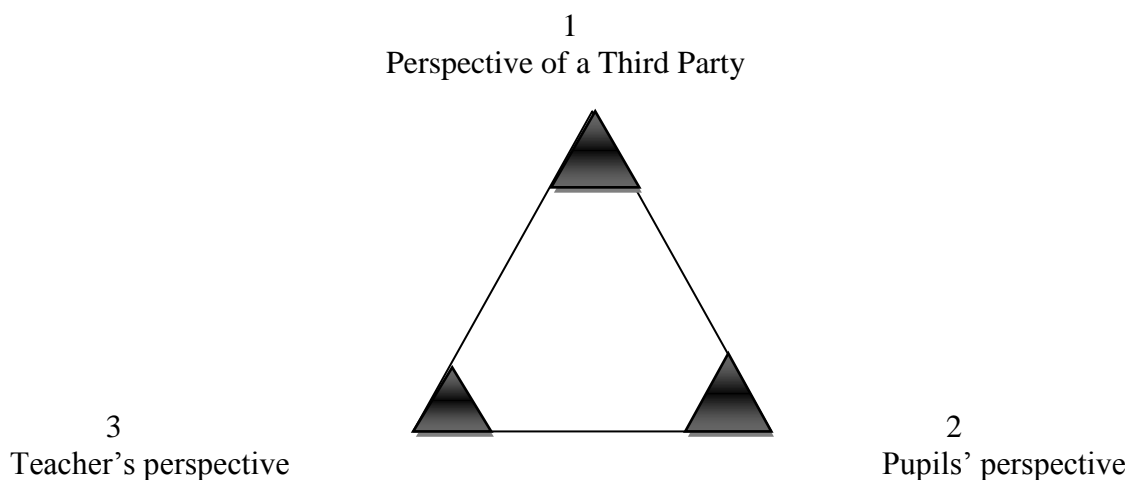


Figure 1.1. The Three Corner of Triangulation
(Adopted from Altrichter et al, 2005:115)

Moreover, the researchers claimed that the usefulness of using three methods in data collection is very reliable. Triangulation can identify the contradictions that may occur in the studied situation so that it allows the researcher to make profound interpretations and break the 'hierarchy of credibility'. By triangulating the methods of research, all the participants in the study have equal status though they have different ranks. For instance, the researcher can count on the teacher's point of view as well as that of pupils' because pupils can also contribute to the understanding and the explanation of a situation. Finally, Triangulation can provide the researcher with a complete picture and detailed information about the case being under investigation.

Another factor that makes use of the reliance on case study is that in some situations the researcher has no control over the behaviour of the participants. However, case study offers very helpful alternatives which can provide valuable data on real life events and

contemporary situations such as the observation of the performance of teachers and students in their classrooms and interviewing the persons involved in the study. (Yin, 2003:07-08).

1.7.1. The Profiles of the Targeted Populations:

The researcher need to take a decision about selecting the appropriate population in conducting a study because the targeted population is another significant pillar that contributes to the overall success of a piece of research. Focusing on factors such as accessibility and time are very crucial in gaining suitable information from the participants (Cohen et al, 2005:92). Hence, in this case study, the participants were teachers of the module of written comprehension and expression in the University of Ibn Khaldoun in Tiaret and the students of first year LMD studying in the same university.

1.7.1. Teachers' profile:

Any attempt to study a situation in details requires the participation of the involved persons who can give a clear picture of what is going on. In this research study, the participation of teachers is of paramount importance regardless of their gender, age, and work experience. However, all of them are teachers of the module of written comprehension and expression. The first teacher is a female of 25 years old. She graduated from the University of Bechar and had a Master in Linguistics from the University of Jordan. She has taught in the department of English since 2012. The second teacher is a man in his fourtees. He graduated from the University of Tlemcen and had a Master in educational psychology. The reliance on teachers' participation in this study was due to a set of reasons:

- They spend so much time with their students in which they are in a position to observe their students' behaviour in the classroom. Besides, they are able to know their students' learning styles, needs and interests which enable them to determine their profiles.
- They can reflect upon the used methods in their class and how their students react to in their process of learning.
- Their points of view are a valuable source to contribute to the process of improving students' learning and to provide researchers with new ideas to conduct other research studies.

1.7.1. Students' profile:

The participants in this study were 40 students from the University of Ibn Khaldoun in the centre of Tiaret. Their age ranges between 18 and 25 years old. 17 students of the whole population are enrolling in first year LMD for the second time. They studied their first year in the University of Abd El-Hamid Ibn Badis in the city of Mostaghanem. This group of students was chosen at random and the students' permission was taken so as to be a part of this research study. More details about the participants will be provided in the third chapter.

1.6.2. Methods of Data Collection:

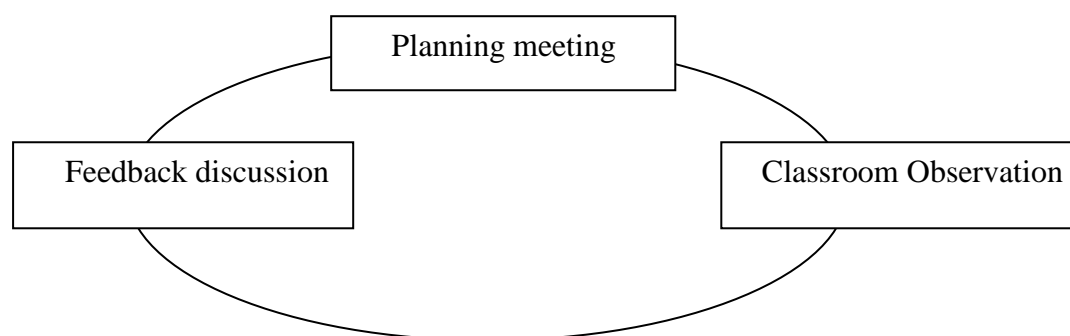
Once the research problem and the hypotheses are defined, the researcher heads towards deciding the methods that he will rely on in order to carry out his study and gather the relevant data that will help him find answers for his research questions.

Kothari (2004) asserts that the researcher has to decide which kind of data better suit his research study. Therefore, if he strives for originality, he has to collect *primary data*. These types of data are characterized by the fact that they are collected for the first time. Thus, there are many methods that can facilitate obtaining primary data that is why in this research study three methods are going to be adopted: systematic observation, a questionnaire directed to students, and an interview directed for teachers of the module of written comprehension and expression. Here are the definitions of the three used methods and some crucial reasons for their relevance.

1.6.2.1- Systematic Observation:

Many research studies depend on the use of systematic observations as a vital instrument in the process of gathering data (Koshy, 2005: 98). According to Patton (1990), data generated through means of systematic observation are very useful due to the fact that they provide the researcher with the opportunity of collecting 'live' pieces of information from actual situations. Besides, systematic observation fits case studies because it enables the researcher to understand the context of the study being carried out that is why it is appropriate for contexts such as classrooms and schools because interactions inside these institutions cannot be fully understood and interpreted without observation (De Marrais et al, 2004: 229).

Koshy (2005) maintains that the roles of observations are to record behaviours, number of actions happening in the examined context, and the interactions going on between the persons involved in the study. For the observation to be conducted effectively, the researcher has to make decisions about the different phases of the process of observation. Hopkins (2002) proposed a three-phase observation cycle as shown in the following figure.



01.02: The Three-phase Observation Cycle

Hopkins's model (2002)

According to Hopkins (2002), the researcher should be aware of three fundamental phases when he is about to carry out his observation. The first phase is about planning meeting which is an opportunity for the researcher and the person in charge to discuss the reasons of this observation and what factors are going to make it effectively conducted. For instance, if the observation is about to be carried out in a class setting, the researcher ought to meet with the teacher so as to have insights about the proposed lesson and the aspects of the practices that may take place during the observation phase. During the observation phase, the researcher ought to be interested in collecting the data relevant to his research study objectively. Once the observation is over, there should be a feedback session in which the observer can share the information collected with the teacher which may give him as well insights about his practices and plan another session of observation if possible. Here the diagram proposed by Hopkins stresses the significance of observation and the phases it includes. The circle that links the different phases of observation is continuous as a sign of interrelation among the elements and how each phase contributes to the other.

As far as our research is concerned, the researcher is going to conduct some observation sessions of written comprehension and expression of the target groups for the sake of observing the environment of teaching and learning, teacher's and students' roles and

behaviours, the contents of the proposed lessons, as well as the activities and the types of their instructions.

1.6.2.2- A Questionnaire:

A questionnaire is a non-experimental and a descriptive research method for collecting information about a phenomenon that cannot be directly observed. Besides, they are used to describe and explain the status of phenomena, to trace change and to make comparisons (The Independent Institution of Education, the year: 03). Questionnaires are also used for obtaining data that are related to facts, attitudes, knowledge, beliefs, opinions, perceptions, expectations, and the behaviours of individuals (Parahoo, 1979: page). Questionnaires are made up of questions, but should also include clear instructions, simple language which the respondents will understand and be capable of answering appropriately, space for answers if the questions are open-ended and choices if they are close-ended. If used as a method of research, questionnaires should always have a purpose that is related to the objective of the research study and the researcher holds the responsibility of informing the respondents how the findings are going to be used (Kirklees, the year: 01).

This research study relies on close-ended questionnaire because this kind of questionnaires is easy to administer and quick to record answers. In addition, respondents are likely to answer all the questions.

1.6.2.3. Interview:

The interview method is useful for exchanging ideas between two or more people for the purpose of discussing a topic of common interest. This tool of research regards the human interaction as a central element in the process of generating knowledge for the sake of collecting research data. Interviews give participants the opportunity to express and share their interpretations of topics and point of views from their own perspectives. Thus, the researcher and the participants are allowed to take the topic being discussed into new directions and seek greater depth than other data collection methods can do. This space granted to the participants makes them more involved and motivated as they are free to a certain extent to disclose facts, attitudes and thoughts (Cohen et al, 2005: 267-269).

Gillham (2000) asserts that the researcher has to decide on a set of factors that he need to have control over them such as the careful selection of the kind of the interviews that will

meet the objectives of the research study, the structure of the interview, the number of the conducted interviews, their length, and the accessibility of the involved participants.

According to Burns (1999), the selection of the interview that the researcher is going to rely on depends a great deal on the degree of control that he will exercise over the interaction during the conduct of the interview. Hence, the interviews are characterised as structured, semi-structured, and unstructured.

- **Structured interviews: (formal interviews):** this type of interviews is composed of a list of pre-planned questions in a fixed order to ensure both reliability and consistency. This type is mainly used to gather data in case the researcher is well aware that he did not have a great deal of information or experience on the topic he is dealing with, but he is able to structure the questions that will provide him with the required answers from the proper interviewees. (Cohen, 2005: 267)
- **Semi-structured interviews:** this kind of interviews is characterised by the fact that it is open-ended in which it allows for more flexibility that means that the researcher prepares just the overall guidelines and directions in no fixed order. Thus, the unstructured interview can seem to be conducted in a ‘natural’ way because it has the advantage of enabling the interviewees to explore new themes and to raise related topics that were not pre-determined during the preparation of the interview.
- **Unstructured interviews: (informal interviews):** this kind of interviews is a free flowing discussion between the researcher and the participants about the themes and the issues of the research. In this situation, the researcher has a slight control over the conversation for the aim is to fully engage the participants in providing the researcher with more details about their perceptions, attitudes and experiences.

So as to find adequate strategies and techniques that can assist teachers of writing to better respond to their students’ writing performances through formative assessment practices, a structured interview is going to be directed to teachers of writing. The selection of this research tool aims at getting insights from the participants due to their direct involvement in the process of teaching as well as responding to their students’ writings. In addition, they can provide valuable suggestions based on their reflections from their teaching experience.

1.8. Conclusion:

This chapter was devoted to look closely at the learning situation as well as the adopted research methodology. At the outset, the chapter tackled the imperative role of the writing skill as being a tool for learning and succeeding in all levels of education as well as being a pre-requisite for further academic and professional achievements. Thus, teaching the writing skill was one of the priorities in Ibn Khaldoun University to help learners have command of the writing skill as well as overcoming the demands and the challenges that face students when they write especially in a context where the English language is considered as a foreign language. Then we explored the factors that are partly contributing to the promotion of the writing skill and shed light on the role that formative assessment could play in helping students have command over the writing skill if it was adopted in the Algerian context. The chapter also presented the main components of the curriculum of the module of written comprehension and expression. Eventually, the chapter ends with the methodology and methods of research that we depend on in order to answer the research questions.

Chapter Two

Review of Literature

Chapter Two: Review of Literature.

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2.1. Introduction:

The variety of the kinds of assessment is very crucial to both teaching and learning a foreign language thanks to the different purposes that they serve. However, some kinds of assessment are overlooked in favour of other important, yet traditional assessment practices.

Studies in learning and teaching language have emphasized the necessity of altering the threatening nature of assessing students into an acceptable assisting tool in promoting their learning. This form of assessment is embodied in formative assessment.

As it has been always a constant issue for teachers and students, learning how to write coherently and cohesively in a foreign language and demonstrating an acceptable level of the mastery of its written forms still constitutes a serious challenge in the diverse levels of education. Fortunately, there have been voices in the domain of teaching language calling for granting formative assessment a prominent role in teaching and learning the writing skill in higher education to overcome this deficiency. They assume that the integration of formative assessment practices can have a reflective impact on the teaching process and effective tools for promoting students' written performances on one hand and paving the way for being autonomous writers on the other hand.

Therefore, this chapter is going to be devoted to examine profoundly the relevant literature related to the concept of formative assessment and its practices in relation to promoting the writing skill. The literature will be arranged according to two procedures: the chronological order of originating the concept of formative assessment in the domain of teaching in general, its theoretical framework and finally the previous research and findings on the topic. And by organizing the literature into the main headings and their sub-headings. Accordingly, this chapter will shed light on the diverse purposes and functions of formative assessment and what principles ought to be adopted so as to embody the real meaning of formative assessment in developing students' writings. Eventually, the focal point is going to be on discussing the range of the various practices of formative assessment in the writing classroom and what makes each discipline a unique tool. Furthermore, the chapter will tackle the way teachers can create a balance in the use of the practices of formative assessment and the reasons as well as the factors that lead to take such a decision.

2.2. Formative Assessment:

Formative assessment or assessment for learning is only one form of miscellaneous kinds of assessment. According to Brown (2003: 06), it is the most adopted kind of classroom assessment. Thus, it is an ongoing process of evaluating students' competencies and skills which aims mainly at developing their learning. Paul Black, one of the strongest supporters of formative assessment, provides another definition. Black (2003: 09) asserts that assessment for learning is any assessment, which primarily targets the promotion of students' learning in the process of its design as well as its practice. For him, this kind of assessment can function formatively if the designed activities can yield information to be used as feedback by teachers and by students, or among students themselves for the purpose of informing them how well they are performing. In addition, the gained evidence is taken into account in order to adapt the teaching act to fulfil students' needs.

2.3. Milestones of Formative Assessment:

This section traces the history of creating the concept and the underlying principles of formative assessment. The word formative evaluation was coined by Scriven (1967). He claimed that formative evaluation should be regarded as an effective tool for assisting students, teachers and curriculum constructors for the purpose of improving what they are doing. However, this view advocated the intention of formative evaluation without highlighting the process or tools of this kind of evaluation that could be adopted to reach the improvement of learning.

During the 1970's, Benjamin Bloom was one of the founders of the concept of the mastery of learning. The aim of the mastery of learning was to ensure that students should work hard to reach the objectives of the current level and they could not move to the next one without a full mastery of the current one. In this same period, this principle constituted the basis of a widespread trend of a modular instruction in which students learned from a self-directed packets. As soon as students met the objectives set in each module, they could move to the next module. Though this trend seems perfect theoretically especially when it comes to determining the current level, setting objectives and working to meeting them successfully, students worked in isolation without the assistance of a teacher or even the interaction with peers. (Greenstein, 2010:21)

Although there were empirical investigations about classroom assessment for learning particularly by Natriello (1987), Kulik and Kulik (1987), Crooks (1988), but they did not show much evidence of the role of formative assessment in improving learning. However, some of the above studies paved the way for a stunning study that was entitled *Inside the Black Box* and led by Paul Black, Dylan William and colleagues from the Assessment Reform Group (1998) on the power of formative assessment in enabling students to progress at all grade levels. (Harlen, 2007:118)

In fact, Black and William examined more than 250 studies on formative assessment as opposed to summative assessment. This comprehensive review of literature ranged from kindergarteners to college students in a set of subjects including reading, writing, social studies, mathematics, and science and was conducted in many countries including the United States of America. During their investigation, Black and his team of scholars addressed three categories of problems attributed to assessment. They are: issues related to effective learning, others concerned with negative impact and problems of the managerial role of assessment respectively.

1. First of all, effective learning is hindered because of the aims set behind test. The majority of tests are meant to give grades and ranks among students. In this context, students are more likely interested in getting the marks at the expense of thinking about the learning benefits which they could have reflected upon once the test is over. Besides, teachers do not coordinate and cooperate before and during the preparation of tests, so the methods of testing go without reviewing. And even the results of the tests are not discussed. The negligence of these indication lead to other negative effects.
2. Secondly, the absence of reflection upon the assessment process generates a negative impact on the learning process because assessment is meant only to awarding grades without the reinforcement of good achievement, without guiding advice directed for low-attaining students which may trigger feelings of demotivation, and without discussing what students gained from their tests at the learning level.
3. Finally, the wrong perception of the purpose of assessment tends to serve bureaucratic aims, rather than learning. Therefore, assessment outcomes are not analyzed which in turn resulted in teachers being less aware of their students' abilities and needs.

Consequently, they found out that there is a close correlation between the increase level of students' achievement and the increase level of understanding and using the teachers' skill at utilizing assessment formatively. (Butt, 2010: 08)

Their research showed the major components of formative assessment and its principles: (Harlen, 2007:119)

1. Learners must be provided with constructive feedback on their performance and on how to improve, and avoid making comparisons with other students.
2. Students need to be aware of the goals behind the work being assigned to them and have a clear idea of the characteristics of a good piece of work.
3. Students need to be given a chance to express their understanding of their own abilities especially if the questions are from their teachers.
4. Students need to be involved in the process of self-assessment so that they can assume responsibility of their own learning especially if they can identify what they need to improve and work to reach it.
5. Teachers need to engage with their students in discussions that encourage students to rediscover their own work by reflecting upon them.
6. Teachers must perceive formative assessment as an effective tool that allow them gauge the effectiveness of their instruction.

The above components of formative assessment clearly showcase students and teachers as partners in the learning teaching process. Besides, teachers are assigned new roles which go beyond delivering a lesson into building other aspects of students' psychology. For instance, the fact of avoiding comparison between students can be encouraging and empowering because students do not perceive comparison in relation to their performance only, but also to them as individuals. And in case, their work was judged in comparison with other students', such kind of experiences will generate feelings of dissatisfaction and rejection of learning (Butt, 2010: 20). Furthermore, the process of assessing students for learning stresses the significance of involving students actively in reflecting upon their learning in an attempt to make them capable of assuming responsibility and independence on their learning. Moreover, the ongoing process of assessing students' academic performances is also a valuable opportunity for teachers' professional development.

Black's and Wiliam's systematic body of research based on empirical data has had a deep impact on educational policy and practice in the United Kingdom as well as on other experts in the field of teaching who carried on their journey to support formative assessment and move towards favouring an environment that boosts learning through teacher-students interaction.

2.4. Constructivism and Formative Assessment:

As the term suggests, assessment for learning is basically a practice that recognizes the importance of using constructive judgements to foster deep learning. In this case, the notion of learning is highly emphasized which means that the process of teaching inevitably entails the fact of assigning active parts to students to build their own knowledge, skills and competencies. Yet, when the history of the practice of formative assessment is traced back, it is noticed that there were many assumptions about the roles of the teachers and students with the process of assessment for learning and the theoretical justification of formative assessment in accordance with theories of learning.

Torrance et al (2002: 12) asserts that though advocates of formative assessment like Harlen, Black and James identified the necessity of students playing a part during the process of receiving information about their performances which they understand and act upon, their roles were not as clearly identified as their teachers'. In the same context, Tunstall and Gipps (1996) carried on an investigation on young children aged between five and six years old. Their main study was about the various kinds of feedback that teachers can deliver to their pupils and if these pupils are capable of grasping them. However, this study was criticized for it did not give account of the direct process of interaction that was going on between the teacher and his pupils and which is considered as the heart of the process of delivering feedback and what effects it had on pupils.

In the same line of thought, Crooks (1988: 454) extends the review of literature about formative assessment. He considers this kind of classroom assessment can only be done by a skilful teacher who is in control of the process and know well when it is appropriate to deliver feedback. He claims that the teacher should be dynamic in asking the right questions to students in order to encourage active learning and to check their understanding of the task.

Besides, the teacher should provide his students with feedback which makes limited use of praise (except for less attaining students) and criticism. However, Crooks' work studied the execution of the process of formative assessment from the teacher's perspective only and neglected the role of students in understanding and dealing with the received feedback. However, there are scholars who advocate the active engagement of students in the realization of formative assessment in the classroom setting in terms of being capable of comprehending the judgments of their teachers about the quality of their work and monitoring it. This activity of checking their own production cannot be fulfilled unless students are well informed and aware of the standards of high quality performance. Therefore, formative assessment is about granting students a central role in the process of learning due to its complexity rather than perceiving it as a model based on stimulus- response (Sadler, 1989:119).

The theory of learning which gave ground to the students' vital role in the whole process of formative assessment is the model of social constructivist perspective in cognitive psychology based on the work of the Russian experimental psychologist Lev Vygotsky (1987, 1986) which provided views about the process of acquiring language (Geoff, 2004: 110).

According to Oosterhof (2003: 198) the constructivist view proposes valuable insights into how effective learning and instruction take place as opposed to the behaviourists who emphasize the importance of designing detailed set of instructional activities for learners rather than teaching them to acquire specific skills.

As Gipps (2003: 23) noted, learning is the engagement of students in constructing their own knowledge and interpretations by linking them to their prior knowledge. Once students are aware of their teachers' feedback and know how to use it, they move from shallow learning, in which students receive knowledge from their teachers and memorize it, then forget about it as soon as it is no longer needed, to deep purposeful learning in which students reason and reflect upon their learning experiences.

Moreover, Torrance et al (2002: 15) asserts that the work of Vygotsky not only takes the role of teachers in providing information about the performances of their students and offering additional instruction, but they also make the process of formative assessment as a practice that have a positive impact on learning.

Teachers are capable of using formative assessment so as to support their students' learning. In this respect, Vygotsky points out at a significant tool in human learning which is the use of external support. Students need to engage in interaction with their teachers in order to analyse their learning situation. The famous contribution of Vygotsky that is known as the zone of proximal development (ZPD) refers to the identification of the actual achievement of students and what they are able of achieving in collaborating with other peers or under the guidance of teachers. This process of supporting and guiding students towards an efficient realization of the improvement of learning is called scaffolding (Gipps, 2002: 27). For scaffolding to be an effective tool in pursuing learning, the teachers and the students need to discuss the goals which must be specific, clear, and challenging but not out of the reach of students (Sadler, 1989: 129). Designing goals for the sake of improving the students' learning is therefore only one broad purpose of the various aims of assessment for learning.

2.5. The Purposes of Formative Assessment:

It has been argued that the varied types of assessment have miscellaneous purposes to serve learning, teaching and other functions. Thus, they are very essential practices due to the influential role that they have on many levels. According to Stobart (2008: 102), the first fundamental step in undertaking any attempt to assess students' performances or achievements is the fact of being very clear about the reasons behind setting any kind of assessment, which is most of the time an ignored procedure.

As far as the practice of formative assessment is concerned, it is well known that it is an ongoing organized system that aims mainly at promoting learning and enabling every single student to progress even the low-attaining students. Therefore, assessment for learning is a systematic multidimensional plan that has learning-related objectives and teaching-related goals.

2.5.1. Learning-related Purposes of Formative Assessment:

Many scholars have claimed that formative assessment must have a central part in the act of learning as well as teaching, thus, this domain has been widely appropriate for research on how to promote learning in all its stages and what underlying practices can make it continuous.

Hattie and Timperley (2009: 02) asserts that assessment for learning is a powerful tool which is used for the purpose of diagnosing learning from the outset of any course until the final objectives of a program or a qualification. In this respect, the instructional framework of formative assessment has three fundamental components or questions that are pre- requisite for high-level learning. These elements are:

- ◆ **Where am I going?**
- ◆ **How am I doing?**
- ◆ **Where am I going next?**

The first component of formative assessment is primarily about diagnosing the current level of students, which includes their strengths and their weaknesses in a subject matter as well as identifying the starting points for instruction. In this step, teachers can get information through means of dialogue, question and answer, or any other tool that proves to be effective such as quizzes. Consequently, revealing the level of students is an indicator of many realities like the abilities and the potentials of students and the impediments of learning (Ecclestone et al, 2010: 38). Once the teacher collects the necessary information that he needs, he can provide individuals and the class with feedback about their knowledge, skills, strategies and attitudes. However, giving feedback only has proved its ineffectiveness because some students do not know how to use information about their performance to improve so that chances for promoting learning may fail (NCTE, 2010: 12).

Additionally, part of the issue of addressing feedback alone is the fact that feedback itself is an external regulation that means that it is up to the student to respond to the feedback by internalizing it to become a part of their internal regulation, or he chooses not to take it into account (Ryan and Deci, 2000: 05). Furthermore, there is another barrier stands in the way of the effective adoption of feedback. For instance, when students receive their papers with remarks on them, they either forget about them or they make effort to correct the mistakes and give them back to be reviewed, but the problem that feedback in this situation is reassigning responsibility back to students who are not fully aware of how to use feedback to progress and what steps to undertake in order to assume responsibility of their own learning and to move forward. Moreover, increasing student responsibility needs to be planned and grounded on a solid formative assessment instructional framework (Frey and Fisher, 2011: 05).

The second component is the central part of the cycle of formative assessment instructional framework. Its significance lies in its ability of bringing teachers and students even closely because at this very phase of assessment of learning that both teachers and students seek the appropriate answers for the question « How am I doing? ». The teachers need to explain to their students that effective learning is a journey that requires their cooperation to fulfil three imperative aspects that are establishing purpose, increasing motivation and finally, setting goals (ibid, 2011: 16).

Establishing purpose facilitates the active engagement of students in learning by providing them with the objectives that have to be realized *today*. At the outset of the lesson, the teacher should identify three purposes: content purpose, language purpose, and social purpose of that lesson. These purposes are translated into the following statements: what students are going to learn today, what students will do with the content, and how they will work with other partners so as to accomplish the task respectively (Fisher et al, 2008: 17).

The teacher ought to provide his students with an exemplar that illustrate the three concepts of the establishment of purposes.

Purpose statement	Example
Content	Learning the properties of writing a descriptive paragraph
Language	Using Adjectives
social	Work in pairs to make

02.01: Establishing Purpose in Writing

(Adapted from Fisher and Frey, 2011:18)

The above figure shows examples of the three purposes of a writing lesson. It is a plan of action for students to know what they will learn and *know how* to apply it.

According to Dutro and Moran (2003: 21), establishing purposes is very necessary for all students and at different levels of their education, but particularly necessary for English language learners (ELLs) when academic language is utilized. ELLs may rely on translation from their second language into their first language to make sense of instruction.

Besides, they may not demonstrate an optimal ability of processing and understanding some parts of speech. Thus, the written form of the purposes facilitates the grasp of the objectives.

Establishing purposes is only one aspect of engaging students in learning. The execution of these purposes heavily depends on students' interest and motivation to start realizing them.

Increasing motivation has been always a concern for all those involved in education. For students to be interested in learning there are two major conditions that have to be fulfilled and perceived by students. To begin with, students need to be aware of the element of relevance during instruction that means that students should be helped to understand the reasons and the goals from their studies and all the activities that they do in the classroom and outside it (Frey and Fisher, 2011: 21). In addition to above idea, for learning to occur, students perceive themselves as capable and competent learners. Each student has a self-image that is internalized and unconsciously transformed into motion. If a student perceives himself as capable of performing well, and he really managed well. Therefore, he regarded this achievement as a proof of his potential. Furthermore, students' self-image is influenced by the teachers' attitudes and praise. For instance, if a teacher praises a student as being intelligent when performing a task, other students may conceive the fact that intelligence is the key factor to succeed in performing well, and not other factors such as hard work, using specific strategies, or working with other partners. In this case, they will not make efforts due to the fact that they believe that academic achievements are closely related to intelligence. As a consequence, they will fall behind (Dweck, 2007: 22). In this context, teachers need to work on developing intrinsic motivation through motivational skills such as personal accountability or "Academic Recovery Contract" (Frey and Fisher, 2011: 24). By doing so, teachers assume the responsibility of helping their students overcome their learning difficulties by engaging with them in out-school program. Students will be given tasks to work on and they will be supervised by their teacher to give them guidance and pieces of advice on how to improve so as to reinforce their intrinsic motivation.

Academic Recovery Checklist	
Student Name: _____	
Date of Conference: _____	
Course: Written Expression.	
Concerns:	
<p>The students will</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> write outlines about different kinds of paragraph organization.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>The teacher/ university will</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Student signature _____ Date _____</p> <p>Teacher signature _____</p>	

02.01: A Sample of Academic Recovery Checklist

(Adapted from Frey, N and Fisher, D, 2011.)

The last component of the second phases of formative assessment system is setting goals. It is very useful for the teacher to determine what kinds of goals his students intend to set and guide them properly. Goals can be categorized into approach (positive) and avoidance (negative) goals. Students with positive goals tend to show interest in learning and attempt to move forward with their learning in hope of good achievement, whereas students with negative goals show fear of failure that may put them at risk of avoiding challenging tasks which may lift them to the next level of their academic life (ibid, 2011: 27). Thus, the aim behind setting goals is to encourage students' self-regulation and reflection especially for students with avoidance-oriented goals. If students reach the level of self-regulation, they would be able to develop their intrinsic motivation in order to set their own goals, try to accomplish them using their learning strategies, reflect on their extent of success, and start planning for future goals (Zimmerman, 1999: 29).

Once the goals and instruction begin, the teacher should track the progress of his students in order to determine to what extent they have met their objectives to move to a new phase in the cycle of formative assessment instructional framework, which is how students can close the gap between current and good performance. The teacher has to focus on

identifying and analysing students' errors because they are of a great help in adjusting teaching and making it suitable for their needs and making sure what they have achieved and what areas of learning they are still struggling with. Thus, the teacher can use scaffolding to guide instruction in which he will provide assistance and guide them until they realize their goals by using feedback or other effective instructional tools (Hogan & Pressley, 1997: 102). Moreover, Sadler (1989) insists upon the fact that closing the gap will not be accomplished unless students demonstrate their ability to use at least some of the evaluative skills that their teachers possess to assess their own performance.

Meeting the purposes of the system of formative assessment successfully can be achieved through the mutual understanding of teachers and students of the importance of taking active parts in the process of appreciating the value of working to move from their actual level towards the accomplishment of their targets. Yet, there still another significant condition that boosts the execution of the system of formative assessment instructional framework that is the instructional tools that can be used by teachers to formatively assess their students' written performances as well as empowering students with skills that can enable them contribute to their own learning and be autonomous.

2.6. The Practices of Formative Assessment in the Writing Classroom.

As it has been mentioned before that formative assessment is well grounded on the belief that learners work to construct their knowledge rather than accumulate it. Therefore, the focus should not be placed only on the active role of learners in playing a crucial part in promoting their own learning, but also on the process of assessing their performance under the supervision of the teacher. In this context, learners are in a position to respond effectively to the standards they are assessed against through integrating assessment in the teaching and learning process and regarding it as diagnostic tool that enables them communicate with their teacher to promote their learning experience. This is why formative assessment aims at making learning an ongoing process inside and outside the classroom by providing teachers and learners with tools serving as guiding options for assessing learners' overall language competencies. Rea-Dickens and Rixon (1997:151) say:

*"Communicative
teaching methodology brings with it a considerable
emphasis on formative evaluation with more use of*

descriptive records of learners' development in language and learning which [track] language development."

It is assumed here that according to formative assessment adherents, instruction need to focus on incorporating the instruments that can help give account of the progress of students in the area of language learning. Hence, formative assessment provides a range of practices and tools that cal lift teaching and learning the writing skill into the next level.

2.6.1. Feedback: the Core of Formative Assessment.

Many researchers in the domain of assessment advocate the necessity of making formative assessment a vital part of the classroom routine and environment. According to Brookhart (2008: 01), formative assessment is based on a set of skills, which include the fact of setting clear learning targets, designing well-crafted lessons and inside and outside classroom activities, and connect all these skills with a primary skill that is giving good feedback.

According to Sadler's work on theorizing formative assessment (1989), he pointed out that:

" Teachers use feedback to make programmatic decisions with respect to readiness, diagnosis and remediation. Students use it to monitor the strengths and weaknesses of their performances, so that aspects associated with success or high quality can be recognized and reinforced, and unsatisfactory aspects modified or improved."

It was mentioned in the above quotation that Sadler gave two perspectives of feedback. The teachers' perspective and the students' one. In Sadler's words, feedback is a powerful tool in the process of teaching as teachers count on it in order to take further steps on how to manage their instruction. Feedback helps teachers decide the degree of the preparedness of their students to learn, identify how well they are performing to decide whether to explain again, to provide them with additional practice and how they can provide their students with opportunities to improve.

2.6.2. Evidence about the Use of Feedback:

Recent works on the positive impact of feedback were conducted in several parts of the world. The first qualitative research was done by Fathman and Whalley (1990) in the United States of America. They investigated the impact of teacher feedback on grammar and composition among 72 students of college ESL. They found out that this study proved feedback to be a positive practice as students showed improvement and played a significant role in identifying their own errors and correcting them.

To collect information about students' attitudes towards receiving feedback, Dheram (1995) conducted a case study in Britain. Five EFL students were the subject of a questionnaire and an interview to investigate the following points:

- ◆ What kind of feedback students preferred to receive on their compositions (comments on grammar or content).
- ◆ How they responded to feedback.
- ◆ How they considered their preferences for future instruction.

After analysing the collected data, Dheram concluded that teachers ought to reconsider the fact that content should be prior to grammar when responding to students' writing. In addition, she found out that students benefited from the study as they discovered that revision is of a paramount importance in discovering meaning.

Myers (1997) adopted a strategy in her writing courses for ESL students in which she used the technique of giving her students feedback on their grammar inaccuracies on one hand. Students, on the other hand, were requested to correct their grammatical mistakes by taking into account their teacher's suggestions. By doing so, students worked to come up with free-error written pieces. Whereas in the classroom setting, they spent time on peer editing through participating in focusing on the content of their classmates' writing. Feedback proved to be a powerful tool that can be used to give valuable information to teachers and students about instruction and learning at the same time. However, effective learning cannot occur without knowing how to manage the process of providing students with good constructive feedback.

2.6.3. Delivering Effective Feedback:

Teachers have to be very skilful at knowing the necessary strategies of delivering good feedback. Therefore, informing students about their learning by giving them suggestions and providing further recommendations takes into account many specific variables that are context, the characteristics of students, classroom activities, and the classroom environment that means that teachers need to decide on what to say, when to say it, how to say it, and to whom to say it.

2.6.3.1. Feedback Strategies:

The process of formulating an effective feedback is very demanding from the part of the teacher of writing and which takes many considerations into account. This process includes the following decisive components:

2.6.3.1.1. Timing:

The aim of giving students feedback is to provide them with information that they can understand so that they can use it to help them in their learning. Hence, the teacher has to know the right time to deliver feedback. Feedback can be very effective for students as long as they are still striving to achieve a learning goal because they are already involved and the teacher should take advantage of this situation. Besides, immediate or slightly delayed feedback can guarantee students the chance to act upon it. Basically, good timing depends a great deal on the teacher's punctuality and efforts to correct his students' papers and returning them as soon as possible because if the papers are returned when the unit that includes this assignment is finished, it would seem pointless to give a thought to the provided feedback. Additionally, students' interests and aspirations change within the course of time, which may endanger the opportunity to promote learning (NCTE, 2010: 12).

2.6.3.1.2. Amount of Feedback:

According to Brookhart (2008: 13), the task of deciding how many points to be delivered as feedback is a hard one. A good amount of feedback can follow the following principle "Not too much, not too little, but just right". The teacher needs to have a deep knowledge of the level of each student in his class and what targets he wants them to achieve. Therefore, every student ought to get enough feedback which enables him to know what to do

next and not a feedback that does everything for them. For instance, a criterion of a good feedback includes the following aspects:

- Deciding on two or three points to give students comments on and not handing students their papers with all the errors being edited.
- Giving priority to the most significant learning targets when giving feedback.
- Comments on strengths and weaknesses ought to be at least equal in order not to inhibit students if weaknesses were more numerous than strengths.

2.6.3.1.3. Mode:

Another task that teachers are required to perform skilfully is their ability to decide on which mode to rely on to deliver an effective feedback. In this respect, some tasks can better be responded to through written feedback (the case of written assignments), some activities lend themselves to oral feedback such as observing and giving comments when students are brainstorming their ideas and examples for writing an outline, and another mode of feedback which is through demonstration, can be used to show students how something looks. For instance, the teacher can give his students a paragraph on how to use transitive words and expressions to link between sentences in a paragraph (Overmeyer, 2009:04).

2.6.3.1.3.1. Written Feedback:

Giving effective written feedback to every single student is a complex process itself. It requires deep understanding and consideration from any teacher about the role of language, not only in processing the world around us, but also in constructing the world around. In this respect, delivering written feedback to students should primarily consider the following criteria (Fisher and Frey: 2011:81):

- **Clarity:** the selection of simple words and expressions to present feedback are of a paramount importance in maximising the chances of the ability of students to perceive the teacher's intention behind delivering feedback and showing them what aspect they need to work on. Moreover, clear feedback should inform students about any development even if it is slight. Yet, the teacher should check if his students understand the provided feedback.
- **Specificity:** avoiding vague comments on students' written performances matters very much. For example, the teacher must avoid using expressions like "work hard"

because this comment does not give student insight or guidance on which area of his work that needs further efforts to be made.

Being specific in selecting the vocabulary of comments has many advantages. For instance, "great work!" is a positive, but too vague. A better one will sound like this "your introductory paragraph about the interpretation of the word ambition was great! How about sharing it with the whole class?". In this case, the student will know that the teacher really values his work and that his learning is supported through suggesting other students to know about it. Furthermore, the teacher can write comments that describe any useful strategies to be used during the process of writing.

- **Tone:** represents "*the expressive quality*" of feedback. It communicates the underlying assumptions about the student's identity as a learner through word choice and style. Tone is a powerful tool that can either provide inspirational insights or demotivate students. Hence, the teacher must be very careful about his selection of the vocabulary, which does not mean to be always positive if some criticism would be appropriate in this context. Moreover, the teacher has to share his wonderings with his students and provide some guidance that does not look like as if it is the last resource for improvement (ibid, 2008: 16).

2.6.3.1.4. Audience:

Another factor that also has an impact on the effectiveness of feedback is the choice of delivering feedback individually or collectively. If the teacher notices that each student has his own unique written performance, it will be suitable to address each student alone because it shows the student that his work is valued and it is better to tell him about the progress that he makes (Josef, 2001: 28).

2.6.3.1.5. Feedback Content:

Feedback is a message that the teacher has to know how to formulate it in order to be effectively considered and used by the students.

2.6.3.1.5.1. The Focus of Feedback:

According to Hattie and Timperley (2007), there are four levels of feedback on which the focus can be put on:

- **Feedback about the task:** students need to get feedback about the degree of success on any given task. Feedback about a task can identify the extent of its depth and quality.

It can also urge students to work on the task by enriching it with more details and illustrative images. Finally, feedback can be provided about the layout of the task and its neatness. However, there is a concern about feedback given on tasks. Each task is unique in its nature. Though students may learn how to work out this task based on feedback about it, they may not be capable of using this feedback to do a different task.

- Feedback about process: in this level, the teacher interferes during the execution of a task. He provides them with information about the way they relied on to approach the task, informs them about what has been achieved and compares it to the quality of good performance, and suggest possible options to reach the intended goal.
- Feedback and self-regulation: students' self-regulation is very central to the effectiveness of feedback because it has a huge impact on the students' decision about feedback. The power of self-regulation lies in directing students' learning starting from perceiving the significance of feedback in guiding their learning and relying on it to improve. In addition, effective learners internalize feedback so that it becomes part of their internal routine which reinforces their willingness to make much more efforts to reach the intended targets with confidence. However, self-regulation may have negative effect on less effective students who chooses not to monitor their learning though they get constructive feedback from their teachers.
- Feedback about the self as a person: the teacher must avoid giving feedback about students as persons such as "*you are the most intelligent girl!*". This kind of feedback is highly inappropriate not only because it does not inform the student about his learning and performance, but also because it stigmatizes learning as being closely related to a fixed criterion for success, which is intelligence and overlooks other positive influencing factors such as knowing how to solve a learning problem, the use of effective learning strategies, and above all knowing how to set goals and reach them through hard work.

2.6.3.1.5.2. Comparison:

The content of feedback is also based on the dimension of comparison. Feedback can include valuable information that is primarily criterion-referencing. That means that the feedback provided about any work is comparing its quality to the intended learning target (To what extent has the student achieved the learning goal?) or to a rubric that the

class already shared before the corrected performance. Besides, this kind of feedback is advantageous in a way that it addresses comparison between the level of the actual performance of a student and his previous performances so as to answer a set of key questions about his learning such as how well he is doing and what the next step is. Another instructional function that can be achieved through comparison is to help struggling students. In this case, the teacher can be helpful through reminding his students about the improvements they have made even if they are slight and encourage them to use the learning processes and strategies that they counted on to reach that level. However, when it comes to comparison, the teacher needs to pay attention to the fact that it is not useful to compare students with one another because this act can demotivate some learners, especially those who are not self-confident and start to make efforts to improve. Besides, the teacher's feedback should be given according to a specific criterion or a rubric that entails the standards of good performance (Higgins et al, 2009:09).

2.6.3.1.5.3. Function:

As the aim of feedback is to promote learning, its function ought to be of a descriptive nature and not an opportunity to judge the students' performances. Even though the comments on the student's written work are descriptive, the student may perceive them as an evaluation and a declaration of whatever the comments convey.

As a matter of fact, it is advisable for teachers to point out the improvements first (achievement feedback), especially for low attaining students and at the same time, they should suggest some doable steps for students to do (improvement feedback). As soon as the task is done, the teacher should monitor the student's work to check if there is any progress and provide feedback again on any learning development.

The teacher has to work on changing the students' attitudes and be able to interpret the teacher's feedback as being *descriptive*. One way to do this is by designing tasks that are a bit challenging and easy for the students to act upon the feedback given on them to improve, but without assigning a grade. Once the teacher notices that there is actual development, he sets an assignment or a test on the previous learning components and gives them grades or scores (Haines, 2004:20).

2.6.3.1.5.3. Valence:

The last characteristic that a good feedback must have is valence. The teacher must describe the work of the students using positive comments. Yet, he must point out at the actual performance of the student whether it is close to the intended goal or not. Being positive is to describe how well the student worked on his task. Moreover, using the appropriate comments to make the student notice what part of the task was not good enough. For the student to consider what the teacher informed him about his task, the teacher must offer suggestions on how to move towards improving the quality of his work (Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick, 2006: 12).

In short, feedback is a core pillar of the system of formative assessment that constitutes a powerful impact on learning as well as teaching. The teachers can evaluate the effectiveness of their feedback by making sure that their students' learning is improving, students' willingness to learn is increasing, and students' approval and acceptance of feedback as a necessary constructive tool in their daily classroom routine.

2.6.2. Rubrics:

Like any other practice, formative assessment instructional framework also has another sound tool of assessing the written products of students and guides them towards the achievement of their goals. This tool is the rubric.

2.6.2.1. The Definition of Rubrics:

According to Wolf and Stevens (2007), rubrics are guiding tools that assess the students' products and performances according to a set of descriptive levels of performance quality. Rubrics show to students the key traits they have to work on in order to meet successfully.

The use of rubrics is only effective in some learning cases. Rubrics are the best tool to be included in teaching when the students are required to show how a process is done such as making a speech to a class, making a product like written essays, themes, reports...etc, or demonstrating the understanding of a concept as using a diagram to explain the evolution of means of telecommunication. That means that rubrics can work better if the intended learning targets are observed by the teacher and indicated by students' products. In these cases, students would do, say, or write (Brookhart, 2013).

Rubrics may vary according to the subject matter and the content of the assignment that the students should perform. However, most of them are composed of four basic components.

2.6.2.2. The Components of a Rubric:

Any rubric should include the following four parameters that clearly communicate the teacher’s expectations to his students (Stevens & Levi, 2005: 05).

2.6.2.2.1. Task Description:

The teacher is usually the responsible for framing the task description that must be an indication of performance and the task has to specify the nature of the assignment as being a term paper, a presentation, or a project. Or it can be an overall behaviour like the use of Microsoft Word to type a text.

The task description is generally placed at the top of the rubric so as to attract the students’ attention and be a reference in case an assignment of the same kind was assigned to students again. However, if the task description is very long, the teacher can write the title of the assignment only like "Written Analysis" and guide the students to go back to its description on a previous rubric. The teacher should keep in mind that a rubric must not be more than one page.

Task Description: Each student will write an effect paragraph on the changes that social media have on his daily life. The student may focus his paragraph on the spent time on the social medium Facebook. The paragraph should include real examples.

2.2. Task Description in a Rubric

(Adapted from Stevens and Levi, 2005:06)

2.6.2.2.2. Scale:

The second dimension that any rubric should entail is the scale or descriptors. The function of the scales is to describe the levels of the quality of any performance. The used terminology tells the students how well or poor their product might be according to some

indicators. In this respect, some scholars advocate the use of terms that are descriptive and non-judgemental such as "high level, middle level...etc" (Overmeyer, 2009: 32).

It is advisable that the first assignment ought to include three levels of performance to check its effectiveness. Once the students get accustomed to this tool and show further understanding of its importance and make progress, the teacher can refine the rubric to include other descriptors. However, the scales should not be beyond five scales in order not to get students confused and make it hard for them to articulate the reasons of falling in any given scale.

Huba and Freed (2000: 180) gathered some of the used scales:

- Sophisticated, competent, partly competent, not yet competent (NSF Synthesis Engineering Education Coalition, 1997).
- Exemplary, proficient, marginal, unacceptable.
- Advanced, intermediate high, intermediate, novice (American Council of Teachers of Foreign Languages, 1986, p 278).
- Distinguished, proficient, intermediate, novice (Gotcher, 1997).
- Accomplished, average, developing, beginning (College of Education, 1997).

2.6.2.2.3. Dimensions:

A rubric also includes the different elements and skills such as the involved techniques in doing the task, the appropriateness of the language used in the context, the layout, and the content...etc that the students need to combine in order to accomplish the task successfully. The fact of including dimensions in rubrics allows students to reflect on the most important aspects of the assignment especially if the teacher links these dimensions to percentages (Overmeyer, 2009:32).

2.6.2.2.4. Description of Dimensions:

Dimensions alone cannot provide the students with enough feedback on the quality of the intended performances. Good descriptions of the dimensions offer students characteristics of poor work as well as how well a work can be carried out.

2.6.2.3. The Advantages of Using Rubrics:

Rubrics are crucial tools in the process of teaching and learning thanks to their roles in addressing the importance of involving students in the act of quality learning, helping teachers instruct their students effectively, and finally it establishes a close relationship between instruction and assessment, which has been neglected in many educational settings and contexts (Brookhart, 2013).

2.6.2.3.1. Assisting Students' learning:

As rubrics include the descriptions of different levels of performances, students are able to perceive the qualities of a good performance and product. Thus, they serve as self-assessing tools due to the fact that they can enable students compare the level of their performance with the ones cited in the rubric on one hand, and as rubrics identify the learning targets, students are likely to determine their actual level and decide what to do next to improve their performance (Stiggins, 2001:12).

2.6.2.3.2. Guiding instruction:

Arter and McTigue (2001) assert that relying on the use of rubrics in the act of teaching places learning at its very centre. When a teacher is preparing any rubric for a meant performance, he is concentrating on a set of skills that need to be combined to accomplish the task for the sake of meeting a range of learning targets and not being interested in teaching content only. Moreover, rubrics always regards the learning targets as the key element for any instructional move that means that instruction is primarily designed around selecting the best approaches and methods as well as the suitable learning environment to accomplish the learning objectives.

2.6.2.3.3. Coordinating Instruction and Assessment:

When rubrics are used formatively, they establish a connection between assessment and instruction. In this respect, rubrics embody a kind of assessment that is fair and consistent to all students as their performances are going to be assessed according to the same criteria on one hand (Wolf & Stevens, 2007: 12). Thus, the obtained information from the students' performances serves as indicators for teachers to adjust their instruction according to the level of each student's performance on a given activity. Besides, rubrics has a double barrelled approach in its way of giving a lot of information when they describe the

different dimensions as well as giving students clear accounts of the characteristics of the highest levels of achievement. These two indicators proved substantial as they were very effective for students' learning in a study done by Brinko (1993).

Thanks to the benefits that both teachers and learners can gain from the adoption of rubrics, teachers are encouraged to reflect upon the process of constructing such tools to be included in their instruction.

2.6.2.4. The Process of Constructing Rubrics:

The task of designing rubrics for the first time may be difficult especially for novice teachers. However, getting used to relying on rubrics in order to improve learning will facilitate their construction. Teachers can cooperate with each other in order to have discussions and suggestions about designing rubrics.

The process of constructing a well-designed rubric involves three basic stages (Stevens & Levi, 2005: 29).

2.6.2.4.1. Reflecting upon the Objectives and Contents of a Rubric:

At the outset of engaging in any activity, reflection is the first core step to be relied on. Therefore, the preparation of any rubric is based primarily on having reflection on seven principles.

- The overall objectives of the task: the teacher has to identify the learning targets and purposes behind assigning any task to his students whatever they are (developing skills such as writing formal letters, encouraging cooperative learning through group work, or developing critical thinking).
- The second principle that the teacher needs to reflect on is whether this task or a similar one was given to students so that he can recall the extent of their success and failure in accomplishing it.
- Thirdly, the teacher has to make sure that if the actual task contributed in any manner to the previous learning experiences and how it is going to aid in fulfilling future assignments.
- In addition, the teacher should reflect on the kind of the skills that students already have to complete the assignment, or they need to develop other skills to do so.

- Another important principle is to determine what evidence the students have to provide so as to show if they would meet the learning objectives and the teacher's expectations.
- Furthermore, the teacher should cite his highest expectations on this task as well as mentioning the characteristics of the exemplary product he wishes his students would generate.
- Finally, the teacher should list the worst performances and the obstacles that hindered students from performing well and how he can aid him overcome these pitfalls.

Once the teacher writes down his notes about the above steps, he can focus on what learning objectives he will emphasize in the design of the rubric.

2.6.2.4.2. Listing Learning Objectives and Teacher's expectations:

At this stage, the teacher turns his attention towards the details of the assignment by listing the most important learning targets that this assignment could help students meet successfully. Of course, at the beginning, the learning targets would seem so vague to organize in a list, but some refinement can make it possible to decide upon specific goals to this assignment and the teacher can break the task into other components.

2.6.2.4.3. Organizing the Components of the Rubric in a Grid:

Once the teacher finishes the list of the learning objectives, he selects the number of the levels of the quality of the students' performances. Then he provides detailed description for each level of performance from the highest level to the lowest one. Then he inserts the task description at the top and draws a grid that includes the other three components of a rubric, which are the scales, the dimensions, and the description of each dimension.

2.6.3. Conferencing: Enriching Classroom Interaction.

Though the teacher can choose to write down his comments about the students' written performances on their work sheets, he can also engage with them in a new initiative that can enlighten many hidden aspects of the identity of students as learners as well as granting the students the opportunity to be aware of their own learning. This initiative is conferencing.

2.6.3.1. The Definition of Conferencing:

According to Richards and Schmidt (2002:105), conferencing is a face-to-face purposeful conversation between a teacher and a student or a group of students. The underlying goals of conducting such discussion are chiefly meant for aiding students gain insights about their learning difficulties, their strengths and weaknesses, and planning for future efforts to make further progress.

2.6.3.2. The Value of Conferencing:

Conferencing can be very advantageous strategy providing that the teacher perceives its roles. Conferencing with individual students can be very fruitful in art and language classes especially in the students' initial years of instruction because they are not highly proficient at engaging in conversations about their own performances. Besides, the suitable time for conducting conferences with students is at the beginning of the year in order to grab any opportunities for students' improvements in any learning area and to be capable of fixing emergent weaknesses earlier (Fisher & Frey, 2011: 79).

Anderson (2000) points out that conferencing is a precious opportunity for teachers of writing to become effective listeners and researchers at the same time. He recommends that asking students read their written can enable them share their experiences with their peers and enable the teacher figure out what they exactly need to help them improve.

Graves (1983:138) asserts that conferencing with students raise personal reflections. He claims that students do not know what they actually know until the teacher elicits some pieces of information, which turn to be very informative about their learning. He also emphasizes the significance of verbal communication due to its power in allowing students to express themselves and encouraging reflectivity through slowing down their thinking while speaking and sharing their attitudes during conferencing. Thus, it is very crucial to grant students chances to confer with their teachers and their peers.

2.6.4. Self-assessment: Fostering Independent Learning.

The last practice of formative assessment that scholars have advocated in higher education is the development of independent learning through the use of self-assessment.

2.6.4.1. The Definition of Self-assessment:

Self-assessment is a process performed by students in which they review and compare their work against what they were trying to accomplish to identify their strengths and weaknesses in order to decide what achievement they have made and what plans they hold for improvement (Moss & Brookhart, 2009: 80).

According to Dann (2002: 73), self-assessment encourages students' awareness about their own learning as they get a bit responsible in an important area that is assessment, increases their motivation, and involves them more in their work. In addition, he emphasized the priority of the process of self-assessment instead of its outcomes.

2.6.4.2. Preparing Students for Self-assessment:

The attempt to involve students in assessing their own work needs to be planned carefully. First of all, the teacher must identify the goals from setting such kind of assessment. He should ask himself if self-assessment is just meant for making students reflect on their performances, or it is done for the sake of designing a plan for self-improvement. Then the teacher should provide his students with the criteria that they are going to use in order to assess their own work. In this case, it is better to supply them with rubrics before the session of assessment begins. Rubrics are a good choice because they include the characteristics of the level of each performance. Finally, students should be given opportunities to practice self-assessment and be asked to provide comments about their work with evidence (Greenstein, 2010:116).

For the strategy of self-assessment to be successful and adopted by students, the teacher should discuss with them the fact that it takes time but they can do it if they follow his recommendations.

2.6.4.3. Teaching Self-assessment Skills:

Teaching self-assessment skills depends a great deal on the importance of working on learning targets that students are familiar with or they have been introduced to in order to generate a list of the important qualities that guarantee that the work is going to be accomplished successfully. For instance, the teachers may ask his students to write down the characteristics of writing a fairytale. In this context, the students will process what they know about making a good fairytale. After that, students start the process of assessing their own

work with the assistance of the teacher who should give them descriptive feedback and ask them to write their reflections about their own work or by highlighting the description of the dimension that matches their work. Once they finish, they will be asked to judge the level of their efforts taking into account the following aspects time, concentration, care, and the use of strategies. If students show that they are interested, make efforts to identify their weaknesses and strengths, and consider their mistakes as opportunities to effective learning, the teacher can make sure that the process of self-assessment is working in his class (Brookhart, 2009: 83).

2.7. Conclusion:

In this chapter, the concept of formative assessment was explored deeply in order to trace back its foundation and the theoretical background that backed it. This section also aimed at highlighting the reasons and the purposes of relying on this kind of assessment in the processes of teaching and identifying students as active learners who are able of perceiving their own role in improving their own learning. Then light was shed on the various practices that formative assessment provides for teachers to change the nature of assessment from a threatening element into an aiding one through informing students about their strengths and weaknesses and suggesting ways for them to make further progress. Each practice was accompanied with useful guidelines for teachers to know how to apply them in their daily instruction.

Though the previous body of research highlighted the crucial role of formative assessment in promoting learning in many subject matters and in English and French speaking countries, it did not study its impact on learning in countries where English is considered as a foreign language on one hand. On the other hand, reformations and decisions about implementing new approaches and methods have been always a matter in the hands of educational authorities embodied in the Ministry of Higher Education and curricular designers. Therefore, the next chapter is going to focus on seeing the implementation of formative assessment practices from the perspectives of the involved agents in the processes of teaching and learning the writing skill who are students in university and teachers of writing.

Chapter Three

Field Work and Data Analysis

Chapter Three: Field Work and Data Analysis

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3.1. Introduction:

The actual chapter represents the core of this research. It is mainly interested in highlighting what procedures were adopted to collect the relevant data to investigate the manner by which the practices of formative assessment are to be relied on in order to promote the writing skill and lead students to be able to demonstrate a good level of the writing skill and be autonomous writers in higher education due to the crucial role of writing in their academic career as well as assist teachers in implementing these practices in their teaching of the writing skill.

For the sake of gaining insights from the field and the targeted population, three methods of data collection were adopted: systematic observation, a questionnaire directed to the students of 1LMD English, and an interview with the teachers of the module of written expression and production in Ibn Khaldoun University in Tiaret respectively. Gathering data was approached from three different angles. First of all, the systematic observation is meant to identify any aspects that favour the practice of formative assessment in relation to teaching writing. The second tool is the questionnaire which aims at enabling the students reflect on their readiness in approaching the module of written expression and investigating their attitudes towards the practices of formative assessment. Finally, the purpose of conducting the interview is to enable the teachers contribute to the theme of implementing the practices of formative assessment through their insights from their experience in teaching the writing skill.

3.2. The Systematic Observation

The intention to attend a session of writing aims at capturing a ‘real-life’ teaching and learning situation. The observation session was meant for detecting the patterns of involving the students in their learning of the writing skill as well as identifying any use of formative assessment practices in the teacher’s method of teaching the writing skill.

3.2.1. The Components of the Observation Sheet

The observation sheet is composed of the following components:

- 1/ The teacher’s procedures and methods.
- 2/The students’ tasks.

3.2.2. The Analysis of the Observation Sheet

The primary aim of this writing session was that by its end the students would be able to demonstrate their ability in writing an outline about a topic related to how to generate statements that embody the characteristics of a process paragraph.

This session was an opportunity for the students to practise and apply the theoretical background of developing a paragraph about a process. At the beginning of the session, the teacher paved the way for the main activity of building an outline by activating her students' schemata (prior knowledge) through asking them to remind her of the process paragraph and its characteristics. However, only some students were offering some answers related to the previous lesson and it seems that the rest of the students remained passive. Besides, the teacher explained the students' answers again. Regarding this situation, the teacher ought not to re-explain what she has already taught. Alternatively, she could hand every single student a brief self-assessment test (Appendix 01) to be filled in three minutes and then had a brief discussion with her students as a way of involving each one of them in the process of paving the way for the next step in this session.

The second part of the teacher's questioning was about asking the students to comment on a picture in order to elicit its topic to be developed later on. This task is really appropriate for this stage as it provides them with a material that they could count on in order to express their ideas and enable them practise their speaking skills. Once the topic of writing was suggested and agreed upon, the teacher divided the class into groups of six, assigned a responsible student for each group, and asked them to mention the ideas or the process that they thought they would be relevant to the topic of losing weight and keeping in shape.

This technique of enabling the students to work cooperatively in exchange of their learning experiences and sharing their ideas for the sake of producing a learning outcome is very effective as it involved all the students no matter what their levels were. In addition, the teacher was monitoring their answers for completing the task by providing each group with feedback after negotiating with them the appropriateness of their choices of details so that they could make immediate decisions to adjust them.

In spite of the fact that students were working on the task being assigned to them, some remarks are worth mentioning. First of all, though the students were working cooperatively in brainstorming their thoughts, they were using their first language instead of

the target language which is English. Besides, they were asking their teacher to assist them by giving the English equivalent of some Arabic words. Instead of providing the students with the words they need to accomplish the task, the teacher could have made this cooperation more effective through asking them to bring their dictionaries and depend on themselves to look for the words as a way of enabling them reduce the use of L01 in the classroom and increase both, the learning of the target language and the advancement of autonomy even at this very little stage of learning. Then, each group participated in the process of suggesting the relevant ideas to the topic.

The teacher's guidance does not stop at the stage of brainstorming, but it extended to helping them how to learn to write through answering a **process technique questions** handout (Appendix 02) in which they answered the questions that led them to build their brief outline paragraph (topic sentence, three controlling ideas, and a concluding sentence). After the students shared their outlines, the teacher assigned them the completion of this task by offering them a handout entitled **step by step approach to writing a process paragraph** that they would count on when they write their final draft.

The fact of suggesting learning tips embodied in material can really provide the students with a sense of real learning as they can make the transition from one learning activity to the other one smoothly and be involved in each step thanks to the aid they were handed. In this context, the students are also guided outside the class setting as they were asked to accomplish the task taking into account the guideline of writing the last draft and being dependent on themselves without the immediate assistance of the teacher.

To conclude, the observation session was a reliable clue in relation to assisting students on how to learn by providing them with immediate feedback so that they could make adjustments to their writing task. Moreover, providing the students with a sheet to answer is really reliable as it guided them work on the task effectively. Finally the guideline sheet represented a real tool for autonomy as it gave the learners the chance to rely on themselves to generate their process paragraphs.

3.3. The Questionnaire Directed to Students:

Before implementing any practice in the field of education, students' views and experiences should be taken into account in order to identify the favouring factors that can facilitate learning and teaching.

The major objective of directing this questionnaire to the students of first year LMD was to highlight the main reasons of the failure of some students in the module of written comprehension and production that is why it was administered immediately after their final exams in the academic year 2013/2014. It was also about giving them the chance to have some time to reflect upon their learning experiences during a year of studying the writing skill. Furthermore, the questionnaire investigated the students' attitudes about the implementation of a set of formative assessment practices brought together.

3.3.2. The Target Population:

The following table presents some details about the students that took part in answering the questionnaire.

level	01 st year LMD
Branch	Didactique de l'anglais langue étrangère
The number of students	40
Female	26
Male	14
Age	Ranged from 18 to 24
Repetitive students	17
Students choosing English	33
Student not choosing English	07
The students' results of the module of writing	
Positive	22
Neutral	11
Negative	07

3.1. The Profile of the Target Group

3.3.2. The Design of the Questionnaire:

The questionnaire is composed of four sections. Each section involves a set of close-ended questions in which the students are provided with yes or no answers and in other questions; they are given a range of possibilities to select from the appropriate answer for the learning attitudes and situation. The four sections are:

I/ The Details of the Respondents.

II/ The Investigation of the Students' willingness to Approach the Module of Written Comprehension and Production.

III/ The Students' attitudes towards the Implementation of the Practices of Formative Assessment in the Teaching and Learning of the Writing Skill.

IV/ The Students' Psychology and Formative Assessment.

3.3.4. The Analysis of the Results

The obtained results were first interpreted and then analysed to have insights about the students' attitudes towards the use of the practices of formative assessment.

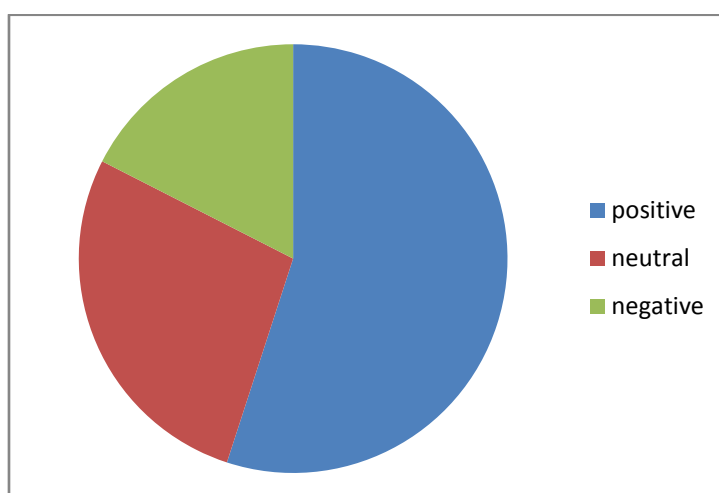
3.3.4.1. The Details of the Respondents

Question 06

The question was intended to know the role that the module of written comprehension and production played in the summative assessment results of the students. Especially in their overall achievement due to the decisive nature of this module as having a high coefficient.

	Number	Rate
positive	22	55%
Neutral	11	27.50%
Negative	07	17.50%

3.2. The Students' Results of Writing (final exam)



3.1. The Students' Results of Writing

The above pie chart about the final results of students in the module of written expression clearly shows that 27.5% of the students involved in the study admitted that this module did not contribute positively to their overall results of 1st year and 17.5% revealed that their results were so weak that it played a negative role and led them to the catch up sessions to be able to succeed.

Question 07

This question was directed only to the students that did not achieve well in the module of written comprehension and production in order to enable them reflect on their learning experiences with the writing skill as well as to identify the factors that they think were the reasons behind their failure.

The results show that 42.50% of this category considered that the main hindering factor for a good achievement in the module of writing is the fact of the lack of practice. Thus, it is indicated here that these learners are well aware of the close correlation between the nature of writing as a productive skill and the significance of practice in enabling them to make progress in academic writing. In addition to that, 17.50% of this category linked their failure to the lack of time devoted for class session. They stated that studying the module of written comprehension and expression for 03 hours a week is not enough for having a good level in writing in a foreign language especially if light is shed upon the activities that are to be tackled in each session. Therefore, it is worth mentioning that during these two sessions of one hour and a half, the teacher should teach the theoretical background of the components of writing, deal with these theoretical backgrounds during written comprehension sessions for the sake of introducing learners to examples of writing contexts, and finally enable learners apply what they learned through practice. With regard to some other hindering factors, 15% of the concerned students referred their failure to the lack of motivation and the lack of feedback and feedward. Concerning these results, it should be mentioned that these students perceives the importance of psychological factors in increasing their achievement as well as the crucial role that feedback can play in providing them with descriptive information about their writing performances and suggesting the best ways so as to improve. Fortunately, only 12.50% reported that their indifference to the importance of the module of writing as a reliable skill in learning English and being the most used mode for assessment in higher education was an obstacle for getting at least an acceptable grade that could guarantee their success. 10% of the students said that the reasons of their failure were both, the teacher's

methods of teaching writing and the kinds of the writing tasks which did not take into account their interests. Finally, 2.50% of the respondents confessed that the real reason of having negative results in writing was due to their inability to demonstrate a good level in the English language.

The second section of the questionnaire was mainly devoted to investigate any behaviour that encouraged the students to take initiatives in studying writing expression.

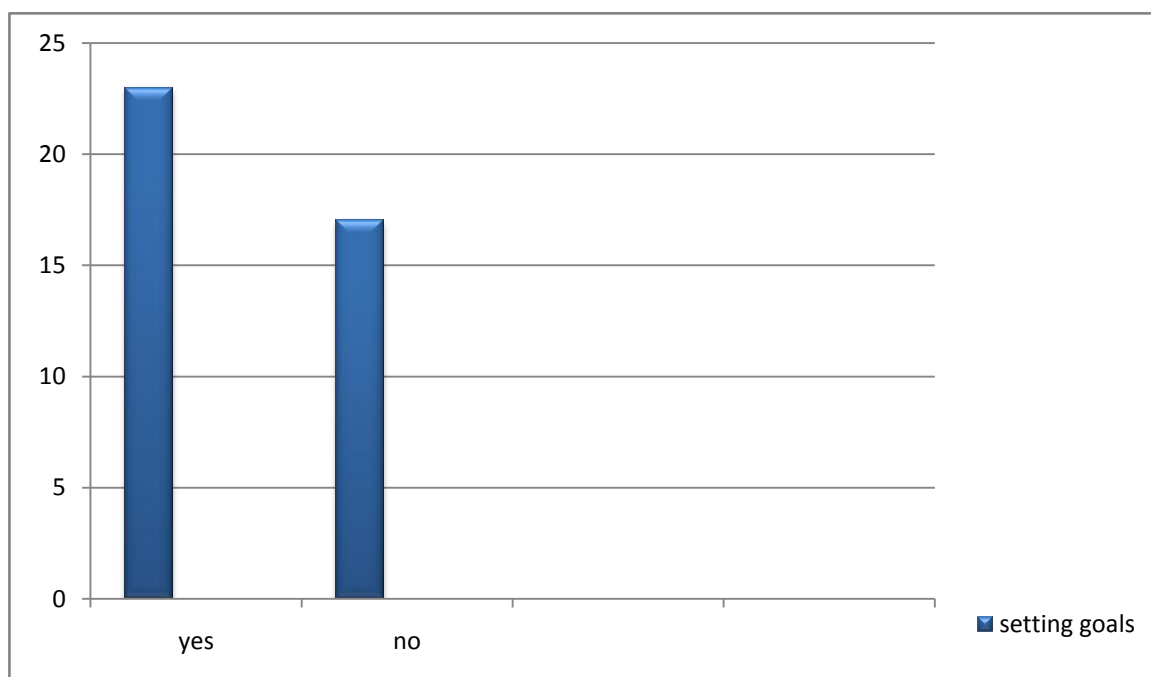
Question 01

This question attempted to reveal whether the students have any predetermined goals that they wanted to achieve during their study of the module of writing and at the same time to raise their awareness about this essential step of setting clear targets to reach by the end of their studies.

	Number	Rates
Respondents	40	100%
Yes	23	57.50%
No	17	42.50%

3.3. Setting Goals from Studying Writing

It is apparent from the results shown in table 3.4 that 57.50% of the respondents approved the fact that they set clear objectives that they wanted to achieve through studying the module of writing, which suggests that this category of students had a purpose from learning the writing skill. Whereas 42.50% stated that they did not set any goals to reach by studying writing.



3.3. Setting Goals from Studying Writing

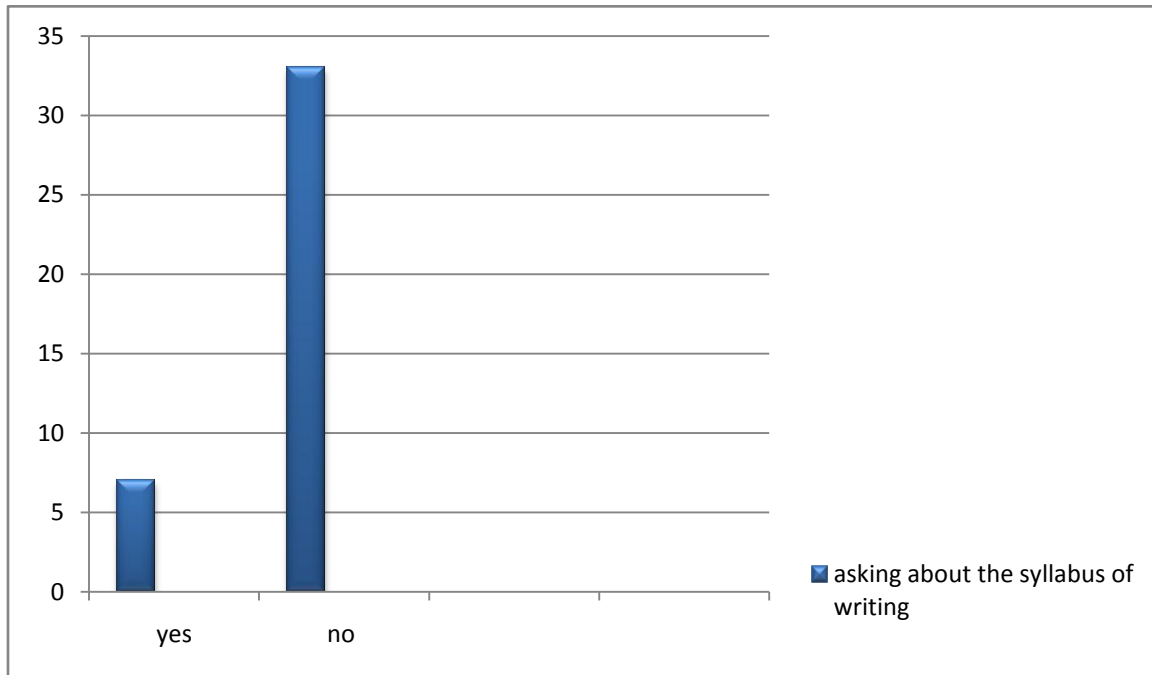
Question 03

As the students were not provided with the syllabus of the module of written expression, this question was intended to determine whether the students made the initiative and asked their teacher to supply them with the contents of their programme so that they could have an idea about what they were supposed to acquire from studying the module of writing.

	Numbers	Rates
The respondents	40	100%
Yes	07	17.50%
No	33	82.50%

3.4. Asking about the Syllabus of Writing

As the above shows that only 17.50% of the students actually contacted their teacher of writing and asked her to provide them with the contents of this programme. Whereas the majority of students with a percentage of 82.50% admitted that they did not approach their teacher to get any piece of information about what they would study in the module of writing. This fact can indicate that these students still think that the teacher is the only agent who can make decision in the class.



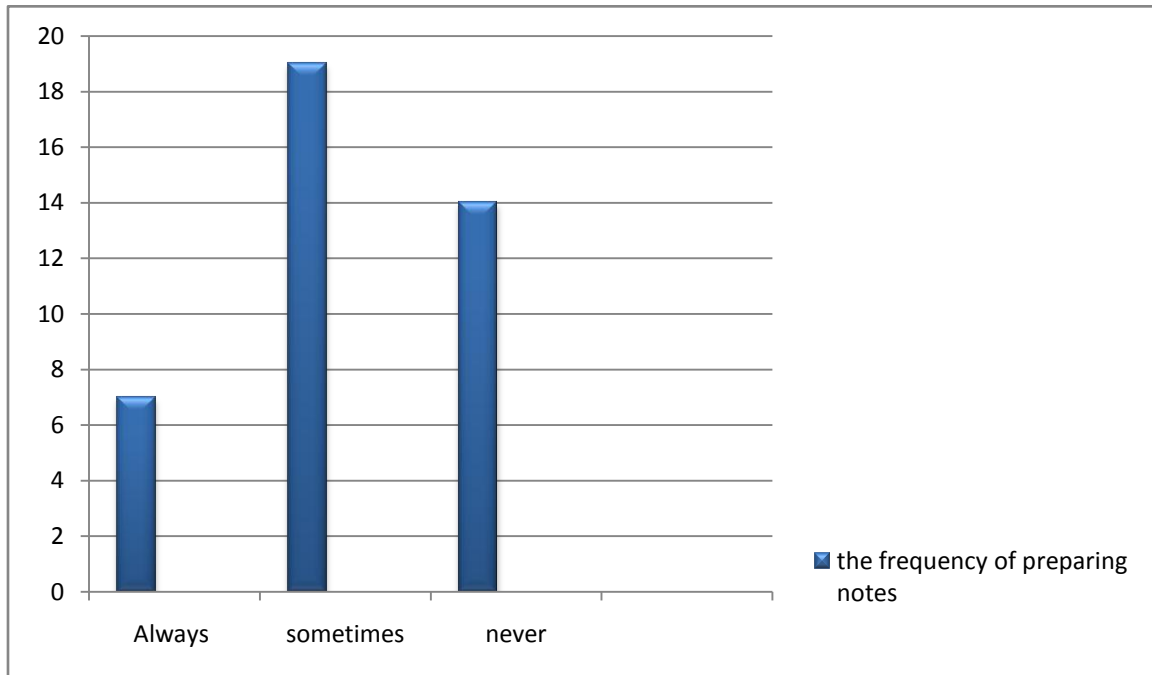
3.4. Asking about the Syllabus of Writing

Question 04

So as to elicit information from the students about the frequency of their readiness to approach the module of writing through making attempts to prepare some notes about their lessons before coming to the classroom setting, the results show that 17.50% of the students always took an active part in their learning through making notes and 47.50% of the students answered that they sometimes did. Whereas 35% of them said that they never did.

	Numbers	Rates
The respondents	40	100%
Always	07	17.50%
Sometimes	19	47.50%
Never	14	35%

3.5. Preparation of Writing Lessons



3.5. Preparation of Writing Lessons

Question 05

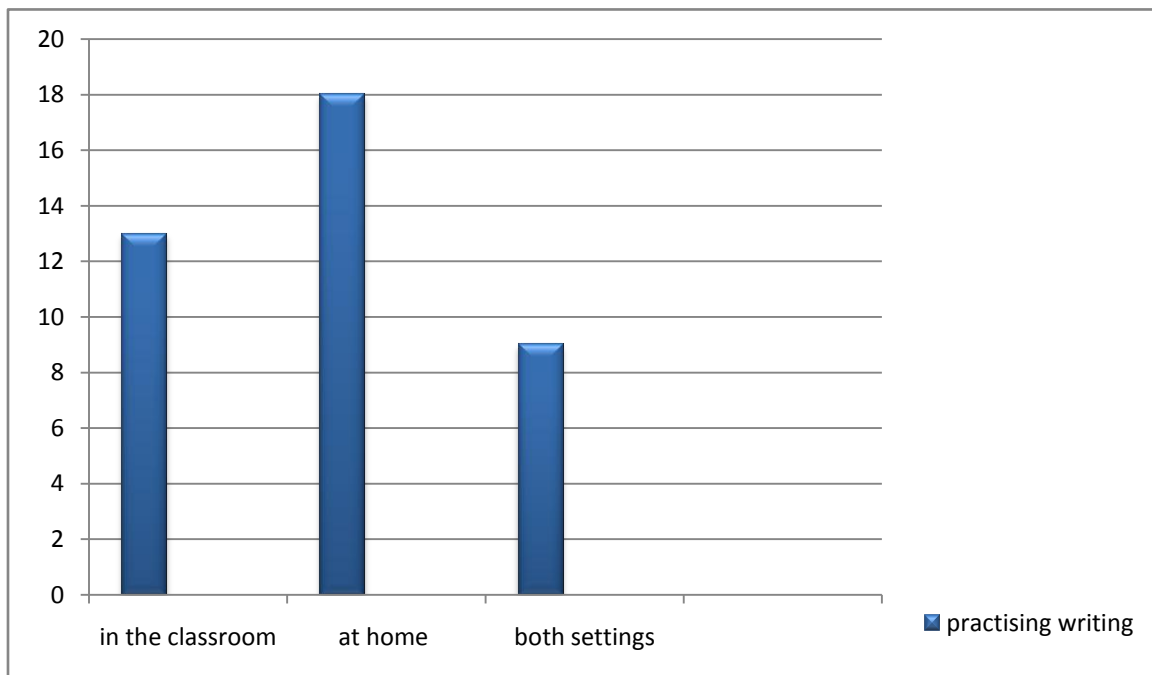
This question is of a paramount importance as it explores the practical side of teaching the writing skill through highlighting the settings where the students feel comfortable to practise their writing tasks in a way that contributes positively to their learning.

	Number	Rates
Respondents	40	100%
The classroom	13	32.50%
At home	18	45%
Both of them	09	22.50%

3.6. The Settings of Practicing Writing

It is noticed that the highest percentage which was about 45% of the students preferred producing their pieces of writing at home because they have enough time to make many drafts as well as being able to have access to many resources, and 32.50% reported that the classroom is their ideal setting to deal with their writing performances due to the role the

teacher can play through assisting them with his guidance and feedback. However, about 22.50% said that there is no difference at all between practising writing in both settings.



3.6. The Settings of Practising Writing

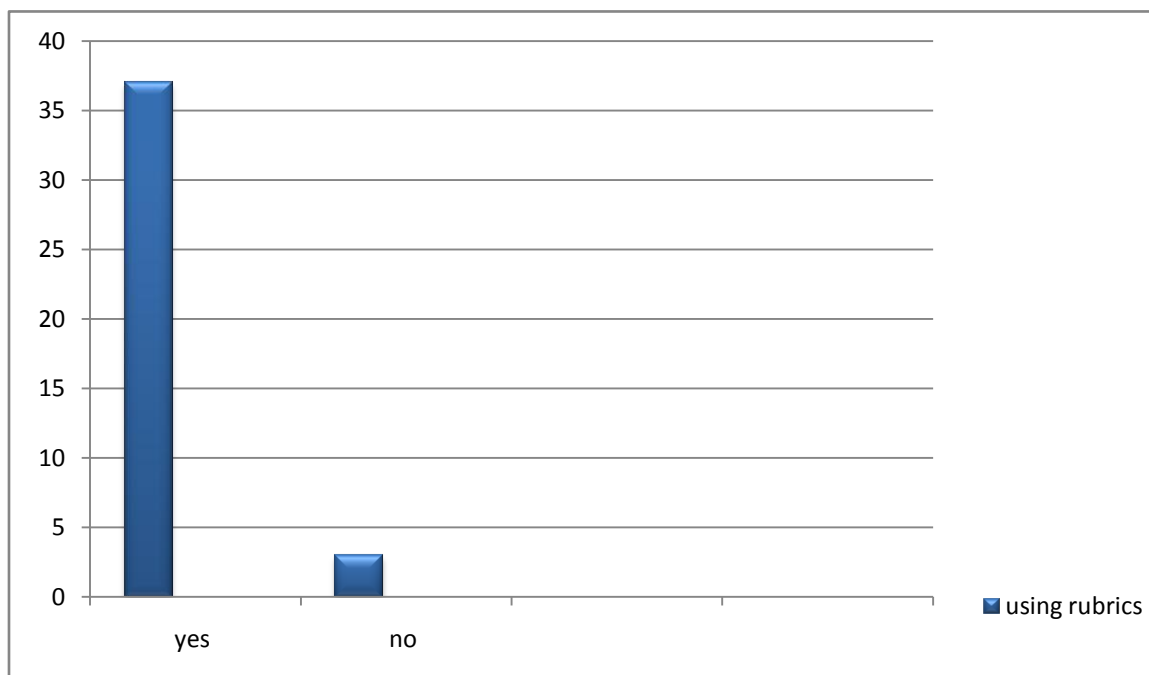
The third section of the questionnaire was mainly devoted to investigate the students' point of views about the implementation of the practices of formative assessment including: rubrics, descriptive feedback, teacher-student conferencing, and self-assessment in the different stages of teaching and learning the writing skill. Besides, it aims at identifying the components of each practice that the students think they would help them achieve a better level in writing.

Question 01

This question was directed to students in order to know if the students approve the inclusion of rubrics whenever they are assigned to write a paragraph on a given topic so that they describe the characteristics of the final draft that they would submit to their teacher.

As it was expected the majority of students with a percentage of 92.50% agreed on using rubrics as a reliable procedure that they would account on to guide them towards incorporating the dimensions which could assist them in writing successfully. However, 07.50% admitted that they did not like to receive rubrics because they thought they would

hinder them from concentrating on their writing and hinder them from living their own learning experiences even if they committed mistakes.



3.7. Using Rubrics in Writing

Question 02

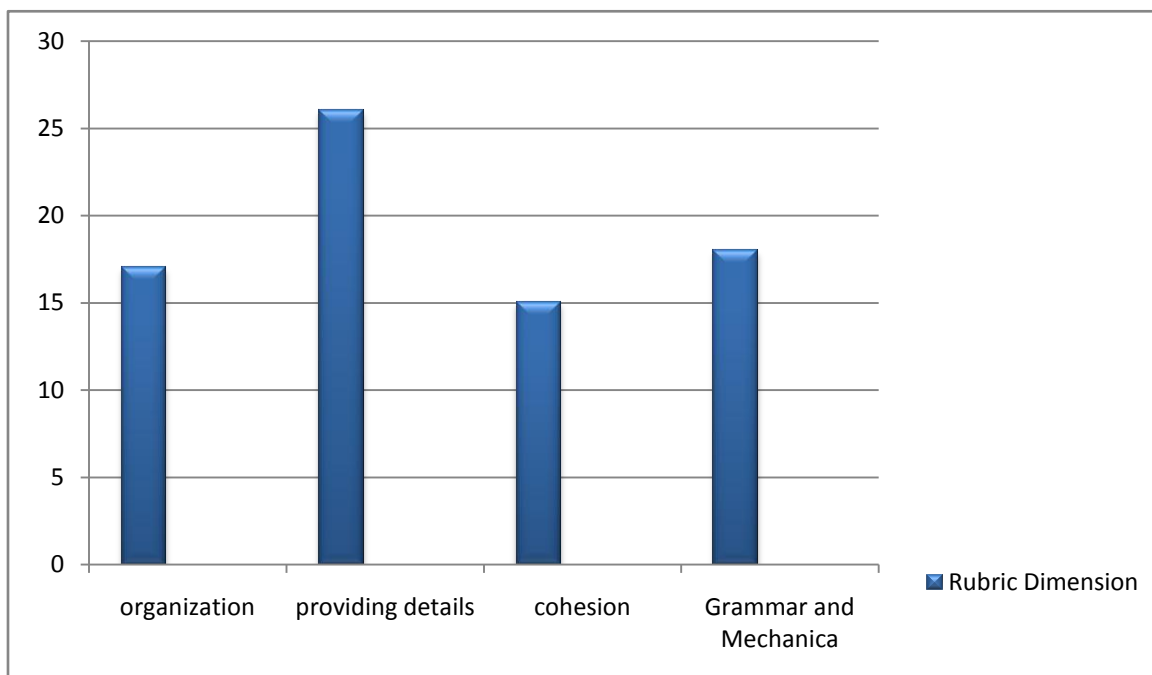
This question was meant for obtaining information about the dimensions that the students thought are important to be reminded of in rubrics so that they could work on to produce well-written paragraphs.

	Number	Rates
The respondents	37	100%
The organization of the paragraph	17	45%
Giving examples and statistics	26	70%
Writing cohesively	15	40%
Editing	18	48%

3.8. Dimensions Incorporated in Rubrics

It is worth noticing that the students crossed more than one dimension within this question, which is why the accumulation of the percentages is more than 100%.

The obtained results highlighted that 17% of the students who approved the incorporation of rubrics in their writing assignments thought that it would be beneficial for them to rely on rubrics that include how paragraphs ought to be built, that means that these rubrics should remind them of the importance of stating a topic sentence, supporting or controlling ideas, and a concluding sentence. With regard to the other components of rubrics, 70% of the students considered that the rubric could be very effective and helpful if it entailed a part that reminds them of enriching their pieces of writing with illustrations and examples. And 40% of them replied that they could be assisted in their writing providing that the rubrics have guidelines on how to make their writing cohesive through the use of transitional words and expressions as well as the sequencers related to each genre of paragraph developing. Finally, 48% of the students reported that the rubrics ought to include a reminder about polishing their final draft by asking them to check their grammar and mechanics including spelling, capitalization and punctuation.



3.8. The Dimensions of Rubrics

Question 03

This question is very crucial in any educational setting as it seeks the knowledge of how the students perceive their relationships with their instructor concerning getting descriptive feedback about the strengths and the weaknesses of their written performances. And if they like to be informed about their learning of the writing skill.

	Numbers	Rates
The respondents	40	100%
Yes	40	100%
No	////////////////	////////////////

3.9. Receiving Descriptive Feedback

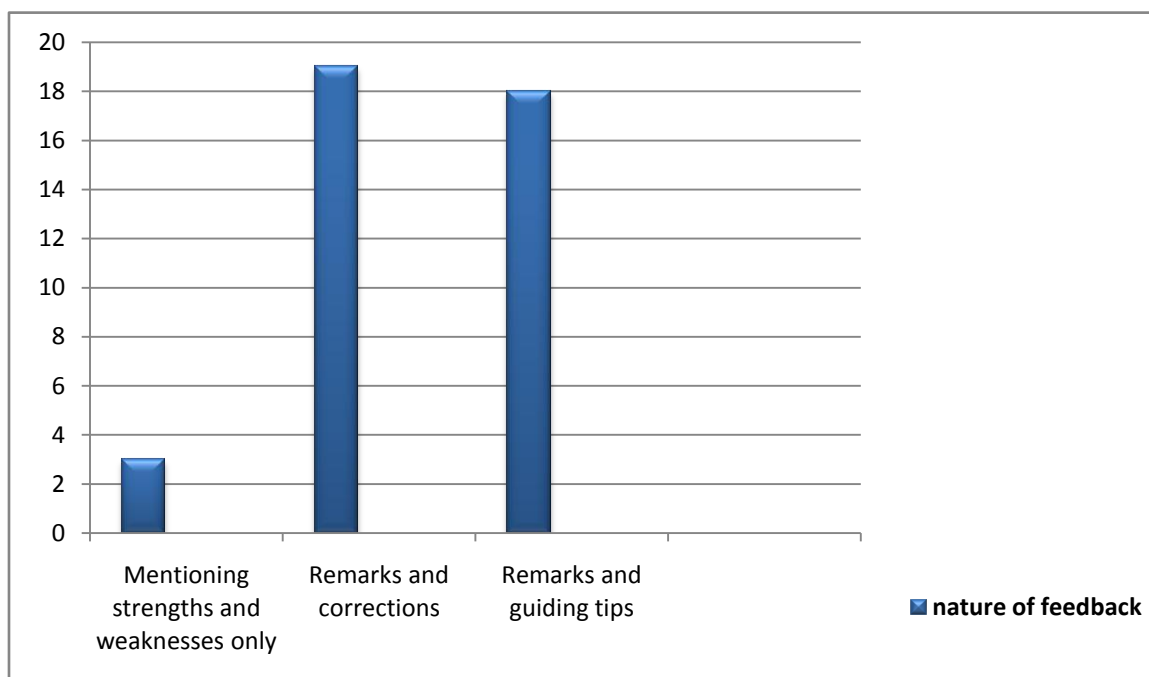
The above table gives an account of the students' attitudes about receiving descriptive feedback. It clearly shows that all the respondents are interested in the fact of getting feedback from their teacher about their achievements in writing as well as the areas that they failed at achieving well. This choice made by all the students indicated that the students are looking at the teacher's indispensability through the active role he plays when he assumes the responsibility of contributing to their learning by providing them with evidence about their progress and constructive remarks about the learning targets that they need to take into account and make extra efforts to achieve them successfully.

Question 04

This question was intended to identify the nature of the descriptive feedback that the students preferred to be delivered by their teacher about their written performances.

According to the results, only 07.50% of the respondents believed that the nature of the descriptive paragraph that they need from their teacher ought to be reserved to giving them accounts about the progresses that they made so far as well as mentioning their weaknesses only. This result can be explained by the fact that these learners are self-confident about their own potentials and they think they are able to handle and assume responsibility of their own learning by making their own learning decisions and taking the steps towards

meeting them. The second category of learners with the percentage of 47.50% preferred to get insightful feedback from the teacher about their writings that could give them remarks about how well they worked on the written assignment and at the same time, they considered the fact of correcting their mistakes very beneficial for their learning how write. It seems from this result that this category of learners relied on their teachers' judgements and need to be encouraged to trust their own instincts and try to find tips that enable them to correct their own mistake to learn more effectively. Whereas 45% of the students admitted that it would be very advantageous for them if they are informed about the strengths of the work and guided by their teacher on how to improve through their teacher's suggestions and tips to advance in their learning area they are weak at. It seems clearly that this category of students is willing to assume responsibility of a part of their learning through working on their areas of weaknesses if they are inspired and provided with ways that make learning targets possible to be achieved.



3.10. The Nature of the Descriptive Feedback

Question 05

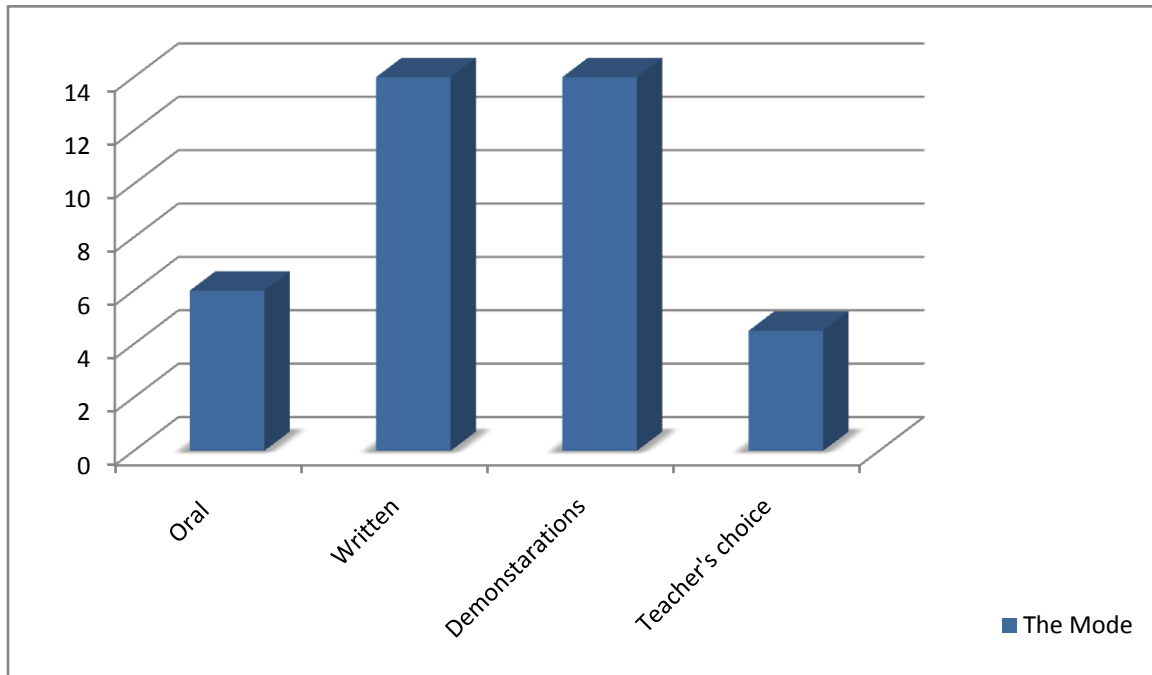
This question attempted to identify the mode of feedback that the students like to receive and think it is useful for them to remember and come back to if they decide to overcome any mistakes or errors that make during the process of writing.

	Numbers	Rates
The respondents	40	100%
Oral feedback	06	15%
Written feedback	14	35%
Demonstrations	14	35%
The teacher's choice	06	15%

3.11. The Modes of Descriptive Feedback

Concerning the choice of the mode of the descriptive feedback, the results indicated that there are two categories which are more advocated than the other two. According to 35% of the respondents, the mode of the descriptive feedback that they would wish to get from their teacher after reading and formatively assessing their written performances is through means of inserting it on their worksheets so that they can keep an authentic record of the quality of their written work. At the same time, written feedback can serve as an empowering tool of reflection as the students may go back to and make self-evaluation or take real steps to make adjustments to their work. Not surprisingly that the same percentage of students selected the mode of descriptive feedback in the form of demonstrations in which the teacher is in a position to redesign a remedy in which he would reteach the points that the majority of students failed to apply very well in their writing pieces.

It is worth mentioning that the above two categories of learners are of visual learning style as they emphasized the fact of offering them explanation that depends on writing or demonstrations. However, only 15% of the students prefer to receive oral feedback and the other 15% thought that the choice of the mode is up to the teacher as they are not a part of the process of taking decisions in the classroom and they considered themselves unable to intervene with the teacher's teaching practices.



3.11. The Modes of Descriptive Feedback

Question 06

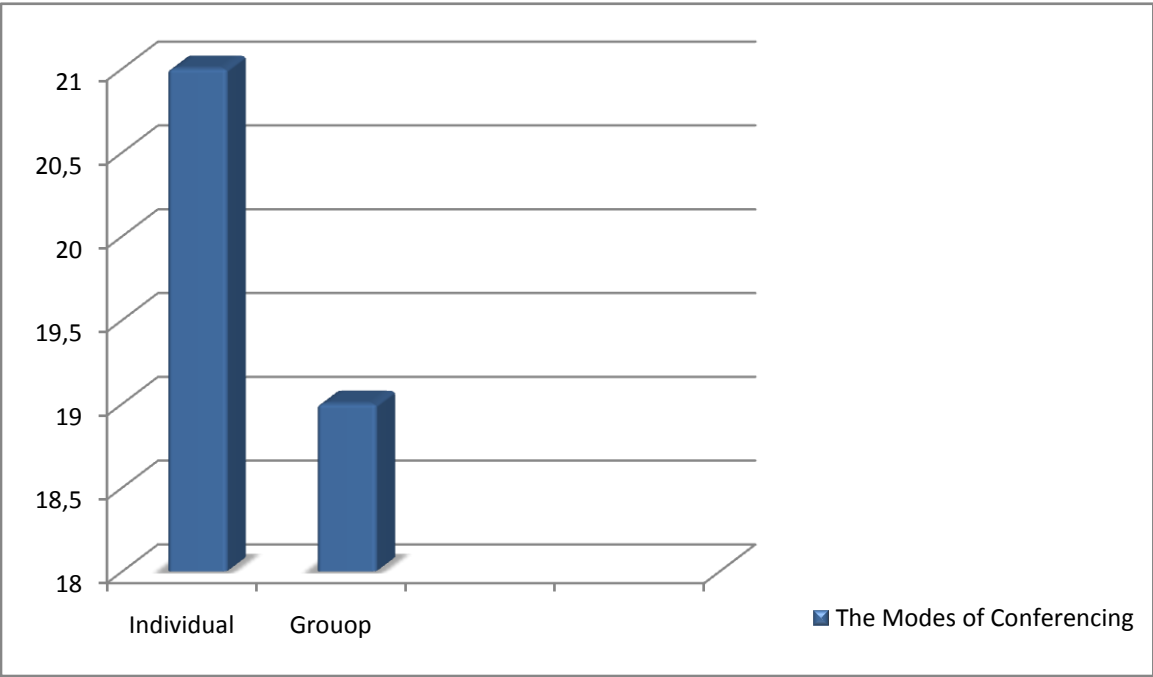
This question was meant to identify the students' attitudes towards the technique of individual and group conferencing that can take place in their daily learning of writing.

	Number	Rates
The respondents	40	100%
Individual conferencing	21	52.50%
Group conferencing	19	47.50%

3.12. Students' attitudes about Conferencing

The above results reveal that there is only a slight difference between the two categories of students' attitudes about the kinds of conferencing. Thus, 52.50% considered that being a part in conferencing with their teachers about their written work should be kept confidential. That means that the teacher should discuss the feedback he provided in private. This clearly suggests that this category of learners did not like to be exposed in front of their

classmates because they think that making mistakes or being weak in any learning area may make them embarrassed and be judged by other students that is why it is very secure for them not to share it with the rest of the class. Whereas 47.50% of the respondents approved the inclusion of group conferencing in teaching writing because they regarded the fact of discussing the level of their achievement in writing with their teacher during the class sessions or with other students is not an intimidating activity. On the contrary, they saw it as a potential that can advance their learning of writing as well as granting their classmates the same chance to learn from their own learning experience and reflect upon it.



3.12. Students’ attitudes towards Individual and Group Conferencing

Question 07

Due to the crucial role of planning the activities that would take place inside the classroom, it was necessary to investigate the learning targets that students would like to discuss with their teacher of writing during conferencing sessions.

	Number	Rates
The respondents	40	100%
Actual level	18	45%
Setting goals	13	32.50%
Means of achieving goals	23	57.50%

3.13. Guidelines for Discussions during Conferencing

Concerning the guidelines that the respondents really would like to have clarifications and guidelines about during the session of conferencing are summarized in the following lines. More than half the respondents with a percentage of 57.50% preferred to get insights from their teacher of writing about the learning tips that could enable them overcome their weaknesses in writing, realize their learning targets and provide them with the appropriate learning materials like books, forums, learning web sites in which they can find reliable learning sources such as practice worksheets, videos, and stories about succeeding at writing. Whereas 45% of the respondents thought that they could cease the opportunity of being conferenced by examining closely their actual level in writing with their teacher who is able at this phase to inform them about the learning objectives that he sees they have already reached and what points they need to consolidate and make further efforts to remedy them. Only 32.50% admitted that the sessions of conferencing could be very effective for them providing that the teacher schedules the theme of assisting them with setting the next learning objectives that they have to achieve to make further progress in their learning.

The last section of the question was devoted to one of the most influencing learning factors which can either boost or hinder the process of learning; it is the psychology of the learners.

Question 08

The last question of this section aimed at knowing whether the students are taking into account the decision to involve themselves in learning the writing skill or they still consider the teacher as the only provider and monitor of their learning. In addition, it seeks the knowledge of whether the students are ready to take more responsibilities in the area of formative assessment through checking their own written activities.

	Numbers	Rates
The respondents	40	100%
The irrelevance of self-assessment	14	35%
The technique of self-assessment	15	37.50%
Paving the way for autonomy	11	27.50%

3.14. Students' attitudes about Self-assessment

The obtained results indicated that 35% of the students being involved in this study saw that the attempt of the teacher to ask them to take part in assessing their written work through a checklist is an irrelevant practice due to their belief that their teacher is the only qualified agent and person in charge to assess their work and deliver an appropriate descriptive feedback. Thus, it seems clearly that this group of learners still hold the idea that the teacher is responsible for all the aspects of teaching and practice inside the classroom and they consider themselves as unable to make even small decisions and judgments about their own learning practices. However, 37.50% of the whole class were ready to have such an experience of checking their own writing as they thought that it could be an effective technique that would make them more aware of their learning how to write correct meaningful English. The least category with a percentage of 27.50% welcomed the idea of being trained to check their own writing especially if self-assessment could be a way to make their teachers trust their potential and help them evaluate their work in order to get used to monitor their own achievement and be ready to assume responsibility of their learning and become autonomous learners who can make effective decisions and guide their own learning

The last section of the questionnaire was about shedding light upon a very influencing factor in learning that can boost learning or simply hinder it. It is the psychology of the students being involved in this study in relation to the use of the practices of formative assessment.

Question 01

The objective of this question was to know if the delivery of descriptive feedback to the students of first year LMD has any positive impact on their psychology.

	Number	Rates
The respondents	40	100%
Yes	40	100%
No	//////////	

3.15. Feedback and Students’ psychology

Unsurprisingly, all the students admitted that they are relieved when their teacher of writing informs them with descriptive feedback about their writing immediately so that they can take decisions about their learning immediately if they wish too, not leave it until getting the final feedback that accompanied summative assessment in which learners cannot make amendments and check their improvements with their teachers.

Question 02

The students were asked whether getting a feedback that is really informative and constructive about their weaknesses motivates them to make much more efforts in order to improve their written performances.

	Number	Rates
The respondents	40	100%
Yes	31	77.50%
No	09	22.50%

3.16. Constructive Feedback and Motivation

The above table shows that the majority of the respondents considered the fact of getting feedback even on their weaknesses motivates them to take it into account because making mistakes and errors is a crucial part of learning and the key of making positive changes in learning is mainly in their hands. Whereas 22.50% of the students reported that if their teacher points at their weaknesses, they did not feel at ease and they get demotivated. This case indicates that these students misinterpreted the fact of getting constructive feedback about their work because they think that they are personally judged and not their performance.

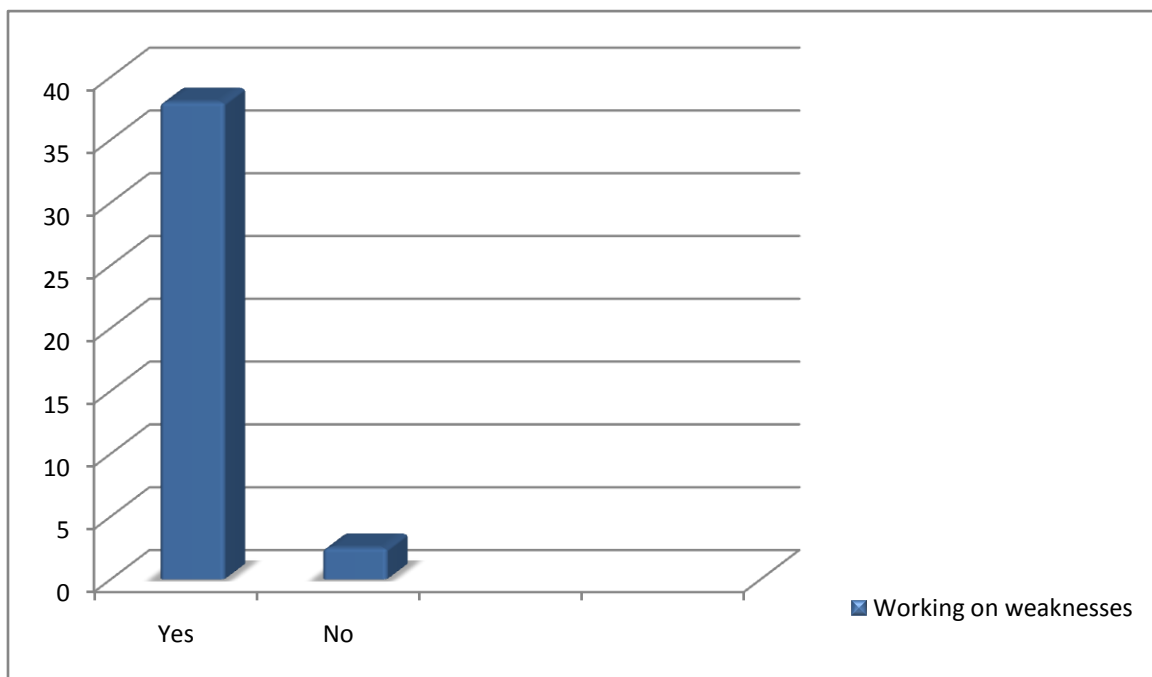
Question 03

This question is an extension to the previous one as it tackles the perspective of the students' willingness to work on their weaknesses if their leaning actions are related to any kind of reward.

	Number	Rates
The respondents	40	100%
Yes	38	95%
No	02	05%

3.17. Students' Willingness to Work on their Weaknesses

According to the table (3.17), a big number of students (95%) showed that extrinsic motivation can be a decisive factor in increasing their readiness and willingness to reflect upon the constructive feedback and use it in order to improve their level in the writing skill. This result is a confirmation of what Brookhart (2008) pointed out at when she claimed that any delivered feedback over a period of time ought to be rewarded in order to get the students more involved and had a purpose for improvement. Whereas (05%) said that it makes no difference to work on their learning difficulties for the sake of getting a reward whatever it is.



3.15. Students' Willingness to Work on their Weaknesses

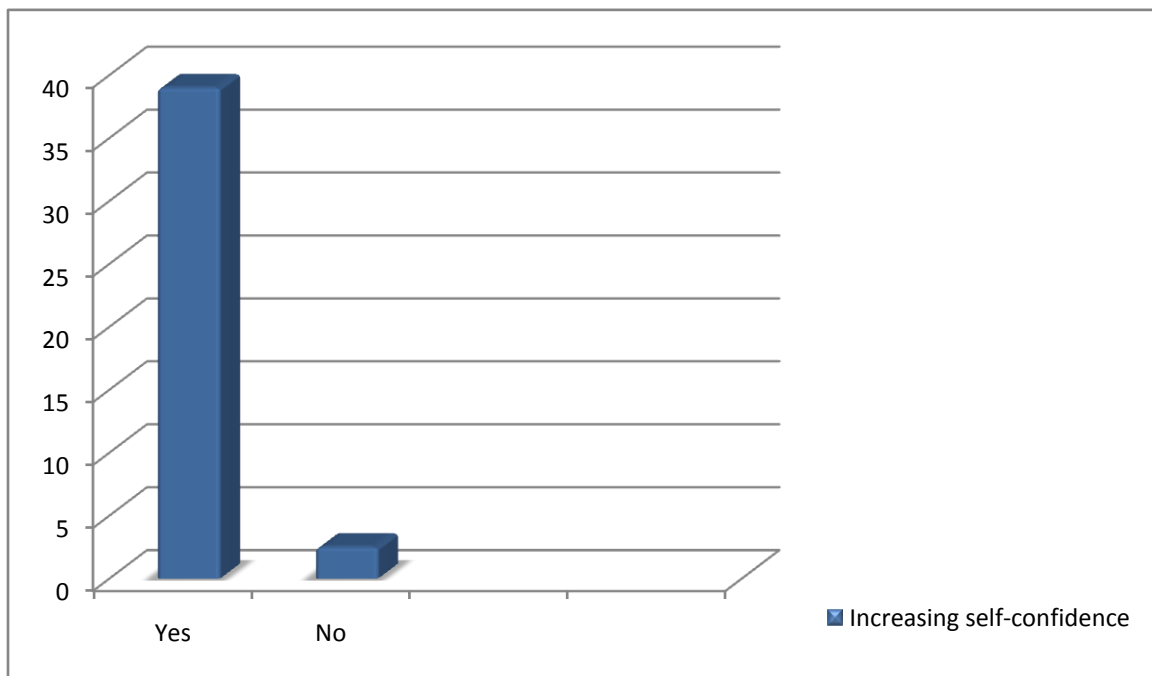
Question 04

This question aimed at detecting whether the students care about their teacher's impression about the quality of their written performances or not.

	Number	Rates
The respondents	40	100%
Yes	39	97.50%
No	01	02.50%

3.18. Teacher's views and Students' psychology

Only 02.50 % denied the importance of their teacher's impression about their good work in increasing their self-confidence. However, 97.50% of the students revealed that they count very much on their teacher's point of views about the quality of their work especially if he holds positive and encouraging ones as they lead them to consolidate their self-confidence.



3.16. The Teacher's opinions and Students' self-confidence

To sum up, it sounds that the students really appreciated the inclusion of the different practices of formative assessment in studying the module of written comprehension and expression thanks to the way each practice highlights its concept, the objective it intends to realize by explaining the component of each practice and how it can help them learn how to write effectively, and improve their writing performances each time they engage in generating pieces of writing.

Furthermore, they approved the fact of being actively involved in making decisions about their own learning such as considering the option of setting goals and work towards realizing them if the means are provided.

Moreover, learners advocated the use of formative assessment as a relieving factor that can encourage and motivate them to improve.

3.4-The Conducted Interview with Teachers

The major objective of the interview is to get insightful accounts from the experiences of some teachers of writing as well as their points of view about the useful procedures and strategies that enable any teacher implement the practices of formative assessment in the sessions of written comprehension and expression so that the students' writing is supported.

3.4.1. The Informants

Two teachers of the module of written comprehension and expression at the University of Ibn Khaldoun were interviewed. Each interview took about half an hour.

3.4.2. The Analysis of the Interviews

Both interviews yielded interesting facts about the necessary elements that can make the transition into implementing the active use of the practices of assessment for learning in teaching the writing skill and involve the students in the process of making them participant agents rather than passive receivers of knowledge.

Question 01

This question was asked in order to seek the highlighting of the appropriate factors that need to be established so as to guarantee a smooth implementation of the practices of formative assessment.

The first interviewee thought that there are many important factors that are important for the implementation of formative assessment. However, he considered the issue from the psychological perspective. Thus, he insisted on the following points of view:

1/ The Affective Readiness: the teacher should prepare his students to receive such kind of assessment. That means that they should get rid of their fear and embarrassment because

formative assessment represents an opportunity for learning and overcoming their learning weaknesses.

2/ Motivation: both teachers agreed on this factor. The teacher should advance motivation in each class by informing his students of the benefits of being a good writer which can evoke their intrinsic drives as well as evoking their will to write.

3/ The Simplicity of Formative Assessment: the teacher should simplify the design of some formative assessment practices as the rubric and use it in accordance with his students' abilities and potentials.

Question 02

This question intended to investigate the procedures that can assist the teacher in instructing their students formatively in day to day teaching of the writing skill.

The first interviewee admitted that the implementation of the practices of formative assessment have to do with the strategies of each teacher when he comes across the weaknesses of his students. Besides, he relates the practice of assessment for learning to the kind of weaknesses and the time that need to be devoted to analyse it and prepare an effective remedy session to reconstruct their knowledge.

The second interviewee said that the implementation of such practices is linked to the learning objectives of each lesson. Therefore, the teacher should plan activities that entail formative assessment practices in relation to the learning objectives. Besides, they need to observe the students during the different phases of the lesson and decipher their written performances to locate their strengths and weaknesses so as to design other activities to help them learn effectively.

Question 03

The aim of this question was to get answers about the role of cooperation in higher education to implement new practices.

The first answer revealed that though each teacher has his own set of techniques that he utilized with his students, there are times when it seems a bit challenging to find the right strategies that can be employed to support learning. So in this case, it is of a paramount importance for any teacher to consult other colleagues because they may see the issue from

another perspective that could be ignored by the teacher or he may consult with the head of the department who can able to provide him with some tips and materials that can be of a precious value.

The second answer pointed at cooperation and coordination among the staff of the department of English as being fundamental to the success of the implementation of formative assessment. The first underlying principle is to establish bridges between teachers and other researchers in the domain so that these teachers can keep updates with the research movements to be aware and well-informed about the changes that he could bring to his class. In regard to the head of the department, he may act as a mediator and facilitator of coordination among teachers and researchers by organizing seminars and workshops in which they can discuss the best ways to implement it.

Question 04

This question detected the teacher's approval of explaining the integration of the formative assessment practices in the curriculum of the module of writing.

Both teachers agreed on the fact that it would be very beneficial as it guides the teacher towards a good understanding of the underlying principles of this kind of assessment. Besides, it would ensure that all the involved teachers have share and can apply the same assessment tools.

Question 05

This question is meant to find whether there is a correlation between the integration of formative assessment and the professional development of the teacher.

The interviewees said that there is a close relationship between the integration of formative assessment in teaching and the teacher's professional development because the act of researching and trying to bring educational changes and practices can really urge the teacher to reflect on his own teaching methods and strategies, so that he can identify the aspects that worked effectively and questions the reasons and the circumstances that led to this failure.

Question 06

This question investigated the teacher's readiness to support their students' learning by explaining the process of integrating formative assessment.

The informants thought that making the students aware of the teacher's practices in the class of writing would clarify your vision of the process of teaching and learning as well. And raising their awareness about such practices can involve them as they are called to take action in their own learning through the reliance on the teacher's guidance who is following an organized plan in favour of advancing active learning and enhancing learners' responsibilities.

Question 07

This question intends to identify the constraints that may hinder the implementations of the practices of formative assessment.

According to the teachers, the main constraints that may hinder the implementation of formative assessment are the lack of motivation and interest from the part of the students, the nature of the feedback because if it is very difficult for the students to perceive it and process it, they will take it into account in an attempt to use it in their learning. In addition, the large size of the classes can be a real obstacle in the front of practicing formative assessment at a regular pace.

Finally, the teachers suggested that the implementation of formative assessment in teaching and learning the writing skill must be a priority for every teacher in higher education. Moreover, they stressed the cooperation among the experienced teachers and the novice ones especially that there is no training for university teachers.

The analysis of the collected data from the interviews revealed that the teachers perceived the significance of implementing formative assessment practices in the sessions of writing so as to entrench the view of perceiving the students at higher education as active agents whose involvement in the process of teaching and learning is highly important and as being able to assume responsibility of their own learning.

In addition, they stressed the status of the teachers as being able to assume the responsibility of a researcher though engaging himself in observing his teaching environment, analysing it, reflecting upon it and drawing conclusions about the best ways that can enable him introduce the practices of formative assessment in his teaching of the writing skill.

Moreover, they pointed at the essential step of integrating any explanations and clarifications of the use of formative assessment practices in the curriculum of writing so as to help teachers have clues about the current practices of formative assessment as well as

incorporating it as a helping kit. Furthermore, the involvement of learners could not be facilitated unless they have clear guidelines about the different practices as well as their use in the different phases of writing and evaluating their final drafts.

3.5. Analysis and Interpretation

The analysis of the collected data from the interviews revealed that the teachers perceived the significance of implementing formative assessment practices in the sessions of writing so as to entrench the view of perceiving the students at higher education as active agents whose involvement in the process of teaching and learning could be highly important and as being able to assume the responsibility of their own learning. First of all, their point of views confirmed the previous research done about the close relationship between the psychology of the students and its impact on the internalizing of feedback or avoiding it.

Moreover, they claimed that there was not a precise plan to deal with the weaknesses of students in relation to the implementation of formative assessment as every class is unique. So, in this context, it was the teacher's responsibility to get use of his students' weaknesses and design a systematic plan to help them overcome them.

In addition, they stressed the status of the teachers as being able to assume the responsibility of a researcher through engaging himself in observing his teaching environment, analysing it, reflecting upon it and drawing conclusions about the best ways that could enable him introduce the practices of formative assessment in his teaching of the writing skill.

Moreover, they pointed at the essential step of integrating any explanations and clarifications of the use of formative assessment practices in the curriculum of writing so as to help teachers have clues about the current practices of formative assessment as well as incorporating it as a helping kit. Furthermore, the involvement of learners could not be facilitated unless they possessed clear guidelines about the different practices as well as their use in the different phases of writing and evaluating their final drafts.

3.6. Conclusion

In this chapter, the researcher described the purposes of selecting each of the three of the methods of data collection. Then each method was discussed in a section in which the reasons of setting these questions were highlighted and the analysis of each section was

provided. All the different sections studied closely the possibility of incorporating the use of formative assessment practices, the students' attitudes about the inclusion of formative assessment in their learning of writing and some teachers' insights about the best factors and ways to do so. Therefore, this conducted study showed that it is very crucial in this age of technological development to implement the practices that change the nature of assessment into a helping factor rather than a threatening one, involving students in taking responsible part in their learning of writing to be autonomous ones later on.

For the sake of ensuring a smooth implementation of the good practices of formative assessment in the teaching and learning of the writing skill, a range of pedagogical recommendations ought to be taken into account by the department of English, the teachers of the module of writing and the students of English.

Chapter Four

**Recommendations and Pedagogical
Implementations**

Chapter Four: Recommendations and Pedagogical Implementations.

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4.1. Introduction

The major aim of conducting this research study was for the sake of investigating the best ways so as to promote the practice of the writing skill in higher education including teaching and learning it effectively and efficiently through making a connection between it and assessment for learning so that the implementation of its practices would advance the ability of students to generate well-written texts and lead them to be autonomous writers.

The actual study revealed significant results after the analysis of the three research methods: the systematic observation, the questionnaire directed to the students, and the interview being held with the teachers of the module of written comprehension and production in Ibn Khaldoun University. The obtained results stood as a backup for our assumptions about the crucial role that the practices of formative assessment might play if they are to be considered as an integral part of the process of teaching and learning the writing skill from the first day of enrolment in university.

The results clearly showed that the students approved the inclusion of all the practices of formative assessment in their day to day instruction of the writing skill. They admitted that using these practices had many positive dimensions. When they were informed about the quality of their written performances, they had a sense of security and got more involved and responsible of their own learning of writing.

In addition to the positive attitudes of students about the effectiveness of entrenching formative assessment in learning writing, the teachers of this unit shared the respondents the same positive attitudes. Furthermore, they stressed the idea that assessment for learning ought not to be regarded as an additional instructional tool, but rather as priority in each classroom because its application could be based on a planned process, as well as its impact on the teachers' professional development in teaching and widening their horizons as researchers in their own classrooms.

In accordance within the results that have been mentioned above, the following section is going to suggest some recommendations and practical implications that are in favour of recognizing the importance of the writing skill as well as supporting its promotion through the inclusion of the positive effects of the practices of formative assessment.

4.2. The Significance of the Pre-semester Preparations:

The effective implementation of any practice necessarily requires that so many factors come together to realize it. As for the advancement of the practices of formative assessment in every writing classroom, a set of decisions and steps are to be taken into account at the outset of the academic year and the teachers of the module of writing, particularly, need to consider this fact if they wish to create an environment that encourages successful teaching and learning.

According to Berkeley University (2014), any teacher has to be well aware of a range of fundamental arrangements and activities that have to be established and applied in his teaching unit. These arrangements are highlighted in the following guidelines:

4.2.1. Establishing a Welcoming Classroom Environment:

Before engaging in any preparations for the module of writing for the students newly enrolling at university, the teacher should take into account the fact that higher education is totally a different learning setting for the students coming from high school with miscellaneous attitudes, learning needs, interests, aptitudes, and above all expectations. Thus, professional teachers need to make the transition from college to university as smooth as possible.

First of all, the teacher has to obtain all the necessary information from the department about the students of the sections that he is going to teach in order to get clear ideas about their learning backgrounds and issues so that he can make the right decisions about any special cases later on.

Once the teacher outlines the essential points that he will discuss during the initial sessions with his students, it comes time to put them into practice. In this respect, the teacher should introduce himself in the first day he meets his students. These pieces of information include (the name, the e-mail address, the office number, the office hours, the name of the course, and the section number.) and they are provided for students to facilitate the communication between them and their teachers.

4.2.1.1. The Policy of the Teacher:

Before introducing the module of writing, the teacher has to explain to students the policy that he is going to establish and highlight its components. It is better to provide each student with a copy of these policies.

- The students ought to be asked to read the policies. Then the teacher should explain each policy and the reason for including it.
- The teacher should provide his students with the time schedule on which he can receive his students in order to answer any questions they may have about the course or their assignments.
- The teacher should also clarify his attitude about the students' use of laptops and mobile phones in the classroom.
- The teacher has to discuss with his students their responsibilities and his policy of grading, assignments, and exams of the module.

4.2.1.2. Introducing the Module of Written Expression:

Another key component of establishing a welcoming environment for learning is providing students with a thorough image of the module because it is very crucial at this stage to answer the students' wonderings about it. In this context, the teacher is responsible for explaining the importance of the writing skill as being a medium of learning as well as the dominating factor of many forms of assessment during their academic career. Besides, students should be informed about the purposes of studying the writing skill, the hours devoted to this module, and its coefficient.

The focus of this component is also on giving each student a copy of the curriculum of the module of written expression. This step is of a paramount importance especially if it is accompanied with clarifications about the learning objectives of each lesson. Besides, the teacher can cease the opportunity and refer to the fact that he considers his students as active learners who have the potential to develop their own skills and be guided by him so that they can be autonomous learners not only in his sessions, but also in the other modules.

As it is a part of the teacher's responsibility to engage students in taking an active role in their own learning, it is also advisable to identify the educational resources that can assist

them in their studies and have a positive impact on their performance. These valuable resources are the university library and the internet.

A recent study done by the New York Comprehensive Centre entitled the Impact of School Libraries on Student Achievement in October 2011 across the United States of America and one Canadian province (Kachel, 2011) shows that the extensive body of research proved that there is a close relationship between the reliance of students on the related bibliography to their studies and the fact of increasing their motivation, higher assessment scores and greater graduation rates. Thus, it can be very beneficial to suggest a list of books in the domain of the writing skill to support students' learning in higher education and make them ready to meet their learning objectives successfully.

The teacher can include the following bibliography at the bottom of the curriculum handout, or he may provide each group with a CD of the suggested books.

1/ Checkett, G and Checkett, L (2010): **The Write Start: Sentences to Paragraphs with Professional and Student Readings**. USA: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning.

2/ Brandon, L and Brandon, K (2011): **Paragraphs and Essays with Integrated Readings (11th ed)**. USA: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning.

3/ Scarry, S and Scarry, J (2011): **The Writer's Workplace with Readings: Building College Writing Skills (07th ed)**. USA: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning.

4/ Juzwiak, C (2012): **Stepping Stones: A Guided Approach to Writing Sentences and Paragraphs**. USA: Bedford/ ST. Martin's.

In relation to the above bibliography, the teacher can also emphasize the crucial role of reading in helping the students develop their linguistic repertoire and enrich their knowledge to be used later on in their writing assignments.

1/ Robitaille, J and Connelly, R (2007): **Writer's Resources: From Paragraph to Essay (2nd ed)**. USA: Wadsworth.

2/ Anker, S (2010): **Real Writing with Readings: Paragraphs and Essays for College, Work, and Everyday Life (05th ed)**. USA: Bedford/ St. Martin's.

Even if the students express their intention to rely on other sources, the teacher should put this subject into debate because nowadays the internet and social networking have become primary resources of researchers for many students, however, they may be a less trustworthy sources. Therefore, the students ought to indentify the references they will depend on in case they prepare any assignment for their sessions (Greenstein, 2010: 42).

4.2.1.3. Class Interaction

Effective teaching and practising new plans depends a great deal on the teacher's awareness of the role of creating bridges between them and their students. In this regard, the teacher should start conversations with his student about their previous academic experiences.

According to Westbrook (2014), any teacher has to be aware of his students' profiles. One option to do so is done at the beginning of the academic year and by creating some helpful starters and guidelines.

- ◆ The teacher should ask his students about their previous academic experience as it may give him indicators about their current skills, knowledge, and expectations from studying the module of writing.

- ◆ The teacher has to ask them if they wanted to study this specialty, or if they were oriented to it so that he can fix any issues that would appear later of he can explain any misunderstanding.

- ◆ The teacher has to ask them about their goals behind studying this specialty and the objectives of studying his module in particular. If some of them do not know how to proceed or they do not have any clue of what the teacher is discussing, he should go straightforward and make it clear that they must have clear goals and provide them with some guidelines on approaching this very crucial step in learning in higher education.

Or the teacher can simply require them to fill in the following survey about the module of writing.

Written Expression

Teacher's name: _____

First Day Survey

Please, take some time to fill in this survey. Consider it as a way that can facilitate communication between us and enable me to know your academic objectives so that we can make class time as beneficial as possible for every learner.

Name _____

Branch of study at high school _____

What previous exposure or courses have you had in relation to writing?

What do you expect to learn in this course?

What do you consider as strengths and weaknesses about your writing?

Is there anything that you would like to add?

4.1. Teacher's survey on the First Day

It is worth mentioning at this stage that the teacher analyses the data that he obtained from the survey in order to make useful decisions about the planning of the course, its content and the extent of the involvement of learners in the routine of the class. Or the teacher can adopt another technique which is *writing questionnaires* that proved its usefulness in a project about teaching the writing skill in Nottingham (Corden, 2001). The research showed that the learners who were given opportunities in order to express their points of view about their own improvements in the arena of writing developed mature attitudes and reflection about it and approached it purposefully. Thus, urging students to ask questions about their own level can lead them to think how to become proficient writers.

Therefore, any teacher can seize the opportunity and make an inquiry about his students' interest in writing.

Student Writing Questionnaire
What sorts of writing do you like writing most?
What sorts of text do you find most difficult to write by yourself?
What could you do by yourself to improve your writing?
What do you need most help with from others to improve your writing?
What improvement will you try to make in your own writing in this semester?
What sort of writer do you think you are?

4.2. Writing questionnaire
Adapted from Dean, G (2004: p122)

Once the teacher gets some information about the profiles of his students, he needs to start thinking about planning the lessons of the semester and how he can implement the practices of formative assessment to enhance the students' writing.

4.3. The Role of Diagnostic Assessment:

Though assessment has different forms that serve different purposes during the period of learning, the types of assessment should not be perceived as opposites to each other because the gained data from one form can yield reliable data for another one to function

appropriately. Thus, it is the same case for information gathered from diagnostic assessment and used for formative purposes.

According to the Memorandum of the Ontario Ministry of Education (2013: 03), diagnostic assessment has to take place at the outset of the academic year, the term, the semester, or the unit in order to identify the students' needs, abilities and readiness to achieve the objectives outlined in the curriculum as well as helping the teacher determine the actual level of his students and what they need to do to achieve well. By using diagnostic assessment, the teacher needs to rely on tools that focus on obtaining information which really inform instruction and learning equally.

It is up to the teacher to select the diagnostic assessment tool that he thinks is appropriate taking into consideration time, the number of his students per class, the students' oral and written skills. These tools include: documents and records of the students' qualifications, records of achievement, self-assessment tests, discussions and interviews, individual activities, and observation (QIA, 2008:04).

It is recommended that the teacher asks his students to demonstrate their writing ability through simple tasks that are meant to provide him with data about their strengths and weaknesses concerning the organization of their written piece, the sentence structure, mechanics, spelling, and vocabulary. At the same time, the students should be asked to keep their pieces of writings because they will need them later on to see how much their writings have improved. The following prompts can be adopted (Scott and Alexander, 2007: 63):

- ◆ Examine and describe a photo or a picture from a magazine (student or teacher chosen).
- ◆ Reflect on a memorable event in your childhood that helped shape you into the person you are today.
- ◆ Write about the most important thing to you in the world.

4.4. Implementing the Practices of Formative Assessment:

Establishing a systematic plan of entrenching the practices of formative assessment in teaching the writing skill stems from the understanding of the close relationship between learning and assessment *for learning*. Hence, when the teacher starts planning the

writing courses, he should not only take into account the learning objectives and the tasks that the learners are going to perform, but also when and where the opportunities to use them should take place to ensure their effectiveness in meeting the major goal which is the promotion of the students' writing (Butt, 2010: 23).

Greenstein (2010) asserted that through her investigations about the implementation of the practices of formative assessment, she found out that many teachers do not possess in depth knowledge about many aspects of formative assessment due to the indifference of educational and professional development programmes in making it a priority in their teaching. Therefore, she suggested the following guidelines and divided the inclusion of formative assessment into three phases.

4.4.1. Formative Assessment Prior to Instruction:

The initial step of designing a system of formative assessment depends on the powerful strategy of pre-assessment of the students' knowledge about the kind of the paragraph organization that they are going to tackle. By doing so, the teacher is going to lead the students to focus on what they need to learn and avoid repetition of already learnt concepts. In addition, this phase of the lesson is very crucial as it serves as a starting point in determining the level of the challenge of the tasks that the teacher will assign to the students so as to enable them get engaged and motivated.

In addition to the above advantage, pre-assessment can boost initial learning thanks to its nature as a multi-function strategy because it stands as a cognitive preparation for the acquisition of new knowledge and skills. Based on a research about the ability of the human brain to perform complex operations, the brain can fit new knowledge in its system by making connections to previous knowledge through processing it and improving understanding. Therefore, students' reflection is activated and their thinking is organized.

The selected strategies at this stage are not fixed as each class is unique. However, the teacher should be flexible in his teaching and keep in mind that the kind of the activities for this part should share the following characteristics (briefness, not threatening, linked to the content of the lesson, and finally targeted to make learning progress.)

Pre-assessment can be in the form of a test in which the teacher can give them some statements and they tick it as true or false. Or the teacher can approach it from a different angle. For instance he can make them answer the following questions briefly.

- 1/ -Name three stories that you know or read.
- 2/ - Why do you like reading them?
- 3/ What have you learnt from them?

Figure 4.3. Pre-assessment Questions

4.4.2. Formative Assessment during Instruction:

After paving the way for the students to get engaged in the mood of the lesson, it is possible for the teacher to insert other practices of the ongoing formative assessment to ensure the process of realizing ongoing learning.

According to Regier (2012), the practices of formative assessment will work in any phase as long as the teacher takes into account a set of factors. These factors include the kind of the learning outcome that the teacher is going to measure, the students' preferences, and whether the task is going to be performed individually, in pairs, in small groups, or as a class.

In this regard, the teacher should about think about practical ways to raise the level of involving his students and cease the opportunity to use formative assessment. For instance, at the outset of teaching a new unit from the curriculum of writing, it would be of a great benefit to start with a session of written comprehension. That means that instead of presenting students with the knowledge about any component in writing, he rather designs a lesson that include a text of the writing genre or a set of activities that they will read and answer questions that are related to its content and organization.

In this case, each single student has the chance to seek knowledge about the component that they will need to apply later on in their own writing and get monitored by his teacher who at the phase of sharing answer will be delivering oral feedback that can be of a great value such as making misunderstanding clear and explain any difficulties with the new concepts of writing genres and their organizations.

Besides, this session can be empowering at the linguistic level thanks to the integration of the reading skill into writing. As the students get exposed to passages of the target language, they will be able to enrich their account with new words and expression that they can incorporate in other context of writing production or their learning in general.

So as to ensure the good quality of achievement at this stage and to measure the level of meeting the learning objectives, the teacher has to keep track of his learners' learning pace through checking their understanding by assigning them activities that clearly demonstrate their capability of applying what they have learnt at a small scale.

Once the teacher obtained the indicators that he needs to make the next instructional move, he can either carry his plan or he may personalize his teaching according to his students' level of performance.

For formative assessment to be well-implemented, all its practices have to be integrated in a proper manner into the different stages of the lesson to make the transition of students towards a greater involvement proceed smoothly and gradually (Wylie and Lyon, 2013: 12). Therefore, promoting the students' writing also depends a great deal on getting students to be familiar with the utilization of rubrics when they practice their writing tasks.

The first key factor that helps implement the use of rubrics is the students' understanding of the importance of practising writing and keeping track of this activity because the more they generate pieces of writing, the more they develop and consolidate their progress. Moreover, the teacher can demonstrate the connection between making efforts to write and being proficient writer by setting vivid examples of people who could make achievements in the arena of creative writing (Marzano, 2001: 52).

Once the teacher discusses the significance of practice in the development of the writing skill, then it is time to introduce another practice of assessment for learning which is the rubric. After the task for writing has been set, the teacher should tell his students that he is going to provide them with this assisting and a self-monitoring tool. The teacher should make sure that he prints handouts of the rubric that would be used during writing and ask them to read it in order to have an idea about its components before he explains to them its purpose and use in helping them get more involved in their writing process as well as enable them to reflect upon the standards that lead them to reach the learning goals set in that rubric.

In the process of integrating the practices of formative assessment in day to day teaching of writing, the teacher also becomes a researcher who is in a position to observe his students' behaviours and level of written performances and make decisions that can have positive impact on his teaching as well as his students' learning. Hence, each time he obtained the data related to each student's achievement, he should analyse and determine the gap between what they have achieved and what they need to go to reach the learning target. In this case, the teacher's reflection is highly required to design rubrics that address the learning weaknesses that his learners have to focus on in their coming writing tasks.

Wylie and Lyon (2013: 14) assume that any teacher who intends to raise the quality of his teaching has to ponder upon this range of questions and the recommendation that follows:

- ◆ Which dimensions occur more frequently than others in daily practice of writing?
- ◆ Which dimensions need more support, explanation, or practice to reinforce their learning?
- ◆ Which dimensions need more resources to develop them?
- ◆ Will practice on any dimensions exceed the other components according to the age of the students and the content area?
- ◆ Which dimensions seem to be close to each other? Why?

It is worth mentioning at this stage that it very crucial for the teacher who is introducing new practices in his classes to consult other teachers and spend some time with them discussing the key ideas about including any dimensions and components in the rubric as well as examining how they can support students' learning through formative assessment and make it central in this process.

The teacher can also consider the promotion of their writing skill from another perspective that increases the level of the students' involvement in their own writing in order to assume great responsibility after a while. This learning skill is student self-assessment.

"Self-assessment by pupils...is in fact an essential component of formative assessment. If formative assessment is to be productive, pupils should be trained in self-assessment so that they can understand

the main purposes of their learning and thereby grasp what they need to do to achieve. "

(Black and William, 1998:143)

As it has been mentioned in the above quotation, self-assessment is also a crucial skill in the process of formatively assessing students' learning. However, it cannot be effective unless the learners recognized the learning target that they need to realize, know their actual level, and some understanding on how to approach the learning target.

In this context, the teacher of writing must engage in discussions with his students about the significance of self-assessment and their role in advancing it in their writing. Therefore, the teacher uses this *learning tool* during the writing task practice to assess their process of writing or when the students finish their final draft to assess their products.

According to Cassidy (2007: 06), students' capability of assessing their own writing will progress over time providing that the teacher selects the appropriate tools and strategies that he can adapt to fit the learners' needs. These strategies include checklists and open-ended question quizzes or close-ended ones.

Using checklists allows the students to analyse their piece of writing before handing it to their teacher by identifying the areas that they worked well on and those which he needs to make much more efforts on to change them into a better performance. The following figure shows a typical exemplar of a checklist that encourages students to self-evaluate their paragraphs (Regier, 2012:08).

When learners are immersed in assessing their own pieces of writing, the instructor should minimize his feedback intervention so as to grant his students a high level of independence to locate their errors, create their own assessing procedure and recognize their strengths and weaknesses (Taras, 2003). Accurate self-assessment is...crucial for education to be a lifelong enterprise that continues far after the students has left the classroom." (Dunning et al, 2004:85).

**Paragraph
Revision
Checklist**

1. Form

Title: Are the major words (including the first and last words) capitalized?

Does the title reveal the topic and slant of the paragraph?

Does it catch the reader's attention?

Is the first sentence indented?

Does the paragraph have the required number of sentences?

Does the paragraph have the required organizational patterns?

2. Topic Sentence

Does the topic sentence fit the assignment?

Is it appropriate for the intended audience and purpose?

Is the main idea clear?

3. Supporting Sentences:

Are there enough supporting sentences (three to five supporting, depending on the assignment) to explain or to prove your topic sentence.

Does each supporting sentence clearly relate to or develop the topic sentence?

Are there enough specific details, facts, and examples to convince the reader?

Does anything in the paragraph not relate to the main idea?

Is the relationship between supporting sentences clear?

Are there clear transitions within and between sentences?

Is the order of supporting sentences clear or logical?

Are the sentences varied in length and structure?

Is appropriate vocabulary used?

Is the language clear and precise? (Are there strong verbs, specific nouns, Colourful adjectives and adverbs?)

4.4. Self-assessment Writing Checklist

Adapted from Robitaille and Connelly, 2007:50

Despite the fact that the above formative assessment practices namely rubrics and self- assessment are very reliable learning tools, descriptive feedback are required at the end of each phase to enable learners perceive what was missing in their judgments about their own written performance. Furthermore, through this delivered feedback, the teacher can also use the indicators to make the last moves before the student take their summative tests.

Greenstein (2009:104) insisted upon the idea that formative assessment is not just about assisting the students in making progress in their learning, but also about measuring the progress that these students have made.

To maintain positive attitudes about learning and encourage the learners to keep track of it, the teacher can also use the obtained data about each learner's profile and achievement and split them into small groups in which their members share the same level and ask them to attend sessions of conferencing during office hours to have purposeful discussions about their written performances.

For the sessions of writing conferences to be dynamic and to contribute to the students understanding on how to reflect on their previous work, the following guidelines would be very beneficial for guiding them (Atwell,

- ◆ Writing conferences are meant to direct the students on how to raise questions about their writings, to challenge themselves, and to enhance their writing through making learning choices.

- ◆ Writing conferences are not editing sessions of the students' written pieces; rather they regard the students as writers with whom the teacher can converse with and provide with some tips on how they improve.

- ◆ As McKay (1987:) pointed out that the central characteristic a writer needs to have so as to be capable of carrying his writing is confidence, that is why one of the fundamental principles of formative assessment is to make use of the psychological factor to boost learning. In the case of writing conferences, the teacher should select only one or two issues at a time in order not to overwhelm the student with too much information that may demotivate him.

- ◆ Writing conferences should deal primarily with content, meaning, and focus. First of all, the teacher should review the student's piece of writing and make some questions based on his judgment about it. Then, he should ask the student questions like:

- What do you consider valuable about this piece of writing?
- Which parts of the draft are not well-written?

- What is your next step concerning this draft?

By asking this kind of questions, the student is urged to find answers for them. By doing so, he is going to reflect upon the elements that worked well and considers the areas that need further efforts and adjustments. Once the teacher reviews the student’s final draft again and he finds that there are remarkable improvements, he can schedule to deal with other components of the student’s writing in which other measures need to be taken to consolidate his achievement and supply him with tips.

Another tip for the teacher to foster the students’ reflection upon their writing performances, the teacher has to ask his students to keep records of their achievements to see how much progress they have made and to have evidence that learning is a real experience that is related to practice and commitment to make all what it takes to acquire the craft of writing.

Conference Record		Student Name _____	
Date	Selection	Focus	Goals &/ or Comment

4.5. A Record of Writing Conferences

Adapted from (Atlantic Canada English Language Arts Curriculum: High School, 1998)

4.4.3. Formative Assessment after Instruction:

The power of formative assessment lays in its concept of the continuation of assisting students’ learning until their learning targets are met successfully. That is why the teacher is always accounting for his students’ learning right from the planning phase until the summative assessment period. But if he finds evidence about some gaps in learning, he should

make some effective final interventions that can make a difference such as using a bit more clarification, practice, or reinforcement. Besides, the teacher ought to reconsider some facts from that learning journey through formative assessment to be valued and rewarded within the formative assessment tests or standardized test. As a matter of fact, as the teacher would consider what the students demonstrate correctly during his tests, he should also take into account how much progress they made. Hence, it would be better to value the students' growth in learning and when designing a summative test, the teacher should include a variety of measures that the students have demonstrated their proficiency in for the sake of being fair with all the students and especially with those who experience troubles with stress during standardized tests (Greenstein, 2009:104).

4.5. Formative Assessment and Teacher's Professional Development:

The mission of teaching at higher education requires a set of professional qualifications not only to perform the profession of teaching effectively, but also to be able to further the development of the teacher's career. Therefore, it is crucial to for any member of the teaching community to enrich his profile with updated knowledge as well as skills.

Marshall and Gus (2009: 490) assumed that pursuing a career of teaching at university depends partly on achieving initial competence in instructing the students and working very hard and at many levels in order to gain experience and competence in the areas of teaching, learning, and *assessment methods*. Hence, formative assessment is a practice that contributes to the creation of rich profile for any teacher in higher education.

According to Irons (2008: 97), the multi-dimensional nature of assessment for learning is not only centred around the goal of assisting the learners achieve their learning targets and ensuring their acquisition of the skills that ensure lifelong learning, but also around its contributions to the professional development of the instructor as can develop interpreting, analysing, and synthesizing the data that he obtains from his students' written performances. Besides, devoting time and effort in order to interpret the data results in developing the teacher's abilities to evaluate the effectiveness of his teaching methods and techniques as well as planning and adjusting his practices to suit his learners' needs.

Moreover, Yorke (2003: 482) suggested that getting insights from the implementation of the practices of formative assessment can also widen the professional horizon of other teachers and members of the staff as they can interact and discuss the good

practices that worked well and promoted learning in any subject area and reviewing the difficulties that stood in the way of facilitating learning so that they can research the issue closely to focus teaching efforts and find a solution to.

4.6. Entrenching Formative Assessment Practices in the Curriculum

The ability of the teacher at higher education to develop a wider repertoire of competences also entails leading and managing curriculum innovation in order to encourage and boost the student learning experience (Marshal and Gus, 2008: 490). Thus, nowadays the major aim of education should not be placed upon the completion of teaching the contents of the curriculum; however it has to advocate the view that stresses the urgent need of not leaving any learners behind.

Though teachers in many educational domains think that they must implement the set of educational goals and outcomes that are prescribed in formal curricula or imposed upon them by the authority, they need to re-examine this stand and reconsider the whole matter from a different perspective.

In regard to implementing any practices in the realm of teaching in general so as to reinforce formal content that would be delivered to students, teachers can modify the following components of the curriculum (Perner, 2004: 15):

- ◆ Methods of presentation: how the teacher can present new knowledge.
- ◆ Methods of Practice and performance: what strategies and techniques the learners are using to understand the content in their own terms.
- ◆ *Methods of assessment*: How the students can show evidence of learning and improvement.

Therefore, teachers can also bring changes at the level of assessment to facilitate learning and one of these components that the teacher can make adjustments to is assessment. In this context, formative assessment has to be implemented in any curriculum of teaching written expression thanks to the four criteria that it can meet:

- ◆ Formative assessment is a meaningful practice that seeks to help learners learn effectively and acquire the necessary skills in order to improve their learning and meet their

learning targets successfully. In addition, it encourages quality teaching as the teacher keeps reflecting upon his teaching methods to adjust it properly.

◆ Formative assessment perceives learning as a lifelong journey that the learner takes from his actual level until he realizes his targets as well as the ability of formative assessment in equipping them with the skills that enable them carry on their learning experiences outside the classroom setting to be autonomous learners.

In brief, all it takes to make some crucial amendments in a step to make education a better environment for learning and teaching is to give a serious thought about the factors that hinder both practices.

4.7. A Suggested Lesson Plan

The following section is devoted to highlight some of the concepts that were highlighted in the previous sections of this research study. The suggested lesson plans are composed of two sections: written comprehension and written expression.

The written comprehension session is mainly devoted to pave the way for the students to discover the underlying theoretical background of the rhetorical mode that they will be writing about. Whereas the written expression session is related to the practical side in which the students will be asked to apply what they have achieved by generating a piece of writing on a given topic.

4.7.1. The Written Comprehension Session:

Level: 01st year LMD.

The devoted time: 01hour and 30 minutes.

The title of the lesson: Patterns of developing a paragraph «Narration».

It is worth mentioning that the patterns of developing a narrative text are vague. Thus, in this lesson plan, the emphasis will be on the chronological order of events.

The Main Objective:

By the end of the unit, learners will be able to write a narrative account.

The Unit Objectives:

1/- Rhetorical Focus:

- ♣ Narrating fiction and nonfiction paragraphs.

2/- Language Focus:

- ♣ Showing chronological order of events through the use of time sequencers.
- ♣ Forming and using the past simple and the past continuous.

4.7.1.1. The Pre-assessment Phase:

- Look at the following video clips and answer the following questions:
 - ◆ Who are the people of characters in the videos?
 - ◆ Where are they?
 - ◆ Do you have any idea about the historical eras of both events?
 - ◆ Add other examples?

The objectives:

- ◆ To enable the learners discover the theme of the pattern of developing a paragraph.
- ◆ To expose learners to the history and culture of the target language (English).
- ◆ To activate and measure learners' prior knowledge.

At the phase of answering, the teacher should ask the students to justify their answers as a way of fostering interaction in the class and encourage learners' contributions.

The keys for the first activity:

	Person/ Character	Where?	When?
Elizabeth, the Golden Age	Queen Elizabeth I	The United Kingdom	1585
Oliver Twist	Oliver Twist	London	The Victorian Age

Table 4.1. Details about Narration

At this phase, the teacher should have asked his students about the pattern of development in both videos.

The definition of narrative:

The narrative is an account of an incident or a series of incidents that make up a complete and significant action. Each narrative has five parts: situation, conflict, struggle, outcome, and meaning. (Brandon & Brandon, 2011: 102)

Suggesting other examples:

In this Phase, the teacher ought to elicit the answers from the students. If it does not work well, the teacher may guide them through the technique of questioning so that they can find the appropriate answers.

The following examples can have more than one characteristic at a time.

Fiction	Non fiction	biographical	autobiographical
-Little Red Riding Hood.	-Documentaries about historical events.	- The Times (a film about Virginia Woolf)	- Young Victoria
	-		

Table 4.2. Students' activity

4.7.1.2. Reading and Analysing a Narrative Text:

Each story we read must have a *point* or *purpose* in order to stimulate the reader's attention and interest to make him want to know more details about it (Checkett and Checkett, 2010:178).

1/ Pre-reading:

The teacher may ask his learners to answer the following couple of questions so that he can engage them in reflecting upon them.

◆ Predict the content of the story through the following statement by the writer « I wrote this essay after I had just begun to get my life on tracks.»

◆ Have you ever made a decision that affected your life entirely?

It is not necessary to emphasize the appropriate answers. But, it is just a warmer to get the students discuss and share their ideas.

1/ Read the following text which was written by an American students. Then write what you think the point of the story is.

The Turnaround by Jelani Lynch

Before my big turnaround, my life was headed in the wrong direction. I grew up in the city and had a typical sad story: broken home, not much money, gangs, and drugs. In this world, few positive male role models are available. I played the game "Street Life": running the streets, stealing bikes, robbing people, carrying a gun, and selling drugs. The men in my neighborhood did not have regular jobs; they got their money outside the system. No one except my mother thought school was worth much. I had a history of poor school performance, a combination of not showing up and not doing any work when I did. My pattern of failure in that area was pretty strong. When I was seventeen, though, things got really bad. I was arrested for possession of crack cocaine. I was kicked out of school for good. During this time, I realized that my life was not going the way I wanted it to be. I was headed nowhere, except a life of crime, violence, and possibly early death. I knew that way of life, because I was surrounded by people who had chosen that direction. I did not want to go there anymore. When I made that decision, my life started to change. First, I met Shawn Brown, a

man who had the same kind of life I did. He got out of that life, though, by graduating from high school and getting a good job. He has a house, a wife, and children, along with great clothes. Shawn became my role model, showing me that with honesty, integrity, and hard work i could live a much better life. Since meeting Shawn, I have turned my life around. I started taken school seriously and graduated from high school, something I thought I would never do. Working with Shawn, I have read books and learned I enjoyed writing. I have met the mayor of Boston and got a summer job at the State House. I have been part of an educational video and had many opportunities to meet and work with people who are successful. Now, I am a mentor with Diamond Educators, and I work with other young, urban males to give them a role model and help them make good choices. Now, I have a bright future with goals and plans. I have turned my life around and know I will be a success.

- The point of the story is: Jelani’s decision to change the life of crime and violence into a bright success through education.

While-reading:

- ♠ Work with your partner and write the five elements of narration in the above text:

Situation: _____

Conflict: _____

Struggle: _____

Outcome: _____

Meaning: _____

- ♠ In which order were the events of the story told? Are there any time sequencers?

4.7.1.3. Writing a Narrative Paragraph.

This session is about the entire involvement of the learners in writing their own narrative paragraphs versions.

- ♠ **Writing Activity:** the following task encourages the awakening of creativity among the learners as they are going to create a story out of a photo.

♠ The Writing Process

♠ Brainstorming

The teacher will ask the learners to brainstorm all the ideas that they think can develop the story by attempting to answer the following questions without forgetting to start by reflecting on its central element which is the point of the story. The learners can select any of the techniques of brainstorming that they learnt.

-First brainstorm about the characters in the story. Who are the people in the image (the teacher should choose a photo)? Use your imagination.

-Next, brainstorm about the setting for the story, Based on the image, where is this story taking place? Be sure to give the place a name.

-Think about the events that make up the story (the plot). Start by providing background on the characters and the situation. Explain the important actions that take place. Then think about the outcomes that would happen.

At this phase, the teacher walks between rows and listen to the students' ideas about the proposed topic. In the meanwhile, he gives them feedback about the details that seem appropriate for the story and that take it to the next level.

♠ Organizing the Ideas into a Paragraph Outline

Topic sentence: _____

Supporting sentences (events) : _____

Concluding sentence (the outcome): _____

♠ Writing the First Draft

Consulting your corrected outline, write your first draft.

♠ Writing the Second Draft by Using a Rubric

The teacher asks the students to put their first draft aside and ask them to read the following narrative writing rubric to be reviewed during their second draft writing.

RUBRIC	NARRATIVE PARAGRAPH CRITERIA			
	Excellent	Acceptable	Basic	Weak
Topic sentence	Topic sentence is well written, correctly placed, and introduces the topic.	Topic sentence is complete and introduces the topic	Attempt was made to write a topic sentence but it is not effective at introducing the topic.	Topic sentence is unclear and incomplete, and is not introducing the topic
Supporting sentences	Paragraph(s) have 6 or more supporting sentences that relate back to the main idea and flow smoothly.	Paragraph(s) have 4-5 supporting detail sentences that relate back to the main idea and are connected.	Paragraph(s) have 3-4 supporting detail sentences that relate back to the main idea and have some flow.	Paragraph(s) have 0-2 supporting detail sentences that relate back to the main idea.
Concluding sentence	Conclusion is clear, complete, sums up the paragraph and relates back to the topic sentence.	Conclusion is complete, relates to the topic, but is simple.	An attempt was made to conclude, but is incomplete or does not relate to the topic.	No clear conclusion.
Word choice	Rich, colourful, precise language is used, and the choice of the words seems accurate, natural and not forced.	Word choice is interesting and precise but occasionally the words are used inaccurately or seem overdone.	Some interesting and precise wording is used, but the writing lacks variety, punch or flair.	Writer uses a limited vocabulary which makes the writing vague and predictable.
Grammar and Mechanics	Paragraph has no errors in punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.	Paragraph has one or two punctuation, capitalization, and spelling errors.	Paragraph has three to five punctuation, capitalization, and spelling errors.	Paragraph has six or more punctuation, capitalization, and spelling errors
Voice	A lively voice imparts a personal flavour and interest that is you and shows intense engagement with the topic and your reader	You are engaged with your writing. The writer comes through your words	Is emerging as you find your own voice. You show limited engagement with your writing.	Is flat, dull, tentative or inconsistent. You are not engaged with your writing.

4.6. A Narrative Paragraph Rubric

Adapted from www.scs.sk.ca

After the teacher explains the purpose of the rubric, the students compares their first draft to the rubric to know which dimensions they applied in their writings and what dimensions they need to work on in order to meet.

Finally, the teacher takes the students' written paragraphs and analyse them to determine each students' strengths and weaknesses. In this case, he provides each student with descriptive feedback and identifies the learning area that a big number of students missed in their writing and prepare a remedy for them.

Greenstein (2009:) assumed that during the conduction of her own research about using the practices of formative assessment, she noticed that many teacher misunderstood the concept of remedial work; they just retaught the content of the lesson without any reflection about their teaching practices, rather, they must design the entire lesson including the content and the techniques as well as the assessment tools that can help check learners' understanding.

In the above lesson plan of written expression, the emphasis was on delivering descriptive feedback and a rubric because there should be a balance in the use of the practices of formative assessment.

4.8. Further Research

This research study was conducted so as to highlight the significance of implementing the practices of formative assessment that the students can use during and after their writing tasks to make them aware of the importance of reflecting upon their learning by using the delivered feedback from their teachers to determine the learning targets that they achieved and make the decisions to pursue their progress through working on their weaknesses.

However, this research did not include any details or mentioned how the teacher of writing can manage the entrenching of the practices of formative assessment in crowded classrooms especially if we take the case of Algeria in which each group has about 30 students per class. Thus, researchers have the chance to seek answers for this problematic.

4.9. Conclusion:

To sum up, in this last chapter we tried to look at the best aspects and conditions that ought to be established in every writing class from the beginning of the academic year and how it can be very beneficial to have a shared agreement between the teacher and his students about his policy and management of the class as well as the activities during the sessions. In addition, It tackled how the teacher of writing in university can pave the way for implementing the tools of assessment for learning by relying on other form of assessment which diagnostic assessment in determining students' needs and interests, and seeking the appropriate strategies that can assist him share his perception of the usefulness of formative assessment, the purposes of integrating it in their daily instruction and practice of writing tasks as well as how they can benefit from relying on its tools during and after they finish their last drafts. And above all, if they get used to reflect on their learning and adjust their learning to improve it, they can be autonomous writers.

General Conclusion

General Conclusion

Our study was meant to investigate the situation of teaching and learning the writing skill at university. In fact, many students face a set of obstacles and challenges in generating and writing good texts even at this higher level of education. Therefore, some hypotheses were formulated in order to seek some authentic solutions that assist the teachers with methods and techniques that enable them make their classes a much more appropriate environment that fosters productive and intentional learning. In this respect, it was assumed that the key element that is effective enough to bring remarkable changes would be through the inclusion of the practices of formative assessment in the daily routine of teaching and learning how to write as assessment for learning has the potential to make a difference and advance each learner's capability of learning if he is ready to assume responsibility of reinforcing his strengths and he is willing to accept that he has learning weaknesses in writing that will be overcome providing that he reflects upon them, takes the teacher's feedback and feedforward into account and makes efforts to realize the learning target that he failed previously in meeting.

To explore the matter in depth, three methods of data collection were adopted for that reason. The systematic observation aimed at highlighting any used formative practices in teaching writing skill and if the teacher could handle their use professionally. A questionnaire directed to the first year students of the LMD system to give them the opportunity to reflect on their learning experiences during the whole year of studying the module of written comprehension and expression, and to know about their attitudes towards the implementation of the practices of formative assessment in their daily study and practice of the different aspects of the writing skill. The last data collection method was an interview with some teachers of writing at university. It was meant to involve them in the process of seeking the best ways to make the right decisions and bring effective educational changes into our classes through providing us with insightful points of view from their experience in teaching and dealing with students from different backgrounds and learning potentials, needs, and interests.

The obtained data showed that the students approved the integration of formative assessment practices namely the descriptive feedback, rubrics, conferencing and self-assessment strategies if they are to be informed about their potential and purposes in assisting them overcome their writing deficiencies and promote their own writing. Furthermore, they admitted that these practices are really involving and can lead them

towards being autonomous writers. The teachers went further in suggesting that there should be a systematic plan in equipping the teachers with the adequate knowledge about the significance of formative assessment and how it can be used to boost learning in every class. In addition, they stressed the idea that this kind of assessment ought to be a priority that needs exploration and further research because it is still an underdeveloped area in the academic domain.

Based on the above results, the fourth chapter tackled the best ways on how to create a class right from the beginning of the academic year that promotes the learning of the writing skill and how the teacher can put a systematic plan to implement the practices of formative assessment. Furthermore, it was also mentioned that the teacher ought to be aware of the fact of preparing the students for the phase of writing by involving them in a session of writing comprehension in which they can be exposed to an exemplar of a written pattern to read it and analyse it. Then he ought to ask them to write a text about any selected topic and assist them with the relevant formative assessment practice. Moreover, the researcher stressed the importance of creating a balance among the practices of formative assessment in order to ensure that the class is not monotonous and to equip the learners with these learning skills that they would depend on in their learning journey. Finally, a lesson plan was suggested about conducting the sessions of written comprehension and written production.

In short, the aim of this research study was meant to confirm the previous research findings about the positive role of assessment for learning in many different domains and disciplines in several academic settings all over the world. In fact, this study proved the effectiveness of the attempt to tackle the topic of implementing formative assessment in Ibn Khaldoun University of Tiaret through investigating the students' attitudes towards the inclusion of the practices but in different phases of the writing skill and by the teachers' views. The interviewed teachers approved the need for giving formative assessment the status that it deserves in the teaching as well as the learning of the writing skill. Firstly, by equipping all university teachers with the appropriate body of knowledge about this kind of assessment and provide a thorough explanation of its significance, its milestones, its practices and accurate exemplars of them. Secondly, by stressing the significance of helping the students depend on themselves in seeking knowledge to be autonomous students and making learning a lifelong experience.

To sum up, the domain of assessment is still in need of further explorations and close study due its importance as an accounting element that can give signs about the effectiveness of the adopted methods and techniques, and if learning is really taking place.

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Appendices

Self-assessment Test

- Check either True or False on the blank next to the statement.

T F

- A process explains the steps necessary to complete a procedure or an operation.
- A process, however, is not used to explain an event.
- There are three kinds of process descriptions: directional, informational, and subjective.
- Directional process explains how something was made.
- Directional process allows the reader to duplicate the process.
- Informational process explains how an event occurs.
- Informational process intends for the reader to understand the process but not to duplicate it.
- Process paragraphs do not have to be arranged chronologically.
- Directional process paragraph need a topic sentence.
- Informational process paragraphs do not need a topic sentence.

(Adopted from Checkett and Checkett, 2011: 232)

Process Technique Questions

What is the process that is going to be explained?

Is the paragraph going to be *directional* or *informational*?

How many reasons or steps you are going to discuss in your paragraph? What are they?

Step by Step Approach to Writing a Process Paragraph

- 1/ Write at least one complete sentence for each of the steps you have mentioned in your outline.
- 2/ Use the appropriate transitional words and expressions to link between the sentences.
- 3/ Write your complete concluding statement that says something about the results of completing the process.
- 4/ Copy your sentences into standard paragraph form.
- 5/ Make a final check for spelling mistakes and appropriate punctuation.

The Observation Sheet

The setting: Ibn Khaldoun University Tiaret.

Module: Written Comprehension and Production.

Level: 1 year LMD.

Lesson duration: 01h and 30m.

File: Creating Effective Paragraphs.

Lesson: Writing an Outline of a Process Paragraph.

I/ The Teacher's and the Students' behaviours:

1-The teacher asked her students to remind her of the characteristics of process writing and the patterns of developing it.

2-The teacher provided the students with a picture of a women exercising in a gym and asked them to comment and suggest topics of writing that may be related to the picture in hand.

3-Once the teacher and the students agreed that the topic would be 'How to lose weight', the teacher asked them to site the strategies of brainstorming that can assist them in gathering ideas that will narrow their topic.

4-Learners were divided into groups of six students and each group was asked to brainstorm some ideas to the topic using one of the techniques mentioned earlier (clustering and listing).

5-The teacher monitored the work of each group and provided them with some remarks about the relevance of their ideas and thoughts to the topic.

6- The teacher provided each group with a handout entitled **process technique questions** that would help them generate an outline.

7-The teacher asked each group to share their outline with the rest of the class after she provided them with oral feedback about the choice of the topic sentence, the controlling ideas, and the concluding sentence.

8-The teacher gave students a handout about **step by step approach to writing a process paragraph** to use it in order to write their paragraphs at home.

The Questionnaire Directed to Students

Please take some time to complete this questionnaire. Your responses will provide valuable pieces of information for our study entitled « **Formative Assessment as a Basis for Promoting the Writing Skill** ». The purpose of our study is to find out the best ways to implement the practices of formative assessment in teaching and learning writing in order to help EFL students master the written form of English. All responses will be kept confidential.

I-The Biographical Details of Respondents:

A- Tick () the box that is appropriate for your situation:

1-Gender: Male Female

2-Age:

3-Level: First year LMD student,

4-Was the orientation to study English (Anglais: licence en didactique de l'anglais langue étrangère.) your choice?

Yes No

5-Is this your first year LMD student?

Yes No

If your answer is **yes**,

6-What role did the module of written comprehension and production play in your overall results of 1st year LMD?

Positive Neutral Negative

If your answer is negative or neutral,

7-What is/are the factor (s) that hinder (s) you from succeeding in the module of written comprehension and expression?

- a- Not perceiving the importance of the module.
- b- Lack of motivation.
- c- Lack of proficiency in English.
- d- Teacher's methodology.
- e- The kind of the writing tasks.
- f- Lack of practice.
- g- Lack of time devoted to written comprehension and production sessions.
- h- Lack of feedback and feedward.
- i- All the factors mentioned above.

II-Investigating Students' willingness to Approach the Module of Written Comprehension and Expression:

1-Did you set any clear goals to be reached during your study of the module of written comprehension and expression?

Yes

No

2- Were you given the syllabus of the module of written comprehension and expression?

Yes

No

If your answer is **no**,

3- Did you ask your teacher to provide you with the contents of the syllabus of this module?

Yes

No

4- Have you ever prepared some notes about a lesson?

Yes

Sometimes

No

5- Where do you prefer to practise your writing tasks?

a- In the classroom.

b- At home.

c- Both of them.

III- Students' attitudes towards the Implementation of the Practices of Formative Assessment in the Teaching and Learning the Writing Skill.

A- During Instruction: {when you are given a topic to write a paragraph about.}

1- Do you like to receive rubrics on how your ultimate pieces of writing should look like?

Yes

No

2- What dimensions (guidelines) do you think are important to be incorporated in rubrics?

a- A reminder about the organization of the written piece.

b- The details that need to be included in the piece of writing. (examples, statistics, and facts...etc)

c- Directions on how to make your piece of writing cohesive. (Including transitional words and expressions.)

d- A reminder about editing your final draft. (Spelling, capitalization and punctuation.)

3- Do you like to receive feedback from your teacher about your written work?

Yes

No

4- What feedback would you like to receive about your written work?

a- Remarks about the strengths and weaknesses of your written piece only.

b- Remarks and corrections of your work.

c- Remarks about the strengths of your written work and tips on how to improve and develop your skills.

- 5-How do you prefer the mode of the feedback given to you?**
- a- Oral.**
 - b- Written.**
 - c- Demonstrations in which the teacher reteaches you the points that you missed in your written assignment.**
 - d- The mode is better determined by the teacher (the degree of the importance of the feedback).**
- 6-How do you consider the fact of discussing feedback on your written work?**
- a- A private matter that you need to discuss with your teacher only.**
 - b- An equal opportunity for you and your peers to benefit from your learning experience.**
- 7- What are the points that you like to discuss with your teacher during conferencing?**
- a- Your actual level in writing.**
 - b- Determining the goals that you want to reach.**
 - c- Discussing the means of achieving your goals.**
- 8- What do you think about assessing your own writing through a checklist?**
- a- Not relevant because the teacher is the only one who can deliver feedback**
 - b- A technique that involves you more in the process of learning how to write in English.**
 - c- A step towards independence and assuming responsibility of your own writing.**

III-Students' Psychology:

- 1-Do you find it relieving to get descriptive feedback on your written performances?**
- Yes No
- 2-Are you motivated when you get constructive feedback about the weaknesses of your work?**
- Yes No
- 3-Are you willing to work on your weaknesses in order to improve your level if this task is related to a reward?**
- Yes No
- 4-Do you feel embarrassed if a piece of writing of yours is chosen for a class demonstration?**
- Yes No

5-Do you feel self-confident if any of your written performances lives up to your teacher's expectations?

Yes

No

Eventually I would like to thank you very much for your precious participation in this study and I would like to inform you that the results of will be available once the study is completed.

Definitions of Some Concepts in the Questionnaire

1. A rubric: is divided into several sections which encompass many dimensions such as the content, the relevance of terms, the organization of ideas and the grammatical mechanics including scores for each component depending on which one teacher wants to reinforce.
2. Feedback: refers to comments or other information that learners receive concerning their success on learning tasks or tests, either from the teacher or other persons.
3. Conferencing: a face-to-face conversation between a teacher and a student or a small group of students in which work being undertaken is discussed. For example in a writing class a student may present a collection of his or her writing in a portfolio and discuss the selection in the portfolio, difficulties encountered, and strengths and weaknesses. The teacher gives feedback on progress, suggested improvement.

Bibliography:

Richards, J and Schmidt, R. (2002): Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics. London: Pearson Education Limited.

Conducting an Interview

You are going to take part in the following interview which is a part of a case study in Ibn Khaldoun University Tiaret entitled «**Formative Assessment as a Basis for Promoting the Writing Skill**».

Thematising:

The writing skill, compared to the other skills, constitutes a great challenge for students especially to those newly enrolling at university.

As supporting students' learning is taking ground, helping students to improve their writing skills ought to be placed at the heart of their instruction. The major mission of the teacher in this context is making use of all the favoring factors inside and outside the classroom environment in order to help students learn and how to learn effectively. Therefore, supporting learning ought to be seen as an opportunity to fulfill each single student's needs because students have different levels, abilities, learning styles and strategies and above all they all must have fair chance to undertake a journey from their actual level towards improving their level and meet their goals. However, it is sometimes too late for students to take action for improvement particularly when they receive their assessed work at the end of the semester. Therefore, one of the most significant aspects of supporting learning which is advocated by many scholars like Paul Black (1996), Brookhart (2008) and Fisher and Frey (2011) to bridge the gap is the integration of formative assessment in instruction.

The Objective of the Interview:

The main objective of the interview is to provide us with insightful accounts from your experience and points of view about the useful procedures and strategies that enable any teacher implement the practices of formative assessment «rubrics, feedback, conferencing, self-assessment and the portfolio» in the sessions of written comprehension and production so that students' writing is supported.

The Informants:

The conductor of the study is going to interview some teachers of the module of written comprehension and production at the University of Ibn Khaldoun.

The Reasons of Choosing the Interview Approach:

The use of the interview in this study is due to the fact that it allows an effective interchange of information between the interviewer and his interviewees (Cohen et al, 2005: 267). Precisely, the type of the interview that is going to be conducted is a structured one to allow the interviewer explore the answers in depth, to clarify any misunderstanding, and to give chance to the element of unexpectedness to take place (Cohen et al, 2005: 275).

The Questions:

The number of the questions to be asked should not be less than five questions and not more than ten (Gillham, 2000: 66).

- 1/ What are the factors that can facilitate the implementation of the practices of formative assessment in teaching the writing skill?
- 2/ How can teachers of writing implement the practices of formative assessment in day to day instruction?
- 3/ Does the implementation of formative assessment practices require cooperation and coordination among the staff of the department of English namely (the head of the department, teachers, and researchers)? If yes, in what way (s)?
- 4/ What do you think about incorporating and explaining the process of integrating formative assessment practices in the curriculum as well as in teaching writing?
- 5/ Is there any relationship between the implementation of formative assessment practices and teachers' development?
- 6/ Do you think that It is necessary to make students aware of the different practices of formative assessment practices and their roles in supporting their writing and leading them to be autonomous?
- 7/ Are there any constraints that may hinder the incorporation of all formative assessment practices?
- 8/ Would you like to add other suggestions concerning this topic?

Eventually I would like to thank you very much for your precious participation in this study and I would like to inform you that the results of will be available once the study is completed.

Glossary

Glossary

1/ **Active Learning:** a process of engaging with the learning task at both the cognitive and the affective level.

2/ **Assessment:** a systematic approach to collecting information and making inferences about the ability of a student or the quality or success of a teaching course on the basis of various sources of evidence. The term assessment is used in a wide sense to mean a variety of approaches in testing and assessment.

3/ **Autonomy:** (in language teaching), the principle that learners should be encouraged to assume a maximum amount of responsibility for what they can learn and how they learn it. This will be reflected in approaches to needs analysis, content selection, and choice of teaching materials and learning methods.

4/ **Criterion-referenced test:** an assessment that compares "an individual's performance to a specific learning objective, performance standard or established criterion."

5/ **Curriculum:** an overall plan for a course or programme, as in the *Freshman composition curriculum*: Such a programme usually states; the aims and goals of the educational programme, the syllabus, the teaching procedures and learning activities, assessment, and evaluation of the effectiveness of the programmes.

6/ **Portfolio:** a selective collection of an individual student's work over a specific period of time. Portfolios can include a variety of work (e.g, written, audio, or video material) and can be collected by the teacher or collaboratively. Teachers can use portfolios as an assessment technique to measure student progress over time.

7/ **Reflection:** consideration, from description to analysis, of an experience, or of learning; to enhance and improve understanding and practice.

8/ **Standardized Test:** a form of measurement that has been normed against a particular population or criteria. All students in a population are given the same test, and equivalent scores are produced to allow comparison between students or groups.

9/ **Summative Assessment:** the collection of evidence of learning after a period of instruction. It is generally used to judge learning outcomes and determine a score.

ملخص باللغة العربية

الهدف من هذا البحث العلمي هو تحديد السبل المثلى لتطبيق التقويم التكويني في تدريس مادة التعبير الكتابي من أجل تمكين المتعلمين من أن يصبحوا مستقلين نظرا لأهمية هذه المادة خلال الدراسة الجامعية وبعدها. لقد تم الاعتماد على ثلاثة وسائل بحث و هي: الملاحظة ، الاستبيان، و الحوار مع أساتذة المادة من أجل معرفة أرائهم حول ادراج التغذية الراجعة ،الجدول ،المناقشة و كذا التقويم الذاتي في تدريس المادة وترقيتها.

Résumé en français :

L'objectif de cette recherche est d'identifier les meilleures méthodes et techniques d'application de l'évaluation formative dans l'enseignement des techniques d'expression écrite de façon qu'elle favorise l'autonomie de l'apprentissage surtout dans ce module qui constitue une grande importance pour les étudiants au cours et après les études universitaires.

Pour ce fait, nous avons opté pour trois moyens de recherche à savoir : une observation, un questionnaire, et des entretiens avec les enseignants de ce module pour étudier les attitudes des participants face à l'inclusion de la rétroaction, les rubriques, les discussions entre les enseignants et ses étudiants, et l'auto-évaluation dans l'enseignement et l'apprentissage de l'écrit.

Summary in English

This research study aimed at identifying the appropriate ways to implement the practices of formative assessment practices in teaching the writing skill through the use of the following techniques (feedback, rubrics, conferencing, and self-assessment) and leading them towards autonomy.

Three data collection methods were adopted: systematic observation, a questionnaire directed to students, and interviews with teachers of writing to investigate their attitudes about entrenching formative assessment practices in the daily teaching and learning of the writing skill.

