

Developing Critical Literacy: Teacher Candidates in Initial Teacher Education Programmes

Vanithamani Saravanan¹, Olivia M. Uranga²

¹ Associate Professor, Bahrain Teachers College, University of Bahrain

² Fulbright Teaching Assistant, Bahrain Teachers College, University of Bahrain

Received: 30/06/2013, Accepted: 30/10/2013

Abstract

This paper will focus on recent curriculum initiatives in developing academic literacy in English as a requirement in Initial Teacher Education programmes, the PGDE (Post-Graduate Diploma in Education Programme) and in the BEd (Bachelor of Education Programme). The course in which these new curriculum initiatives were implemented is instructed in two languages, English and Arabic, at the Bahrain Teachers College. This impetus in curriculum initiatives is a result of the reform movement in Bahrain, (Bahrain Education Reform, 2006). This paper will discuss the processes and the strategies enabling the development of critical academic literacy in teacher candidates. These enabling strategies are for developing both content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge across several academic courses at BTC.

Keywords: Critical literacy; curriculum initiatives; academic writing; teacher development

1. Introduction

The focus of this study on academic writing was to examine the development of critical literacy in English among Bahraini teacher candidates attending the BEd programme at Bahrain Teachers College (BTC). In analyzing the development of BTC teacher candidates' critical writing during the course we are able to analyze the pedagogical effectiveness of the practices, processes, and strategies in teaching critical writing. The teaching method used included components of processes in writing, from brainstorming in order to creating alternate writing tasks, to giving emphasize to idea formation and organization of writing. In the process of writing, idea development was stressed alongside technical writing skills of linguistic features of language complexity, syntactic complexity, and lexical complexity. The importance of critical thinking and analysis was taught as a main feature of critical academic writing.

1.1 Research question

The research question undertaken for investigation in this study is: To what extent did the enabling strategies put into practice in writing task instruction facilitate the development of critical academic literacy in teacher candidates in teacher education programmes?

1.2 Participants

English academic writing is a compulsory course at BTC. The course is taken by BEd (Bachelor of Education) first year students in their first semester. Before entrance into BTC, the students' practice of writing is generally limited to typical secondary school courses in Bahrain where they participate in typical classroom English lessons taken from British textbooks, which are adapted for Bahrain schools. Typical essay writing ranges from narrative writing to letter writing. Student admission into BTC is dependent on

proficiency examinations. All students are of Bahraini nationality and are native Arabic speakers and English is largely at EL2 proficiency.

1.3 Setting

Bahrain Teachers College was set up in September 2008. The classes were conducted in the first semester of the 2008-2009 academic year at the BTC, at the University of Bahrain. The course, entitled English for Educators (EFE), is compulsory for all first year teacher candidates. EFE is not a content course specifically, as it includes a variety of reading activities. All students at BTC are required to take this course in order to fulfill specific requirements in teacher education.

1.4 Teaching and Learning Materials: Procedures

The lecturer, the main author of this paper, provided all Teaching and Learning notes used by the students throughout the course. Materials were adapted from "The Student Writer: Editor and Critic, Sixth edition" (2004) by Barbara Fine Clouse. Additional materials in the form of workshop notes were also provided to establish processes and practices in academic writing. We analyze the development of students' writing with an focus on the organizational process, from topic identification and content organization to students' multiple essay revisions, in order to provide meaning and context. Over the course of two months, students moved from their developing first mind-maps to weekly conferencing in order to avoid overdependence on Internet materials and the issues of plagiarism. When the final drafts were submitted, each group had worked on writing and developing an academic paper that explored argumentative writing on a topic that they selected. They were encouraged to work on a topic with a specific Bahraini context so as to make their writing experience more purposeful and meaningful.

1.5 Pedagogy of L2 writing

The instructions for writing included the construction and use of voice in writing. By establishing a voice in writing, a writer is able to convey their individual perspective on a topic while presenting the purpose of writing to an audience using cohesive and convincing arguments. The presence of an authorial voice is frequently assessed in order to determine the quality of students' writing in L1 and L2.

Voice is described as "one of the ingredients or traits of good writing that pertains the personality of the author, the style, the mood, or tone of the writing, and matches the purpose and audience of the piece of writing" (Wyoming State Board of Education, 2003). Research on the importance of voice as a pedagogical tool in writing instruction has been conducted with regards to L1 and L2 academic writing. In the literature review in teaching writing, for example in the United States, the presence of voice in writing is linked to the Western ideology of individualism. However, instruction and use of voice in L2 writing has come into question, especially in cases where L2 writers identify with a collectively oriented cultural background.

Ramanathan and Atkinson (1999) have researched the difficulties L2 writers face when writing in a linguistically and culturally different framework. Their research on the use of voice in academic writing seeks to better understand and inform L2 writing pedagogy. Although challenges have been observed in relation to voice and L2 writing, researchers like Matsuda argue that these challenges are not linked to cultural differences between individual voice and group-oriented voices in different societies. Matsuda (2001) describes voice as "the use of discursive and non-discursive language that writers choose from ever changing repertoires" (Matsuda, P.K., 2001), in which he disassociates voice and individuality, but instead links voice to language and intention of meaning.

In a study conducted by Helms-Park and Stapleton (2003), the *Voice Intensity Rating Scale* was used to evaluate components of voice in their argumentative writing assertiveness, from self-identification, reiteration of the central point, and authorial presence to autonomy of thought. The element of voice was given particular importance throughout the EFE writing assignment as the target was to develop argumentative writing. The use of voice was given emphasis because of its role in expressing opinion based on critical thought, and in expressing assertiveness in argumentative writing.

Instruction and emphasis during the course was also given to the components of context, audience, and purpose as students were instructed to examine, develop, and use process writing as a tool for academic

writing development across BTC course assignments and presentations. Process writing focuses on how the writer writes, where ideas come from, and looks at various stages of composing (Raimes, 1983). Process writing is different from product-writing which focuses mainly on accurate, error-free writing without a focus on content development and idea creation. The emergence of process-oriented writing instruction over the last thirty years reflects the shift away from technical-based writing skills and a move towards content and critical thinking as a form of academic writing. The instructor of the EFE course gave emphasis to the processes of writing over the writing product in order to provide more effective approaches to writing for Arabic speaking L2 writers at BTC. The aim was to establish a model for writing instruction as well as process writing approaches for teacher candidates at the Bahrain Teachers College. By establishing manageable targets, emphasis was given to establishing standards in L2 writing amongst teacher candidates.

The instruction in processes in academic writing included elements of scaffolding and process writing strategies in that student writers were encouraged to identify, select, and brainstorm in order to develop their own topics, contextualize their ideas, practice grammatical scaffolding to understand the use of transitional phrases, and develop coherent writing. All evidence of scaffolding stages was analyzed from writing samples produced by the students throughout the writing stages. These samples were examined in order to analyze and review the process of writing that occurred and whether or not the use of these instructional strategies resulted in stronger academic writing skills.

The importance of academic and critical writing in the professional world has been studied across many fields. In a study examining faculty views on the importance of academic writing and writing instruction, two strands of thought were identified (Wei Zhu, 2004). One view of faculty members held that writing instruction is provided in order to transfer general writing skills, while the second view recognized the importance of communication processes that should be bolstered by both content course faculty teaching and academic writing instructors. Although the study looked at writing and writing instruction in the fields of business and communication, it is apparent that these two views on writing instruction are notably intertwined when applied to the field of L2 language instruction for teacher candidates.

2. Processes of L2 writing

2.1 Enabling strategies – knowledge

The starting point for the instructional strategies was what Hyland (2011) in *Learning-to-write* states as explicit teaching in goal setting and activation techniques. Hyland states that these processes are not just editing but rather central resources for constructing meaning in writing. Texts are shaped by audience, purpose, and context. Learning to write involves not only procedural knowledge but strategies such as activating schemata, genre awareness, grammar proofing, and responsiveness to a particular audience. Writing is considered as more than grammatical accuracy of guided composition, gap filling, and substitution exercises (Hyland, 2011).

The following enabling strategies were included to develop students' thinking skills and processes in writing. The strategic knowledge included the learning to write processes. The following strategies and practices were encouraged:

2.2 Using linguistic devices to develop coherence and cohesion

- Analysing reading scaffolds to model and develop strategies to develop writing
- Analysing and using signaling devices used by writers: abstracts, captions, titles headings, sub-headings, thesis statements, summary statements, structural arrangement of words on the page
- Analysing and using non-linguistic devices such as *diagrams, charts, symbols, and photographs*
- Developing context & meaning: Awareness raising on how language is used by writers to establish contexts and meaning
- Changing attitudes away from “you tell me what to do” or the typically anticipated *su'aal* (question) – *jawaab* (answer) approach
- Developing active participation instead of passive avoidance tactics

- Predicting strategies from reading scaffolds
- Recognizing, identifying, and using cues and clues in texts in order to make connections in ideas
- Recognizing, identifying, and using coherence and cohesive devices in developing arguments
- Recognizing and using lexical cohesion to make meaning

2.3 Pedagogy of writing

The pedagogy of writing included instruction on linguistic aspects of the target language, on the structure of language, the use of cohesive devices, lexico-grammatical devices, establishing statement of purpose, establishing an audience and context for writing, and analyzing and writing text structures: compare and contrast, cause and effect, problem and solution text structures. Feedback in the form of teacher-student conferencing, peer response, and a variety of feedback was included. Oral and written (on paper and on screen for those with IT tools) comments were included to provide feedback to motivate students.



Figure 1. Elements of writing emphasized in process writing and argument development

2.4 Teaching and learning notes

Guidance in writing strategies was given through workshop notes on writing processes to guide the teacher candidates in the principles of critical academic writing. The workshop notes used by the teacher candidates emphasized writing with a focus on four components: audience, purpose, context, and voice. Question prompts were provided to student writers on what the principles of writing entailed. For example, when instructing the writers on *Audience* in writing, the questions and prompts included the following: “Who is going to read my project paper?” and “How do I convince school administrators to review my recommendations?” These prompts were posed in order to lead the student into thinking about the purpose of their writing (Appendix 1). These questions were also related to the understanding of purpose in writing, for example, “How do you want your readers to respond?” The instructor provided signaling phrases, so that the writers could link lexical writing devices with their topic. Emphasis was also placed on the use of lexical cohesive devices in order to develop coherence and cohesion in writing.

2.5 Using a text-based approach with visual scaffolding

Instruction included using linguistic and non-linguistic scaffolding devices, mind maps, tree diagrams, spider webs to make connections between reading and writing in order to organize thinking and writing. Visual scaffolding was used to develop students' oral and written responses to texts.

2.6 Bilingual approach

Bilingual approaches were used to shift students away from direct translation, from Arabic to English, from the tendency of using limited electronic translation devices. The over use of these translation devices very often failed to help students. It limited their understanding; sometimes it led to confusion and also to inappropriate word choices.

Instead instruction incorporated bilingual approaches through a bilingual instructor who co-taught and answered queries from students. The use of a bilingual approach was encouraged more for clarification of tasks. The bilingual approach helped to raise awareness of the use of Arabic and English writing strategies to facilitate academic language development.

2.7 Accommodating learning styles and use of space

The following practices were encouraged:

- Moving away from students seated in formal rows waiting to take down notes passively in a thick book where other notes were recorded
- Encouraging and developing co-operative learning and collaborative approaches by establishing group roles for each member of the team
- Collaborative approaches: working towards a consensus on tasks – for example, constructing mind maps, critiquing ideas during brainstorming sessions, reading up and writing up drafts

2.8 'Habitus': changing social-cultural behavior – ways of learning

A change in behavior from individualistic to co-operative learning needed to be accompanied by a shift in body language in the classroom. Utilizing classroom space was encouraged by moving the workspace occasionally from the desk to the floor, where students sat with their peers to brainstorm, communicate, interact, and record on *wasleea* (large sheets of paper). One group of students in fact initiated this move to the floor as this was what they practiced culturally when they sat on rugs to read their religious texts, the family copy of the Koran. It was observed that they were found to be more responsible in taking charge of the various tasks of writing. This also led to an increased amount of interaction. The change in 'habitus', change in body language, change in posture, and change in their space and environment helped towards reducing culturally driven gender differences in peer interaction and in reducing other ideological differences. It thus provided a basis for more positive collaboration. Group dynamics shifted from resistance to more positive interaction.

2.9 Collaborative approaches: co-constructing content knowledge

The students reported that working towards co-constructing mind maps, critiquing ideas during brainstorming sessions, reading up on the content and writing up drafts led to a consensus on selecting content knowledge that was used to construct arguments. These approaches led to more interactive learning experiences. It increased their confidence. It was observed that some female students who were generally diffident in collaborating with their male peers showed a shift in their behavior to more active interaction with their peers and to a more interactive style of learning.

3. Analysis

3.1 Scaffolding

The analysis below provides the various stages of development of academic literacy in teacher candidates. The next part of the process began with identifying topics of interest to the student writers. Some of the discussion triggers given were through readings from Bahraini newspapers, which carried issues of the day. Daily newspapers were made available to the students. Topics were not initially given, but students were encouraged to review topics that were relevant to their society and culture, as well as topics that have not been thoroughly researched in Bahrain. The topics selected were arrived at after brain storming sessions and peer discussion. While some students had access to the Internet and were able to contribute and discuss what they read online to their groups, many did not own computers. Instructors did take this into regard and encouraged the use of sharing computers in their groups and to collaborative work in the library.

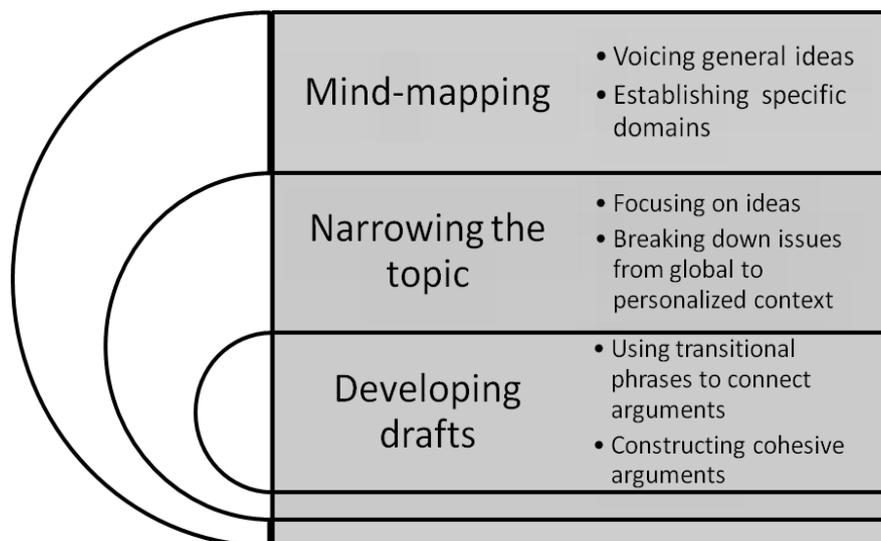


Figure 2. Process writing in critical academic literacy

3.2 Mapping ideas

Readers have to note the following. The analysis and examples of students' writing is on the developing of writing: argument construction and logic. Though attention was paid to language accuracy, time was given for writing drafts where attention was given to generating ideas. In order to allow for a less stressful, a less anxious environment for writing as far as possible, all writing drafts produced by students were given value without constraining them on attending to error correction all the time, as the primary focus of writing. The examples from students were not merely on language accuracy but on establishing processes in writing.

After initial mapping on *wasleea* (large paper), groups were encouraged to develop further, clarify, review and revise concept maps. The concept map given below (Fig. 1) shows the first attempt by one group at selecting, focusing, and developing their ideas. There is an attempt to define the domains of the topic: i.e. psychological and environmental domains.

The group whose work was analyzed chose the topic of homosexuality in some Bahraini students in the school domain. After consultation with some Bahraini educators on campus it was decided not to censor the topic, but to allow the students to read up on this topic. The main emphasis in developing processes in writing was not the topic, but developing argument.

It is evident from the initial mind map that they were working with a broad range of ideas in which they read up and established specific domains related to the topic. The main elements of the students' writing were linked to exploring on how to present their arguments. Although the mind map included various strands, the writers selected and worked on the topic in relation to a few adolescents in Bahraini schools, as this was most likely based on personally observing this behavior in the context of a few students. By expanding and discussing the factors related to homosexual adolescents in the Bahraini school system, the

writers had expanded it hypothetically to a wider context in order to analyse the issue. They were made aware of generalizations.

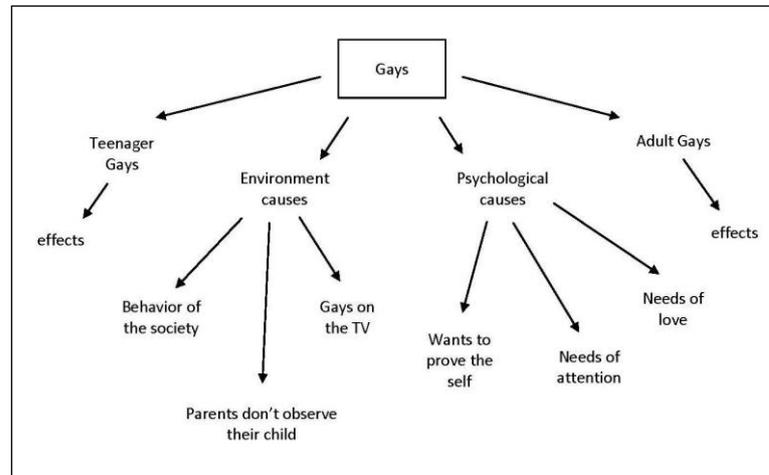


Figure 3. Initial concept map of group 1

3.3 Narrowing down the topic

The next step in identifying a topic of interest for group 1 was to narrow down their topic. Writers were asked to focus on their topic by creating a topic tree in which they broke down the issue from a global context to a more personalized context. This is demonstrated in Figure 2.

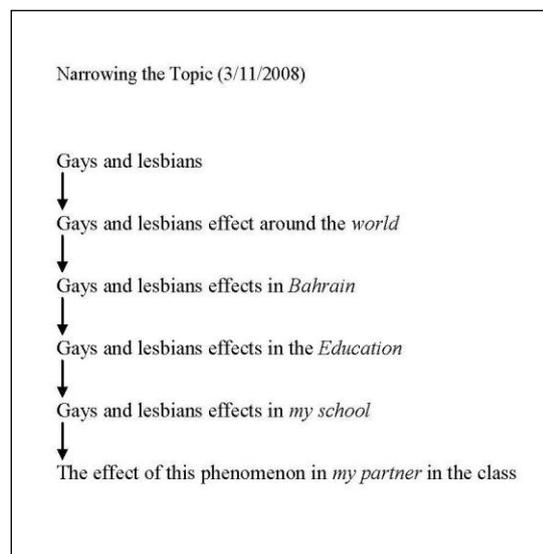


Figure 4. Narrowing the topic

3.4 Structural Analysis

The research question analyzed the following: To what extent did the effectiveness of pedagogical instruction bring about more effective writing strategies? A comparison of the structures of the 1st draft to the more developed structures of 2nd draft is given below. The first draft of writing was dense, crowded with ideas, quite typical of students who have a disparate set of ideas. There was a need to develop fluency and communication in writing. The structural analysis that follows is used to demonstrate the way in which the

students used instructional strategies to develop and organize writing. On the right hand side of the diagram is the full text of the students' first draft on the topic. The left hand column lists structural elements of the students' writing such as their introduction, statement of purpose, definition of the topic and conclusion signaled by the signaling phrase "at the end." Much of the second half of the writing is devoted to listing reasons for this behavior. This is linked to their understanding of elements of cause and effect related to this behavior.

First Draft (3/11/2008)	
Introduction: Establishing Bahraini context	Gays and lesbians is a new issue which happened in Bahrain's school two years ago. Actually, the problem takes a part in our society which affect the
Domain: Adolescence in Bahraini society	adolescence's behavior and lead them to a negative outcomes. <i>It is a danger</i>
<i>Definition #1</i>	<i>disease which related to the relationship between same genders. In the</i>
Domain 2: Bahrain schools	educational situations it must not have the phenomenon because it is a place to
Purpose: Research cause of issue in Bahraini society to learn about resolution.	learn the good habits not to do the bad habits. To discover the main reasons, we should research about the psychology of the adolescence's behavior and
(Psychological) Cause: Parental neglect	feelings to understand them and know how to deal with them. So the reasons are: environment causes are play a role to increase this disease like the parents
Effect: Need for "care and love"	who lead their children to a positive or negative way and post a basic beliefs in
(Environmental) Cause: Television and movies	their minds so if they don't give them care and love and pay attention of them they will become gays or lesbians. In addition, television is an important
Effect: Modeling behavior of gay actors	service in our life which we can get news from it. Also, the movies and programs that appear in it are affect the children's learning so when they see a
Conclusive Effect: Homosexual students face challenges in school	famous actors who is gay or a lesbian they will become like him\her. at the end, this category of people is faces difficulties in the learning process and as a result we will have low level in graduated students.

Figure 5. Structural analysis of first draft of students' group work

Second Draft (29/11/2008)	
Introduction: Establishing Bahraini context	Gays and lesbians is a new issue which occurred in Bahrain's school two years ago.
Domain: Adolescence in Bahraini society <i>Definition #2</i>	In fact, this problem takes a part in our society which affect the adolescent's behavior and leads them to negative outcomes. <i>It is related to illogical beliefs of the gender.</i> In the educational institution, it must not have this phenomenon because it
Domain 2: Bahrain schools [Purpose of research not stated]	is the place for learn positive sexual behavior. The main factor that increases the number of gays and lesbians in Bahrain's school is the internet. This technique
Cause: Internet -Movies -Websites -Chat rooms -Forums -Advertisements	involves many programs that influence the adolescent's behavior. To explain, these programs include movies, websites, chatting rooms, forums, and electronic advertisements, which transfer the information in incorrect way. As a result, the
Effect: Exposure to "incorrect" information. Modeling behavior from gay friends.	adolescent's mind translate it in different interpretation. In chatting rooms and forums, adolescents meet bad friends and model bad behavior from them. Furthermore, movies in the internet show adolescents the interest aspects of gays
Conclusive Effect: 1) Avoid positive learning 2) Interest in bad behavior 3) Rise in unemployment 4) Homosexual students face challenges in school	and lesbians but it doesn't display them for the bad effects. The consequences of this phenomenon in Bahrain's society are: they learn from internet how to avoid positive learning process. moreover, negative effects on the education of adolescents. All these effects would establish generation who attract by bad behavior and avoid learning. That's would arise the number of employment in the future. At the end, this category of people is faces difficulties in the learning process and as a result we will have low level in graduated studies.

Figure 6. Structural analysis of second draft of students' group work

4. Developing arguments using Teaching & Learning notes

The development of academic writing from the first typed draft to the second draft is evidenced by an increase in connecting phrases and cohesive arguments that employ examples and elaboration. The following side-by-side analysis of the two drafts shows an increase in the correct application of transition words and phrases that demonstrates prepositional elements of writing development in the students' academic writing. The examples drawn from the written drafts clearly outline the use of signaling phrases which express cohesion and coherence in explaining and expanding the writers' arguments. A concise analysis of these examples show how the students experimented with transitional phrases from one draft to the other.

First Draft (3/11/2008)	Second Draft (29/11/2008)
<p>Gays and lesbians is a new issue which happened in Bahrain's school two years ago. <u>Actually</u>, the problem takes a part in our society which affect the adolescence's behavior and lead them to a negative outcomes. It is a danger disease which related to the relationship between same genders. In the educational <u>situations</u> it must not have the phenomenon because it is a place to learn the good habits not to do the bad habits. To discover the <u>main reasons</u>, we should research about the psychology of the adolescence's behavior and feelings to understand them and know how to deal with them. So the <u>reasons</u> are: environment causes are play a role to increase this disease like the parents who lead their children to a positive or negative way and post a basic beliefs in their minds so if they don't give them care and love and pay attention of them they will become gays or lesbians. <u>In addition</u>, television is an important service in our life which we can get news from it. <u>Also</u>, the movies and programs that appear in it are affect the children's learning so when they see a famous actors who is gay or a lesbian they will become like him/her. <u>at the end</u>, this <u>category</u> of people is faces difficulties in the learning process and as a result we will have low level in graduated students.</p>	<p>Gays and lesbians is a new issue which occurred in Bahrain's school two years ago. <u>In fact</u>, this problem takes a part in our society which affect the adolescent's behavior and leads them to negative outcomes. It is <u>related to</u> illogical beliefs of the gender. In the educational <u>institution</u>, it must not have this phenomenon because it is the place for learn positive sexual behavior. The <u>main factor</u> that increases the number of gays and lesbians in Bahrain's school is the internet. This technique involves many programs that influence the adolescent's behavior. <u>To explain</u>, these programs include movies, websites, chatting rooms, forums, and electronic advertisements, which transfer the information in incorrect way. <u>As a result</u>, the adolescent's mind translate it in different interpretation. In chatting rooms and forums, adolescents meet bad friends and model bad behavior from them. <u>Furthermore</u>, movies in the internet show adolescents the interest aspects of gays and lesbians but it doesn't display them for the bad effects. The <u>consequences</u> of this phenomenon in Bahrain's society are: they learn from internet how to avoid positive learning process. <u>moreover</u>, negative effects on the education of adolescents. <u>All these effects</u> would establish generation who attract by bad behavior and avoid learning. That's would arise the number of employment in the future. <u>At the end</u>, this category of people is faces difficulties in the learning process and <u>as a result</u> we will have low level in graduated studies.</p>

Figure 7. Comparison of first and second draft. Transitional devices are highlighted and key cohesive language is underlined.

4.1 Cohesion and coherence in argument construction

Coherence is defined as:

Property of unity in a written text that stems from links among its underlying ideas and from the logical organization and development of its thematic content. The property of unity in written text that stems from links among its surface elements, as when words in one sentence are repeated in another, or when some words or phrases depend for their interpretation on materials in preceding or following text. (Coherence. (2012). In Merriam-Webster.com. Retrieved December 12, 2012, from <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/cohesion.>)

Teaching & Learning notes:

To add ideas: "In addition, furthermore, first, second, third"

Illustration: "for example, for instance"

Purpose: "in order to"

Lexical Cohesion:

Analysis from first draft:

4.1.1 Example: (1st draft) "Actually, this problem takes a part in our society which affect the adolescence's behavior and lead them to a negative outcomes."

The use of 'actually' as a connector in the first draft is typical in school essay writing. It signifies that students must begin to utilize a more appropriate and diverse range of connectors, both lexical and

syntactic, for academic writing.

4.1.2 Example: (1st draft) "at the end, this category of people is faces difficulties in the learning process and as a result we will have low level in graduated studies."

The signaling phrase, 'at the end' is used as a concluding statement indicating proper use of the phrase in argument development. The signaling phrase, 'as a result' is used in tandem with the concluding remark to show a relationship between the conclusion and the effect of homosexual behavior on society and the individual.

4.1.3 Example: (1st draft) "Also, the movies and program that appear in it are affect the children's learning so when they see a famous actors who is a gay or lesbian they will become like him\her.

'Also' is used as a signaling device to indicate the addition of more ideas or evidence to support the argument.

4.1.4 Example: (1st draft) "In addition, television is an important service in our life which we can get new from it."

The signaling phrase, 'in addition,' is used in order to add ideas or evidence to the argument that television is impacting elements of adolescent behavior.

4.1.5 Example: (1st draft) "To discover the main reasons, we should research about the psychology of the adolescence's behavior and feelings to understand them and know how to deal with them."

Teacher candidate writers used the shortened signaling phrase '(in order) to' to state the purpose of their research, and so extracted the meaning of the phrase and applied it correctly to the development of their essay.

Analysis from first draft:

4.1.6 Example: (2nd draft) "In fact, this problem takes a part in our society which affect the adolescent's behavior and leads them to negative outcomes."

Teacher candidates replaced 'actually' with 'in fact' as a connector in the second draft which shows that they were experimenting with and developing the transitional phrases they used.

4.1.7 Example: (2nd draft) "The main factor that increases the number of gays and lesbians in Bahrain's school is the internet. This technique involves many programs that influence the adolescent's behavior. To explain, these programs include movies, websites, chatting rooms, forums, and electronic advertisements, which transfer information in incorrect way."

As evidence of elaboration and expansion of ideas, writers used the signaling phrase 'to explain' to further comment on the relationship between internet programs and adolescents' homosexual behavior.

Grammatical cohesion:

4.1.8 Example: (1st draft) "Gays and lesbians is a new issue which happened in Bahrain's school two years ago. Actually, this problem takes a part in our society which affect the adolescence's behavior and lead them to a negative outcomes."

The phrase 'this problem' is used in reference to the 'issue' (key word) of homosexuality in Bahrain. This kind of grammatical cohesion indicates a fluid expression of ideas and concept grouping.

4.1.9 Example: (2nd draft) "The main factor that increases the number of gays and lesbians in Bahrain's school is the internet. This technique involves many programs that influence the adolescent's behavior."

'This technique' is used as a demonstrative prepositional phrase related to the way in which the Internet plays a role as a 'factor' in increasing the number of gays and lesbians in Bahrain.

Repetition:

Repetition of ‘adolescence's behavior’ (line 3 & 8) and ‘learning’ (line 15 & 17) in relation to children's learning processes throughout the essay indicates the importance of these topics to the young student writers.

4.2 Establishing a central purpose

Teaching & Learning notes:

Is it to inform? Persuade? How do you want your readers to respond? How do you want to convince your reader/your peers?

Signaling phrases: “in order to”

4.2.1 Example: (1st draft) *"Gays and lesbians is a new issue which happened in Bahrain's school two years ago."*

This introductory sentence sets up the essay topic, setting, and time frame.

4.2.2 Example: (1st draft) *"To discover the main reasons, we should research about the psychology of the adolescence's behavior and feelings to understand them and know how to deal with them."*

The purpose of the writers' research is established, with a noted goal to understand their homosexual peers and inform readers about a possible solution for handling this situation in Bahrain.

4.2.3 Example: (2nd draft) *Title: Gays and Lesbians in Bahrain's school*

The development of a title in the 2nd draft suggests the incorporation of learning notes into students' academic writing. In the 2nd draft, the statement of purpose is omitted, possibly due to oversight or a writing shift towards cause-and-effect.

4.3 Audience and Context

The first essay draft of the project paper sets up an audience made up of Bahraini readers. This is closely linked to the stated purpose of the project, which is to research the origins of homosexual behavior in Bahraini adolescents and understand how to deal with their behavior in the school context. This statement of purpose is not found, however, in the second and third drafts.

Teaching & Learning notes:

Who is going to read my project paper? Who is the reader of my paper? What do they anticipate?

4.3.1 Example: (Final Title) *The Truth about Gays and Lesbians in Public*

In the final draft, the development of a final title places emphasis on public settings, rather than Bahraini schools. This shows that the students were conscious of their audience and shifted the content of their writing, including the title, to fit the interest of their readers.

4.3.2 Example: (1st draft) *"Gays and lesbians is a new issue which happened in Bahrain's school two years ago."*

The topic sentence first introduces educational institutions in Bahrain as the main domain of this research.

4.3.3 Example: (Final draft) *"To realize the harm of being gay or lesbian you could imagine your self in this situation."*

By addressing the reader as ‘you’ the writers are directing their voice to their readers. It is assumed that the reader is not gay or lesbian, so the writer attempts to convey the world in which gays or lesbians live in Bahrain. This kind of appeal is important in setting up the context of the paper and presenting the argument in an engaging manner.

4.3.4 Example: *"What could you do if you dearly loving someone and having to keep it totally secret because if you don't you will be punished?"*

The writers ask questions of the reader in order to elicit an emotional connection to the research in Bahrain. This type of writing where the writer raises questions shows the development of further thinking.

4.3.5 Example: (2nd draft) *"In the educational institution, it must not have this phenomenon because it is the place for learn positive sexual behavior."*

Educational institutions, previously referred to as 'educational situations,' are addressed as places to learn positive behavior, more specifically positive sexual behavior. The type of revision of vocabulary and elaboration on content found in this sentence compared to the previous version found in the first draft is indicative of a development in academic writing based on the learning notes provided.

4.4 Cause-and-effect structures

Teaching and Learning notes:

Signaling phrases: "because, since, as a result"

4.4.1 Example: (1st draft) *"Gays and lesbians is a new issue which happened in Bahrain's school two years ago."*

With the introduction of this topic sentence, the students are essentially setting up the questions on a current issue: What has been the recent cause of this issue in Bahrain's schools? What are the effects? In this way they are able to connect the cause of homosexuality in Bahrain to its effect on society and the schools.

4.4.2 Example: (1st draft) *"Actually, this problem takes a part in our society which affect the adolescence's behavior and lead them to a negative outcomes."*

Writers mean to draw a connection between the issue and its effect on negative behavior.

4.4.3 Example: (1st draft) *"So the reasons are :environment causes are play a role to increase this disease like the parents who lead their children to a positive or negative way and post a basic beliefs in their minds so if they don't give them care and love and pay attention of them they will become gays or lesbians."*

This sentence and the sentence to follow are examples of how the student writers attempted to create a list of 'reasons' or causes for this condition in certain students. In listing examples of causes, the students are establishing the origins of the problem and creating a background for developing a solution.

4.4.4 Example: (1st draft) *"Also, the movies and program that appear in it are affect the children's learning so when they see a famous actors who is a gay or lesbian they will become like him\her."*

A casual relationship is drawn between homosexuality portrayed on the screen and its influence on child development. Recognizing this external influence is important in understanding the proposed solution in all domains.

4.4.5 Example: (2nd draft) *"The main factor that increases the number of gays and lesbians in Bahrain's school is the internet. This technique involves many programs that influence the adolescent's behavior."*

In the second draft, it is clear that the teacher candidates have narrowed down their list of causes for homosexual behavior. Instead of listing a number of internal and external factors (psychological and environmental), the writers begin concentrating on one main cause: the Internet. Note the use of a transition sentence that introduces the Internet and the many ways in which it can 'influence' behavior in adolescents, not only cause it.

4.4.6 Example: (1st/2nd draft) "at the end, this category of people is faces difficulties in the learning process and as a result we will have low level in graduated studies."

The use of signaling phrase, 'at the end,' indicates that the conclusion of the argument as well as the final effect homosexuality has on society and individuals. The signaling phrase, 'as a result,' is also used to show cause and effect. A link between cause-and-effect is made: Child learning development is challenged which will lead to poor grades in school.

5. Conclusion

The analysis in this paper is used to establish to what extent the pedagogy of instruction was effective in scaffolding the teacher candidates who are second language speakers and writers of English in developing their language skills and complexity in syntactic, lexical, organizational, structures and coherence in writing [Figure 8]. The analysis examines the extent to which pedagogical approaches used in instruction develops writing in Arabic speaking writers writing in L2 English classes. Multiple frames of analysis were used in order to gain perspectives on the writers' development over the course of the writing tasks and assignment. We hope this paper has contributed to the discussion on some of the strategies enabling the development of critical academic literacy in teacher candidates. These enabling strategies are useful both for developing content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge across several academic courses.

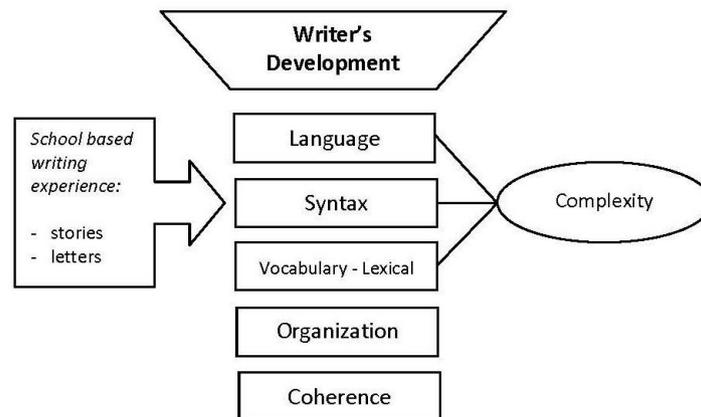


Figure 8. Writer's development in secondary school and after literacy course
(Adapted from Manchón, 2011; Swain, 2006; Williams, 2012)

There is some evidence of students co-constructing knowledge, using procedural knowledge in order to work towards set targets in their weekly writing tasks. Williams (2012) provides a strong argument for writing and written feedback compared to fleeting oral feedback as writing provides a permanent record for reformulating and recasting. This processing provides opportunities for language development and for L2 development. Williams (2012) discusses how learners use either initial or restructured knowledge. The new knowledge is prompted by collaborative tasks of co-constructing, critiquing ideas, revising, and reformulating. As the task complexity increases, collaboration requires students to move towards reformulation and reprocessing and repackaging of implicit knowledge – what Swain refers to as “languaging” (Williams, 2012; Swain, 2006).

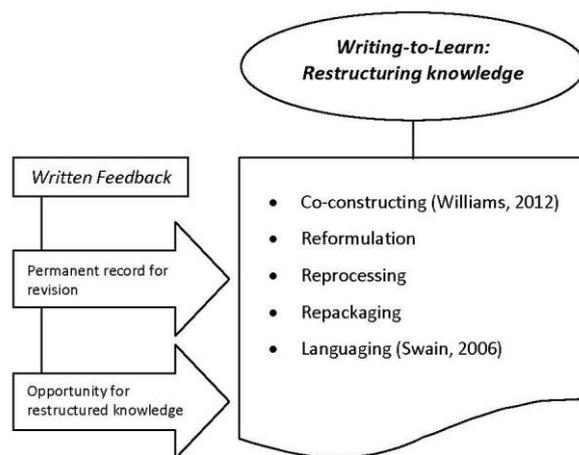


Figure 9. Developing competencies (Adapted from Swain, 2006 & Williams, 2012)

The complex processes in developing writing from planning, framing, and developing ideas on a topic of their choice, increasing task complexity that led to increasing linguistic, lexical, syntactic complexity in writing tasks are part of the writing processes of reformulating and restructuring. Manchón (2001), in studying writing in particularly foreign language settings, argues that it is not only *learning to write*, but *writing to learn* [Figure 9]. The activity of writing, of producing texts, activates thought processes that leads to producing language and makes it conducive to language development. The gaps in undertaking effective writing tasks and to language development are being addressed in a range of academic tasks, both oral and written tasks, oral presentation to develop communication skills, from writing reflective essays to journals and logs as part of developing a range of competencies across teacher candidates. The BTC curriculum gives emphasis to reflective practices in order to develop professional practice, teacher development, and teacher confidence.

References

- Baradaran, A. & Sarfarazi, B. (2011). The impact of scaffolding on the Iranian EFL learners' English academic writing. *Australian Journal of Basic and Applied Sciences*, 5, 2265-2273.
- Cohesion. (2012). In *Merriam-Webster.com*. Retrieved December 12, 2012, from <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/cohesion>.
- Helms-Park, R., & Stapleton, P. (2003). Questioning the importance of individualized voice in undergraduate L2 argumentative writing: An empirical study with pedagogical implications. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 12, 245-265.
- Hyland, K. (2011). Learning to write: Issues in theory, research and pedagogy. In R.M. Manchón (Ed.), *Learning-to-write and writing-to-learn in an additional language* (pp.17-35). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Johnson, M.D., Mercado, L., Acevedo, A. (2012). The effect of planning sub-processes on L2 writing fluency, grammatical complexity, and lexical complexity. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 21, 264-282.
- Matsuda, P.K. (2001). Voice in Japanese written discourse: Implications for second language writing. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 10 (1-2), 35-53.
- Manchón, R.M. (2001). Trends in the conceptualization of second language composing strategies: A critical analysis. *International Journal of English Studies*, 1(2), 47-70.
- Raimes, A. (1983). *Techniques in teaching writing*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Ramanathan, V., & Atkinson, D. (1999). In individualism, academic writing, and ESL writers. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 8 (1), 45-75.
- Swain, M. (2006). Languaging, agency and collaboration in advanced second language learning. In H. Brynes (Ed.), *Advanced language learning: The contributions of Halliday and Vygotsky* (pp. 95-108). London, UK: Continuum.
- Wei Zhu, W. (2004). Faculty view on the importance of writing, the nature of academic writing, and teaching and responding to writing in the disciplines. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 13, 29-48.
- Williams, J. (2012). The potential role(s) of writing in second language development. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 21, 321-331.
- Wyoming State Board of Education. (2003). Wyoming Language Arts Content and Performance Standards. Retrieved December 17, 2012 from <http://www.k12.wy.us/SAA/standards/lang.pdf>
- Zhao, C.G., & Llos, L. (2008). Voice in high-stakes L1 academic writing assessment: Implications for L2 writing instruction. *Assessing Writing*, 13, 153-170

*Note: All diagrams/figures in the paper are digitalized figures of students' original work.

Appendix 1

Bahrain Teachers College
English for Educators, Dr. Vanithamani Saravanan

The following were some of the approaches we put into place. Teaching and learning notes were prepared by Dr. Vanithamani Saravanan.

Where to begin: How to choose a topic?

Identify a problem in the school that you are attached, a problem that is close to your heart.

Choose a problem or an issue where you want to reflect upon, where you want to contribute some good ideas on how this problem or issue should be considered.

This is your own project.

Ways to avoid plagiarism. Should you download files from the Internet?

- It is suggested that you do not go into the Internet and download some files.
- What is available and posted on the Internet is the thinking and writing of other writers who have thought through the problem and who want to share their thinking with you.
- The writing of other writers is to provide a trigger for your own thinking and writing.
- The writing of other writers is to provide a background to such problems in their part of the environment, in their part of the world.
- It is not meant that you imitate the same similar ideas or solutions provided by these writers.

Appendix 2

Where do I begin? Topics for project paper

Audience

- **Decide** on the audience for this project paper.
- The audience for these projects may be your peers.
- The audience for this project may be the school authorities or the school administration.

Purpose

Think through the purpose for this project paper.

- Do you want to make an impact?
- Do you want to change school policy?
- Do you want to provide some solutions?
- Do you want to start a committee that will assist you in developing some solutions?

Context

This project paper helps you to provide a context to what you're writing.
This project helps you to share some of the issues and problems in the Bahrain context.

Voice

Express in writing your unique personality, your unique voice.
Use the choices given to you, the choices that reflect who you are inside.
Write your original thoughts, your particular way of seeing things.
Interpret your thinking.

Appendix 3

Project paper: planning to write - 1st draft

Identify a problem that you observed in school.
Refer to the existing literature on the topic/subject
Read up at least 3-4 relevant references: (books, articles, papers)
Write up a statement of intent, i.e. thesis statement:

i.e. Which aspect or strand that you wish to focus upon or highlight in your argumentative paper.

Review and summarize and present relevant literature
Write up your thesis statement
Provide a mind map or flow chart as part of your plan to write your paper.
Provide brief background information, programmes conducted in the institution/school

Appendix 4

Argumentative structures

Use argumentative structures to write up briefly on

- the causes and consequences to this issue/problem
- problem-solutions as a response to this issue/problem

2nd draft: Revise content

- Revise to make sure that your arguments make an impact
- Revise to make sure that you have used academic language

3rd draft: Consolidation

Discuss solutions: Propose recommendations for a committee to consider.

- **Final draft: Proof reading of final copy before submission:**
consider grammar, syntax, structure, and spelling

Appendix 5

Sample project paper: planning to write

1st draft

Identify a problem that you observed in school.

Refer to the existing literature on the topic/subject

Read up at least 3-4 relevant references: (books, articles, papers)

Write up a statement of intent, ie thesis statement:

ie. Which aspect or strand that you wish to focus upon or highlight in your argumentative paper.

Review and summarize and present relevant literature

Write up your thesis statement

Provide a mind map or flow chart as part of your plan to write your paper.

Provide brief background information, programmes conducted in the institution/school

Argumentative structures

Use argumentative structures to write up briefly on

- the causes and consequences to this issue/problem
- problem-solutions as a response to this issue/problem

Appendix 6

Group Oral Presentation

All groups are to prepare their paper for oral presentation

Divide up your role eg. group of 5 =5 speakers & Group of 4= 4 speakers

Each participant to present one main argument

Use power point to help you to present.

Audience

- **Decide** on the audience for this project paper.
- The audience for these projects may be your peers.
- The audience for this project may be the school authorities or the school administration.

Purpose

Think through the purpose for this project paper.

- Do you want to make an impact?
- Do you want to change school policy?
- Do you want to provide some solutions?
- Do you want to start a committee that will assist you in developing some solutions?

Context

This project paper helps you to provide a context to what you're writing.
This project helps you to share some of the issues and problems in the Bahrain context.

Voice

Express in writing your unique personality, your unique voice.
Use the choices given to you, the choices that reflect who you are inside.
Write your original thoughts, your particular way of seeing things.
Interpret your thinking.

Appendix 7

