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STUDENTS' WRITING ERRORS IN EFL: A Case Study

Abstract

Writing is a productive skill. It is one of the most difficult and therefore frustrating '*subjects*' to teach particularly in an ESL/EFL programme. This paper is an outcome of teachers' concerns and efforts to identify areas of difficulty in the writing skill among EFL students and to work out remedial procedures to help them overcome their weaknesses. The study examines 40 exam scripts of first year university students majoring in English. Two topics were given to the students whom were asked to write freely and to express their positive and negative points of view about certain topics. The students' errors were grouped and analysed. The study concludes with pedagogical recommendations.

Keywords: *LEARNERS' WRITING ERRORS: SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHING*

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<u>ملخص</u>

أخطاء الطلبة في الكتابة باللغة الانجليزية

إن مهارة الكتابة من أصعب المهارات اللغوية ، ولهذا تعتبر من المواد الصعبة و المحبطة من الناحية التدريسية خاصة عندما تدرس كمهارة **(في لغة)** لغير الناطقين بها، و تلقي هذه الدراسة الضوء على اهتمامات و محاولات المدرسيين لتحديد أخطاء الطلبة في مهارة الكتابة باللغة الانجليزية ، و قد تمت دراسة و تحليل الأخطاء في كتابات أربعين طالباً من طلاب السنة الأولى في تخصص اللغة الانجليزية بالمرحلة الجامعية ، بهدف وصف و تصنيف هذه الأخطاء من اجل الوصول إلى معرفة كيفية صياغتها و بالتالي التمكن من إيجاد طريقة منهجية لتدريس مهارة الكتابة.

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STUDENTS' WRITING ERRORS IN EFL: A CASE STUDY*

1. Introduction

There is a general consensus among English language instructors at the English Department (now called Department of Foreign Languages) in The University of Qatar that most EFL students are weak in writing courses, namely, Writing 1, Writing 2 and Advanced Writing. This problem is invariably reflected on the other courses by exigency of their requirements that entail the continuous writing activity in examinations and assignments. Hence it is necessary to investigate this problem and find, if possible, the remedial procedures that can elevate the students' level and lessen the number of repeaters every semester.

2. The Purpose of the Study

Qatar University has started a new era of changing and developing since 2004. An excerpt from some Qatar University Standards states that "Each course within a given programme is subject to review similar to that of programmes" (University Evaluation Committee, 2002: 4). Self-evaluation studies are a sign that the institution, whether academic or otherwise, is concerned about its achievements and the level of performance of the people involved in its mission. Problems exist in every writing course. If we, however, face possible problems before they occur, then we might be able to avoid them. Also, if we look at the limitations in what we did, we can consider how to modify them. This article is an outcome of teachers' concerns and efforts to identify the problem and to understand the key issues to EFL writing so as to suggest a remedial procedure that may help the learners to express themselves in better English. It aims at finding areas of difficulty in the writing skill among the students and to work out remedial procedures to help them overcome their weaknesses.

3. Empirical Data

The data of the study is 40 exam scripts of the first Writing Course. The subjects of the study are female students majoring in English (no male students were enrolled in this course during that time) whose ages range from eighteen to twenty years. These learners have finished 6 years of English language instruction at school and are taking English courses including reading, grammar and lab.

Two topics were given to the students. In the first topic, students were asked to write a letter of 200 to 250 words and in the second topic students were to write a text of 350 to 400 words in a time pressure of two hours. The

students were asked to write freely and to express their positive and negative points of view about the above- mentioned topics. *Refer to Appendix (1).*

4. Method of scoring
In this study, a ten-point scale was developed to evaluate each aspect, then the average of the scores was calculated. The breakdown of the marks of the areas covered is given below:

1. Structure: (2 points).
2. Spelling: (1 point).
3. Punctuation: (1 point).
4. Coherence: (2 points).
5. Cohesion: (1 point).
6. Strength of argument: (2 points).
7. Aesthetic dimension: (1 point).

Refer to Appendix (2) for results.

5. Characteristics Defects of Students' Writing
In general, the students writing show the characteristic defects below which confirm Weir's (1988) conclusions.

a) High frequency of grammatical errors
b) Lack of variety in grammatical structures employed
c) Use of inappropriate vocabulary
d) Use of inappropriate grammatical structures
e) Limited range of vocabulary
f) Poor spelling
g) Inadequate understanding of the topic
h) Deficiency in clear self-expression
j) Poor punctuation
k) Poor handwriting
l) Untidiness

6. Data Analysis
Analyzing students' errors is a valuable source of information concerning the transitional state of the learners' competence and weaknesses. Preliminary analysis of the data involved the separation and classification of errors to identify their type. Sentence-level grammatical errors committed by the learners involve some syntactic features, namely verbs, relative clauses, articles, fragments, noun modifiers, and prepositions. The samples present the commonest or most frequent Arabic (Qatari) errors in English. Many of these errors are, of course, common to all non-native users of English (Al-Buainain, 1988b and 2007).

7. <u>Errors found in the Data</u>

i)   *<u>Verbs</u>*

In the data, there are many cases exemplifying the misuse of verb tenses and aspects in English. The students had a hard time selecting the appropriate verb form. Tense and aspect errors were due to the substitution of one tense/ aspect for another. These errors may have resulted from negative transfer (i.e. interference according to Selinker 1969) from Arabic which has different concepts of time. In Arabic, there are only the perfect and the imperfect (past and non-past). Progressive and perfect aspects are especially difficult for Arab learners of English (Mukattash, 1978; Al-Buainain, 1992). In Arabic verbs show two indicative conjugations for aspect: the Imperfect (morphologically marked by prefixes) and the Perfect (marked by suffixes) which may indicate whether the action is viewed as uncompleted or completed, respectively. In the absence of any further temporal specification the Imperfect serves to indicate an action which is regarded as in progress at the present time or repeated action or with future time adverbials. Refer to *Appendix (3)* for examples of errors found in the data.

1) Present/Past Perfect Versus Simple Present/past Verb Tense

Several attempts have been made to establish a 'root' or unitary meaning for the English perfect (Sweet, 1903; Crystal, 1966). It may be used to indicate an action completed in the past, but which result or outcome is still in effect. The duration of the action is not emphasized. The nearest Arabic equivalent to this use is V (+ perfect), but no grammatically encoded category can be considered an exact equivalent to the English present perfect. Semantically, however, Arabic is capable of conveying the different uses of the English present perfect. This involves the use of particles like / qad/ and adverbs such as /tawan or litawi/ (just, now) and so forth (Al-Buainain, 1988:226). ESL students have difficulty understanding the notion of a frame of time. The following examples are taken from the data.

* I was very disappointed of what I have seen there and very annoyed of what I have found.
(*Student no. 8; Topic 1*)

2. *Omission/Addition of verb to be*

In cases of 'intensive complementation' (Quirk <u>et. al</u>., 1972: 820) i.e. when a co-reference relation exists between the subject and the subject

complement, English requires the use of a linking verb: 'copula'. The copula itself carries little meaning, yet it functions as a link between the subject and its complement. <u>Be</u> is the typical copula in English. On the other hand, Arabic does not have auxiliaries similar to those found in English. The tense is marked in the main verb. In Arabic, an Equational Sentence is called /mubtada? wa Xabar/ (theme-rheme constructions). In neutral Equational Sentences, the copula is not realized (Ferguson, 1971: 142). The auxiliary constituent is present in the surface structure of an Arabic Equational sentence, when a non-present point of temporal reference is to be indicated. This is signalled by the presence of the 'incomplete' verb /kana/. In both languages, Arabic and English, the predicate can be a noun phrase (predicate nominal), an adjective or an adverbial phrase.

    A. * So it is cost money.
(*Student no. 20; Topic 2*)

ii) Articles:

 ESL students had difficulty deciding if a definite article is needed for a noun in a particular context. In some cases our students overcorrected themselves by using articles in a redundant way; they also omitted them to simplify their tasks or replaced them with each other. This showed that the students still had difficulty in understanding the concepts of definiteness and indefiniteness. In Arabic the use of the definite article differs from that of English. Definiteness is expressed by the prefix /?al/ (the) affixed to the nouns and adjectives. There is no indefinite article. Without the definite article, the noun is usually indefinite (Al-Buainain, 1988:219). Thus, although articles are among the most frequently occurring morphemes, they are among the last elements of syntax to be acquired by Arabs. Mastering their usage correlates with high proficiency in other language skills.

    A. * I think studying abroad is good thing.
(*Student no. 25; Topic 2*)

iii) Fragments:

    As for the structure of Arabic sentences, there are three main types of sentences. (1) The nominal sentence begins with a noun (i.e. SVO). (2) The verbal sentence, in contrast, starts with a verb: VSO. (3) The Equational sentence is composed of a subject and a predicate with no verb. According to Thalji (1982:201) "surface orders like VOS< OVS are exhibited, but serve specific functions". Some students had problems with fragments:

A. * May be see the young people so he want to be like them.
(*Student no. 23; Topic 2*)

8. Discussion

The previous sections, the students marks *(Appendix 2)* and the students errors (*Appendix 3*) clearly show that there is a problem in teaching and/learning writing. In this section an attempt is made to organise understanding of processes of teaching and learning writing. There are three main integrated issues to be discussed here: **First,** *Method of Teaching*. There are many different approaches for teaching writing; for example, The Controlled-to-Free Approach, The free-Writing Approach, The Paragraph-Pattern Approach, The Grammar-Syntax-Organization Approach, The Communicative Approach, The Process Approach (Raimes,1983), Genre-Based Writing Instruction (Johns, 1995, 1997, 2002) and the Sydney School- a loose grouping of pedagogical approaches that originated in the work of Australia's Adult Migrant English Programme (AMEP) (Feez, 2002).

It should be clear here that there is no one answer to the question of how to teach writing in ESL classes. Surveying the related literature proved that there are as many answers as there are teachers and teaching methods and styles as well as learners and learning styles. For example, Finocchiaro's own observation which goes back to (1969) is based on informal experimentation favours a "Hear, Say, See, Do (Write) method" (156). The writing step may be introduced soon after the reading step.

Many EFL/ESL programs use a process approach to writing instruction, and some regularly publish collections of learners writing (for an overview see Peyton, 1991). Process writing - as distinguished from 'Product Writing'- (White, 1988) is playing a large role in ESL classes. In order to respond to purely formal views of writing, proponents borrowed the techniques and theories of cognitive psychology and First Language composition to refine the ways we understand and teach writing. Emig (1971) looked at what professional writers and students did when they wrote. It was found that good writers concentrated on ideas rather than on correctness. Then process writing gradually developed from this research and from teacher practice. Writing is seen as a communicative act with an intended purpose and audience. The teacher and other learners help the writer find a topic and revise drafts of a written piece until it conveys the intended meaning. While working to make their meanings clear, learners are assumed to acquire competence using the style, syntax, grammar and surface features of the language. During the writing process, students engage in pre-writing, planning, drafting, revising, editing and publishing. Learners, however, do not necessarily engage in these activities in that order because the writing process is recursive in nature. The

process approach then "breaks the writing act into manageable parts and puts oral language, reading and writing at the service of the student's communication goals." (Peregoy and Boyle, 2005:210).

Current research confirms the similarity of writing processes for both first and second language writers (Peregoy and Boyle, 2005:208). There are, however, some important differences in what the two groups bring to the writing task. Second language proficiency plays a role in writing. Also English learners may not have a feeling for the way that English translates into written form. (Krashen, 1982). Thus, one of the most important aims in teaching writing in EFL is to improve learners' language ability. The importance of teaching language rules when teaching writing is documented in many studies. For example, in their survey Leki and Carson (1994:89) found that the largest percentage of responses to the question of what students would like to have learned or learned better in their writing classes was "more language skills". The most frequently expressed specific needs were vocabulary and grammar. Hedgcock and Lefkowitz (1994) also noted that both EFL and ESL responses to their survey concerning student response to feedback conventions "indicate a strong concern for formal text features, such as lexical and grammatical accuracy" (p.150). Myers (1997:1) believes that "Modern composition teaching has emerged primarily from observations of L1 freshman students, leading to a strong focus on writing 'process', which does not address the need of ESL students for help with sentence- level syntax". Hinkel (2004) argues that there is often too much emphasis on teaching the process of writing in ESL courses instead of teaching the practical skills that students need. The writer presents findings which show that ESL students' academic papers are often perceived as vague and confusing (p. 4). She argues that this is a result of the process-writing curriculum, which emphasizes content and structure while only sparsely and inconsistently addressing grammar and lexis.

Learning the syntax and vocabulary of the new language is basic to our students' ability to write. In fact, second language learning is as much a process as writing is a process. Thus, the proponents of the Genre- based writing approach criticize the process approach stating that "while remaining the dominant pedagogical orthodoxy for over 30 years (…) process models have for some time found themselves under siege from more socially-oriented views of writing which reject their inherent liberal individualism". Genre refers to abstract, socially organized ways of using language. The "genre approaches see ways of writing as purposeful, socially situated responses to particular contexts and communities". They believe that genre pedagogy is "buttressed by the belief that learning is best accomplished through explicit awareness of language, rather than through experiment and

exploration, but this does not mean replacing communicative practices with teacher-centred ones (Hyland, 2003:27). It is clear that students need to "understand and control the established ways of communicating first, before they go on to express other different possibilities" (Matsuo and Bevan, 2002)

However, is it possible to acquire syntax through writing? Weissberg (1998) tested the hypothesis that SL learners may acquire syntax in part by writing in their personal journals and writing in class. It was found that writing was favoured over speech and journal writing was particularly favoured when working on grammatical accuracy. It appears that the informality of a personal journal combined with the privacy of writing have a positive effect in Second Language Acquisition (SLA). Liu (2000:33) argues that "content lexical ties are an important cohesive device in writing and that insufficient use of lexical cohesive ties by ESL students contribute to the lack of cohesion in their writings". Kiany and Khezrineshad (2001) carried out a study to explore the relationship between English proficiency, writing ability and the use of conjunctions in Iranian EFL learners' compositions. They believe that "the results paved the path for the material designer in developing adequate materials since they can infer particular types of conjunctions in the materials they provide for each level" (239).

The **second** issue is *Method of feedback*. Correcting students' writing is time-consuming work therefore, many teachers dislike correcting students' writing. The goal of writing classes, however, is to promote learners performance in writing accurately across different genres. This requires explicit instruction on many items such as grammar, punctuation, spelling, structure, style as well as on generating and expressing ideas. Tennant (2001:27) used two methods for editing/correcting students writing: (1) to write corrections on the paper, using a red pen to make them clearly visible; (2) and "more effective method" to write lengthy comments explaining grammar points, rising questions concerning meaning and logical development, suggesting alternative wording, and reorganizing text. When faced with such task some teachers will react with comments like "Oh, no". However, the results are rewarding because students can learn better. For example, students can be reminded of a previously studied grammar rule through explaining its applicability in a specific instance. So it is always helpful for teachers to move beyond simple correction to providing explanations for changes suggested.

Positive evidence is one type *of feedback.* Newton and Kennedy (1996:120) define positive evidence as the "input or models that language learners receive about the target language. Positive evidence can be provided

authentically, such as in natural conversations or in foreigner talk discourse or in teacher talk (Ferguson, 1971). Negative evidence, on the other hand, provides information to learners about what is not possible in the target language. It can be provided pre-emptively, such as in explanations of grammar rules, or reactively, such as through error correction. Reactive negative evidence is also called negative feedback because it highlights the differences between the target language and the learner's output. Negative feedback can be explicit (error correction) or implicit (communication breakdown). Long, (1990) reports that the explicit error correction can be considered as negative feedback.

The **third** issue is *Testing writing* which is undeniably difficult. Assessing and evaluating writing in ELT has a long history with various procedures and scoring criteria being revised and adapted to meet the needs of administrators, teachers and students (Bacha 2002). Recent approaches to academic writing instruction have necessitated testing procedures that deal with both the process and the product of writing (Upshur and Turner, 1995). It should be clear here that this issue is mentioned here only because the data of the study is forty writing exam scripts.

When testing writing ability directly, there are some considerations to take into account:

1) The writing tasks should be properly representative of the population of tasks that should expect the students to be able to perform.
2) The tasks should elicit samples of writing which truly represent the students' ability.
3) It is essential that the samples of writing can and will be scored reliably. (Hughes, 1989:75).

Taking into consideration the first two points, we found that the testing paper was too ambitious. Although students were asked to write in the Second Question (350-400 words for the first topic) or (400-500 words for the second topic) only excellent students wrote that much. For the third point, the writing exam papers were scored reliably *(refer to **4. Method of scoring**)*

9. Pedagogical Implications

How to improve our students' ability in English in general and in academic writing in Particular? Such knowledge is important because academic writing is a sever problem. Many students are not taught how to write academically even in their first language (Arabic). In fact,

many university students are weak in Arabic writing let alone in writing English.

It should be mentioned here that many of the ideas here have evolved from conversations with our colleagues in our offices and at professional meetings. Moody (2000:1) states that " issues concerned with improvements to the teaching in the English Department can be considered in two ways: (1) What should be done in the individual writing courses and (2) What should be done in regard to the overall teaching programme to improve students' writing abilities." Suggestions were put forward. These include "revision of writing course descriptions, the nature of teaching materials, collaboration among the instructors of each year to set goals and common approaches within the year, and follow- up after the first year to determine the students' progress and steps to counteract impediments to their progress" (Minutes of Departmental Meeting 2001:2).

(1) A relevant point then is that aims, objectives and outcomes of each course should be specified. The objectives of the three writing courses (Writing I, Writing II and Advanced Writing) are in general: 1) to provide extensive practice in the process of writing; 2) to expand the students' awareness of different kinds of writing: descriptive, narrative, argumentative, creative writing, etc.; 3) to enable students to be grammatically accurate while writing on a variety of topics; and 4) to focus on planning, drafting, correcting and redrafting of different genres of writing *(Refer to Appendix 4).*

The objective of the *First Writing Course* as it is stated in the BA Plan "is the writing of paragraphs". Students work on sentences and the combination of sentences. They are to pay special attention to punctuation and spelling. They also work on the discovery or creation of ideas and organizing them into paragraphs showing clear topics, developmental points and conclusion. The context of the writing activities are in accordance with Wilkins (1976); i.e. paragraph writing, note taking, answering questions, completing forms, report writing, letter writing, giving instructions writing invitations, writing complaints, and replies to letters. The language functions involved in the above mentioned writing activities were specified as to draw conclusions, summarize, classify, compare contrast, describe, answer questions, generalize, interpret, define, illustrate, exemplify, demonstrate, conclude, infer, prove, select, disapprove, approve etc. (Wilkins (1976). In fact, the existing course descriptions show a progression from writing paragraphs, to writing three-paragraph essays, to writing full (five paragraph or more) essays, to writing a seminar paper. This is theoretically neat scheme, but in practical terms, given the entry level of most students, it is a somewhat idealistic one for most of instructors who teach writing.

(2) The <u>method</u> of teaching writing at the Department is traditional. The students are given instruction on a mode of written discourse. Then, they are handed a topic and asked to write about it, using the rhetorical mode that has been taught. The instructor marks the students' drafts. Students are to recopy the draft including the teachers' corrections. Students have 4 hours per week for each writing course. Instructors are also available two hours per week to answer students' questions. The student role in all the writing activities would be one of learner, member of a group, participant, commentator, inquirer, visitor and so forth. Students enrolled in Writing Courses were given a hand-out on requirements for written assignments as well as the course outline (*Appendix 5*). Moody (2000) listed some of the basic problem areas of writing. The list is not exhaustive; points can be added and/or deleted.

Certainly, there is a large literature on the complex nature of writing (Reid, 1994). From our reading, we believe that the writing process is cyclic. We start with a new topic for writing. The first stage which is *Prewrite* includes reading, research, discussion, webbing, plan/ list items or points for writing. Next, *First Draft,* here students are to write, just to write (i.e. to put their thoughts on paper). They shouldn't worry about the conventions of writing. *Revision* is to follow. In order to improve the piece of writing, changes in the wording could be made. Then, comes *Editing*. Students are to edit their work by consulting dictionaries and other resources. They can do Peer editing. They are to edit their work over and over again. The next stage is *Final Draft*. The Final stage is *Presentation* (which might take us back to the first stage). We think that, it is important for ESL/EFL students to develop some degree of automaticity in the use of surface structure features e.g. articles, verb tenses, spelling subject/verb agreement, etc. Still, this is not to say that we underestimate the need for teaching the more sophisticated levels of discourse addressed in the process approach. As Myers (1997: 3) puts it " This is not a matter of disowning the insights of the process approach, but of incorporating those insights into our instruction while still addressing the need to teach our students syntactic features of our language which come automatically to native speakers but not to L2 writers."

Furthermore, the existing writing courses are designed to teach the students writing as a separate subject typically focusing on fixing grammatical problems at the sentence level. They neglect to link the writing instruction with authentic content area writing assignments that ESL/EFL students encounter in their studies. Such neglect led some members of staff to call for integrated teaching of language. Therefore, another suggestion, which was put forward to find ways of improving students' writing in English, was to

closely coordinate items/ structures in other relevant courses at the department; e.g. grammar, reading, core course and so forth.

Many teachers, including myself, see both reading and writing as two sides of the same coin. Reading is the reception of a message transmitted through the written word and writing is the transmission of a message through the written word, too (Hassan <u>et. al.</u>, 1993). Abu Rass (2001) integrated reading and writing for effective language teaching. The instructor reported that "the improvement in proficiency level was noticeable" (p.33). It is always important to show the students how to use readings as models in order to make their own writing better.

(3) While the new insights into composing processes are important, we also know that "Grammar is important; and learners seem to focus best on grammar when it relates to their communicative needs and experiences" (Savignon, 1993:43). Novice writers cannot learn to write by process alone. Students need to be explicitly told why text X is better than text Y (Information for new writing teachers 2003:6). Therefore, <u>students' grammatical errors</u> in the Writing courses were discussed in a departmental meeting on 16th /6/2001 under Other Business by a member of staff teaching Advanced Writing Course. He drew attention to these errors of such serious nature as to draw into question the students' being promoted from the first to the second year. Items "touching on (1) the nature of the errors, basically performance vs. competence characterisations, and on how to measure or determine the nature and seriousness of the errors, and (2) on what might be undertaken to address such errors effectively" were extensively discussed. Students should be helped to develop their ability to evaluate their own writing and to correct their errors. Error analysis as a learning tool helps students identify grammatical errors in their own and other students' writing samples. Self-correction as well as peer-correction encourage the active role of the student and promote cooperative learning in the class.

How to treat errors? Tactful correction of students writing is essential. Ferris, (2002) Writes about this important aspect of teaching writing to ESL/EFL. It is always helpful to have different strategies when responding to errors found in students' writing. Some of these are Direct/Indirect Feedback, Global/ local Errors/ and treatable /Untreatable errors. Also, learners' errors which are repetitive should be put as samples on the board and then students should be asked to correct the errors. Error analysis could be the core of the writing class. This could be done by typing the sentences or the errors on paper or transparencies or writing them on the blackboard. Lile (2002:1) asserts that "If students aren't given a reword or credit for their efforts, and no feedback is given to the student, then most students' intrinsic motivation would begin

to decrease". Students should be always encouraged to write and express themselves on subjects of their interest. Students need to know that the writing process is difficult. Only through practice can students make the inevitable errors and learn to engage in the process of negotiating meaning through different stages. Involving learners in their own writing assessment would be motivating for them and will increase learner involvement in aspects of the learning experience which is highly beneficial. "Teachers who want to help their students gain confidence in writing should try to follow a writing process that takes the student from insecurity to success" (Cimcoz, 1999:1).

(4) In fact, students seem never to stop making errors in writing in EFL in spite of all teachers' endeavours. Is the "skill getting" and "skill using" (Rivers, 1973:25; Revell, 1979) is too difficult to bridge because of the restrictions imposed by the classroom formal environment? So, related to the previous point is the <u>teaching environment</u> itself. The classroom should be a foreign language learning community where learners can enjoy the merit of sharing work in progress with other members of the class community striving to communicate in writing. This is the teacher's duty to try and create. We should be preoccupied with how to bridge the gap between linguistic competence and communicative competence (Revell, 1979).

(5) The <u>textbooks</u> used in the Department have been selected and approved for the writing courses by staff members teaching these courses. The textbooks systematize linear methods to teach sentence building, paragraphing, and standard, rhetorical academic modes. Also, they are not culturally inappropriate and the writing models are not outside most of students' knowledge. The textbook used for this course is Stephens, M. (1992). *Practise Advanced Writing*. A course outline is handed to the students for each course. This includes course description, textbook, requirements, marking scheme, assessment, course timetable and examinations. *(Refer to Appendix 4).* In our opinion the textbook is not enough. Extra materials from different sources are needed to help in teaching the writing skills. In fact, some of the textbook materials concentrate on learning <u>about</u> writing at the expense of actually <u>practising</u> it. As with any other skill, practice makes perfect. Thus, the only best way to learn how to write is by writing.

(6) <u>Teachers</u> are playing the most important role in teaching. We should always remember that writing is an individual effort and skill, therefore, the instructor's role is to share in the process by offering constructive criticism as well as correcting errors. Proper classroom explanation is needed by the teacher, so that students can well understand what is expected of them

(Harris, 2001). In an ESL Programme, especially in the beginning stages, the writing teacher must not be only a writing teacher (teaching writing full-time, and not language) but also as the English language teacher because teachers will need constantly to go back and revise skills which have been covered earlier. Having said that, we should also emphasize the point that the skill of writing could be further maximized by activities that involve pair work and group work (e.g. in writing exercises).

(7) If writing is limited only to writing courses, then the students will have insufficient practical writing experience. Consequently, writing needs to be encouraged, required and assessed as part of all the other English courses students take. Thus, various writing activities are important elements in teaching writing. Therefore, It was suggested that all linguistics and literature courses should demand a piece of writing, e.g. a paper, a project or a review. Since the only way to learn writing is to write, then our students should be writing every day because there are different types of writing or writing tasks. Free and controlled writing activities could be developed or adopted by the teacher to be used in different parts of the writing lesson. According to Khan (2005:77), "one of the best ways of teaching is through literature, which is a combination of entertainment and education and which provides the young learners the opportunity to appreciate language at its finest. The essential elements of language (grammar, subject verb agreement, punctuation, tenses, parts of speech and so forth "can most effectively be taught through literature since literature provides interesting and lively examples of such essentials and their variations".

It is always helpful to encourage students to use different activities and strategies to improve their writing e.g. keep a journal, get a pen-friend, keep copies of everything you write, use a word processor, … etc (refer to Ellis and Sinclair 1991: 106). In fact using computers to teach writing is very popular nowadays. As Cook (cited in King: 1997:2) suggests "there's more to computer technology than simply word processing software, and if you're not using it, you're missing out on some exciting and valuable ways of teaching writing." Computers can be used to teach writing effectively in many different ways e.g. word processing for writing and revising, e-mail for peer response, journal writing, online class discussion, and communication (King op. cit). Belisle, (1996:1) listed different email writing activities from which his students (Japanese English majors) benefited. The implication of this approach, then, is that teachers should require frequent writing exercises from their students. Teachers need to spend a great deal of time checking, marking and giving feedback to their students. If we are serious about improving writing, teachers should have an idea of each student's individual writing problems and this is not at all an easy task.

Since writing is an extension of thought, the Department policy is to publish two issues each year of a magazine written by students of the department. Also, writing competitions are sometimes arranged and winners are given prices and their names are announced on the notice board. Internet resources are also extremely valuable especially that many of our students are using the Internet. Tennant (2001) listed a number of online resources which are available. There is also no doubt that a departmental library with books, periodicals and magazines on many subjects of interest and on many ability levels will contribute to the development of a love for reading- the fundamental prerequisite for further language growth.

(8) The analysis revealed that the learners made use of such strategies as simplification, paraphrase, overgeneralization, hypercorrection, avoidance (switching topic and giving up message), Interlingual transfer and intralingual transfer. Learning Strategies are also important tools that the teacher has to develop his students' abilities in writing. Learning to write is a gradual process which begins with simple copying and ends with free expression. Under the teacher's guidance, students are to be trained systematically through several stages of writing experience. However we have to be very careful with such findings. Since what we called 'strategies' or 'processes' are not best arrived at by our analysis of the surface structures and the intended meaning of the learners, and the gap between the two (Lessard-Clouston, 1997). Teachers should have different types of tasks, format, model, editing, correction (http://writing.colostate.edu/references/teaching/esl/writing.cfm)

It is not enough, simply, to know language skills to be able to write accurately and fluently. What instructors do in EFL teaching is to" slow down language processes, analyze what is (or should be) happening and articulate what first-language users take for granted" (Moody, 2005:13). Therefore, students, who are still learning the process of thinking through writing, require their teachers' help to structure and organize their ideas. In their study, the researchers focused on strategies of persuasion in order to develop writing skills. They developed a model which consists of three phases. In the first phase, the teacher is to encourage oral activity by brainstorming for ideas on a particular theme. Then, the teacher should provide the learners with some framework to help them organize their ideas. The third phase is subdivided into two stages. "Here the teacher's job is restricted to correcting syntactic errors for accuracy and pointing out flaws in organizing ideas"(Chakravert and Gautum (2000:24).

In fact teachers cannot expect weak writers to improve simply by equipping them with the strategies of good writers. Teachers "need to explore ways of scaffolding students' learning and using knowledge of language to guide them towards a conscious understanding of target genres and the ways language creates meanings in context" (Hyland, 2003:21). One of the principles in the Sydney School's approach to genre pedagogy is that language learning occurs most effectively as part of an "interactive cycle of teaching and learning" which includes modelling of the target text by the teacher, co-production of an instance of the target text by teacher and student (scaffolding), and finally independent production of the target text by the student (Feez, 2002:64-65). The more we read in the literature of teaching and learning writing, the more we come to the conclusion that there is no perfect method which is going to be The Whole method to answer all the unsolved questions. We believe that different approaches are to certain extend accurate. There are advantages and disadvantages of each approach/method. In order to design a syllabus for teaching writing in EFL it is necessary to identify the course consumers, their needs, abilities, conceptual and intellectual levels and motivation. Teachers might use different approaches depending on their students. They may even try to mix approaches to see their students' reaction and intake. There is no royal/ perfect method for the teaching of writing. However, the highly recommended possible way to teach learners to write is to get them to read and write then write and read and revise and rewrite and edit again and again, drafting and re-drafting, self correction and how to employ the strategy of making comparisons within their own use of language to develop fluent writing.

(9) <u>Motivation and attitude</u> are important factors in all learning processes. Motivation is the key to all learning. In fact (Peter, 2000, cited in Lile, 2002:1) states that "[…] academic achievement is more a product of appropriate placement of priorities and responsible behaviour than it is of intelligence". Al-Buainain and El-Emadi (1998:17) found that "[…] as the students progressed, the correlation between their attitudes and their achievement increased". A teacher can do a lot to improve the students' motivation and the effort involved is an essential part of the teaching profession and will enhance learning process. Bacha (2002:14) argued that "Students' grade expectations are often higher, which may negatively affect student motivation".   She concluded that although developing test procedures for more valid and reliable evaluation/assessment is significantly important, "it does very little to motivate students to continue learning if their perceived levels of performance are not compatible with those of their teachers" (p.19). Therefore teachers must not overlook the need to raise students' awareness of their abilities.

Motivation and attitude are not only related to the learners but to the teacher him/herself. If the students were motivated to learn and teachers were not motivated to teach, the result would seem to be the same; i.e. disappointment on the part of students and interest loss. At the end, no actual learning takes place. Teaching writing needs very devoted teachers. In fact, too much time is spent by teachers on identification and correction of students' writing errors. They also devote much time to remedial exercises sometimes sacrificing more central issues of composition such as overall organization, cohesion, coherence and clarity of meaning. This paper load would have a great deal on the teacher getting crushed by heaps of students' writings while they already suffer from busy timetables, large class sizes, attending meetings and conferences, participating in workshops, presenting seminars, writing reports, preparing course portfolios and other activities. It is not fair to ignore all these factors which have 'negative effects'. Such factors inhibit teachers' good performance and frustrate them. During the academic year 2007, the writing instructor was allotted time on his schedule for the 'writing clinic'*(Appendix 6)*, but there was no cooperation on the part of the faculty in referring students and even when students were referred to get 'help' in writing they did not go.

(10) Other issues that we should keep in mind are writing at schools, how much writing is given to pupils, methods of teaching and how to develop them. All of these factors are relevant to this study and worth looking at in future research. Altaha (1993) investigated teaching composition to ESL students in King Faisal University. He stated that "This requires establishing a link between secondary school and university, and maintaining such a link so that the teacher may be able to help his students see these fundamental differences" (p.6).

10. Conclusion and Recommendations

Writing is a productive skill. It is one of the most difficult and therefore frustrating 'subjects' to teach particularly in an ESL programme. It is especially difficult for nonnative speakers because learners are expected to create written products that demonstrate their ability to organize the content , to address the correct audience as well as to demonstrate their linguistic ability (vocabulary, punctuation, spelling, etc). The difficulty is increased by the learners' psychological strategies or processes, which until now remain vague and therefore immune to any definite assertions. In this investigation, the problem is complicated by the fact that the study is cross-sectional and involves a number of learners who learn English in similar situations. A

purely longitudinal study of a small number of learners would show a clear line of development from one stage to another and the possible causes of 'errors' in writing. However, this study could be used as a starting point.

As can be seen from the analysis, the students' performance errors are systematic and classifiable. This, in turn, implies that both teachers and learners must see errors as the key to understanding and solving accuracy problems in English writing courses. Then, it is the teachers' responsibility to adopt, modify or even develop remedial procedures that can elevate the students' level and minimize their errors. Teachers should try to find the best method to deliver the lesson to their students. This is, however, hard since there is **No** such method that is holistic enough to be The Best Method. Therefore, teachers regularly apply different methods that are suitable for the students' needs, interests and abilities.

Brief grammar rules may be essential to help learners realize their errors resulting from overgeneralization and wrong analogy. Learners should be always encouraged to do remedial exercises. In fact, ability to communicate cannot be fulfilled unless "the grammar" is there, in the competence of the writer. According to Chomsky (1986), grammar consists of various levels, which are ordered and interrelated. Teachers have to be realistic in their expectations. Writing is hard work in one's own language let alone in a second language. Developing the necessary skills to improve learners' writing is even harder work. Teachers should be happy with whatever progress learners make. It is always true that some is better than none.

As it stands now, the writing courses need to be improved so that students can benefit more from them. One of the recommendations for improving the students writing is a writing lab.

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PPENDIX 1: Topics given to the students

January 15, 2001	Writing 114:	Name:
………………………		
Autumn 2000/2001	Final Examination	Group:
…………………….		

(I) You have just come back from England, where you took a language course at a summer school.
below is the advertisement you saw before you went.

Oxford House School of English

   Based in the beautiful English countryside

   * Special eight - week advanced courses for university students.

   * Free course materials and use of library and language lab.

   * Accommodation with an English family with two meals a day.

   * Sports and social activities (all included in your fees)

   * All teachers are qualified and experienced native speakers.

   *   Maximum 10 students per group.

                   For further information/registration write to:

                   Oxford House School of English, 14

                   Victoria Street, Plymouth, UK

However, you were disappointed because your course was not as advertised. Write a letter to the school director complaining about four different things you were not satisfied with. Explain the problems in detail and suggest what he/she can do to make you happy. (20 marks)

   (II). Write on one of the following topics: (30 marks).

   a.   The advantages and disadvantages of studying abroad. 350-400 Words).

   You can talk about the cost, cultural issues, academic benefits or difficulties, influence on one's character and influence on one's native country.

b. Write a narrative (4 00-500 words) about the following series of events.

1. Labongo was the chief of a village.
2. 0ne year, the village witnessed a horrible famine.
3. Ndhiti, the medicine-man, told Labongo that his ancestors appeared to him in his dream arid told him that in order for the rain to fall,
   Labongo had to sacrifice his only daughter Oganda.
4. The chief was disrnayed, but he had to obey the will of his forefathers if he wanted his people to survive.
5. He told Oganda. She was horrified, but she yielded to the desire of her ancestors.
6. On the assigned day, all people gathered to bid her farewell except Osinda, the young man whom she loved.
   7. The people of the village sent her to the desert and asked her to keep walking till she arrived near the river where she should drown herself.   8. She kept walking until she arrived near the river.
9. She felt someone walking behind her.
10. It was 0sinda. They fled away.
11. That night, rain fell heavily.

Note: Your work will be evaluated for:
1. Layout
2. Structure, punctuation and spelling.
3. Logic and coherence
4. Style

We wish you the best of luck

APPENDIX 2: Results

Students' Writing errors in ESL: A Case Study

Total 50 Marks	Second Topic 30 Marks	First Topic 20 Marks	Number of Student
34	20	14	1
35	20	15	2
37	22	15	3
27	15	12	4
35	20	15	5
24	12	12	6
27	15	12	7
32	20	12	8
38	23	15	9
43	25	18	10
42	25	17	11
34	20	14	12
32	20	12	13
40	22	18	14
28	15	13	15
25	12	13	16
35	20	15	17
28	15	13	18
37	22	15	19
29	17	12	20
23	10	13	21
28	14	14	22
23	14	9	23
22	10	12	24
38	22	16	25
40	23	17	26
30	15	15	27
25	15	10	28
46	27	19	29
29	15	14	30
29	17	12	31
25	12	13	32
37	22	15	33
37	22	15	34
36	23	13	35
15	10	5	36
34	20	14	37
38	20	18	38
35	20	15	39
25	15	10	40

APPENDIX 3: Errors found in the Data

i)   *Verbs*

1. *Continuous Versus Simple Present Verb Tenses*

    ESL students have difficulty distinguishing the meanings of these tenses and knowing when to use one over the other:

    A. * They always shouting and open my room.
    (*Student no. 23; Topic 1*)
    B. * Because the good students are knowing the disadvantages.
    (*Student no. 30; Topic 2*)
    C. * I am writing this letter and I hope that I receiving apology.
    (*Student no. 30; Topic 1*)
    D. * When I was seeing the newspaper, I found your advertisement).
     (*Student no. 1; Topic 1*)

2. *Present/Past Perfect Versus Simple Present/past Verb Tense*

    A. * I was very disappointed of what I have seen there and very annoyed of what I have found.
    (*Student no. 8; Topic 1*)
    B. * Since I came to your school, I was unhappy.
    (*Student no. 2; Topic 1*)
    C. * I have read an ad in the "Gulf Times" which has published.
    (*Student no. 30; Topic 1*)

11.*Omission/Addition of verb to be*

    A. * So it is cost money.
    (*Student no. 20; Topic 2*)
    B. *I interested.
    (*Student no. 20; Topic 1*)
    C. *He was really wanted to continue his postgradute study. (***this is the original spelling***)
    (*Student no. 2; Topic 2*)
    D. * When the person he boring cannot go to visit friends such as what he do in his country.
    (*Student no. 6; Topic 2*).
    E. * It's really depends on the person's character.
    (*Student no. 1; Topic 2*)
    F. *They may disappoint.
    (*Student no. 31; Topic 2*)

G. * I am really feel disappointing.
(*Student no. 31; Topic 1*)

12. Lack of Subject/Verb Agreement (Omission of 3rd person singular)

Concord errors may be due to simplification strategy and overgeneralization of the Target Language rules. Some substitution errors (e.g. *has* instead of *have* as in *Example A* below must have resulted from hypercorrection:

A. * Their markets and shopping centres has ….
(*Student no. 4; Topic 2*)
B. *It give you ….
(*Student no. 4; Topic 2*)
C. * Then he have to get used to…..
(*Student no. 2; Topic 2*)
D. *Some student are send to <u>forgien</u> countries. (**this is the original spelling)**
(*Student no. 3; Topic 2*)
E. *The rain haven't come and that was terrifying.
(*Student no. 10; Topic 2*)
F. * […]and they was offered them a good house.
(*Student no. 5; Topic 2*)
G. * I found that the number of student in each group are more than 20.
(*Student no. 8; Topic 1*)
H. * […] because the books was not enough.
(*Student no. 27; Topic 1*)

13. Modal Auxiliaries

Some students had difficulty forming verb phrases containing modal auxiliaries, and choosing the correct modal auxiliaries according to their shades of meaning. In many cases the form of the main verb in the sentence was incorrect:

A. * Also the teachers were not enough experienced because they <u>cannot</u> control the students in the class.
(*Student no. 7; Topic 1*)
B. *In each group there was more than 20 students that you <u>can not heard</u> what the teacher said.
(*Student no. 1; Topic 1*)
C. *It's might get problems.

(*Student no. 25; Topic 1*)
D. *[…] students can also enjoyed […]
(*Student no. 31; Topic 2*)
E. *You couldn't find any faithful person.
(*Student no. 25; Topic 2*)
F. * There are more difficult things you'll can't do it if you were alone.
(*Student no. 6; Topic 2*)
G. * When you go to live in another country you will want more time to make alive in that country.
(*Student no. 8; Topic 2*)
H. *[…] will went abroad.
(*Student no. 4; Topic 2*)
K. * I should took […]
* I must said […]
(*Student no. 4; Topic 1*)

ii) Relative Clauses:

ESL students had difficulty constructing adjective clauses correctly. The following errors in English relative clauses were made by our students:

A. * I'm writing this letter to complain about the school which I suffered from it.
(*Student no. 7; Topic 1*)
B. * Moreover, I stayed with an English family whom their children didn't let me study or sleep.
(*Student no. 12; Topic 1*.)
C. *In a small village there was a chief his name is Labongo.
(*Student no. 1; Topic 2*.)
D. * When students stay with people have bad habits, this can have influence on their characters.
(*Student no. 11; Topic 1*.)
E. * Sometimes the country needs someone who studied in a branch that the country doesn't have it.
(*Student no. 11; Topic 1*.)
F. * I went to London where my friends live in.
(*Student no.23; Topic 1*)
G. * I'm writing to complain about your school which I were there before 2 months ago.
(*Student no. 28; Topic 1*)
H. * You will find that school can provide books easily, which that the students won't have any difficulty to get their books.
(*Student no. 40; Topic 1*)

iii. Articles:

A. * I think studying abroad is good thing.
(*Student no. 25; Topic 2*)
B. * In the fact […].
(*Student no. 30; Topic 1*)
C. * There was old woman and she was ill and weak.
(*Student no. 30; Topic 2*)
D. * When you study in such good well-known country with the high
level of good education, you will be well qualified person.
(*Student no. 2; Topic 2*)
E. * We have good university in Qatar.
(*Student no. 4; Topic 2*)
F. * You can enter a university you like to choose.
(*Student no. 8; Topic 2*)
G. * Student may get married from the country he is staying in.
(*Student no. 11; Topic 2*)
H. * So education is *neccessary* for the all. (***this is the original spelling***)
 (*Student no. 13; Topic 2*)

iv .Fragments:

A. * May be see the young people so he want to be like them.
(*Student no. 23; Topic 2*)
 B. *Although there are many advantages.
 (*Student no. 9; Topic 2*)
D. *He couldn't tell his daughter but after studying with himself.
   (*Student no. 10; Topic 2*)
E. * I spend my time dreaming to study abroad in England or America
     but no longer.
(*Student no. 4; Topic 2*)
F. * When I arrived at school.
  (*Student no. 4; Topic 1*)
G. * Most of the teachers here are qualified and such a wonderful.
 (*Student no. 3; Topic 1*)

v. Noun Modifiers:

Some of our students didn't always know that demonstrative adjectives
must agree with nouns and that adjectives do not agree with plural nouns:

A. * This professors are helpful.

(*Student no. 4; Topic 1.*)
 B. * The beautifuls sunsets make Laguanda happy. (***this is the original spelling)***
(*Student no. 10; Topic 2.*)
 C. * Other example of the disadvantages is the bad influence on one's
    character.
(Student no. 2; Topic 2)
 D. * The meals weren't a healthy one.
 (Student no. 12; Topic 1)
 E. * She will indeed see some strange habbit. (***this is the original
    spelling)***
 (Student no. 12; Topic 2)

vi. Countable (Regular and Irregular) /Uncountable Nouns:

ESL students can have difficulty distinguishing which nouns are
countable and which are not. Our learners had problems with noun form.
They used the singular instead of the plural may be to simplify their
linguistic task. They also overgeneralized the use of the plural in some
cases. Also there were errors of irregular plural which may be due to lack
of knowledge of the rule.

 A. * The teacher gave me an advice.
      (Student no. 2; Topic 1)
 B. * Beside mens who study out there are a lot of girls or womens who
    study out.
      (Student no. 13; Topic 2)
 C. * There are many peoples who travel […]
      (Student no. 14; Topic 2)

vii. Prepositions:

There were many errors in learners' interlanguage under this category. Most
preposition errors were due to the students' lack of knowledge of the English
preposition system:

 A. * Should be to the one who has expereince on his life.
   (Student no. 4; Topic 2)
 B. * […] without knowing anything for the country.
   (Student no. 7; Topic 2)
 C. * […] to know the character of the people and how to react with them.
   (Student no8; Topic 2)
 D. * I saw your ad at the newspaper.

(Student no. 2; Topic 1)
   E. * It also gives us more experience at our life.
     (Student no. 28; Topic 2)
   F. * In the other side […]
     (Student no. 30; Topic 2)
   G. * Some of them go to outside the country.
     (Student no. 23; Topic 1)

APPENDIX 4

BA 212114 Writing, (1)

2 credit hours, 4 contact hours, prerequisite: none

The goal of this course is the writing of paragraphs. Students will work on sentences and the combination of sentences, paying, additional attention to punctuation and spelling. They will also work on the discovery or creation of ideas and in organizing them into paragraphs showing clear topics, developmental points and conclusions.

BA 212115 Writing, (2)

2 credit hours, 4 contact hours, prerequisite: *BA 212114 Writing (1)*

Building on the paragraph-writing skills of BA Writing (1), this course will concentrate on short essays of three paragraphs. The students will develop their abilities further to construct more complex sentences and to combine them using suitable transitions. The course will move toward more formal outlining or organizing ideas into clearly stated themes, or purpose, supporting statements and conclusionary remarks.

BA212214 Advanced Writing

2 credit hours, 4 contact hours, prerequisite: *BA 212115 Writing (2)*

The course will focus on the development of more elaborate essays of five paragraphs or more. Students will continue to develop the skills begun in *BA Writing (2)* and will be introduced to the conventions of incorporating references into their essays.

APPENDIX 5 : Course Outline

UNIVERSITY OF QATAR
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND MODERN EUROPEAN LANGUAGES

AUTUMN SEMESTER, 2002

COURSE: 212114 (WRITING 1)

COURSE OUTLINE

INSTRUCTORS:
    James Moody (Groups 1, 2 and 4)
    Saleh AI Salman (Groups 3 and 5)

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
    The goal of this course is the writing of paragraphs. Students will work on
    sentences and the combination of sentence, paying additional attention to
    punctuation and spelling. They will also work on the discovery and creation of
    ideas and on organizing them into paragraphs, showing clear topics,
    development, points and conclusion.
    (The course meets three times each week, for a total of four hours per week.)

TEXTBOOK:
    Mary Stephens, *Practise Advanced Writing.* London: Longman, 1992.

REQUIREMENTS:
    Students in this course are required to:
    1. attend classes. **(STUDENTS ABSENT FROM 25% OR MORE CLASSES**
    ***CANNOT SIT* THE FINAL EXAMINATION. ALL ABSENCES-- FOR**
    WHATEVER REASON-- ARE CONSIDERED IN THIS CALCULATION;
    THERE ARE NO "EXCUSED" ABSENCES. STUDENTS WHO COME TO
    CLASS AFTER THE ROLE IS CALLED WILL BE MARKED ASSENT
    FROM THAT CLASS.)
    2. complete all homework assignments on time, No late work will be accepted. (It is
    especially important to complete writing assignments on time because improving
    your writing skills depends on your learning from each assignment so that you avoid
    making the same mistakes on the next one.
    3. Participate actively in class work and class discussion.

MARKING SCHEME:

A:	90-100%
B+:	85-89%
B:	80-84%
C+.	75-79%
C:	70-74%
D+.	65-69%
D:	60-64%
F ₁.	0-59%

Students' Writing errors in ESL: A Case Study

ASSESSMENT:

Students' final mark in this course will be based on the following:

Course work:	20%

This mark will be determined as follows:

2 quizzes (5 marks each):	10%
5 assignments (2 marks each):	10%
Mid-semester examination:	30%
Final examination:	50%

TIMETABLE:

(The term *units* refer to the units in the textbook.)

Week 1 (21 - 25 Sept.): Introduction to the course; writing skills

Week 2 (28 Sept. - 2 Oct.): Unit 3 (Giving Personal Information)

Week 3 (5 - 9 Oct.) : Unit 3 (Giving Personal Information)

Week 4 (12 - 16 Oct.): Unit 5 (Notes and Messages)

Week 5 (19 -23 Oct.): Unit 5 (Notes and Messages). Quiz 1

Week 6 (26 - 30 Oct.): Unit 8 (Advertisements and Notices)

Week 7 (2 - 6 Nov.): Unit 8 (Advertisements and Notices)

Week 8 (9 - 13 Nov.): Unit 1 (Writing a Personal Profile)

Week 9 (16 -20 Nov.): Unit 1 (Writing a Personal Profile)

Week 10 (23 -27 Nov.): Unit 7 (Describing Appearances)

Week 11 (30 Nov. - 4 Dec.): Unit 7 (Describing Appearances); Quiz 2

Week 12 (7 -11 Dec.): Unit 16 (Describing a Scene)

Week 13 (14 - 18 Dec.): Eid vacation (approximate)

Week 14 (21 - 25 Dec.): Unit 16 (Describing a Scene)

Week 15 (28 Dec. - 1 Jan.): Revision

EXAMINATIONS:

The times and places of the mid-semester and final examinations will be announced. (The mid-semester examination will probably be held during the seventh or eighth week, and the final examinations begin on January 4th 2003.

APPENDIX 5 :REQUIREMENTS FOR WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

UNIVERSITY OF QATAR
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND MODERN EUROPEAN LANGUAGES

COURSE: ENGLISH 114 (WRITING 1)

REQUIREMENTS FOR WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

The following requirements must be observed for all written assignments:

1. Only A4 lined white paper is to be used. Smaller sizes and other colours are not acceptable.

2. No decorations or fancy borders are to appear on the paper. Perforated paper is not allowed.

3. If more than one sheet of paper is needed, the sheets must be numbered at the top of each page, in the middle, and stapled together in the **top left-hand corner.** Paper clips should **not** be used.

4. Students should write clearly the following information in the **top right-hand corner** of the first page: their full name (as it appears on the class registration list), the course number (E114), their group number, and the date.

5. Space should be left between the lines on the paper, by skipping a line, for the instructor's comments.

6. All assignments must be handwritten. Typed work will not be accepted.

7. Dark coloured ink (blue or black) should be used. Light coloured or shiny ink should not be used.

8. Assignments must be handed in by the date required. Extensions can only be granted by the instructor in exceptional circumstances and after consultation with the student, preferably **before** the date due.

NOTE: Students should keep all returned and marked assignments. These will be important for revision and to keep track of your specific writing problems and your progress

APPENDIX 6: HELP WITH WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

THE UNIVERSITY OF QAT AR
DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES
AUTUMN SEMESTER, 2006   TO: Members
of Staff   FROM: James Moody

9TH **October 2006**

Please refer to me students who you think need help with writing assignments. Could you let me have the following information for these students?

1. Her[name and computer number

2. The course she is taking with you (number and name)

3. The assignment(s)! question(s) she has been given

4. A photocopy of the answer(s) she has submitted, together with your markings! corrections

5. The nature of her writing problem as clearly as you can define it (handwriting, spelling, vocabulary, punctuation, grammar, coherence, organization, logic, etc.) and what you would like her to be able to do

6. If possible a copy of a sample text which you believe fulfils the requirements of the assignment-perhaps a copy of the work of a student who did well on the same assignment

Please tell the student to see me in Room 206, during my office hours, as follows, so that we can arrange a time to moat to develop a strategy for dealing with her problems.

Sundays - third and fourth periods
Mondays - second and fourth periods
Tuesdays - third and fourth periods
Wednesdays - second and fourth periods
Thursdays - fourth period

I shall keep you informed of the student's work and progress.

James Moody