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EXPLORING ENGLISH INSTRUCTORS' PERCEPTIONS AND ACTUAL PRACTICES REGARDING THE STRATEGIES USED IN TEACHING AND ASSESSING WRITING IN THREE TERTIARY EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN THE SULTANATE OF OMAN

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EXPLORING ENGLISH INSTRUCTORS' PERCEPTIONS AND ACTUAL PRACTICES REGARDING THE STRATEGIES USED IN TEACHING AND ASSESSING WRITING IN THREE TERTIARY EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN THE SULTANATE OF OMAN

Noura Abdullah Hamed Al-Azani

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education (Curriculum and Instruction)

Under the Supervision of Dr. Sadiq A. Ismail

May 2015

Declaration of Original Work

I, Noura Abdullah Hamed Al-Azani, the undersigned, a graduate student at the United Arab Emirates University (UAEU), and the author of this thesis entitled "*Exploring English instructors' perceptions and actual practices regarding the strategies used in teaching and assessing writing in three tertiary education institutions in the Sultanate of Oman*", hereby, solemnly declare that this thesis is an original research work that has been done and prepared by me under the supervision of Dr. Sadiq A. Ismail, in the College of Education at UAEU. This work has not been previously formed as the basis for the award of any academic degree, diploma or a similar title at this or any other university. The materials borrowed from other sources and included in my thesis have been properly cited and acknowledged.

Student's Signature_____   Date _____

Approval of the Master Thesis

This Master Thesis is approved by the following Examining Committee Members:

1) Dr. Sadiq A. Ismail   (Committee chair)

   Associate Professor

   Department of Curriculum and Instruction

   College of Education

   Signature _____   Date _____

2) Dr. Mohamad Shaban   (Committee Member)

   Associate Professor

   Department of Curriculum and Instruction

   College of Education

   Signature _____   Date _____

3) Dr. Negmeldin Alsheikh   (Committee Member)

   Associate Professor

   Department of Curriculum & Instruction

   College of Education

   Signature _____   Date _____

This Master Thesis is accepted by:

Dean of the College of Education: Dr. Jamal Al-Nuaimi

Signature _____   Date _____

Dean of the College of the Graduate Studies: Professor Nagi Wakim

Signature _____   Date _____

Copy ____ of ____

Abstract

The aim of this study was to explore the perceptions and practices of ESL/EFL instructors in teaching and assessing writing in three tertiary educational institutions in the Sultanate of Oman (Al Buraimi University College, University of Buraimi, and Sohar University). The researcher used the quantitative and qualitative methods in the study. The data was gathered through a questionnaire (n=147), 15 interviews (n=15), and 18 classroom observations (n=10).

The findings of this study revealed that the majority of ESL/EFL instructors believe in and practice aspects of the process- and product-oriented approaches for teaching academic writing in Oman. Many ESL/EFL instructors believe in teaching vocabulary that students may use in their assigned writing and equally they believe in teaching students different genres and/or texts. Other common strategies that ESL/EFL instructors agreed on were generating ideas about the assigned topic before the start of the task and asking students to make a pre-writing plan.

ESL/EFL instructors do believe in portfolios and written essays as tools to assess students writing, which are also practiced in their classroom. However, their belief contradicted their practice in areas like: making students write individually or in group, or both; using analytic or holistic rubrics, or both; and assessing content or grammar first, or both.

One of the main recommendations that the researcher addressed to the ESL/EFL instructors is that their choices of writing strategies should be based on students' needs. There should be a balance between the students need to meet the learning outcomes and helping students to communicate creatively in English. This is by

replacing the traditional exams with more creative and authentic process of writing. Also, the researcher addressed the Omani institutions of Higher Education to keep the writing classes manageable for ESL/EFL writing instructors. Furthermore, the researcher recommended that the learning outcomes must not only be idealistic, but also realistic. The standards for evaluation must be accessible for the ESL/EFL students in Omani Colleges and Universities. They must be challenging without being off-putting.

The last recommendation was addressed to Omani researchers who are led by the Sultan Qaboos University, to set up a national, updated and comprehensive database for Omani Studies and to conduct more studies related to ESL/EFL.

Title and Abstract (in Arabic)

استكشاف تصورات وممارسات أساتذة اللغة الإنجليزية فيما يتعلق بالاستراتيجيات المستخدمة في تدريس وتقييم مهارة الكتابة في ثلاث من مؤسسات التعليم العالي في سلطنة عمان

الملخص

الهدف الرئيسي من هذه الدراسة هو استكشاف تصورات وممارسات أساتذة اللغة الإنجليزية (كلغة ثانيه أو لغة اجنبية) في تدريس وتقييم مهارة الكتابة في ثلاث من مؤسسات التعليم العالي في سلطنة عمان (كلية البريمي الجامعية، جامعة البريمي , وجامعة صحار). وقد اتبعت الباحثة الأساليب الكمية والنوعية في البحث. وقد تم جمع البيانات من خلال استبيان (ن= 147) , و15 مقابلة (ن= 15) , و18 ملاحظة صفية (ن=10).

وقد أوضحت نتائج الدراسة أن أغلب أساتذة اللغة الإنجليزية (كلغة ثانية أو لغة اجنبية) تصوروا ومارسوا مزيج من الاستراتيجيات التي تركز على مراحل الكتابة وانتاج النص لتدريس الكتابة الأكاديمية في سلطنة عمان. هناك العديد من الأساتذة الذين صوروا أهمية تدريس الكلمات التي يمكن أن يستخدمها الطلاب في الكتابة المخصصة. بالتساوي صوروا أهمية تدريس الطلاب مختلف انواع النصوص المكتوبة. كذلك هناك استراتيجيات أخرى اتفق عليها الأساتذة وهي مساعدة الطلاب في توليد الأفكار قبل البدء بالكتابة وكذلك وضع خطة قبل الكتابة.

كذلك تصوروا الأساتذة بأن الملفات والنصوص المكتوبة هي أفضل الأساليب المستخدمة لتقييم كتابات الطلبة التي مارسوها في صفوفهم. لكن اعتقاداتهم تناقضات مع ممارساتهم في نواحي

مثل كتابة الطلبة بشكل فردي أو في مجموعة أو كلاهما ,استخدام مقيم شمولي أو تحليلي أو كلاهما, تقييم المحتوى أو النحوي أولا أو كلاهما.

ومن أهم التوصيات الموجهة إلى أساتذة اللغة الإنجليزية (كلغة ثانية أو لغة اجنبية) أن اختياراتهم في استراتيجيات تدريس مهارة الكتابة لأبد أن تكون مبنية على احتياجات الطلبة. فلأبد من وجود توازن بين احتياجات الطلبة لتلبية أهداف التعلم وبين مساعدة الطلبة في التواصل باللغة الإنجليزية بشكل أبداعي. وهذا قد يحدث عن طريق استبدال الامتحانات التقليدية بكتابات أكثر أبداعا وأكثر قربا من الواقع الملموس. بالإضافة أن الباحثة وجهت توصيات لمؤسسات التعليم العالي بجعل فصول الكتابة أقل عددا من الطلاب لزيادة قدرة الأساتذة في احتواء طلابهم. بالإضافة إلى ذلك أوصت الباحثة أنه لأبد أنت تكون مخرجات التعلم ليست فقط مثالية وإنما واقعية. وأن تكون أساسيات التقييم منطقية للطلبة الموجودين في كليات وجامعات سلطنة عمان.

و أخر توصية وجهت إلى الباحثين العمانيين الذين هم تحت قيادة جامعة السلطان بإنشاء قاعدة بيانات وطنية، محدثة وشاملة للدراسات العمانية , وكذلك إجراء مزيد من الدراسات التي تتعلق باللغة الانجليزية كلغة ثانية أو لغة أجنبية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: تصورات أساتذة اللغة الإنجليزية (كلغة ثانية أو لغة اجنبية)، ممارسات فعلية، استراتيجيات مهارة الكتابة, تدريس, تقييم.

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I would also like to express my gratitude to many people. I shall be eternally thankful to the people who motivated me to embark on this research project. First of all, I thank Sheikh Ahmed bin Nasser Al-Naimi, the owner of Al-Buraimi University College, for encouraging me to pursue further studies and Mr Khalaf Al-Mamari for inspiring me to take on this academic challenge. Mr. Al-Mamari's words will always resonate in my mind: "One day, BUC will be proud of you". I must also say thanks to those who actively participated in my research. I am grateful to my colleagues at BUC, University of Buraimi, and Sohar University.

I shall remain forever thankful to the people whose support made my research possible. Without my supervisor Dr. Sadiq Ismail's continuous support and expert advice, this research would have been much more daunting than it was. He was the person who encouraged me to delve into the literature and write a scholarly master's thesis. I will also never forget Dr. Negmeldin Alsheikh and Dr. Mohamad Shaban for their assistance and kind contribution so that I could finalize my research project. I would equally like to thank all my instructors in the master's program at the College of Education of UAEU. They helped me lay the foundations so that one day I would be able to accomplish a project like this. The advice and time which they bestowed upon me certainly helped me to develop the research skills without which I would not have been able to produce this piece of college writing.

Last but not least, I would also like to express my gratitude to those who read my research as I was writing it and gave me valuable scholarly feedback. I thank Dr. Milton A. George, from University of Buraimi and KU Leuven (Belgium),and Dr. Sergio Saleem Scatolini, from Al Musanna College of Technology, for all their suggestions and comments.

Dedication

I dedicate this work to Sultan Qaboos Bin Said, the Father of modern Oman. This thesis has been possible, among other things, because of His Majesty's commitments to the establishment and development of education for all Omanis, both men and women. His words have always inspired me to take my place in the history of our country

"When we first set the education process in motion, we appealed for education to take place 'even in the shade of the trees'. We appealed for the whole population – males and females, young and old – to be given the opportunity to join the march of knowledge without discrimination, because the clear river of knowledge is one from which all should drink, and the channels flowing from it should carry richness, fecundity and growth to every part of Oman's pure and noble land."

His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said

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List of Abbreviations

BUC   AL-Buraimi University College

EFL   English as a Foreign Language

ESL   English as a Second Language

SU   Sohar University

UoB   University of Buraimi

UAEU   University of the United Arab Emirates

Chapter 1: Introduction

For college students, writing is the most significant and productive skill in English language learning. It contributes to the development of their communicative skills as it must be both appropriate and accurate in terms of register and style.

Writing is a privileged way of conveying scholarly knowledge, which is accessed mostly through reading written texts (Hyland, 2006). Consequently, the capability to write well is not only highly appreciated, but also accentuated as one of the necessary skills in college and university. In fact, this one skill is usually one of the indicators of academic success (Al-Badwawi, 2011). Therefore, their low performance in writing makes students tensed and since anxiety can hinder learning, instructors ought to facilitate students' learning by investigating and identifying successful strategies to teach writing (Ambuko, 2008).

Hence, ESL/EFL instructors' strategies in teaching writing shifted from one era to another. During the era of audio-lingualism, teachers focused on practicing grammar and vocabulary. The main objective of writing was to construct grammatically correct sentences. However, written tasks are now seen as a social practice which focuses on the meaning and context of writing, which includes the context of the writers and their real or implied audience. As a result, the challenges for second language instructors have increased because their focus would involve more than sentence accuracy. However, this is not always done. Neither is it always envisaged by syllabuses, curricula, and learning environments (Richard, 2013).

From the above, it is obvious how English instructors play a significant role in helping EEL/ESL students to attain proficiency in writing. For that the researcher has

tried to explore the EFL/ESL instructors' perceptions of teaching and assessment strategies in English writing classes of Al-Buraimi University College, University of Buraimi, and Sohar University. Also, the researcher wanted to figure out whether their perceptions of teaching and assessment strategies matched with their actual practices.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Students who are learning English as a foreign language (EFL) face difficulties in writing. For example, Arab students commit a lot of errors in writing in English language. There were a lot of studies that showed the problems that Arab students came across during writing in English. For example, Abshihab, El Omari& Tobat (2011) conducted a study that aiming to examine and classify the grammatical errors in the areas of tenses; prepositions articles; voice; and morphology in the writings of students of the Department of English Literature and Translation at Alzaytoonah Private University of Jordan. A total of 345 grammatical errors were found. 26% of the total errors were comprised to prepositions. The most problematic areas were correspondingly: morphological errors, articles, verbs, active and passive and tenses. The researchers ended with a recommendation that teachers should emphasize on the common mistakes that students make and overcome these mistakes by using different approaches and materials.

In addition, Sawalmeh (2013) carried out a study to investigate the errors of essays written by 32 Saudi learners of English of the Preparatory Year Program at University of Ha'il. The results showed that Arabic participants made ten common errors in the areas of verb tense, word order, singular/plural form subject-verb

agreement, double negatives, spellings, capitalization, articles sentence fragments and prepositions. The researcher concluded that the role of teachers are very important in helping students to avoid the transfer and interference of their first language.

Furthermore, Khalil (2015) conducted a study to investigate the common grammatical errors made in English written essays by Omani Students at Nizwa University. The results showed that students made errors in articles, tenses, singular/ plural agreement and pronouns. The researcher in this study stressed the teachers' role in using activities that could help students with their errors.

Beside the above studies, based on my observation and experience as an English instructor at Al-Buraimi University College (BUC), the foundation program students face a lot of difficulties in their writing. The fact that "writing is frequently accepted as being the last language skill to be acquired and it is true in Oman, as in other EFL contexts, that mastering written skills is a major challenge for learners" (Al-Abri, 2006, p. 1).

Therefore, ESL/EFL instructors has to play a paramount role in helping students to overcome their writing difficulties. Grabe and Kaplan (1997) insist that "all second language learners need to attain some proficiency in writing and all second language instructors need to know how to teach a writing class in the L2" (p. 183). Thus, after looking at this problem through different perspectives and also in the literature review, the researcher decided to explore the perceptions and actual practices of ESL/EFL instructors regarding the strategies used in teaching and assessing writing.

1.2. Purpose of the Study

This study sought to explore the perceptions and practices of ESL/EFL instructors regarding the strategies used in teaching and assessing writing. Also, it wanted to find out to which extent their perceptions and actual practices differ or similar.

1.3. Research Questions

This study aimed to provide answers to the following research questions:

- What are the ESL/EFL instructors' perceptions regarding the strategies used for teaching students' academic writing?
- What are the ESL/ EFL instructors' perceptions regarding the strategies used for assessing students' academic writing?
- Is there any variation between instructors' perceptions of teaching strategies, assessments strategies, and their actual practices?

1.4. Significance of the Study

There is a remarkable shortage in the number of research studies that have been conducted about EFL/ESL writing in Oman. Consequently, the research can make a considerable contribution to understand the ESL/EFL instructors' perceptions of teaching and assessment strategies in writing classes. This would be beneficial not only for administrators, supervisors, and ministry personnel, but ultimately also the students being taught by ESL/EFL teachers in Oman.

This study can get ESL/EFL instructors' attentions of how their perceptions of teaching and assessing ESL/EFL academic writing differ from or come close to their

actual performance. Moreover, the findings will be significant not only for Al-Buraimi University College, University of Buraimi, and Sohar University, but also for other high institutions that teach ESL/EFL writing in Oman.

Finally, the present research opens a door for more Omani studies in the field of EFL/ESL academic writing.

1.5. Limitations

The first limitation was that the ESL/EFL instructors at Al-Buraimi University College, University of Buraimi, and Sohar University come from different educational backgrounds, and this may have affected their responses to the questionnaire. Moreover, some of the interviewees were not focused and started talking about other issues, such as the behavior of students in the classrooms, etc. Furthermore, the time to observe classes was limited as some ESL/EFL instructors were busy with teaching schedules and it was the week of their midterm exams.

Beside the above practical aspects, there was also a theoretical limitation. There are only few articles discussing ESL /EFL writing in the context of Omani Higher Education. For example, there is practically no database for Omani studies at Sultan Qaboos University.

1.6. Delimitations

This study was limited to the number of instructors who participated in the study. They all were employed by to Al-Buraimi University College, University of Buraimi, and Sohar University. Besides, the study did not make gender-based distinctions; nor

did it take into account the qualification factor. The researcher preferred to focus on the instructors' strategies in teaching writing.

Another one of the parameters was that the strategies being investigated in the questionnaire were focused only on the process and product approaches. This methodological choice was linked to the literature reviewed.

In addition, the number of observations might not be enough to judge whether the instructors' perceptions matched their actual performance or not beyond any shred of doubt.

1.7. Definition of Terms

There are some terms that have been used in this study for particular purposes. Their meanings are listed below for transparency and clarity.

- Process Approach: The Online TEFL Dictionary defines the process approach as "a method for teaching writing that walks with learners through the strategies of pre-writing, writing, and revision stages." (TEFL Online Dictionary, 2015)

- Product Approach: The Online TEFL Dictionary defines the product approach as "a method for teaching writing in which learners are given a model and then asked to create something similar." (TEFL Online Dictionary, 2015)

- EFL: The Online Cambridge Dictionary defines EFL as "English as a foreign language: the teaching of English to students whose first language is not English." (Cambridge online dictionary, 2015)

- ESL: The Online Longman Dictionary defines ESL as "the teaching of English to people who are living in an English-speaking country, but whose first language is not English." (Longman online dictionary, 2015)

- Academic Writing: is often defined as "the writing you have to do for your university courses. Instructors may have different names for academic writing assignments (essay, paper, research paper, term paper, argumentative paper/essay, analysis paper/essay, informative essay, position paper), but all of these assignments have the same goal and principles." (Whitaker, 2009, p.2) The present study is concerned with all the academic writing genres which are employed and/or taught at college or university.

Chapter 2 : Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

Learning to write in English as a second or foreign language is very important nowadays, especially in college and/or university. As a result, there is much interest in the strategies which make teaching writing easier and more efficacious. This has led to the existence of many different views of the subject. Some researchers like Alodwan & Ibnian (2014) are against teaching writing based on the product-based approach, as they consider it old fashioned. They find that the process approach is better in ESL/EFL. On the other hand, there are researchers who believe in the combination of product and process approaches (Hasan & Akhand, 2010).

However, good teaching techniques are not enough; suitable assessment is needed, too, to ensure that learning takes place. My review of the relevant literature will shed light on the teaching and assessing theories on which process and product approaches are built.

Furthermore, since this study deals with the Omani context, this chapter will also include studies about the teaching and assessment of EFL/ESL writing in Oman. This is done to elucidate both practices in Oman and to see if there is any difference between the results of previous studies and the current one.

2.2. Theoretical Framework

2.2.1. Writing according to the Innatist Theory

The literature review shows that there are plenty of theories and approaches to understand how second language learners learn the target language. Krashen's theory is one of the most famous theories in this respect, and it is based on the fact that there is no fundamental difference between the way we acquire our first language or any other language. He claimed that we have an inborn ability that guides the language learning process.

Krashen illustrated that in the field of learning second language writing, there is a difference between writing competence and writing performance. Competence refers to mental knowledge that makes good prose, and most of it is learned through reading (Krashen, 1984). On the other hand, Krashen linked performance to the conscious application of strategies or rules that have been learned and practiced.

Krashen further stated that writing practice has no effect on competence. However, the quality of the learners' writing products can be influenced by practice and the grammar rules that students have learned. This scholar dedicated much consideration to the writing techniques that had been found to be effective in improving writing quality. These included flexible planning, frequent revision, and postponement of editing.

2.2.2. Writing according to Vygotsky's Theory

Vygotsky's theories stress the fundamental role of social interaction in the development of cognition. He believed strongly that community plays a central role

in the process of "making meaning." He is well known for his concept of "The zone of proximal development," which "is the distance between what children can do by themselves and the next learning that they can be helped to achieve with competent assistance" (Raymond, 2000, p.176).

Vygotsky's theory brought to instructors a strategy that can be used in writing instruction. It is named *scaffolding* instruction, and it is defined as the "role of teachers and others in supporting the learner's development and providing support structures to get to that next stage or level" (Raymond, 2000, p. 176). Later on, Sylvia Read (2010) developed the steps of scaffolding, which were summarized in the acronym IMSCI, namely Inquiry, Modeling, Shared writing, Collaborative writing, and Independent writing.

I = inquiry. Read said that she integrated reading and writing instruction. She focused on a particular genre for a week or two during read-aloud sessions, and she engaged her students in an inquiry into the features of that genre. After that, she used that genre for writing instruction. Thus, students write independently once they have become familiar with the topics (Read,2010, p.4).

M = modeling. When the learners had understood the texts of a given genre, the instructor modeled for her students how to write text of the same genre. The models could be brainstorm topics, graphic organizers, drafts, revision, and editing samples. Modeling was applied to the whole process of writing. In this way, the students learned to accomplish their own writing task (Read,2010, p.4).

S = shared (writing) students and the instructor co-wrote. Students participated in the writing. They engaged in making decisions about topic, topic sentences,

sentence structure, and organization. All other decisions were made when they started writing independently (Read,2010,p.5).

C = collaborative (writing). In this step, two students would work together to produce, each, a piece of writing. However, some other times, they would collaborate to write a single text, each student taking turns at writing. On other occasions, they used to write parallel texts which were both similar and different (Read, 2010, p.5).

I = Independent (writing). Finally, Read gradually placed the responsibility for the writing on the shoulders of her first and second graders. Thanks to the previous scaffolding, they had become able to write on their own (Read, 2010, p.5).

For Read, teachers who ask students to write without any real preparation are like people "throwing non-swimmers into the pool and shouting "Swim!" from poolside" (Read, 2010, p.5). She believed that students can successfully write independently if and when "they have become familiar with the features of the genre during an inquiry phase, seen the teacher model the genre, participated in writing in that genre through shared or collaborative writing" (Read, 2010, p.5).

2.2.3. Writing according to the Behaviorist Theory

Behaviorism, also known as behavioral psychology, is a theory of learning based upon the idea that behaviors are acquired through the existence of stimuli-response and habit formation (Suharno, 2010). This means that teachers can teach ESL/EFL through imitation and modeling. This approach is based on language structure when

learners imitate a certain structure, and it could be implemented in writing classes in many ways.

In a behaviorist writing class, the instructor will seek to familiarize the learners with the second/foreign language. This would be done by giving learners certain grammar structures and vocabulary through a text (Tangkiengsirisin, 2012). Also, the teacher would give the learners controlled writing; for example, when learners are provided with "a great deal of the content and/or form [such as] an outline to complete, a paragraph to manipulate, a model to follow, or a passage to continue" (Raimes,1983, p. 95). On the other hand, free writing could also be one of the processes based on language structure. In this case, the learner would develop a given pattern in order to write a letter or an essay, etc. In addition, instructors could employ guided writing, which is based on imitating a certain text that includes specific structure and vocabulary (Hyland, 2003).

2.3. Teachers' Perceptions

In EFL, teachers' perceptions are "founded on the goals, values, and beliefs" which they "hold in relation to the content and process of teaching, and their understanding of the systems in which they work and their roles within it" (Richards & Lockhart, 1994, p. 30). In other words, perceptions are not fully novel. Teachers have pre-terminated points of views as a result of their past experience, knowledge of different approaches to teaching (either undergone or learned, or both), or successful practices with language learners. These perceptions help teachers to make their own decisions in selecting methods for and approaches to language teaching and learning

(Graham, 2011). Thus, in order to produce changes in teachers' practices, there must be changes in their beliefs first.

2.4. Academic Writing

In this study, academic writing is understood as "any writing that fulfills the purpose of education in a college or university" (Chokwe, 2011, p.24). Furthermore, mentions of *writing, students' writing,* or *teaching writing* in this study refer to *academic writing*, and they will be used interchangeably.

There is no consensus on the purpose, scope, and ways of teaching academic writing. In general, the opinions fall into two major camps: the product-oriented approach and the process-oriented approach. Both of them will be dealt with now.

2.4.1. Product-Oriented Approach

The product-oriented approach appeared during the era of audio-lingualism, when ESL writing classes were focused on sentence structure as a way to support the grammar class (Nordin & Mohammad, 2006). This approach is considered traditional because it encouraged students to imitate or mimic a model text, and this usually took place at an early stage (Gabrielatos, 2002). Thornbury (2006) opines that the product-oriented approach "typically involves analyzing and imitating models of particular text types" (p.249). Students were trained to *re-produce* an original until they gradually became able to *produce* their own texts incorporating both imitation and difference (p.249). This means students would be given a model text as a standard to follow and then they would be asked to construct new pieces of writing along similar lines.

After the publication of Wilkins's Notional Syllabus (1976), the product-oriented approach was blended with the functional approach, which aimed to meet the students' functional language needs. Teachers would thus focus on the organization, consistency, and structure of writing, without losing sight of grammar and style (Jordan, 1997).

Moreover, the new criteria were also used to classify types of writing according to their functions. The main types were descriptive, including process and sequencing. The other ones were narrative, instructive, explanatory, defining, exemplifying, classifying, comparing and contrasting, establishing cause and effect, expressing purpose, means, prediction, result and so on, generalizing and specifying, discussing and arguing and drawing conclusions.

The influence of the product-oriented approach can be felt still today, even in Oman. In fact, Omani students in foundation programs are still being taught to write some of the above-mentioned types of text. The same could be said about IELTS and TOEFL preparation courses and examination. Probably, one of the appealing dimensions of this approach is that it leads to quantifiable results, easy to teach and very clear to test and mark.

2.4.2. The Process-Oriented Approach

The process approach originated in the 1970's, but the idea of process goes back to the Greek and Roman models of instruction in the area of rhetoric (Vanderpyl, 2012). The process-oriented approach is learner centered since students are encouraged to produce pieces of writing that are in keeping with their own capability. Therefore, educators of this school have systematically preferred to focus

on the creative process of writing, and not just on the form of writing or on the concrete product. In Thornbury's words (2006), "A process approach argues that writers do not in fact start with a clear idea of the finished product. Rather, the text emerges out of creative process" (p.249). Or, as Kroll (1990) would explain, students engage in a cyclic approach whereby they go through stages until they can produce a complete piece of writing.

2.4.3. Summarizing Observations

The above description of the product- and process-oriented approaches show that each approach has its own fundamental assumption and, based on it, draws its own practical conclusions. Their theoretical frameworks lead to classroom strategies and practices, which is what the following paragraphs will briefly deal with.

2.5. Classroom Writing Strategies based on Different Perspectives

2.5.1. The Product Approach Strategies

Hasan& Akhand (2010) pointed out that the product-oriented approach goes through four stages.

Stage one: The role of the students is to look at the text models and highlight the features of each genre. For example, if students are given a story, the teachers' role is to make students find out the techniques that have been used by the writer to make the story interesting. Thus, the students are meant to focus on where and how the writer uses these techniques.

Stage two: Teachers teach students specific isolated features which they must use in their writing. For example, if students are asked to write a formal letter, they may be asked to practice some key features of letter writing such as how to make polite and formal requests (e.g. 'I would be grateful if you would...').

Stage three: This stage is the most important because students get to organize ideas at this point. It is worth remembering that for the product-oriented approach, the organization of the ideas may at times be more important than how the students arrived at those ideas.

Stage four: The last stage is when students use the structures, vocabulary, and stylistic features which they learned previously, and which correspond to the genre of the texts to be written.

2.5.2. The Process Approach Strategies

According to Steele (2004) the process-oriented approach has eight stages that imply different teaching strategies.

Stage one: brainstorming. In this stage students generate ideas and discuss with the teacher the points that need to be covered in the assigned topic.

Stage two: planning/structuring. Students write down the ideas and then judge their usefulness with a view to doing their writing task.

Stage three: mind mapping. Students organize their ideas into conceptual maps or diagrams. These are meant to help them to structure their information and to find relations between different ideas.

Stage four: writing the first draft. Using the ideas which they generated and organized previously, the students write their first draft, often in pairs or groups.

Stage five: peer feedback. Students exchange drafts among themselves. This is meant to make them realize what they have just done: they are gradually becoming thinkers, writers, and, of course, also readers. Their give each other feedback, learning from one another.

Stage six: editing. Students make changes based upon the feedback which they got from their peers. This strategy is aimed at developing their cognitive and meta-cognitive competency.

Stage seven: final draft. Students finally write their definitive drafts in fulfillment of their writing assignment.

Stage eight: evaluation and teachers' feedback. Students' writings are evaluated by the teacher, who also gives them his or her feedback.

White and Arndt (1991) provided teachers with a framework which shows that the process of writing is circular, not linear. It also charts the 'how stages' (namely brainstorming, planning/ structuring, mind mapping, writing the first draft, peer feedback, editing, final draft, and evaluation) as interlinked.

2.5.3. Differences between the Process and Product Approaches

Steele (2004) elicited and indicated the main differences between the process- and product-oriented approaches. He pointed out that process-oriented educators give students a considerable amount of freedom to conduct their writing task. However,

the opposite is true in the product-oriented approach, where students are taught to imitate pre-established model texts, and specific features of lexica or grammar. Whereas for the process-oriented school, creativity and the development of one's own proficiency, meta-cognitive skills, and writing style occupy centre stage, not the imitation of somebody else's writing. As said before, process-oriented writing is all about developing ideas, not so the product-oriented approach, where the organization of ideas according to pre-established paradigms and models is more important than the ideas themselves. Steele also pointed out that process-oriented writing is a collaborative endeavor, while product-oriented writing is an individual activity. Process-oriented writing instructors encourage their students to come up with more than one draft, while product-oriented teachers focus on one final product that has imitated other authoritative texts.

These differences make the two approaches favorable to some and unfavorable to others. That will be the matter to be discussed in what follows.

2.6. Advantages and Disadvantages of the Product-Oriented Approach

The product-oriented approach is not decried by all researchers. As Badger and White (2000) pointed out, it can help learners acquire the knowledge of linguistic features, like the appropriate use of vocabulary, syntax and cohesive devices, which is partly learned by imitation. Also, Arndt (1987) argued for the importance of having textual models, not only for imitation, but also for analyzing and exploring texts. Myles (2002) further argues that students have to be exposed to native models of written texts; otherwise students would be more persisted in their errors. In

addition, Shortall (2006) argues that teachers have to focus and practice new forms with students to help students to reach the ultimate level of learning.

On the other hand, (Zamel, 1987) criticized the product-oriented approach for overemphasizing accuracy and forms and failing to duly take into account that writing is a way to develop ideas. Also, Stanley (2003) argued that feedback is very useful between drafts; whereas in the product-oriented school, students hand in their final draft to be marked without having had any previous feedback. Product-oriented writing approaches stipulate what Nunan (1999) named "reproductive language work". (p.75). He also commented that "product-oriented approaches to writing focus on tasks in which the learner imitates, copies, and transforms models provided by the teacher and/or textbook" (p.272). Product-oriented reproductive teaching strategies can indeed help students to accumulate knowledge and skills which they can then bring to the classroom (Badger and White, 2000, p.157), but they do not lead to the levels of inventiveness, problem-solving, and self-expression which creative, process-oriented writing can foster.

2.7. Advantages and Disadvantages of the Process Approach

The effectiveness of the process-oriented approach is varied in many ways. It gives students the chance to think of their writing while they write, and this can greatly help students to manage their own writing (Brown, 2004). The sense that students are creators of their own writing can function as a powerful intrinsic motivation which is valued in learning language skills. In fact, Raimes (1983) wrote that teachers found that the process-oriented techniques made students discover new ideas and new forms to express their ideas. She also pointed out that this approach

was beneficial in combination with techniques that had been used before, such as "conferencing" when students work together in groups to write a paragraph or an essay. Nunan (1991) has also insisted that the process-oriented approach encourages students to work collaboratively, and this would enhance their motivation and disposition toward writing.

However, there have been scholars, too, who voiced reservations about an all-out commitment to process-oriented teaching in the area of writing. For example, Reid (2001) expounded that this approach can lead to accuracy being neglected. Fluency in a language implies more than just making sounds or scribbling on paper. Fluency goes hand in hand with correctness, which includes following not only thought patterns proper to a language community, but also speech patterns. This author claims that ESL students need to acquire *both* accuracy *and* fluency. Imitation has its place and role in this broader process (not just the writing process). In addition, Onozawa, (2010) has argued that some educators believe the process-oriented approach not to be very practical since it requires multi-drafts and multiple revision instances. If students do not learn to actually produce a text in one go, they will have real difficulties when they have to write a complete text on an exam.

2.8. Writing Process Studies

Studies that have been done so far show that using process-oriented strategies for teaching writing is one of the best ways in ESL/SFL instruction. Nonetheless, many ESL/EFL instructors are still using product-oriented strategies in their classes. On the other hand, there are studies which have asked for the combination of both approaches to overcome learners' problems in ESL/EFL writing.

The first study that investigated the benefits of the process-oriented approach among college students was conducted in 1985 by Diaz. She observed her own students while she applied process-oriented strategies in her teaching. Diaz (1985) then wrote that "not only are process strategies and techniques strongly indicated and recommended for ESL students, but also when used in secure, student-centered context, the benefits to these students can go beyond their development as writers" (p.163).

In the same vein, other investigators (Adipattaranun, 1992; Villalobos, 1996) examined the variables in ESL college writing classes that favored the process-oriented approach. Adipattaranun (1992) found that the writing of all his nine students improved. Villalobos (1996) also carried an ethnographic study on three ESL College students to find out how writing was being taught, and how the students perceived the process-oriented approach strategies. The findings showed that students' perceptions of writing changed the more they focused on the writing process.

In the same line, Ora'a (1995) studied the influence of the process-oriented approach in a freshman English class at a Filipino university. Two groups of 23 students were divided into a control group and an experimental group. The experimental group was taught according to the traditional product-oriented pedagogy, while the control group embarked on process-oriented learning activities. The findings showed that the latter group benefited more than the former. Furthermore, the students confirmed that peer editing was useful.

Jouhari (1996) explored the influence of the process writing approach on Saudi College freshman students' writing. The results showed that the students became

more the writing development of Saudi college freshman students. The findings indicated that students became more able in producing ideas, writing multi drafts, giving and getting feedback and revising their writing. He also pointed out that the students became more positive toward writing.

Tyson (1997, 1998, 1999, 2000) has conducted action research studies related to the effects of the process writing on Korean college students in writing class above four years. Tyson got out that the techniques of the process approach helped students to produce and develop their writing. He noted, too, that the students' motivation and self-confidence with regard to writing had also increased.

Kang (2006) conducted another pertinent study. He chose his two English composition classes at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies in Korea. Forty eight students from the fall 2005 writing class participated in the study. Kang taught his students all the concepts of the writing process starting from pre-writing strategies to editing peer work techniques. For the study students were given four full essays as tests every two or three weeks, the subjects were changed and students were asked to submit each essay with its outline. Also, the researcher used a questionnaire at the end of the semester to confirm the students' knowledge of the process approach. The results reinforced the idea that the writing of students who are taught with a focus on the writing process improve more than their peers who concentrate mainly on grammar and mechanics. The researcher suggested that a combination of both approaches (process- and product-oriented) would solve writing problems among Korean EFL writers.

Hasan & Akhand (2010) conducted an interventionist study designed to study the effects of the product- and process-oriented approaches on learners' writing skills.

The study took place at United International University in Bangladesh. Two ESL classes were chosen: one was instructed in keeping with the process-oriented methodology, while the other followed the product-oriented principles. Later on, both approaches were combined in both groups. The data was collected by means of observations and students' work. The results showed that the combination of both approaches increased the performance of students in writing.

Hashemnezhad & Hashemnezhad (2012) carried out a study about the possible differences between Iranian learners' writing abilities in terms of three writing approaches of product, process, and post-process. The study included 60 EFL sophomores from Azad University, Iran. The researchers divided the students into three groups of 30 students each. The first group was exposed to the product-oriented approach, the second group was taught according to the process-oriented approach, and the third group was exposed to the post-process. After 16 sessions of teaching, the researchers gave two post-exams (cause-effect, procedural) to each group. The findings of the study showed that there was a significant difference between the process and post-process approaches over the product-oriented approach. The writing abilities of students who had focused on the writing process and post-process were superior to those of the remaining group.

Alodwan & Ibnian (2014) conducted a study on the effect of using the process approach to develop university students' essay writing skills in EFL at the World Islamic Sciences and Education University in Amman. The study was descriptive in its data collection about the writing skill, in particular essay writing skills in EFL, also quasi-experimental in terms of design. They chose 45 students from English 101 sections, who were given a pre- and post-test and grouped into experimental and

control groups. They were all asked to write an essay to test the effects of using process-oriented teaching strategies. The results showed that the usual components of the process-oriented approach, namely pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing and publishing, had a positive effect on the students' essays. The students applied brainstorming techniques and produced creative ideas during the pre-writing stage. As a result, the researchers recommended emphasizing the preparatory stages before writing.

Thulasi, Ismail, & Salam (2015) used an extensive review of literature review to explore teachers' perceptions and their experiences in Malaysian schools. Their paper discussed especially different views of how model techniques can be used to improve students' writing skills. They pointed out that their studies indicated that Malaysian students are poor in writing, and that is due to the product-centered methods that are still being used by Malaysian teachers, even though they are starting to move toward more process-oriented pedagogies. The researchers showed that the reason behind the teachers' practice is that teachers have a large number of classes; therefore, they opt for product-based alternatives to be able to finish the syllabus on time, to give students feedback more easily and less often, and to save time. Their paper recommends that teachers provide students with effective strategies such as "creative writing", self-assessment, and "critical analysis practices". However, they still encourage the use of model essays, but only as the first step in learning how to write.

Another recent study is that by Zhou (2015), who investigated the influence of process-oriented strategies on students whose majors are not in English. He studied two of his classes from China West Normal University. Zhou used questionnaires and a test paper. Although 280 questionnaires were distributed, only 213 were

returned having been answered. The questionnaires showed that students performed their writing tasks using the product-oriented methodology. After that, the researcher conducted an experiment. The experimental group was the one which was directed to focus on the process, while the control group concentrated on the product. After teaching the experimental group the different strategies of the process-centered approach, in the final exam students were given a topic to write about. The experimental group did better than the control group which shows the beneficial impact of this pedagogy on students' writing.

In the Omani context, Al Seyabi & Tuzlukova (2014) examined the gap between what students get in schools and universities in both the teaching and learning of EFL writing. They looked into the problems which school and universities learners encounter when they write in English as well as the techniques which they use to overcome them, especially when these problems are related to writing correct sentences, organizing ideas, selecting suitable vocabulary, and determining how to begin essays or paragraphs. The researchers used a questionnaire that was distributed to 1,114 school students (grades 11 & 12) and 317 foundation university students from the Batinah South, Muscat, and Dakhiliyya regions. The results showed that both groups encounter problems in writing, especially with vocabulary and content. However, the biggest difficulty which the university students face is a shortage of ideas, whereas post-school students face a problem in how to start their essays or paragraphs. The researchers found that the common technique that teachers use with university students is brainstorming ideas. On the other hand, the common technique for post-school students is revising grammar and structures. The researchers

recommended aligning the school and university curricula that target the development of ideas, content knowledge, critical and creative writing.

Yet another study was conducted by Ali (2012) to measure the quality of the report writing in Oman. The researcher randomly chose 100 students and 15 teachers from an Omani university college. He used surveys to find out the perceptions and experiences of teachers and students in the area of report writing both in groups and among individuals. The results showed that most of the teachers and students preferred to write reports in groups, although most of them believed that individual reports are better for helping students to learn by themselves and to develop the quality of their reports. Also, samples of reports were shown to indicate that the quality of individual reports was superior to those that had been written in groups.

2.9. Assessment process in Higher Education

In an ideal education system that is all about learning, assessment would be "an ongoing process aimed at understanding and improving student learning" (Angelo, 1995, p.7). It would be used to make gauge not only the product, but also the process, implicit and explicit expectations, official learning outcomes, criteria, standards, materials, students' talents and difficulties, etc. In such a system, the assessment instruments would be used for "systematically gathering, analyzing, and interpreting evidence to determine how well performance matches those expectations and standards" (Idem). Furthermore, the data provided by the assessment should be used "to document, explain, and improve performance. When it is embedded effectively within larger institutional systems, assessment can help us focus our collective attention, examine our assumptions, and create a shared academic culture dedicated

to assuring and improving the quality of higher education" (Idem). In short, in such a learning-centered system, the assessment process aids to confirm, validate, substantiate, and support student learning described in the objectives and aims stated for a program, curriculum, or course.

Everybody will agree that the aim of assessing students is to provide the instructors and students with information that helps them to improve the teaching efficiency and learning quality. That means college instructors use what they get from the classroom assessment to readjust their teaching. Also, instructors share their findings with their students to involve them in the learning strategies so that they become more fruitful in their studies. Seen in this light, assessing students "is a vital part of teaching and learning" (Angelo, 1991).

However, in real life assessment, assessment tools are used both with a product and process orientation. Teachers evaluate learners to collect data about how well they are learning what has been taught (i.e. reaching the learning objectives). The key difference is implicit in the phrase "what has been taught in class". If students were taught to more or less slavishly emulate a model in order to pass an exam meant to assess their memory and capability to reproduce knowledge, the assessment instruments will primarily be designed to measure and record the level of emulation. However, if students in the ESL/EFL classroom were taught "to learn how to learn" or, in other words, to become autonomous, creative users of English, the assessment will be designed in keeping with this pedagogy, and it will function as a mirror for both the teacher and the student to take stock of how effective their interactive teaching-learning process has been.

2.10. Assessing Writing

Writing is assessed by means of a range of procedures meant to "describe the promise and limitations of a writer working in a particular rhetorical, linguistic context" (Huot, 2003, p.107). In other word, it is —or ought to be— seen as part of a process geared toward enhancing ability, identifying strengths and weaknesses, and recognizing how much students have accomplished (Weigle, 2002). Moreover, as Weigle (2002) suggests, the interpretations that result from assessment or evaluation instruments about language ability should help to make certain decisions for future teaching, on the part of the teacher, and learning, on the part of the student.

For a long time, writing assessments were based on the forms of multiple choice, grammar completion, etc. (Hamp-Lyons, 2003). However, according to Lee (2006), "most ESL professionals these days believe that it is better that students are tested by directly writing a composition on a certain topic" (p.20). In the next section we will show the alternative ways to assess students' learning and output as well as the consequences of traditional writing assessments.

2.11. ESL/EFL Traditional Ways to Assess Writing

The traditional classroom paper-pencil assessment is a method that has been used for a long time. It is simple and fast, and it offers information about how much students have learned about a given subject. Assessment instruments of this type usually contain multiple choice, matching, or true/false tasks. These tests are not difficult to create. They are also easy to mark; if they are uploaded to platforms such as Moodle, they will even be graded automatically. They may be given to one student as well as to small or large groups. This method measures the responses and

pays little attention to the process whereby students arrive at their answers. These kinds of assessment are teacher friendly, as they are a welcome solution to constraints of time. Besides, they are helpful institutionally as they determine students' position in relation to standards and district benchmarks (Oberg, 2009).

On the other hand, scholars believe that multiple-choice tests fail to address the thought processes involved in producing a written text (Camp, 1993). Aspects of writing such as making plans, producing and improving ideas, editing, and so on are left out. Writing calls for high order skills, which are ignored in the traditional ways to assess students' work (Murphy, 2008). These shortcomings have challenged researchers to try out alternative ways (e.g. portfolio assessment; Hamp-Lyons, 2002), which will be the subject matter of the following section.

2.12. ESL/EFL Alternative Ways to Assess Writing

These days, alternative assessment methods such as portfolios, peer assessment, and self-assessment are used to substitute traditional methods. That is because the emphasis now is laid on the process as well as on the product (Burch, 2000; Hirvela and Sweetland, 2005). The following are examples of alternative assessments.

2.12.1. Portfolio

Educators are using portfolios as an alternative way of assessing writing because it can incorporate instruction with evaluation. A portfolio is a collection of texts produced by the students that shows to both the students themselves and their teachers the former's learning progress and growth (Chung, 2012). Portfolios can involve different materials, like essays and instances of self- and peer-assessment

(Brown & Abeywickrama, 2004). The positive effect of portfolios is that students participate in both the learning and the assessment (Genesee and Upshur, 1996), whereby they decide what to include in their portfolios and participate in defining the criteria for grading them (Chung, 2012).

2.12.2. Self-Assessments

Self-assessment means, as the word clearly suggests, that students themselves revise their drafts, check their finished work, and reflect on how to evaluate their output and the process that went into it (O'Farrell, 2002). In other words, self-assessment is "the involvement of students in identifying standards and/or criteria to apply to their work and making judgments about the extent to which they have met these criteria and standards" (Boud, 1991, p.5). This strategy works very well with other forms of assessment, such as portfolios (Race, 2001), because it encourages students to develop meta-cognitive skills such as self-awareness and (self-)critical reflection (O'Farrell, 2002).

2.12.3. Peer Assessments

Peer assessment could be defined as the evaluation of somebody else's work who shares an equal position and power (Wilson, 2002). When learners are asked to evaluate each other's work, they are told that they must, first of all, estimate the value of another student's work, as well to give and receive feedback (O'Farrell, 2002). Although there are students who have a negative perception of the peer assessment, research regularly shows that it can significantly produce improvements

in students' writing. In fact, it seems to enhance development more than when students are assessed exclusively by teachers (Kaufman, & Schunn, 2011).

2.13. Writing Evaluation Criteria: Holistic and Analytic Rubrics

Rubrics are defined as "scoring guides, consisting of specific pre-established performance criteria, used in evaluating student work on performance assessments" (Mertler& Craig, 2001, p.1). To evaluate the quality of students' writing, decisions must be made on the criteria —or rubrics— for grading. For example, will a single, global score be given to a text or will different features of the text be scored separately, instead? This is an issue which has been discussed in the literature.

There are mainly two kinds of grading systems: holistic and analytic.

A **holistic** rubric "requires the teacher to score the overall process or product as a whole, without judging the component parts separately" (Mertler& Craig, 2001, p.1). On the other hand, an **analytic** rubric requires the teacher to evaluate each part of the product or performance and, subsequently, sum the scores of each element to obtain the total score (Moskal, 2000; Nitko, 2001). That means the holistic rubrics require the teacher to read or examine the product only once, while analytic rubrics call for repeated reading or examination of the product. When done analytically, markers tend to evaluate grammar-related categories more harshly than they do other categories (McNamara, 1996), thereby overemphasizing the role of accuracy in providing a profile of learners' proficiency.

However, holistic grading helps teachers grading many papers to accomplish their task in a shorter time because they do not need to correct or make separate comments. Scholars in favor of this method argue that the holistic approach makes

grading more objective, especially when the students' names are not visible on the quiz or exam papers or when another teacher marks their work (Babin & Harrison, 1999, p.188)

In contrast, analytic grading takes longer than holistic grading because the markers have to make all sorts of discrete decisions about the writing samples. Nonetheless, the proponents of this approach underline that this method gives teachers more information about the students' writing abilities. It also shows more clearly the weaknesses and strengths in students' writing. Furthermore, in the case of ESL/EFL learners, having one score would be problematic because the different aspects of writing would be developed in different rates.

Therefore, a combination of approaches in ESL/EFL writing classes might be the best approach. While a minimum of analytic rubrics would distinguish between various aspects of writing in students' writings (Park, 2008), more holistic rubrics can be more practical, especially in the case of large classes (Weigle, 2002).

2.14. Fitting Assessment with Instruction

The idea of formal education is that it should be planned so that goals, means, implementation, evaluation, and fine tuning constitute a cycle leading to overall enhanced performance. Therefore, instruction and assessment must be goal oriented, the goal being *learning* (Gulikers, Bastiaens, & Kirschner,2004, p.67). For example, if the textbook used in class is test based, partial quizzes must be in synch with the final, decisive test. As a result, a good class discussion which might help students to develop their critical thinking skills will have to make way for an hour of grammar if grammar items are more decisive for the test than tasks aimed at measuring critical

thinking. Also, students should certainly work in groups during instruction, if they are going to be assessed in the same way (Phye, 1996).

Whatever the pedagogy —be it either product or process oriented—, the assessment tool will test what it has been designed to test. Be that as it may, whenever the assessment results indicate that the teaching-learning interaction is not bearing fruit, the teacher needs to find the cause of the problem and to modify his or her teaching accordingly (Phye, 1996). This is so because assessment is a vital component of the (formal) learning environment. Consequently, teachers should match their instruction tools to the assessments tools.

2.15. Studies about Portfolios

One of the newcomers in the field of assessment is portfolio (which was already introduced above). Writing portfolios have become one of the substitutes of multiple choice or writing tests across the educational spectrum, from primary school to college. To demonstrate their capability in writing, students produce portfolios that are meant to reflect their learning process as lived by them.

Many studies have been conducted about the influence of portfolios on the EFL learners' writing as they are the common alternative tools of assessments nowadays. For instance, according to Garcia and Pearson (1994), alternative assessment such as portfolios contain all of those "efforts that do not adhere to the traditional criteria of standardization, efficiency. cost-effectiveness, objectivity and machine scorability" (p. 355). Marx (2001) has also highlighted the portfolio's usefulness in measuring both the productive cycle: the learning process and the concrete outcome.

Another interesting study was conducted by Nezakatgoo (2011), a teacher and a researcher, to probe the influence of portfolios on the improvement of the mechanics of writing (e.g. grammar and punctuation) among EFL students, judging by their marks in final exam. The participants, who were 40 E.C.O insurance university students in Teheran, enrolled in a second semester English composition course. The researcher divided the students into two groups and tested them using two tests: "Error Detection in the Mechanics of Writing" and "Trinity's ISE (Integrated Skills in English) Writing Test," both at the beginning and the end of the semester. The students were taught by the same teacher to ensure the same instruction. The experimental group was evaluated through a portfolio. They were given time to reflect on their essays, while the other group was evaluated in the traditional way. They submitted their work to the teacher and were given grades by the marker without any kind of reflection on their part. The results showed that students who used portfolios had less mechanic errors than the students who went through the traditional process of evaluation. Also, the findings point out that there was a positive correlation between the scores of students who relied on the final exam and the scores of those who were self-regulating and prepared portfolios.

In the same vein, Tabatabaei & Assefi (2012) probed the influence of portfolio assessment on learners' performance. The participants were 40 females and males from Iran with an English major in an institute. They were divided into an experimental group assessed through a portfolio and a control group evaluated in the traditional way. The results indicated that the portfolios made the experimental group outperform the control group in writing. Also, it contributed to their higher

development in sub skills such as focus, explanation, organization, conventions, and vocabulary.

Along the same lines, Sabooni & Salehi (2015) conducted a study on the effects of reflective portfolios on students' writing accuracy. To have a homogeneous group, the researchers administered proficiency tests to students who enrolled in an English institute in Iran. They were in level 3 (intermediate) and had some knowledge of portfolios as assessment tools. Students were asked to keep their essays in binders and to reflect on their writing and their classmates' work (i.e. self- and peer assessment). Five female students were chosen randomly to have interviews about reflective portfolios at the end of the semester. The results from the interviews showed that portfolios helped students to develop their writing accuracy. In addition, reflective portfolios increased their enthusiasm, self-confidence, and independence vis-à-vis writing.

In yet another study, Sharifi & Hassaskhah (2011) examined the effect of portfolio assessment and reflection activities on students' writing. Their project looked at 20 students at Shahid Sattari Air University, Iran, and was quasi-experimental in design. Students were asked to keep a portfolio, about which they had to answer a questionnaire later on. The aim of the project was to assess their perceptions of their portfolio experience. The results indicated that students were very positive about the portfolios as means of assessment.

Al-Qadi & Smadi (2014) looked into the use of portfolios and group work as ways to enhance EFL students' linguistic and discourse competence at Al-al-Bayt University in Mafraq, Jordan. Sixty male and female students from two sections of a writing course took part in the project. They were divided into an experimental group

that was taught to write essays through portfolios and group work and a control group that was taught in the traditional way. Both groups were given a pre-test as well as a post-test, both involving the writing of an essay. The findings showed that both groups performed well in discourse competence. Moreover, the two groups showed some improvement in linguistic competence. Also, the interviews with the participants in the experimental group indicated that they valued the use of portfolios. In fact, the students were convinced that portfolios had helped them to develop their discourse and linguistic competences. Also, most of them appreciated group or peer work as having a positive impact on their linguistic and discourse competences.

2.16. Summary

This chapter looked at the literature dealing with product- and process-oriented pedagogies and their link with assessment, especially in the area of writing classes or courses. These pedagogies stemmed mainly from the work of major theories such as the Innatist school, behaviorism, and Vygotsky's 'learning through scaffolding' paradigm. The sources indicated that most researchers are in favor of the process-oriented approach and that the pure product-centered approach has been losing ground. In addition, this chapter presented some of the advantages and disadvantages of both approaches that have been mentioned in the literature.

It has become increasingly clear that in spite of the preference for process-oriented teaching strategies and assessment forms, a considerable number of research projects support a combination of both theories with their approaches and strategies. The study by Hasan & Akhand (2010) constitutes a good example of this. In

addition, this chapter has shown that alternative means of assessment are (or are perceived as being) superior to the traditional ones. The portfolio is, probably, the most popular alternative way of evaluating students' learning and, therefore, many researches supported the use of portfolios.

This chapter also dealt with the rubrics used in whichever form of assessment teachers may finally opt for. Marking rubrics tend to be either analytic or holistic. However, there are experiments that would seem to recommend a combination of both to overcome their respective limitations.

Finally, there is a consensus in the literature that instruction and assessment must be in synch and that teachers must resort to what best promotes learning on the part of their students.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter will draw a clear picture of how this research project was conducted. It covers the following elements: the research design, population, sampling, participants, instruments, procedures, data analysis, and ethical issues. The study was meant to find answers to the following research questions:

- What are the ESL/EFL instructors' perceptions regarding the strategies used for teaching students' academic writing?

- What are the ESL/ EFL instructors' perceptions regarding the strategies used for assessing students' academic writing?

- Is there any variation between instructors' perceptions of teaching strategies, assessments strategies, and their actual practices?

3.1 Research Design

This research was conducted by means of a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches since the combination of the qualitative and quantitative approaches can be useful when carrying classroom-oriented research (Brumfit & Mitchel, 1990).

The first and second questions of the research are related to ESL/EFL instructors' perceptions of strategies for teaching and assessing academic writing. For that, a questionnaire was used to elicit quantitative data about the instructors' perceptions. This was complemented with interviews with ESL/EFL instructors to get more qualitative data about their perceptions of strategies that ESL/EFL instructors use in teaching writing.

In addition, classroom observations were conducted to find out the similarities and differences between ESL/EFL instructors' responses to the questionnaires and interviews, and their actual performance in the classrooms. This provided answers to the third question of the study which was whether there is any variation between instructors' perceptions of teaching and assessing academic writing and their actual performance.

3.2. Participants

The participants of the study are ESL/EFL instructors at AL-Buraimi University College, University of Buraimi, and Sohar University during 2014-2015. The researcher chose these three Universities because they follow the same system of education as they follow the curriculum of the Omani Ministry of Higher Education. Besides, they are located geographically in the same area, so they are easy to contact and visit.

For this research, non-random, convenience samplings were taken to answer the first and the second question of the study. The whole population (229) of instructors was surveyed to get an acceptable number of respondents. When the questionnaires were distributed, only 147 ESL/EFL instructors responded, and that was considered to be a good number of responses. Table 1 shows that the majority of the participants were from Sohar University (74.1%) and table 2 displays that most of ESL/ EFL instructors who participated in the study were males (76.9%) and only 23.1 percent of them were females.

Table 1: Distribution of participants by University

University	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
Sohar University	109	74.1%
University of Buraimi	23	15.6%
Al-Buraimi University College	15	10.2
Other	-	

Table 2: Distribution of participants by gender

Gender	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
Males	113	76.9%
Females	34	32.1%

Most of the participants have taught six to 10 years. As indicated in Table 4, the majority (91.9% percent) hold a master degree, 5.4% percent hold Bachelor degree and the rest hold PHD degree.

Table 3: Teaching experience of participants

Teaching experience	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
1-5	15	10.2%

| 6-10 | 100 | 68% |
| more than 10 | 32 | 21.8% |

Table 4 : Qualification of participants

Degree	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
BA	8	5.4%
PhD	4	2.7%
Ma	135	91.9%
Other	-	-

From the participants of the questionnaire, a group of 15 ESL/EFL instructors voluntarily agreed to participate in the interviews, 3 females and 4 males from University of Buraimi, and 4 males and 4 females from AL-Buraimi University College. Also, other 10 ESL/EFL instructors voluntarily agreed to observe their classes, six males and four females from Al-Buraimi University College.

3.3. Instruments of the study

As indicated above, three methods of data collection were chosen: a questionnaire, semi-structured interviews, and classroom observation.

3.3.1. A questionnaire

The questionnaire was created especially for this research project. It was designed to match the objectives of the research questions that derived from the literature review of process- and product-oriented approaches in teaching and assessing academic writing.

At the outset, the questionnaire was fixed a couple of times. The questions that proved to be inadequate were revised. Subsequently, the supervisor checked the questionnaire and ensured that all questions were unambiguous and prompted clear answers. Finally, a panel went over the questionnaire and made suggestions for improvement. The panel was made up of seven faculty members: 3 ladies from Al-Buraimi University College (2 with Master's degrees and 1 with a PhD, all in English) and 4 gentlemen from UAE University (all with PhDs specialized in Curriculum and Instruction) (see appendix A).

The faculty members were requested to judge the validity of the questionnaire, and the main feedback was that each category had to have a title. They also asked to use "I" in each statement instead of "you" or other more impersonal pronoun and to change the scale from "strongly agree, agree, disagree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree" to "always, sometimes, etc." After being discussed with the supervisor, all of the recommendations were incorporated, with the only exception of the suggested change of scale because the questionnaire was meant to find out the ESL/ EFL instructors' perceptions of strategies for teaching and assessing academic writing ,but not how often they used teaching and assessing strategies.

The latest version of the questionnaire (see appendix B) consisted of six pages: The first page included the cover letter that explained the aim of the research study

and reassured the respondents that confidentiality would be safeguarded. The second page was about the participants' demographic information, such as place of work, gender, qualifications, and years of experience. The third and the forth pages were related to classroom strategies in teaching academic writing. It is a 5 point likert scale descending from 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree). It contained twenty four closed-ended statements, which invited ESL/EFL instructors to select one answer for each question. The fifth and sixth pages were related to assessment tools. They contained three categories . The first category had seven statements about assessment tools. The second category included two statements about rubrics. The last category was about criteria for evaluating writing and contained six statements.

3.3.2.Validity and Reliability of the Questionnaire

As mentioned previously, the questionnaire was revised by a panel of seven faculty members from UAE University and Al-Buraimi University College and modified in light of their feedback. This was done to ensure its validity.

In the area of research, *reliability* refers to the consistency of a measure or a concept (Choen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). To measure that, scholars usually use Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which helps find the internal consistency of variables. Consequently, in order to ensure the reliability of the questionnaire, its internal consistency was gauged using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The result was .88, which is considered acceptable.

3.3.3. Semi-Structured Interviews

The semi-structured interviews were aimed to get extra information about the ESL/EFL language instructors' perceptions of the approaches and strategies to teach and assess students' writing. In the semi-structured interviews, the researcher designed questions, but there were some other questions raised through the discussion. The questions were six (see appendix C) on the main points, like the process- and product-oriented process being used by ESL/EFL instructors, their tools of assessments, the rubrics, and the criteria which ESL/EFL instructors follow while evaluating students' writing. However, it was a kind of an open discussion as it mentioned above.

3.3.4. Classroom Observations

The class observations were conducted at Al-Buraimi University College. Ten ESL/EFL instructors were observed during writing classes. They were observed twice, with the exception of two who were only observed only once because they were busy with revisions for the mid-term exams. The observations were held only at AL-Buraimi University College because it was easier to access and to agree on a schedule for the class observation (as it is the place where the researcher teaches).

The observation was aimed at finding out the strategies which the instructors used for teaching and assessing ESL/EFL writing. Initially, some strategies that figured obviously in the questionnaires and the interviews were going to be singled out as focal points for the observation. Since the researcher's intention was to have a clear picture of practices in classrooms, no specific format/criteria were adopted

beforehand so that as much information as possible could be collected during the classes visits.

Since no quiz or exam was observed, the instructors provided the rubrics that they normally use to evaluate ESL/EFL writing (see appendix D).

3.4. The Procedure of Data Collection

3.4.1. A questionnaire

Once the deans of Al-Buraimi University College and University of Buraimi had given their express permission for this research project to involve faculty from their institutions (see appendix E), An email was sent to the dean of the English Department and the Foundation Department of Sohar University requesting authorization to conduct the questionnaire among their faculty. Once all the approvals had been given by all the officials, the ESL/EFL instructors were informed about the questionnaire by email (see appendix F). They were also told about the aim of the research. Subsequently, the instructors at University of Buraimi and Al-Buraimi University College received hard copies of the questionnaires, while their peers at Sohar University initially got them by email. However, because only one instructor from Sohar University responded via email, the researcher had to go and distribute the questionnaires in person. Although everybody was given approximately one week to send back the questionnaires with their answers, due to their busy schedules, it took more than two weeks to collect all of the questionnaires from the respondents.

3.4.2. Semi-Structured Interviews

As previously indicated, semi-structured interviews were conducted both at Al-Burami University College and at University of Buraimi with the express permission of the Director of the Foundation Program at University of Buraimi and the dean of Al-Buraimi Univeristy College. The consent letters of the interviews were given along with the questionnaire (see appendix G) . All the participants signed the consent letters, and each interview was assigned a letter code before the data was analyzed to ensure anonymity and confidentiality.

At Al-Buraimi University College, seven volunteers agreed to be interviewed. The interviews were conducted at different times at Al-Buraimi University College.

At University of Buraimi, the interviews were held on a Thursday because this is the weekday when all ESL/EFL instructors are free from teaching duties. Eight volunteers agreed to be interviewed, and all of the interviews were conducted on the same day. They took approximately 10-15 minutes each. The researcher asked the questions and took a lot of notes as the ESL/EFL instructors spoke. Also, from the ESL/EFL instructors answers, there were questions raised like why they prefer portfolios in their assessment etc.

3.4.3. Classroom Observations

After the Dean of Al-Buraimi University College had granted permission for classes to be observed, the instructors were sent an observation letter (see appendix H) explaining the objectives of the class observations. Ten of them volunteered to be observed during writing classes. When a mutually suitable time for each observation had been found, the class observations took place. The researcher took a lot of notes

during the observations. Subsequently, the researcher talked to the 8 instructors face to face about the class that she had observed. Two of the instructors were contacted by email (see appendix I) because it was difficult to arrange a meeting. Every week, one class was observed. Then, when two weeks had passed, the same class was observed one more time.

3.5. Data Analysis

3.5.1. A questionnaire

The data provided by the questionnaires was analyzed by using SPSS (Statistical Package for the social Sciences), Version 21. Each item was given an alphabetical code, and each sub-item received the same letter plus a number. After that, the codes were entered in SPSS, a sheet for each item and its sub-items. Subsequently, the program generated the figures for the means and the standard deviation. Then, all the means of the items in each section of the questionnaires were organized in ascending order, and all items were inputted into tables. This helped to determine the most common strategies which instructors believe in, as well to which extent their opinions differ.

3.5.2. Semi-Structured Interviews

The Grounded Theory methodology is an analytic approach that is used in the analysis of qualitative data. It is based on a coding system and comparative analysis to identify themes that come from the data collected. Therefore, the data analysis began with an open coding process to have themes (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

The interviews were analyzed according to the Grounded Theory as explained above. After reading all the notes, ideas which were repeated were categorized into shared themes between the interviewees. The ideas were assigned codes before they were categorized into themes; the interviewees, too, were encoded alphabetically. The themes were determined in function of their use of the process- and product-oriented approaches, that is, taking into account e.g. to which extent they encouraged group or individual work, what type of assessment they favored, what kind of rubrics they applied, or which criteria they followed to evaluate students' writing. (see appendix J) Once that was done, comparisons were made between different participants based on the pre-established themes. Thus, it was relatively simple to ascertain whether their perceptions matched the questionnaire answers by collecting how many ESL/EFL instructors agreed with each theme and comparing them with the questionnaire results.

3.5.3. Classroom Observations

The researcher studied the data gathered during the class observations in the same way as she had done with the data from the questionnaires and interviews: by means of encoding and comparative analysis. The themes were established in terms of their process or product orientation, or of their combination of both; whether the instructors had the students work alone, in pairs, in groups, of in all these ways; whether portfolios were used to assess students' writing or whether the evaluation focused on writing a paragraph, a whole essay, or a project using rubrics; whether the assessment was holistic or analytic, or a combination of both; whether grading focused on Ideas/content, grammar, content and Grammar, handwriting and punctuation, or vocabulary (see appendix K).

Subsequently, the researcher elucidated how many ESL/EFL instructors agreed on each theme and compared the results from this analysis with those of the analysis of the questionnaires and the interviews.

3.6. Ethical issues

Many issues were taken into consideration in the study. Two of the main ones were: respect for the participants and confidentiality. That is why each one of the interventions was preceded by a request for the informed consent of those involved. Moreover, all of the participants volunteered of their own accord. By encoding all of the responses before the data was analyzed so that their names would be kept out of the equation, confidentiality —together with impartiality— was safeguarded.

3.7. Summary

This chapter described the methodology of this study. As explained above, this research project was based on a questionnaire, 15 interviews, and 18 classroom observations. In addition, to be ethical, the autonomy of the participants and their anonymity were preserved throughout the research. Finally, the analysis was done by classifying the data into themes and then comparing the partial findings to elicit the existence of agreement or disagreement, match or mismatch in them.

Chapter 4: Results

4.1. Overview

This chapter presents the descriptive and qualitative results gathered from the questionnaire, interviews, and classroom observations meant to provide answers concerning the perceptions of ESL/EFL instructors of the teaching and assessment of ESL/EFL academic writing at University of Buraimi, Al-Buraimi University College, and Sohar University in Oman. The main research questions were:

- What are the ESL/EFL instructors' perceptions regarding the strategies used for teaching students' academic writing?

- What are the ESL/ EFL instructors' perceptions regarding the strategies used for assessing students' academic writing?

- Is there any variation between instructors' perceptions of teaching strategies, assessments strategies, and their actual practices?

This chapter first presents the questionnaire results divided into two sections: ESL/EFL instructors' perceptions regarding the strategies used for teaching ESL/EFL academic writing and ESL/EFL instructors' perceptions regarding the strategies used for assessing ESL/EFL academic writing. Then, the results from the classroom observations will be displayed to see whether there are differences between the questionnaires and interviews results and what was observed in class, which is connected with the third research question.

4.2. Results from the Questionnaire

4.2.1. Section 1

ESL/EFL instructors' perceptions regarding the strategies used for teaching ESL/EFL academic writing

Descriptive statistics were employed in order to investigate ESL/EFL instructors' perceptions regarding the strategies they believe in for teaching academic writing. The data was reported by calculating the Mean and the Standard Deviation ranked from highest to lowest. The writing strategy that got more Mean, the more ESL/EFL instructors believed in.

The questionnaires revealed that they are four main writing strategies that ESL/EFL instructors particularly believe in for teaching academic writing. Many ESL/EFL instructors believe in teaching vocabulary that students may use in their assigned writing with a high mean (M=4.54) (SD=.599), equally they believe in teaching students different genres and/or texts (M=4.54) (SD=.685). Other common strategies that ESL/EFL instructors agreed on were: generating ideas about the assigned topic before the start of the task (M=4.52) (SD=.725) and asking students to make a prewriting plan (M=4.52) (SD=.734). On the other hand, the lowest mean (M=3.06) (SD=1.055) was scored by the idea of giving students time to write only one draft.

In general, the overall mean of the product-oriented strategies is (4.24), which was higher than the overall mean of the process-oriented strategies (3.99) (see table 5). For example, ESL/ EFL instructors are very convinced of the benefits inherent in asking students to use the skills, structures, and vocabularies which they have learned

to (re-)produce by writing similar texts independently (M=4.51) (SD=.666). They believe more in giving students text models relevant to the same writing assignment (M=4.31) (SD=.710) than in giving them a chance to use different aspects of grammar, vocabularies etc. (M=4.29) (SD=.742)

However, one product-centered strategy that ESL /EFL instructors do not strongly believe in is giving students time to write only one draft (M=3.06) (SD=1.055). On the contrary, they are more in favor of giving students time to write multi drafts (M=3.90) (SD=.975). The results in table 1 show that all strategies get high means.

Table 5: Mean and Standard Deviation of the ESL/EFL instructors' perceptions regarding classroom strategies for teaching academic writing.

Classroom Strategies for Teaching Writing	Type of approach	Mean	Standard Deviation
B.1 I teach vocabularies that students may use in their assigned writing.	Product	4.54	.599
B.3 I teach students different types of genres and / or texts.	Product	4.54	.685
B.11 I generate with students some ideas about the assigned topic.	Process	4.52	.725
B.10 I ask students to make a prewriting plan.	Process	4.52	.734
B.13 I ask students to use the skills, structures, and vocabularies they have learned to produce similar writing texts independently.	Product	4.51	.666
B.7 I edit some pieces of writing with students to show common mistakes in writing.	Product	4.45	.714
B.8 I ask students to highlight the important ideas/points of the essay.	Product	4.41	.757
B.2 I focus on the features that make the piece of writing interesting.	Product	4.40	.709
B.9 I give students exercises to organize ideas of scrambled events of a story or a text.	Product	4.34	.697
B.4 I give students text models relevant to the same assigned writing.	Product	4.31	.710

B.14 I give students a chance to use different aspects of grammar, vocabularies etc.	Process	4.29	.742
B.6 I give students short sentences to join by using connectors and transition words.	Product	4.24	.755
B.5 I give students jumbled sentences to rearrange in the correct order.	Product	4.22	.707
B.19 I ask students to proof read their own final draft.	Process	4.08	.903
B.21 I give students free writing.	Product	3.96	.851
B.15 I give students time to write multi drafts.	Process	3.90	.975
B.22 I ask students to write about a particular topic in pairs or groups.	Process	3.87	1.009
B.17 I ask students to edit their own writing.	Process	3.84	.973
B.18 I ask students to edit each other writing.	Process	3.82	.884
B.12 I give students the chance to think-aloud while they are writing.	Process	3.78	.935
B.20 I ask students to proof read the final draft of a partner.	Process	3.77	.951
B.23 I publish students' writing in a school's magazine.	Process	3.58	1.091
B.16 I give students time to write only one draft.	Product	3.06	1.055
	↑ Overall= 4.12 Process overall=3.99 Product overall= 4.24		

4.2.2. Section 2

ESL/EFL instructors' perceptions regarding the strategies used for assessing ESL/EFL academic writing

   To assess ESL/EFL students' academic writing, the instructors indicated different items, like types of assessments, tools for scoring, and writing evaluation criteria. The following three tables (6, 7, and 8) show these items.

There are many types of assessments in academic writing, but table 6 shows some major types. The highest rank belongs to individual writing projects, its mean being 4.29 and the standard deviation being .682. On the other hand, the lowest rank belongs to group writing projects, whose mean was 3.76 and its standard deviation was .995.

In general, the four assessments that get the highest means are individual writing projects (M=4.29) (SD=.682), tests (writing essays/paragraphs) (M= 4.24) (SD= .682), portfolios (M=4.07) (SD=.912) and self-assessments (M=4.03) (SD=.702). Also, ESL/EFL instructors believe less in multiple choice tests (M= 4.02) (SD= .1.030) compared to writing essays/paragraphs tests (M= 4.24) (SD= .682). In short, table 6 reveals that the overall mean of all types of assessments is high (M= 4.05).

Table 6: Mean and Standard Deviation of the ESL/EFL instructors' perceptions regarding types of writing assessment (N = 147)

Types of Assessments in Writing	Mean	Std. Deviation
C.2 Individual writing projects	4.29	.682
C.7 Tests: writing essays/paragraphs	4.24	.678
C.5 Portfolios	4.07	.912
C.3 Self-assessment	4.03	.702
C.6 Tests: multiple choice	4.02	1.030
C.4 Peer assessment	3.95	.762
C.1 Group writing projects	3.76	.995
	Total = 4.05	

Rubrics are scoring tools that represent the performance of students' written work. Table 7 reveals ESL/ESL instructors' perceptions regarding the analytic and holistic rubrics. Table 7 shows that ESL/EFL instructors believe equally in both rubrics as both rubrics have the same mean value (M=4.05)

Table 7: Mean and Standard Deviation of the ESL/EFL instructors' perceptions
regarding Analytic and Holistic Rubrics (N = 147)

Scoring Procedures for Assessing Writing	Mean	Standard Deviation
D1. I use Holistic rubrics	4.05	.878
D2. I use Analytic rubrics	4.05	.676
	Total = 4.05	

To evaluate ESL/EFL students' academic writing, ESL/EFL instructors believe in different criteria. Table 8 shows that the highest rank belongs to content (M= 4.58) (SD=.522) while the lowest rank belongs to the plan (M= 4.06) (SD= 870.) Also, the table 8 shows that the mechanics and grammar get less mean value (M=4.41) compare to content. In addition, the table 4 represents a high overall mean of all writing evaluation criteria (M= 4.37).

Table 8: Mean and Standard Deviation of the ESL/EFL language instructors' perceptions regarding the Writing Evaluation Criteria (N=147)

Writing Evaluation Criteria	Mean	Standard Deviation
E.1 I assess: Content: Introduction (clear purpose), supporting sentences with examples, conclusion (restated points from earlier paragraphs etc.	4.58	.522
E.3 I assess: Organization : flow of thought, ideas/paragraphs, transitions, format, coherence, etc.	4.50	.566
E.5 I assess: Mechanics: spelling, punctuation, etc.	4.41	.534
E.4 I assess: Grammar: sentence structure, subjects, verb-agreement, etc.	4.41	.618
E.2 I assess: Vocabulary: high level vocabulary, effective and engaging use of word choice, etc.	4.31	.569
E.6 I assess: The plan (the outline)	4.06	.870
	Total=4.37	

4.3. Results from the Interviews

The qualitative results from the 15 interviews show that the ESL/EFL instructors involved had different views regarding the strategies for teaching and assessing EFL/EFL academic writing, albeit some of them agreed on some ideas.

4.3.1. Section 1

ESL/EFL instructors' perceptions regarding writing approaches and teaching styles in ESL/EFL writing classes

Eleven of the instructors believe in the benefits of combining process- and product-oriented approaches in teaching writing, while four of them believe more in process-centered alternatives. On the other hand, none of ESL/EFL believes that the product-oriented approach is the only beneficial approach in teaching writing to ESL/EFL students.

In addition, nine of the instructors believe that academic writing should be taught by means of a combination of group and individual work. However, there were five who believe that individual work should be given absolute priority. Finally, there was only one who believes that writing should be done predominantly in groups.

4.3.2. Section 2

ESL/EFL instructors' perceptions regarding the strategies used for assessing ESL/EFL academic writing

The interviews showed that the participants believe in portfolios (7) and essay writing (7) as tools to assess students' academic writing. There was only one instructor who believes in giving projects to (Omani) ESL/EFL students.

In addition, the interview results show that the majority of instructors (9) believe in the combination of holistic and analytic rubrics for assessing writing. Moreover, some of them (6) think that holistic rubrics are better suited to a large part of the student population than analytic ones.

Finally, ESL/EFL instructors (8) believe that content is the first element that students should be assessed on, and then the other features, such as grammar (4), vocabulary (2), handwriting, and punctuation (1).

4.4. Classroom Observation Results

Classroom observation results showed that there was no consistency in the instructors' use of a specific approach in their writing classes. However, most ESL/EFL instructors (6) practiced a combination of process- and product-focused approaches. For example, the instructors started teaching vocabulary and some reading passages. Then, they showed some models of what was expected of them. After that, they asked students to work in groups. The instructors explained the assigned topic, and then asked the students to make a pre-writing plan. Subsequently, they wrote and edited their own writing. Students were also given a chance to rewrite their texts before handing them in to their instructor for a first quick look. After that, they were asked to write one draft each and submit it.

However, there were a couple of instructors (2) who used only product-oriented strategies, like asking students to imitate a model which was given in their books. Also, students produced only one draft.

Nevertheless, there were another couple of instructors (2) who used exclusively process-oriented teaching strategies, like a prewriting plan and multiple drafts.

The class observations also showed that (5) of ESL/EFL instructors practiced writing as individual work while 3 of ESL/EFL instructors practiced writing as group work. Two used a combination of individual and group work.

It was difficult to notice all types of assessments, rubrics, evaluation criteria being used by the instructors in the classroom, so the researcher asked them about these issues, which she combined with her own observations. Most ESL/EFL instructors (8) used both written tasks as well as portfolios to assess their students' writing. Only two instructors preferred to do that through projects.

Nine instructors were observed using a holistic rubric, while only one opted for a combination of analytic and holistic rubrics. None of them used exclusively analytic rubrics.

In addition, most instructors (5) focused both on the content and the grammar when they assessed their students' writing. There were just a couple (2) who looked into handwriting and punctuation, too, and only one (1) who did so into vocabulary. Beside, only one of the instructors paid attention mostly to the content, and also only one of them zoomed in explicitly on grammar.

4.5. Summary

The data gathered through questionnaires, interviews, and classroom observations visits results indicates that the majority of ESL/EFL instructors subscribes to and practices aspects of the process- and product-oriented approaches for teaching academic writing in Oman. Also, the instructors do not only believe in portfolios and written essays as tools to assess students writing, but they also practice that in their classroom. In addition, the participants showed their belief and confidence in the combination of analytic and holistic rubrics to assess academic writing in Oman, and most of them do accordingly in their classes. Finally, the participants believe in assessing content as the first criterion to evaluate students' writing. It was clear that they do not view content in isolation, however. They tended to evaluate both content and grammar together in their actual performance.

Chapter 5: Discussion of the Research Findings

The goal of this research was to explore the ESL/EFL instructors' perceptions and actual practices in the area of teaching and assessing academic writing in three Omani institutes of Higher Education, namely Al-Buraimi University College, University of Buraimi, and Sohar University. To answer the research question, a questionnaire, 15 interviews, and 18 class observations visits were carefully planned and respectfully executed. The data gathered during the research has already been laid out. In the current chapter, an interpretation will be ventured of the results from this research project in the light of the relevant literature. Also, recommendations will be made for ESL/EFL instructors, higher education institutions, and researchers dealing with ESL/EFL in Oman.

5.1. Section 1

ESL/EFL instructors' perceptions regarding the strategies used for teaching ESL/EFL academic writing

The first part of the questionnaire was about the ESL/EFL instructors' perceptions of some strategies that originate in process- and product-oriented pedagogies. The descriptive statistics of the means showed that the strategies that got the highest means were: teaching vocabularies which students must use in their assigned writing (M=4.54) (SD=.599) and teaching students different types of genres and/or texts (M=4.54) (SD=.685). The second most important strategies were: generating ideas about the assigned topic (M=4.52) (SD=.725) and asking students to make a pre-

writing plan (M=4.52) (SD=.734). These strategies were the ones most favored as beneficial by the instructors.

The ESL/EFL instructors maybe believed more in these strategies because they thought that they could improve the quality of students' writing. Also, the instructors may have based their perceptions on theories. Their beliefs represent what Krashen (2009) indicated, i.e. that writing quality could be improved through flexible planning. Also, he stated that learners can achieve competence in writing through reading. Moreover, Raymond (2005) defined that scaffolding instruction is the role of teachers and others to develop and support the learning process and to help learners to get from one level to another. In addition, Read (2010) pointed out that students will write independently when they become familiar with the topics during the inquiry phase. Also, she pointed out that the modeling of the whole writing process can help students to learn how to accomplish their writing task.

In general, all strategies got high means, which indicates that the instructors believed in all strategies that come out from the process- and product-centered pedagogies, but they believed in some strategies more or less than in others. For example, they believed more in asking students to use the skills, structures, and vocabularies which they had learned to produce similar texts independently (M=4.51) (SD=.666). Furthermore, they believed in giving students textual models relevant to the writing assignments (M=4.31) (SD=.710) than giving students a chance to use different aspects of grammar, vocabularies, etc. (M=4.29) (SD=.742) These beliefs are supported by Badger and White (2000), Myles (2002), and Shortall (2006). Their point of views is that learners learn from imitation and models to be less persistent in their errors, to acquire knowledge of linguistic features, to analyze

and explore texts, and to practice new forms. This would bring students to the ultimate level of proficiency.

However, one strategy that the participating instructors do not seem to consider beneficial is to give students time to write only one draft (M=3.06) (SD=1.055). On the contrary, they believe more in that process-centered strategy of giving students time to write multiple drafts (M=3.90) (SD=.975). This supported Stanley's view (2003) that feedback is useful between drafts, but not as in the product-based process where students hand their final draft to be marked without knowing what kind of feedback they will get. Such lack of knowledge of what to expect does not help students to learn from their mistakes. However, Onozawa (2010) has also pointed out that the process-oriented approach is not always practical because it requires multiple drafts, and that will not prepare students for the real-life exam situation of having to write one final text (no drafts). Consequently, ESL/EFL instructors need to give students time to write one draft, but also teach them by means of multiple drafts. This would help students to improve their writing as well as to be ready for their written exams.

The results from the interviews and the questionnaire showed that the majority of the participants believed in the combination of process and product approaches in teaching writing, and none of them believed that product alone should be given central place in their teaching. One of the ESL/EFL instructors mentioned that "when the process writing approach is used, it's basically steps of writing, the first draft, then editing to get a final draft, hence accuracy is also a part of the focus of this type of writing. I think the process-product writing method is better for our students."

Another one said that "I think both approaches are important because academic writing requires fluency and accuracy."

The literature review also provided support for combining process- and product-oriented strategies in teaching writing (Hasan & Akhand, 2010). On the other hand, there are many studies that have been done to know whether the process approach is the best one in the ESL/EFL teaching of writing. Hashemnezhad & Hashemnezhad (2012), Alodwan & Ibnian (2014), Al Seyabi & Tuzlukova (2014), and Zhou (2015) showed the effectiveness of process-centered strategies in teaching ESL/EFL writing in higher education. Nonetheless, Thulasi, Ismail, & Salam (2015) showed also that giving models for writing has a positive impact on the students' output.

One of the main issues that relates to both product and process approaches is whether writing should be seen an individual task or group work. Steele (2004) indicated that process writing is a cooperative endeavor, even though the product is usually a number of single texts. If individual and group writing tasks are combined, both the process and the product can be highlighted and reinforced. This idea is seen in the results from the interviews. The majority of the participants believe that writing can be taught best by combining group and individual work. Few instructors believed that writing should be approached as a purely individual activity. On the contrary, only one instructor believed that writing must always be done in groups. One of EFL instructor indicated that "each individual student must be able to write independently after all the process of writing. At the initial stage, like brainstorm and planning, it can be group work, but at the end, it must lead to an individual piece of work written by each student separately." However, this contradicts an Omani study that has been done by Ali (2012) which found that teachers and students were in

favor of group work, although they believed that the quality of individually written reports is better.

5.2. Section 2

ESL/EFL instructors' perceptions regarding the strategies used for assessing ESL/EFL academic writing

The second section of the questionnaire was about the participants' perceptions of the assessment tools. Four ways of assessing students that scored the highest were: individual writing projects (M=4.29) (SD=.682), tests (writing essays/paragraphs) (M= 4.24) (SD= .682), portfolios (M=4.07) (SD=.912), and self-assessment strategies (M=4.03) (SD=.702). Also, the results showed that the overall mean of all the types of assessments was high (M= 4.05). That means that the participating instructors believe in all these alternatives as evaluation tools, but they still prefer one over the other. For example, they believe less in multiple choice tests (M= 4.02) (SD= .1.030) compared to writing essays/paragraphs (M= 4.24) (SD= .682)

The results obtained from the analysis of the interviews supported the conclusions drawn from the questionnaires. This group of instructors believe more in portfolios and essays than in multiple choice tests as ways to assess students' writing. One of the instructors worded it exactly in the same words: "portfolios and writing essays are the best tools to assess students' writing." Another one said that "portfolios are a combination of product and process assessments;" this concurs with Brown & Abeywickrama (2004), who pointed out that portfolios can contain different resources of students' writing, like essays and self- and peer assessments. This is also supported by research conducted by Nezakatgoo (2011), Tabatabaei & Assefi

(2012) Sabooni & Salehi (2015) Sharifi & Hassaskhah (2011), and Al-Qadi & Smadi (2014). Their studies also showed that portfolios are one of main assessment tools to coach students in their writing.

The third section of the questionnaire was about the instructors' perceptions of the two main types of rubrics: holistic and analytic. The participants believe equally in both types, as they obtained the same mean value (M=4.05). Also, the analysis of the interviews indicated that the majority of the instructors believes in the combination of holistic and analytic rubrics for assessing students' academic writing. One of them said that "integration is good". The literature review showed that both kinds of rubrics have advantages and disadvantages; integration can therefore be useful to make up for the limitations of each one of the approaches. For example, a holistic rubric "requires the teacher to score the overall process or product as a whole, without judging the component parts separately" (Mertler& Craig, 2001, p.1). On the other hand, an analytic rubric requires the teacher to evaluate each part of the product or performance and then the teacher could sum the scores of each element to obtain the total score (Moskal, 2000; Nitko, 2001). Having one score would be problematic for second language writers because the different aspects of writing would be developed at different rates. As a result, the analytic rubric would be helpful since it would distinguish between various aspects of students' writing (Park, 2008). Moreover, some of the instructors think that holistic rubrics are more expedient than analytic ones. This supported Wiggle's idea (2002) that holistic rubrics are the most convenient and practical scales when the writing courses are full of students and their teachers have allocated time to finish their syllabus.

The fourth section of the questionnaire was about the respondents' perceptions of the criteria for evaluating writing. The findings of the questionnaires and interviews showed that the instructors believe in a combination of criteria: content, organization, mechanics, grammar, vocabulary, and the plan. At the same time, they believe that content (M= 4.58) (SD=.522) is the most important element on which students should be assessed. Other features, like grammar or spelling, come second, third, etc. Moreover, one of the instructors explained: "I evaluate students on the content once I see their writing papers." This supported Reid's view (2001) that teachers often neglect accuracy in the writing classroom, and that they rather focus on making their students fluent in writing.

5.3. Section 3

The similarities and differences between instructors' perceptions of writing strategies, assessments strategies and their actual performance

The results from the classroom observations showed slight differences from the other interventions and a lot of similarities between the instructors' perceptions of teaching and assessment strategies and their actual practices. The similarities were that most of the participants practiced a combination of process- and product-oriented strategies in their writing classes. They taught vocabulary and some reading passages that included model texts from native speaker. Also, they asked students to write a plan. In addition, they sometimes used single drafts, and sometimes multiple drafts. In other words, the participants did not fully use all the stages either of the process-oriented or the product-centered approach. They combined elements from

both. Also, most of the participating instructors used individual pieces of writing as well as portfolios as assessment tools.

The above means that in the case of these ESL/EFL teachers, as seen in the questionnaires, interviews, and observations, strategies and assessment tools from different schools go hand in hand.

In addition, although the questionnaires and the interviews suggested that most of the participants believe that writing can be both an individual and a group endeavor, the class observations showed that what they practiced is totally different. They mostly give precedence to writing as individual work. Probably, they favor individual over group work because they know that students will have to write alone on their exams. This is supported by Gulikers, Bastiaens & Kirschner (2004): "To meet the goals of education, a constructive alignment between instruction, learning and assessment" (p.67).

Although most of the participants believed in the integration of holistic and analytic rubrics, the majority only used holistic ones. This maybe because of the large number of students in their classrooms (in some cases, there were 30 students per classroom). Also, the instructors wanted to cover the whole syllabus before the exam. On top of that, they also had more than one writing class to teach (each with their own essays to mark). It is the researcher's hypothesis that these factors sometimes make ESL/EFL instructors do the opposite of what they believe in. This suggestion is supported by Wiggle (2002), who argued that it is practical to use holistic rubrics with large classes.

Furthermore, the results from the class observations showed that most ESL/EFL instructors focused on both the content and the grammar when they assessed

students' writing, even though most of them had expressed the belief that the content is the first important to be looked into and assessed. This may have been due to instructors' awareness the weaknesses of their students. So they focus on content because they know that if they mark their writing based on their language, only a few of the students would get respectable scores. On the other hand, Reid's theory (2001) supports the practice of the participants whereby accuracy and fluency are placed side by side, as equally important and mutually beneficial.

5.4 Summary

The instructors that took part in this study showed that their ideas, to some extent, were reflected in their actual practices. They believed and practiced a combination of process-oriented and product-centered strategies in their teaching (e.g. brainstorming, teaching vocabulary, writing one draft or writing multiple drafts, providing students with native models of writing). They also believed in and used portfolios and other writing tasks as assessment tools for ESL/EFL students.

On the other hand, their belief was at times contradicted by their practice. This was visible especially in the role and place allotted to writing in groups and the usual strategies associated with it, such as peer assessment. By concentrating on individual writing tasks, the instructor lost chances to help their students learn from each other and, thus, enhance their own meta-cognitive skills. The participants knew that writing should be done best alone and with peers, yet they privileged individual work over work in group. In that, they were re-enacting the traditional patterns.

Also, although the participating instructors believed in both analytic and holistic evaluation rubrics, when they had to assess pieces of writing in class, they opted for

holistic criteria. As already suggested, they must have done this because analytic rubrics are much more time consuming.

Finally, the participating ESL/EFL instructors focused on the content and grammar when they had their students write, although they believed that the content should be given a privileged position in every writing assessment. This tendency was at times mitigated by over-emphasizing ideas and playing down grammar, spelling, or punctuation. Whenever the teachers thought of the Ministry's learning outcomes for college students, they put correctness before creativity. However, whenever they became aware of most students' low levels of proficiency in English, they made ideas the overarching criterion of marking.

5.5 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations can be made.

The first is related to the ESL/EFL instructors themselves. They should always base their choices of writing strategies on students' needs. In the case of Oman, this means that instructors must strike a balance between (a) the very objective need of the students to meet the learning outcomes set by the Omani Accreditation Association (because scholarships depend on it) and (b) the higher goal of helping the students to communicate in English not only effectively but also creatively. One way to do this is by replacing, whenever possible, the traditional written exams (individual work) with creative writing projects (in groups).

The second set of recommendations is addressed to the Omani institutions of Higher Education. In the case of writing classes, every effort should be made to keep the classes manageable, if not small. Teaching writing is a tiring and complex task.

When classes are large, instructors cannot regularly opt for process-oriented strategies. For example, if students were to produce multiple drafts of every piece of writing they must hand in for correction, teachers would never be done marking and coaching.

The third recommendation has to do with standards. The learning outcomes must not only be idealistic, they must also be realistic. The standards set for evaluation must be reachable for the ESL/EFL students found in Omani colleges and universities. They must be challenging without being off-putting. Replacing the traditional exams with more creative and authentic pieces of writing would be a step in the right direction.

The penultimate set of suggestions is related to Omani researchers. There is a need for studies in the following areas:

- The fluency—accuracy binary relationship in ESL/EFL writing

- Enhancing writing skills through both individual and group work

- The mismatch between secondary schools outputs and college requirements in the area of ESL/EFL writing

- The effectiveness of the combination of process-product strategies as a way to teaching ESL/EFL writing effectively and in learner-centered ways

- The effect of gender, qualification, and years of experience of the ESL/EFL instructors on their teaching of writing courses

Finally, Omani researchers —spearheaded by Sultan Qaboos University— should set up a national, updated and comprehensive database for Omani Studies, including

ESL/EFL. The researcher hopes that the findings of this study will be useful to others

and be part of the above-mentioned database.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Names of Jurors of the questionnaire

Name	Position
Dr. Ali Ibrahim	Prof of Ed, UAE University
Dr. Christopher Morrow	Assistant Prof of Ed, UAE University
Dr. Mohamad Shaban	Associate Prof of Ed, UAE University
Dr. Abdurrahman G. Almekhlafi	Associate Prof. of Ed. Technology, UAE University
Dr. Rana Alneimi	English instructor at BUC
Miss Saila Mannan	English instructor at BUC
Miss Sadia Jabeen	English instructor at BUC

Appendix B: The latest Version of the Questionnaire

Dear Colleague,

I am a master degree student at the UAE University. I am conducting a research study to investigate teachers' perceptions and their actual performance toward teaching and assessing EFL students' writing. Your responses will be very confidential as all results will be reported in the thesis in general terms without releasing the identity of any respondent. The results from this study will only be used for academic purposes. This questionnaire may only take between 5 to 8 minutes to answer. The researcher appreciates very much your participation and cooperation.

Noura Al-Azani

Master candidate, UAE University

English instructor, Al-Buraimi University College

noura@buc.edu.om

Demographic information

Direction: Please check (√) one of the following choices for each question:

1.   College and/or University:

☐ Sohar University   ☐ University of Buraimi

☐ Al-Buraimi University College   ☐ Other

2.   Educational Qualifications:

☐ BA   ☐ PhD

☐ MA   ☐ Other

3.   Teaching Experience (in years)

☐ 1—5   ☐ more than 10

☐ 6—10

4.   Gender:

☐ Male   ☐ Female

Direction:

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following. Tick **only one answer** for each question.

No	Item	Responses				
	Classroom Strategies in Teaching Writing	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
		5	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
1	I teach vocabularies that students may use in their assigned writing.					
2	I focus on the features that make the piece of writing interesting.					
3	I teach students different types of genres and / or texts.					
4	I give students text models relevant to the same assigned writing.					
5	I give students jumbled sentences to rearrange in the correct order.					
6	I give students short sentences to join by using connectors and transition words.					
7	I edit some pieces of writing with students to show common mistakes in writing.					
8	I ask students to highlight the important ideas/points of the essay.					
9	I give students exercises to organize ideas of scrambled events of a story or a text.					
10	I ask students to make a prewriting plan.					
11	I generate with students some ideas about the assigned topic.					
12	I give students the chance to think-aloud while they are writing.					

13	I ask students to use the skills, structures, and vocabularies they have learned to produce similar writing texts independently.					
14	I give students a chance to use different aspects of grammar, vocabularies etc.					
15	I give students time to write multi drafts.					
16	I give students time to write only one draft.					
17	I ask students to edit their own writing.					
18	I ask students to edit each other writing.					
19	I ask students to proof read their own final draft.					
20	I ask students to proof read the final draft of a partner.					
21	I give students free writing.					
22	I ask students to write about a particular topic in pairs or groups.					
23	I publish students' writing in a school's magazine.					

Appendix C: Semi Structured Interview Questions

Interview Questions with the ESL/EFL instructor

1- Tell me about yourself in brief. (How long have you been teaching in Oman?)

2- What are the challenges you are facing as an EFL teacher at Al-Buraimi University College?

3- What procedures do you usually use for teaching writing?

4- Do you think that EFL instructors have to focus on the accuracy or the process of writing?

5- Writing is seen an individual work. What do you think?

6- What kind of assessment tools do you use for your students?

Appendix D: Rubrics

Task 4: Rating scale for Paragraph Writing	
Band Descriptors	
- Task is completed successfully, in a lively, interesting way. - Writing is clear, well-organized and coherent. - Wide range of structures and vocabulary. - Very few language errors	11-12
- Task is carried out with reasonable success. - Some lapses in clarity and coherence. - Adequate range of structures and vocabulary, but nothing more - Several noticeable language errors, occasionally obscuring meaning.	9-10
- Task carried out with only limited success. - Writing is sometimes unclear and lacking in coherence. - Limited range of structures and vocabulary. - Frequent language errors, sometimes obscuring meaning.	7-8
- An adequate attempt at task, with obvious omissions, incompleteness or irrelevance. - Writing is unclear and obviously lacks coherence. - Very limited range of structures and vocabulary. - Frequent basic language errors.	4-6
- A very feeble attempt at the task. - Very little relevant content.	1-3

• Language used is extremely limited and/or seriously distorted.	
• No attempt at the task. • EITHER irrelevant. (Not related to the task) • OR NO writing at all, or not written in English. • OR Complete nonsense. • OR Copied the instruction.	0

Student name: _____

	Need Improvement(1)	Fair (2)	Good (3)	Excellent (4)
Ideas/ content				
Organization				
Grammar				
Spelling				
Punctuation				

Comments/

Total:

Appendix E : Letter to the Deans

Letter to Study Site Dean

Dear Dean,

My name is Noura Al-Azani. I am a master degree student at the UAE University. I am writing to ask for your permission to conduct a survey and interview a few English instructors in your institution for my master thesis. The purpose of my study is to investigate teachers' perceptions and their actual performance toward teaching and assessing EFL students' writing. The EFL classes will not be interrupted in any way. Please do not hesitate to contact my thesis supervisor, Dr.SadiqAbdulwahed Ahmed at 00971 3 713 6258, or e-email him at Isadiq@uaeu.ac.ae if you have any question. You can also contact me at 0096897733395, or e-mail me at noura@buc.edu.om.

Thank you for your consideration of my request.

Yours Faithfully,

Noura Al-Azani

Master candidate, UAE University

English instructor, Al-Buraimi University College

Appendix F: Email Sent to ESL/EFL Instructors

I would like to distribute a questionnaire which is required for my thesis research that aims to investigate teachers' perceptions and their actual practices toward teaching and assessing EFL students' writing. I would like to distribute the questionnaire tomorrow and collect it myself on the coming Sunday.

Your time and help would greatly be appreciated.

Best Regards

Sincerely,

Noura-Al-Azani, Master Candidate,UAE University
English instructor, Al-Buraimi University
UFP

Appendix G: Consent Letter for the Interviews

Informed Consent Letter for Participants

ESL/EFL instructor's interview

Dear Participating Teacher,

I am a master degree student at the UAE University. My research aims to investigate teachers' perceptions and their actual performance toward teaching and assessing EFL students' writing. Having an interview with you would give the researcher many ideas about your perceptions in teaching and assessing EFL classrooms' writing. The gathered information will be kept confidential and personal anonymity will be maintained. Let me also assure you that this research is not meant to cause you any professional embarrassment.

Participant   Name: _____   Date: _____

Participant Signature: _____

Interview date: _____

Sincerely,

Noura Al-Azani, Master candidate

English instructor, Al-Buraimi University College

noura@buc.edu.om

Appendix H : Observation Letter

Informed Consent Letter for Participants

ESL/EFL instructor's observation

Dear Participating Teacher,

I am a master degree student at the UAE University. My research aims to investigate teachers' perceptions and their actual performance toward teaching and assessing EFL students' writing. Conducting classroom observations would give the researcher many ideas about the real practices in writing classrooms. The gathered information will be kept confidential and personal anonymity will be maintained. Let me also assure you that this research is not meant to cause you any professional embarrassment.

Participant   Name: _____   **Date:** _____

Participant Signature: _____

Observation date: _____

Sincerely,

Noura Al-Azani, Master candidate

English instructor, Al-Buraimi University College

noura@buc.edu.om

0096897733395

Appendix I :   Email for Class Observations

I would like to ask you which day is suitable for you?

Your time and help would greatly be appreciated.

Best Regards

Sincerely,

Noura-Al-Azani, Master Candidate,UAE University
English instructor, Al-Buraimi University
UFP

Dear Noura Al- Azani

Sorry for the belated reply. I had an accident on 26th November and I have been held up with that, so I couldn't see your email. Let me finish your questionnaire. There is one class at 3.30 today in room 206.

Appendix J: Analysis of the Interviews

Number of ESL/EFL instructors who believe in the following themes (N=15)

Themes	Number of ESL/EFL instructors
Product	-
Process	4
Combination of both process and product	11
Group work	1
Individual work	4
Group and individual work	9
Portfolios	7
writing a paragraph / writing an essay	7
Projects	1
Holistic	6
Analytic	-
Combination of holistic and analytic	9
Ideas/content	8
Grammar	4
Handwriting & punctuation	2
Vocabulary	1

Appendix K: Analysis of the Classroom Observations

Themes	Number of ESL/EFL instructors
Product	2
Process	2
Combination of both process and product	6
Group work	3
Individual work	5
Group and individual work	2
Portfolios/ written work	8
Projects	2
Holistic	9
Analytic	-
Combination of holistic and Analytic	1
Ideas/content	1
Grammar	1
Content& Grammar	5
Handwriting & punctuation	2
Vocabulary	1