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# The Effect of Homogeneous Grouping versus Heterogeneous Grouping on High School Students' EFL Writing Achievement

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**United Arab Emirates University**

**Faculty of Education**

**Department of Curriculum and Instruction**

**THE EFFCET OF HOMOGENEOUS GROUPING VERSUS  
HETEROGENOUS GROUPING ON HIGH SCHOOL  
STUDENTS'EFL WRITING ACHIEVEMENT**

A thesis submitted

By

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in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Master of Education 2011

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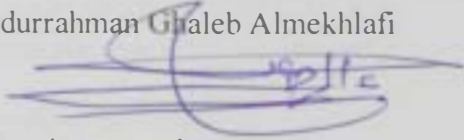
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Dedication

To My family

To my wife

To my children

To my friends

To my students

Who all believe in me.

## ABSTRACT

This study is an attempt to investigate the effectiveness of homogeneous grouping versus heterogeneous grouping on students' EFL achievement in writing. A pretest post test design was used to answer the research questions about the effectiveness of grouping students homogeneously versus heterogeneously. Two classes were selected for the study. One class was assigned for heterogeneous grouping in which high achievers were in groups of four or less and low achievers were in groups of four or less. The second class was assigned for heterogeneous grouping where students of different abilities high and low achievers were in groups of four or less. The findings of the study suggested that there is a difference between homogeneous grouping and heterogeneous grouping. The analysis of the results of the study showed that there was a significant difference between the scores of the students in homogeneous group and the heterogeneous group in favour of the homogeneous group. However, there was no significant difference in the achievement of between high achievers and low achievers in the two groups. Based on the conclusions and discussions of the study it was recommended that teachers may group students homogeneously based on students' levels and according to their needs. Finally recommendations and suggestions for future research were made.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

Cooperative learning has become an inevitable practice in our classrooms. EFL Teachers are encouraged to involve students in cooperative learning as a strategy that helps the teachers get the most out of their students. However, teachers often find a challenge in the way they should group their students. Some teachers prefer to group their students in mixed ability groups or heterogeneous groups in which students of different abilities share each others their learning experiences. They try to make use of high achievers' abilities in supporting and assisting low achievers and at the same time they guarantee a higher type of retention and a maximum portion of learning for the high achievers themselves. Other teachers prefer ability groups or homogeneous groups in which learners of the same abilities share their learning experiences. In this way the teachers can provide certain learning experiences to the students according to their levels.

#### **The issue of the writing skill in EFL classroom**

EFL teachers are concerned about two main issues in language learning. The first issue addresses the skills students should acquire in EFL classes as a result of the teaching and learning experiences. Such skills are often measured by students' achievement. The second issue is the strategies EFL teachers use to help students acquire such skills, and in turn increase their achievement.

In addition, writing is a skill which requires efforts from both the student and teachers. Writing is a skill which is given emphasis in second language learning because the learners need to master it to meet their secondary school graduation requirements (Panofsky et al 2005). Through writing courses, students learn different genres of writing like descriptive, expository, recount and narrative.

These genres are included in the prescribed syllabus provided to the schools (Becket & Gonzales 2004). Consequently; students need support from their teachers and instructors to facilitate their learning and to become able to deal the difficulties they might encounter.

More importantly, supporting students' writing involves providing some form of assistance that helps them go through one or more processes while they are carrying out any writing task. This assistance may include, for example, structuring how students carry out a particular writing process, having peers help each others while composing a piece of writing, providing students with feedback on their performance in a certain task, focusing students' attention on certain aspects of the tasks in hand, and finally providing students with models that might show what the end product should look like (Graham & Perin 2007).

### **The importance of using cooperative learning to support teaching writing**

Moreover, students' writing abilities are affected by the type of instructions the teachers use within their classroom practices. While learning writing, students can get involved in many activities which can enable them to produce a piece of writing at the end. They are often engaged, for example, in class discussions, in role playing or get involved in peer editing (Hensen, 2005). Also in writing classes, when students are engaged in classroom activities which allow cooperation, they construct on their experiences of writing and this then will help them ultimately produce good quality writing.

On the other hand, in teaching writing teachers strive hard to find strategies that facilitate increasing students' achievement. Such strategies are supposed to be connected to the classroom setting and students' diverse abilities in carrying out

the target tasks. There are many methods adopted by the teachers in teaching EFL writing in the classrooms. One of the methods recommended in teaching writing is the incorporation of cooperative learning (Kagan 2002). In cooperative learning, students can be grouped in a variety of more flexible ways, so that they spend some portion of a school day in heterogeneous groups and some portion in homogeneous groups.

Furthermore, in many EFL classes, some learners perform higher than grade level while others are still struggling with the target language, at the same time the majority of the students are somewhere in between. In order to meet the needs of such a diverse students' context, teachers tend to assign pair and group work for students of different levels so as to provide ways to involve all students in the assigned activities. Such ways sometimes include communicative and cooperative tasks to allow effective scaffolding for lower level students. In this classroom environment, higher level students perform as a bridge to facilitate the learning process whereas lower level students express their willingness to cross that bridge (Sean, 2002) as cited in Panofsky et al (2005). Generally, it is more realistic now to say that classroom harmony might be achieved in a group of motivated students who can take part and cooperate.

### **The use of homogeneous grouping and heterogeneous grouping**

One of the practices EFL teachers use inside the classroom is related to the way they are grouping their students while they are engaged in writing tasks. Some teachers prefer to form teams of students who are of the same abilities while others tend to group their students in mixed ability groups in which diverse students sit together as high and low achievers. When grouping students homogeneously

especially in writing classes, the teachers believe that they can provide certain tasks for each level according to their abilities and their needs. Also the teachers believe that they can increase the pace of teaching for the high ability students while low ability students still can enjoy the individual attention needed to facilitate their learning. In this way high achievers are provided with advanced material which can help improve their levels while low achievers are supported with simpler and less complicated materials or activities that will also help them improve and learn.

On the other hand, more teachers prefer to assign groups of mixed abilities in which students of different abilities sit together. When doing this, teachers often have the assumption that they can provide a learning environment for students to learn from each others. High ability students will be involved in supporting low achievers and then their level might improve due to the increase in the retention level. Low achievers will feel they are supported all the time by their peer during the tasks handled. Also the involvement of the learners in peer editing activities in writing has proven to be more successful in increasing students' learning. High and low achieves in the same group often learn by editing each other's writing activities. The high achievers' writing can often be thought of as a model for low achievers.

### **Statement of the problem**

Teachers as well as educators in the United Arab Emirates in general and in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi seem to have struggled to find answers to questions about heterogeneous and homogeneous grouping: Are they of certain benefits for learners? Do they harm anyone? Who gets the benefit or the harm the most? And

why? The answers to such questions are not always clear-cut and often depend on whom you ask and what learning outcomes are considered important. To many educators, grouping is an appropriate answer to academic diversity. To others, the practice has harmful unintended consequences and should be abandoned (Ansalone & Meng 2006). In addition, teachers sometimes have to decide or adopt a way for grouping their students who are often diverse especially in high schools. So they need to choose a way for grouping them either homogeneously when students of the same level sit together or heterogeneously when students of different abilities sit together. Teachers then need to find out which method of grouping would help the high school students improve in writing achievement.

### **Statement of the purpose**

This study aims to investigate the effect of homogeneous grouping versus heterogeneous grouping on EFL high school students' achievement in writing. It also aims at investigating the effect of these two types of grouping on the achievement of high achievers and low achievers so as to find out which type of grouping suits each level.

### **Significance of the study**

It is beneficial for teachers and educators to identify the type of grouping that may suit the diverse students in our classroom. Sometimes teachers work in classes in which the majority of the students are high or low achievers and sometimes they work in classes of mixed abilities with almost equal number. So the teachers have to make a decision about which type of grouping is better for their students. Actually, these decisions might affect students' performance, attitude and involvement in the class.

### **Operational definitions**

The operational definitions in this study will be as follows.

1. Homogeneous grouping can be defined as grouping students into small groups which include students of the same ability or level "high achievers together and low achievers together".
2. While heterogeneous grouping can be defined as grouping students into groups that include mixed or different levels, high and low achievers together.
3. Achievement can be defined as students' improvement in writing after certain treatment or objectives.
4. High achievers can be defined as students whose writing achievement is above the grade level of other students. In this study they are students who achieved 11 and more in the placement test.
5. Low achievers can be defined as students whose writing achievement lowers than the grade level of other students in the same class. In this study they are students who achieved 10 and less in the placement test.

### **Research Questions**

The research questions which this study tried to answer were:

1. What is the effect of grouping homogeneously versus heterogeneously on students' achievement in writing?
2. What is the effect of grouping students according to their level as high achievers and low achievers in the homogenous group and the heterogamous group on students' achievement in writing?



3. What is the effect of the interaction between grouping students according to homogeneity and heterogeneity, and grouping them according to their levels as high achievers and low achievers?

### **Statements of Hypotheses**

Consequently the null hypotheses in this study are:

1. There is no significant difference between the effect of homogenous grouping and heterogeneous grouping on EFL students' achievement in writing.
2. There is no significant difference between Grouping students according to their levels as high achievers and low achievers within the heterogeneous and homogeneous on students' achievement in writing.
3. There is no significant effect of the interaction of grouping students according to homogeneity and heterogeneity and grouping them according to their levels as high achievers and low achievers.



## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Teaching writing is a complex endeavor which requires certain efforts from the teachers. When people think of writing, they often consider the text or think of the written piece. However, understanding what writers do, involves not just thinking of the finished texts. Knowledge of writing is only complete with understanding the strategies writers use to finish with a satisfactory end product. It also involves the steps which writers learn through extended practices over years of routine work. The reason for this is that writing involves a number of steps to be comprehended before ending with the target writing task. There is a gradation from simple to complex with focus on target objectives according to the students' needs and levels. Students normally start by learning letters, words then sentences and finally writing a whole paragraph. Such stages need to be instructed to students within their school curriculums along with teaching other skills.

In EFL and ESL classrooms teachers are interested in developing the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Although writing is at the end of this most common used order, it is not the least important skill. Writing as a skill is as important as any other skill if not more important for many. It is a skill which is given emphasis especially in the high school stages as it is a very important requirement for both graduations from high school and admission to the university. (Mandal ,2009)

In addition, writing as a process has a specific nature as it consists of three main cognitive processes or strategies. These processes are planning, translating and reviewing. However, planning has three main parts generating ideas, organizing, and finally goal-setting. Moreover, translating is the act of composing

the writing piece. It takes place when the writer change their ideas into the form of visual letters and words. The third strategy which is reviewing includes reading and editing. (Chien, 2007)

Cooperative learning strategies can be used during the process of writing to improve the product of writing at the end. Students can be engaged in cooperative activities while planning, drafting, editing and finally writing their end product

### **Homogeneous grouping**

Homogenous grouping as well as heterogeneous grouping both springs from cooperative learning which has been regarded as an important part in instruction. To start with, homogeneous grouping has been considered as a possible solution for meeting the needs of the mixed ability classes. It has also been implemented for the same reason, suggesting that students with different abilities might be formed in groups of the same ability aiming at facilitating instruction (Slavin, 1987). Grouping in this way is based on a pedagogical belief that the teachers have the advantage of directing more instruction at the level of all students in certain groups (Ansalone, 2000).

Ability grouping or homogeneous grouping refers to the process of teaching students in groups that are classified by achievement, skill, or ability levels (McCoach, O'Connel, & Levitt, 2006). Homogeneous grouping provides opportunities for students to learn at their own pace and ability. This type of grouping is frequently used in classrooms and schools to increase students' achievement. In homogeneous groups, students learn at their own pace and ability. Ediger (2001) argued that talented students receive more high quality instruction in a homogeneous setting.) suggested that this type of grouping does not demand

greater skills on the part of the teacher, making it easier to teach certain concepts and skills. An advantage of this approach is its flexibility (Hallam, 2002). Students in homogeneous groups can progress and move from one ability level to the next when focus is set on their ability of concern. Tieso (2003) suggested that when ability grouping is utilized in a flexible and temporary manner significant achievement gains can be realized.

However, there has always been extensive concern that ability grouping is socially divisive, providing achievement for fewer students at the expense of the rest of the class (Lyle, 1999). Students grouped homogeneously are aware of what ability level they are grouped with and where they fall in the levels of education in the classroom or the school. In homogeneous groups, students do not obtain the opportunity to socialize with their peers. Moreover, Meijnen and Guldmond (2002) stated that grouping students in homogeneous groups denies them the opportunity to learn how to handle variation in social conduct caused by differences in performance.

Tieso (2003) stated that ability grouping alone will not lead to significant improvement in students' achievement unless it is combined with the curriculums that have been created based on students' learning styles, interests, and abilities. Homogeneous grouping may not always be the answer to increasing student achievement.

In homogeneous groups, students can experience things in both negative and positive ways. In homogeneous groups, teachers can individualize the pace, process, and products required of students (Shields, 2002). Students who are in homogeneous gifted classes, for example, reported that their teachers expected

more of them than of students in the regular class (Shields, 2002). Shields (2002) further reported that teachers of homogeneous classes for gifted students tend to require students to engage in longer term, research style assignments, rather than frequent, lower level cognitive assignments generally given to a regular class.

Boaler, Brown, and William (2000) found in their study of nine to eleven year- old learners that students who were grouped according to their abilities worked at the pace of the particular ability group in which they were placed. So their performance matched their teachers' expectations. While for some of the students, the pace of working was very slow, causing disaffection. Whereas, for others it was too fast, resulting in anxiety (Boaler et al., 2000). Both responses led to lower levels of achievement than would have been expected, given the students' attainment on entry into school (Boaler et al., 2000). Davies, Hallam, and Ireson (2004) concluded that high ability learners in higher groups tend to accept the school's demands as a normative definition of behavior, whereas low grouped students resisted the school's rules and attempted to challenge them. Ability grouping becomes more of a task for some students who are grouped homogeneously, resulting in frustration and lower achievement.

Moreover, extensive research has been conducted on ability grouping suggesting that academically, high-achieving students achieve and learn more when they are grouped with other high-achieving students (Gentry & Owens, 2002; Grossen, 1996; Hollified, 1987 and Page and Keith, 1996). In mixed-ability grouping it is difficult to provide an adequate environment for teaching to everyone. Since students differ in knowledge, skills, developmental stage, and learning rate, one lesson might be easier for some students and more difficult for the others (Slavin, 1987). In ability grouping, high-achieving students view their

own abilities more realistically and feel that they are appropriately challenged with their peers (Fiedler, Lange, & Wine-Brenner, 2002).

In addition, it is suggested that teachers of ability classes can raise the level of instruction for higher ability learners and boost the pace of teaching and learning while lower level students can have individual attention. For this reason advanced learners can learn more difficult concepts while lower level students can handle simpler and fewer things. Advocates of homogeneous grouping suggest that it is an outstanding means of individualizing instruction. They believe that achievement will increase since the teachers would change the pace of instruction according to students' needs (Slavin 1990).

Moreover, Mulkey et al (2005) suggested that same ability grouping benefits both high and low level students. Marsh (1987) also emphasizes homogeneous grouping as a successful technique to cope with mixed ability classes suggesting that grouping learners homogeneously causes those with lower ability to profit from their self-evaluation by being detached from their higher level peers. Kulik and Kulik (1982) and Slavin (1987), suggest that both low ability students and higher level ones placed in separate groups, benefited from differentiation according to each learner's level. The advocates of homogeneous grouping conclude that research has failed to suggest that homogeneous grouping does not accomplish anything (Loveless, 1998).

On the contrary, Welner and Mickelson (2000) proposed that low ability students are exposed to lowered expectations, reduced resources and rote learning as a result of involving them in ability grouping. They also believe that ability grouping may slow down their academic progress. Ansalone (2001) and Hallinan

(1994) also suggested that students, who are assigned to lower ability groups, are exposed to narrowed and more simplified versions of the curriculum while high ability groups cover broader and more challenging material. Oakes (1992) and Wheelock (2005) also argued that educational benefits in mixed ability classes have not been provided by homogeneous grouping but rather by a more challenging curriculum and higher expectations.

### **Heterogeneous grouping**

Heterogeneous grouping which means gathering students of different abilities in the same groups has been proposed by many researchers as an effective way to support academic growth of students with diverse background knowledge and abilities. One such study by Brimfield, Masci and Defiore (2002) suggests that all students deserve a challenging curriculum. Consequently, the goal of teachers is to find the way to engage all students of the mixed abilities in the lesson in spite of their abilities. Many researchers suggest that when we form mixed-ability groups, we send a certain message that everybody should and is expected to work at the highest level since high and low ability students deal with the same challenges.

Johnson and Johnson (1989) recommended assigning children of mixed abilities, high and low achievers in the same group. They suggested that heterogeneous grouping provides students with access to more learning opportunities. Furthermore, according to Manlove and Baker (1995) this type of diversity within the same group may generate an effective learning setting and provides learning opportunities for lower level students as well as opportunities to more advanced learners to provide explanations to others and so revise, consolidate



and use things they have experienced beforehand. They also suggested that teachers can use cooperative tasks among more advanced and lower achievers of mixed ability groups or pairs in order to elevate task engagement of all students in the mixed ability class since advanced students can provide explanations and guidance in carrying out a task.

Vygotsky (1986) and Slavin (1996) valued cooperative tasks among high and low achievers. Vygotsky also proposed that learners, who are exposed to books and other experiences out of school aspects which contribute to their linguistic development specifically prior knowledge of English from certain institutional instruction, are believed to have already run through a large part of their Zone of Proximal Development. Zone of Proximal Development refers to the difference of level between what a learner can do alone and what he or she can do with supportive collaboration and scaffolding (Vygotsky 1986). On the other hand learners with less literacy opportunities or those without prior knowledge of English may possess a larger Zone of Proximal Development (Van der Veer and Valsiner, 1991). As a result, they may benefit much more from peer interaction which is likely to help lower level learners reach higher levels and higher performance.

In addition Mize, Ladd and Price (1985), Webb (1989), Jacob et al (1996) and Slavin (1996) also emphasized the role of peer learning as contributing to language development. Rogoff (1993) suggested that when learners participate in collective tasks, they guide each other's efforts. Tudge and Winterhoff (1993) also proposed that advanced children provide steady feedback during conversation forcing peers to work harder to reach higher levels of performance.

Moreover, Pica and Doughty (1985), Porter (1986), and Cotterall (1990) recommend that learners of different abilities are more productive in mixed ability pair and group work as they help one another to overcome cognitive obstacles. This conclusion matches Urzua's (1987) finding that the mixed ability students appeared to have developed a sense of power in the language through working with trusted peers to be precise in drafting, writing and revising.

More importantly, the benefits of cooperative learning are more touchable when it comes to written work. O'Donnell et al (1985) found that the involvement in cooperative pairs improves the quality of students' performance on a written activity. Weaker students of mixed ability classes can use their more advanced peers as sources of information, critiquing and commenting on each other's drafts in both orally and written format (Liu and Hansen, 2002). Huot (2002) and Inoue (2005) and Cotterall and Cohen (2003) favored peer review groups and showed the more positive effects of scaffolding in mixed ability classes.

Mixed ability grouping or heterogeneous grouping is when students of different ability levels are assigned to sit together in the class setting. In this type of grouping, students have the chance to learn in a variety of educational settings and with different people (Richardson & Hines, 2002). However there are advantages and disadvantages to heterogeneous grouping.

Grouping heterogeneously comes with a lot of benefits for students. One of the advantages to heterogeneous grouping is that students can learn from each other and slower achievers can learn from the higher achievers. In heterogeneous grouping, students are encouraged to use each other as a resource, and it also allows the teachers to direct their attention where it is most needed (Elbaum,



Moody, & Schumm, 1999). Ediger further stated that in heterogeneous grouping, students should achieve high standards, regardless of ability or talent, and not be held back from optimal achievement.

Lyle (1999) argued that through interactions with their peers, students believed they had learned new literacy skills and new ways of engaging in literate practices. Lyle also indicated that the social experience of collaboration affects the course of development regardless of the students' abilities. Heterogeneous grouping allows students to become both teachers and learners for their groups. This type of grouping also provides opportunities for peer tutoring and advising. Moreover in the long run, heterogeneous grouping provides students with social skills that they will need both later in school and in the careers they choose (Lyle, 1999).

Proponents of heterogeneous groupings argue that the backgrounds and experiences of all students are important for enriching learning in the classroom. Johnson et al. (1991), Kagan (1995), and Millis and Cottell (1998) encourage heterogeneous groups for reflecting varied learning abilities. Similarly, Spear (1992) supports grouping practices that allow for "broad peer interactions to allow students to socialize with, model, and adjust to a variety of peer influences" (p. 257). Moreover, perceived benefits to low- and middle-ability students are often a motivation for implementing the practice. Indeed, most cooperative learning groups of mixed abilities suggest a composition of one low ability student, two medium-ability students, and one high-achieving student (Spear, 1992).

On the other hand, heterogeneous grouping has some drawbacks. For example, opponents of heterogeneous grouping argue that in grouping students heterogeneously, high ability students might feel the trouble of being challenged.

Ediger (2001) argued that the gifted and talented students are not provided for adequately in heterogeneous groups, making the opportunity for achievement unequal. Slower achievers may feel inferior when compared to those at a higher level taught in the same classroom. Also according to Ediger, research has further indicated that heterogeneous grouping provides better profits for low ability students, and high achievers are left to challenge themselves

Johnson and Johnson (1999) said that students in heterogeneous groups are assigned to work together even if they have no interest in doing so, and they will be evaluated by being ranked from the highest performer to the lowest performer. This ends up leading to competition because students see each other as rivals and would achieve better if they were working alone. Ediger (2001) also argued that heterogeneous grouping benefits low achievers, leaving behind the high achievers. According to Ediger, it is more difficult to teach a mixed achievement group of learners than a more uniform set of achievers.

Students experience many different things when grouped heterogeneously. In a study conducted with fifth grade students, results showed that students in the heterogeneous class demonstrated greater academic self-confidence (Shields, 2002). Shields also concluded that students in heterogeneous classes reported lower teacher expectations, less academic learning time, less homework, and less teacher feedback.

Similarly, Elbaum et al., (1999) suggested that a majority of general and special education teachers believe that when students with a range of abilities are placed together in the same group, lower ability students can learn from higher ability students and all students will benefit from working cooperatively. Lyle

(1999) found that all the children agreed that they had been offered and received assistance from others in the mixed ability group and considered this help to be significant in the development of their reading and writing. In this type of grouping, low ability students continually look towards high ability students for guidance and acceptance. For example, students felt that their learning was improving when they were helped by others in their group. Through the collaborative process, the contribution of each child can be extended, challenged, or modified by the contributions of others in the group (Lyle, 1999).

Another reason for favoring heterogeneous grouping is that it maximizes opportunities for peer interaction, peer tutoring and peer support (Kagan, 1995). Johnson and Johnson (1989) mentioned some benefits including increased social behaviours and improved self-esteem, attitudes toward school and acceptance of differences. Students tend to have higher self-efficacy about their chances of being successful. (Johnson and Johnson, 1989).

Finally, cooperative tasks in heterogeneous groups such as group investigations, will probably give confidence to shy and low performing learners especially when they have the advantage of requiring the participation of all the group or the pair members to do a task, allowing all the members to do something according to each one's abilities (Rollinson, 2005).

### **Cooperative learning**

First, a number of studies examined the effects of cooperative learning techniques on student learning. Humphreys, Johnson, and Johnson (1982) compared cooperative, competitive, and individualistic strategies and concluded that students who were taught by cooperative methods learned and retained

significantly more information than students taught by the other two methods. They also found that students studying in a cooperative learning treatment group rated more positively in their learning experience than did students in competitive and individualistic treatment groups. Sherman and Thomas (1986) reached similar findings in a study which involved high school students taught by cooperative and individualistic methods.

Johnson and Ahlgren (1976) also investigated the relationships between students' attitudes toward cooperation, competition, and attitudes toward education. The results of the study showed that student cooperativeness, rather than competitiveness, was positively related to being motivated to learn. In a study involving elementary and secondary students Wodarski, et al., (1980) concluded that 95% of the elementary students enjoyed the cooperative learning activities and that they had learned a lot about the subject.

Furthermore, cooperative learning groups appear to be effective in many ways. First, students work as an influential part of the group when they believe their efforts will add to the success of the group (Baker & Campbell, 2005). Secondly, students are successful and learn in cooperative learning groups because they learn better by doing rather than listening (Payne, Monk-Turner, and Smith, 2006). They are also actively using the material and information (Zimbardo, Butler & Wolfe, 2003). In addition cooperative learning can teach students that knowledge can or should be shared with fellow students; that differences in opinion can be rationally negotiated even under conditions of test pressures; and that cooperative learning procedures can be enjoyable and productive (Zimbardo et al, 2003 ).

## High achievers and low achievers in homogeneous and heterogeneous groups

A number of studies compared achievement of high ability students and low achievers in heterogeneous and homogeneous groups. In the majority of these studies, high achievers performed equally well in achievement tests after working either in homogeneous groups or heterogeneous groups. ( e.g., Galloawy & Armstrong, 1994; Azmitia ,1988; Carte rand Jones, 1994; Hooper and Hannafia ,1991; Jones & Carter ,1994 ; Melser ,1999 Sherman & Klein 1995 and Skon ; Johnson & Johnson ,1981). The remaining studies found that high achievers performed better in homogeneous group than in heterogeneous group (e.g. Baron 1994; Fuchs, Fuchs, Hamlett & Karns 1998; Knufer 1993) . However, Webb 1980 suggested opposite findings as he claimed that high achievers learned more in heterogeneous groups than in homogeneous groups as, according to Webb, in homogeneous group high achievers exchange relatively few explanations because they assume that everyone could master the material without help.

On the other hand much research has found out that low achievers gain more from working in heterogeneous groups than from homogeneous group and individually as they are assisted and supported by the high achievers in their classes. ( webb &Palincsar 1996)

In addition, there has been influential debate on how students should be grouped in as high and low achievers. Proponents of cooperative learn such as Johnson & Johnson, 1989; Slavin, 1987, 1990, recommended heterogeneous grouping for small group work. They supposed that in heterogeneous grouping, low achievers can be assisted, encouraged and stimulated by high achievers;

whereas high achievers can positively improve their cognitive abilities and presentation skills as they explain and elaborate concepts to low achievers.

Another study by Webb (1982) suggested that both high achievers and low achievers can benefit effectively from heterogeneous grouping. The claim was that, the interaction of the high achievers would be less effective when grouping them homogeneously as they assumed that everyone in the group should have understood the materials. Moreover when low achieving students were grouped homogeneously, their abilities would be insufficient to help each other to learn. Along with these arguments, there have been some studies which showed that high and low achievers gained equal benefits in heterogeneous grouping (Stevens & Slavin, 1995).

On the other hand, not all studies supported the advantage of heterogeneous grouping for low achievers and high achievers. For example, Robinson (1990) found that while low achievers benefited from heterogeneous grouping, high achievers did not. Fuchs, Fuchs, Hamlett, and Karns (1998) also suggested that high achievers collaborated less effectively and produced work of lower quality when they worked in heterogeneous rather than in homogeneous pairs or groups. The same findings were proposed by Hooper and Hannafin (1988) when they indicated that achievement of high achievers in homogeneous groups increased compared with high achievers in heterogeneous groups. In contrast of this, the achievement of low achievers in heterogeneous groups increased compared with low achievers in homogeneous groups. A further study by Hooper and Hannafin (1991) also found that high achievers performed in tasks more efficiently in homogeneous than in heterogeneous groups, while low achievers had more



interaction and completed their learning tasks more efficiently in heterogeneous rather than in homogeneous groups.

Similar findings have been reported by some researchers, too. For example Baer (2003) found that in college classrooms with rather wide range of students' ability, homogeneous grouping could result in significant achievement gains among average and high achievers, while no harm was found to the achievement of low achievers.

Furthermore, a meta-analysis by Lou et al. (1996) analyzed 20 independent findings from 12 studies that directly compared homogeneous grouping with heterogeneous grouping. The results specified a small advantage of homogeneous grouping over heterogeneous grouping. However, the superiority of homogeneous grouping was inconsistent among students with different levels of ability. The conclusion was that low achievers performed better in heterogeneous than in homogeneous groups and high achievers performed equally well in either homogeneous or heterogeneous groups. (Lou et al. 1996)

Finally an advantage of heterogeneous grouping related to high achieving students is also that through their explaining of the target material to their low achievers, they will attain higher-level processing of the subject material themselves and remember it longer. This is known as cognitive rehearsal and it is also coherent with Vygotsky's theory where he explained that the development as the transformation of socially shared activities into internalized processes (Woodfolk, 2001).

## Process Writing

Teaching writing began to change when teachers found more holistic approaches to teaching writing (McCarthy, Hoffman, Stable, Elliott, Dressman, & Abbott, 1994). Due to the need for innovative instruction and pedagogies, we witnessed the appearance of new practices that moved beyond rote repetition and conventional teaching. Consequently, writing was taught as a vehicle for creative expressions and critical thoughts. Instead of focusing on spelling, grammar, and other writing rules, process writing strategies emphasize on writing as a process in which writers have the opportunity to plan, draft, edit, and revise their work. (Hillocks, 1987 and Murray, 1982). The writer is taught to review and revise several drafts, which enables and encourages new ideas. Grammatical changes and conventional editing occur during the revision or editing stage (Ballator, Farnum, & Kaplan, 1999 and Flower & Hayes, 1981).

Writing is considered an individual task and the same individual may even use different methods to express him or herself. Actually, in process writing there are many stages to write and these stages are fluid and overlapping (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1983; Flower & Hayes, 1980; Murray, 1982). However, researchers and educators identified several logical steps that most writers go through, for example pre-writing, drafting and writing, sharing and responding, revising and editing and finally publishing.

Research to date has indicated that process writing is one effective way to teach students to be good writers. (Flower & Hayes, 1981; Greenwald, Persky, Campbell, & Mazzeo, 1999; Unger & Fleischman, 2004). Students are taught how



to share and communicate their ideas. In classrooms, they can share their work with peers through writing workshops and peer editing. (Graves, 1983).

In pre-writing, students start planning out what is going to be written. This is an essential step in the writing process which might account for 70 percent of the writing time (Murray, 1982). Research has indicated that skilled writers may spend significantly more time in organizing and planning for their writing (Hillocks, 1986). While in re-writing students have the chance to revise and revisit their goals and plans and also to have into account new ideas and thoughts (Bereiter et al. 1982).

In addition, the research findings indicate that when students go through the steps of observing and writing it would have greater impact on the quality of writing than in traditional teaching of writing. Moreover, consistent with earlier research, Hillocks (1982) found that studying model writings or presenting to students good pieces of writing was significantly more effective in improving the quality of writing than teaching grammar and other conventional methods of writing. (Hillocks 1982).

The process approach treats all writing as a creative task which requires time and positive feedback to be done well. In process writing, the teacher role changes from being someone who sets students a writing topic and receives the final product for correction with no intervention in the writing process at all. White and Arntd (1993) suggest that focusing on language errors does not improve grammatical accuracy nor writing fluency. They instead suggest that paying attention to what the students say shows improvement in writing. (White & Arntd 1993)

Moreover, according to Hedgcock (2005), process writing is an approach to integrate writing skills from the very beginning of the English learning process. It emphasizes on allowing students and young learners to write with more space for errors. Writing correction begins slowly, and students are encouraged to communicate while writing regardless of their knowledge or proficiency of grammar or structure. Research also has shown that feedback is more useful while drafting, not when the piece of writing is done at the end of the task after the students hand in their writings to be marked. Corrections written on students' writings and then returned to the student after the process has finished seemed to do little improvement in the overall writing of the students (Hudelson, 2005).

Finally, the research maintains that planning clearly supports the flowing production of meaningful text. Feedback and associated revisions are other key aspects of the writing process. Researchers have looked at how and when second language writers should receive feedback, which types are best e.g. (content vs. form), where this feedback may come from teacher, peer or self, and what influence this feedback has on the quality of the written products (Panofsky, et al 2005).

### **Peer editing**

Peer Response, or peer editing can be defined as the use of learners as sources of information, and interaction with each others in a way which makes learners assume they have roles and responsibilities normally taken by their teachers in commenting on and critiquing drafts in both written and oral formats in the process of writing (Hansen,2002).

Like teacher's feedback, peer response is highly supported by many proponents as well as a rapidly increasing number of detailed studies on its nature and influence (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2005). Advocates draw the attention to the way in which peer response activities can be used throughout the writing process. They believe that they are in accord with the Vygotskian theory that cognitive development results from social interaction, and that interaction is important for second language development. Peer response can help student writers understand reader expectations and the clarity of their own writing as well as build error analysis and editing skills. (Panofsky et al, 2005).

Studies that examined the effects of peer-editing in the foreign language and second language writing included studies comparing the effects of trained to untrained peer-editing and the effects of peer editing to teachers' editing on writing quality of revised drafts. Berg (1999), Paulus (1999) and Min (2005), reported some development in students' writing and revised drafts after receiving training in peer-editing. Berg (1999) compared experimental and control groups to determine the effect of trained peer editing on the quality of L2 essay revisions. That study concluded that the quality of revisions made by the trained group on peer editing was better than that which was done by the untrained group. However, Berg did not reveal whether peer feedback or self-feedback brought about by teacher instruction in editing was responsible for the improved revisions.

On the other hand, Paulus (1999) examined the effect of trained peer feedback as well as teacher feedback on students essay revisions. The study concluded that students made changes in the content and language as a result of both peer and teacher feedback and that these changes significantly improved students' final draft. However, the study did not trace the effects of each type of

feedback separately (Paulus 1999). Only Min's L2 study (Min 2006), in which students received peer and teacher feedback, compared the effects of trained and untrained peer feedback on students' essay revisions and traced the source and number of essay revisions. The study concluded that trained peer-editing resulted in better essay quality than untrained peer editing. However, the study did not report the effects of self-editing on students' writing development.

Moreover, the benefits of peer response and peer editing have been widely discussed in theory and practice (Rollinson, 2005). Teachers as well as researchers in favor of peer response emphasize the ability to apply it at all stages of process writing. Moreover, it was supported for being related to collaborative learning and more focus on the importance of interaction for second language and foreign language development. They claim that peer feedback activities in the classroom offer numerous advantages for example students' active roles in their own learning; re-conceptualization of their own ideas; a less threatening environment; feedback from authentic readers; and building of critical thinking skills. It is possible that collaborative and communicative settings can be realized through working in pairs or groups in peer editing, allowing students more interaction and motivation (Kondo, Y. & Gardner, S., 2007).

### **Theoretical Framework**

There are two cognitive theories that are directly applied to cooperative learning, the developmental and the elaboration theories (Slavin, 1987). The developmental theories presume that interaction among students around appropriate tasks increases students' mastery of critical conceptions (Damon, 1984). When students interact with one another, they need to explain and discuss

each other's perspectives, which lead to more retention and greater understanding of learning targets. Also students' efforts to resolve potential conflicts within the classroom cooperative activities develop higher levels of understanding (Slavin, 1990). Also from the developmental theorists' point of view, students will learn from one another because in their discussions of the content, cognitive arguments will appear, inadequate reasoning will be shown, and higher quality understandings will arise (Cohen, 1994).

The second theory is the elaboration theory which also proposes that one of the most effective means of learning is when students explain the material or the subject matter to someone else. Cooperative learning activities either in heterogeneous or homogeneous grouping improve elaborative thinking. Moreover according to Johnson, Johnson, & Holubec, (1986), the frequency of giving and receiving explanations increases the depth of understanding, the quality of reasoning, and the accuracy of long term retention. Thus, the use of cooperative learning methods by grouping students heterogeneously and homogeneously should lead to the improvement of students' learning and retention from both the developmental and cognitive theoretical perspectives. Moreover, a major element of cooperative learning is positive interdependence. Students perceive that their success or failure depends on working together as a team (Johnson, Johnson, & Holubec, 1986).

In addition, research in cognitive psychology has suggested that if information is to be retained in long term memory the learners need to engage in some sort of cognitive restructuring or elaboration of the material with the process of relating it to information already found in their memory; (Dansereau, 1985). In fact, a number of cognitive theorists have suggested that cooperative learning can

be an important element of cognitive apprenticeship (Brown & Campione, 1986). This type of apprenticeship involves initial instruction and models, coaching, scaffolding which includes prompt and support and finally fading. In cognitive apprenticeship, students gradually take more responsibilities as the cognitive support is decreased (Brown & Campione 1986).

In cooperative learning settings, peers supply each other with encouragement and assistance. They explain strategies to each other using their own words, which help them in the mastery of complex cognitive activity (Woodward, 1995). Moreover, observing and practicing in cognitive tasks help the learners internalize the cognitive functions they are trying to master (Vygosty, 1977, cited in Slavin, 1990). Cooperative activity encourages the learners to reflect upon their knowledge so as to make generalizations, which they can transmit, to their peers ( Slavins, & Farnish 199)

Accordingly, the theoretical framework for this study is that students' achievement improves when they are involved in group activities. Students are more likely to help one another with their tasks so their academic performance and achievement will improve. Students in homogeneous grouping and heterogeneous grouping will have the responsibility of explaining certain tasks and give examples or study them. When they are involved in supporting each other they will have the will try to learn what they are supposed to teach. They will also provide each others with model of the target activities. As a result their size of retention will increase and their learning will also develop as they practice more writing activities than just receiving them.



## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### Participants

The subjects of this study were 44 eleventh Emirati graders constituting two classes in Al Dahmaa Model School. They were male students whose native language is Arabic and who learn English as a foreign language. The school context included students of the same socioeconomic background.

The students in this age group are known to be diverse in terms of academic content knowledge, learning styles and multiple intelligences and also experiential background knowledge. This stage is categorized as the formal operations stage in which logical reasoning processes are applied to abstract ideas as well as to concrete objects (Ormrod, 2008). The students in this age group also experience operational egocentrism in which they do not separate their own abstract knowledge from the perspectives of others and from practical considerations. They show concern about the world problems and global concerns. The two classes are made up of diverse students in abilities. Some of them are high achievers in English while others are low achievers. Their current level of proficiency and achievement in English is identified by the continuous assessment tests, final exams and external assessment tests like the External Measurement of Students' Achievement EMSA. There are no special needs students in any of the two classes.

Students in model schools are exposed to conditions different from other governmental schools. The nature of this type of schooling is indicated in the description of the Abu Dhabi Education Council (ADEC) as a distinguished type

of schooling. The program in this type of schooling focuses on increased expenditures per student in the implementation of curriculum standards. The school is provided with a remarkable type of upgraded IT infrastructure. The program also is structured around a student centered model of delivery. Ten periods of 40 minutes each, are allocated for teaching English as a foreign language for each class a week. A full time English native speaking advisor works in the school according to ADEC schooling system.

### **Design**

A nonequivalent pretest - posttest design was used due to the lack of random sample selection. Two intact classes were randomly assigned one for homogeneous grouping and one for heterogeneous grouping in the class setting. The size of each class was twenty two. In this way there was no control group as the study would measure the effect of the setting on each group and investigate the difference between both types of grouping. The difference in the achievement of the students after the treatment which both classes will get equally, would tell the difference between the effects. Both groups were administered a pretest and had the same treatment but in different design concerning their way of grouping. The existence of the pretest posttest design would reduce the threats of internal validity as both groups had the same test. The threat of testing effects would be also controlled because if the pretest leads to higher scores in the posttest it would appear in both groups. Moreover, as the treatment was administered for both groups equally, the threat of the interaction between the pretest and the treatment would be reduced. The data collected were analyzed to answer the research questions regarding the effectiveness of the type of grouping assigned for each class.



## Procedures

### Grouping students

To identify student's levels as high achievers and low achievers for this study the researcher prepared a test for this purpose and used it as a placement test. This test was correlated to the following: (a) students' results in the previous semester in writing, (b) the teacher's classroom record.

At the beginning of the study the students sat for the placement in which they were involved in a writing task and were asked to write an essay about the topic of (Healthy living). This topic had been taught to the students during the previous semester as the main theme. After sitting for the test, students' essays were marked and analyzed so as to identify high and low achievers.

A rubric had been designed and adapted after using a diagnostic test and after analyzing students' writings to diagnose the types of weaknesses students might have. The analysis of students' writing in the pilot test revealed that students' writing had certain problems. First, many students made several mistakes per line, they did not use any punctuation marks at all and they could not capitalize words. They also had difficulty in expressing the ideas or use the correct words and word forms. Moreover, there were many problems related to logical sequencing and paragraphing. Most of the writings were in the shape of one paragraph with no introduction, body and conclusion. Many students misused or did not have a variety of vocabulary items needed for common writing. Many sentences contained grammatical errors which sometimes hindered or obscured the meaning.

After analyzing the data of the placement test the researcher assigned the groups. In one class, the students were grouped homogeneously. In this class students who got the score of 11 out of 20 and above in the teacher's writing test sat together in groups of four and less. Whereas students who got the score of 10 and less than sat together. In the second class students were grouped heterogeneously in mixed ability groups when each group included high and low achievers in writing. This score represented the quartile of the students' score in the placement test. Students whose score was 11 and more were identified as high achievers while students whose score 10 and lower were identified as low achievers. The number of high achievers in both classes was 21 while the number of low achievers was 23. In the heterogeneous class the number of low achievers was 12 while the number of the high achievers was 10. The number of low achievers and high achievers in the homogenous group was equal at 11 students. The number of high and low achievers in both groups is shown in table 3.1.

**Table 3.1:**  
**The number of high and low achievers**

	High achievers	Low achievers	Total
Heterogeneous class	10	12	22
Homogenous class	11	11	22
Total	21	23	44

Assigning the groups in the heterogeneous class took place randomly by using two lists. One list included high achievers and the other included low achievers. The researcher matched numbers in the first list with numbers in the second. The researcher matched the even numbers in the list of high achievers with the odd number of the list of the low achievers to assign the groups. The

researcher was keen on having students with different abilities in each group. One group contained four students or less. As for the homogeneous class, the groups were assigned randomly by using a list of students' names which was ordered from high to low score. High achievers sat in groups of four or less and low achievers sat in groups of four or less. The researcher also here was keen on having students with the same marks or closer together. In this way students in the heterogeneous class sat in groups with different scores in the test while the students in the homogeneous class sat in groups with almost the same or close score.

There are a few points to be mentioned here concerning this study. First, the students were divided into groups for the purpose of writing instruction and writing activities only. Since students' abilities vary from skill to skill, for the purpose of this research, identifying students as higher and lower achievers was only referring to their abilities in writing. In addition, a particular level or group is not based on the subject perception or the other label, but on the results of the assessment tool and the test prepared for this particular purpose. In other words, students were not grouped according to any other skills apart from writing, such as their fluency or their oral skills and mainly it was according to the results of a valid placement test in their writing abilities.

## **Instrument**

### **The pretest**

A pretest was administered for the participants before grouping them for the treatment. In this test the students sat individually and were involved in a writing task which included writing an essay about the topic of Money and Friends which is more important. Before the test the teacher read the instructions both in

English and explained them in Arabic when needed. The students were also allowed to ask about any points which were not clearly understood. After the pretest, the students were grouped according to their level of writing achievement for the setting of the study. One class was assigned randomly for homogeneous grouping and the other class was the heterogeneous group.

### **The posttest**

The posttest was done soon after the end of the whole of the writing sessions. At the end of the treatment period, the students were asked to sit for the posttest with the same conditions followed in the pretest. The students were asked to write an essay about the same topic administered in the pretest. The teacher followed the same procedures.

### **Rating students' writings**

After the post test, both the pretest and the posttest were marked by two raters who have experience in rating writing. They were two school teachers whose experience was more than 10 years in teaching EFL . They also took part in marking and rating students' final high school exam in the UAE. The raters were provided with a rubric validated by five experts in the field of EFL (Appendix A). The researcher had a few meetings with the raters in which they agreed upon the procedures and in which the raters were provided with information about the nature of the study. The researcher and the raters applied the rubric on a few samples of writing so as to have a model to be followed for the rating. The names and classes of the participants were hidden in both the pretest and the posttest before marking the writings.

## The treatment

The treatment included teaching students process writing that was covered within twenty sessions of 40 minutes each. A theme based unit was designed for the class so as to follow the provider instructions for the semester in which the treatment took place. According to this theme based unit, students were supposed to be involved in writing in different genres and producing different text types. These text types included narrative, informational, expository and discussion texts. Students were involved in peer editing throughout the writing sessions or periods under the instructions and observation of the teacher. Techniques and strategies of cooperative learning and group work were taught to the students through models and examples provided by the teacher. During these sessions the students were trained on using the writing strategies of peer editing and self editing, drafting and peer correction while they were being taught writing. The teacher used the same techniques with both groups.

The teacher introduced the strategies of process writing to the students as an important way of improving their writing. The students were trained on both process writing and peer editing whilst in their groups. The teacher also trained students on how to work in groups either homogeneously or heterogeneously. The importance of the strategies of cooperative learning was explained to the students at the very early sessions.

The writing sessions began with brainstorming as the first step towards process writing. Discussions were held about certain topics for writing tasks within the framework of the theme of the unit such as healthy lifestyle, healthy community and responsibility of individual towards community safety. These topics were included in the learning and teaching plan of the students. During these

discussions the students were involved in exchanging knowledge and experience as they were asked to support one another in addition to the teacher's support. The teacher used a variety of graphic organizers so as to help students brainstorm for ideas in the planning and organizing stage. The students were given information about the use and the purpose of each organizer. The majority of the students preferred the use of the cluster web and the argument graph (Appendix B). However, the teacher gave the students the chance to make decisions on which organizer they could use according to the need of the writing task. The teacher also used scaffolding sheets and trained students on using them (Appendix C). Other sheets for editing were used by the students e.g. the peer editing sheet (Appendix D). As for peer editing, the teacher trained students on how to use peer editing and provided everyone of them in both groups with an editing checklist (Appendix E), a proof reading sheet (Appendix F) and a self editing sheet (Appendix G). The teacher also encouraged the students and trained them on how to make their own editing sheets using the editing descriptors (Appendix H).

The students were involved in group work and cooperative learning activities in which they were allowed to share ideas, edit and correct each other's writings. In the heterogeneous class the high achievers were instructed to provide support to low achievers next to the teacher's support and under his supervision. Low achievers were asked to take part in all the activities. In the homogeneous class, the teacher provided the same content given in the heterogamous class. High achievers were involved in activities together. They supported each other and the teacher supported them. Low achievers were involved in activities together with the help and support of the teacher while they also were supposed to support each other.



The students were involved in writing sentences and paragraphs and correcting and editing each other's writing. The organization, the spelling, the grammar and ideas were discussed, trained on, practiced and edited within groups. Each student was asked to write, correct and peer-edit for other students.

The validity of the instrument including the rating rubric was reviewed by a number of referees who are considered experts in the field of teaching EFL. These experts included a university professor in the faculty of Education, an English language advisor who works for ADEC, two English language consultants and a curriculum director. The jury reviewed the rubric and made some comments and recommendations which the researcher took into consideration before applying it. The recommendations included some changes of the contents marks and the wording of the rubric. After making the suggested changes the jury approved the validity of the instrument tools as shown in the appendix section (Appendix I)

### **Data analysis**

The data from the pretest and posttest were analyzed quantitatively using the Statistical Package of Social Sciences SPSS program version 18. The researcher analyzed the scores of the students' writings in the two groups after checking the reliability of the pretest and the posttest. The analysis of the data was determined to investigate the inter- and intra-group differences. A *t*. test was used to investigate the differences between the means of pretest and the posttest results in both groups. The differences between the mean would tell the differences of the effect of the way of grouping. The significance and interaction between the groups and the within groups necessitated the use of the Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) test.



## IV- CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS AND FINDINGS

This study is an attempt to investigate the effects of grouping students in homogeneous groups compared to grouping them in heterogeneous grouping and the effects of this on students' writing achievement. It also attempts to find more about the effects of these two types of grouping on the achievement in writing of high achievers and low achievers and to determine which is more beneficial for each level of students. The scores and results of both the pretest and the posttest were analyzed by the Statistic Package of Social Sciences SPSS version 18 to answer the research questions.

Before investigating the results of the scores collected, the reliability of the pretest and the posttest was achieved by using the alpha model. It was found that the reliability of the pretest and the content of the writing rubrics namely vocabulary, grammar and syntax, content, mechanism and organization was .787. In addition, the correlation coefficient of the pretest and the posttest was .842

A *t* test was used to show the difference between the means of the pretest and the post test. The *t* test shows that there is a difference in the means of the pretest and the post test in the two classes together. The mean of the pretest is 11.11 and the post test is 13.66 as shown in table 4.1.

**Table 4.1:**  
**The *t* test for homogeneous group and heterogeneous group**

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pretest	44	11.11	2.026	.305
Posttest	44	13.66	2.458	.371

On the other hand another *t* test for the heterogeneous group alone showed that there was a difference in the mean of the pretest and the post test. The mean of the pretest was 10.82 while the post test was 12.82 as shown in table 4.2.

**Table 4.2**

**The *t* test of the scores of the heterogeneous group**

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pretest	22	10.82	2.343	.500
Posttest	22	12.82	2.218	.473

As for the homogeneous group, the *t* test shows the difference in the means of the pretest and posttest as follow: the pretest is 11.41 while the posttest is 14.50 as shown in table 4.3

**Table 4.3**

**The *t* test of the scores of the homogeneous group**

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pretest	22	11.41	1.652	.352
Posttest	22	14.50	2.445	.521

To test homogeneity among variances, a Levene's test of equality of errors showed no significance as shown in table 4.4 which means that the ANCOVA is robust.

**Table 4.4**

**Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances**

Dependent Variable: posttest

F	df1	df2	Sig.
1.817	3	40	.160

To answer the research questions, the researcher used the Analysis of Variances (ANCOVA) test so as to determine the significance of the difference between the means. The analysis is as follows:

**Question one**

**1- The effect of grouping ( heterogeneously vs. homogeneously)**

What is the effect of grouping (homogeneously versus heterogeneously) on students' achievement in writing?

Table 4.5 shows the difference between the mean results of the heterogeneous group and homogeneous group. The table shows that the difference is in favour of the homogenous group as the mean of the heterogeneous group is 12.82 while the mean of the homogeneous group is 14.5. This significance difference will be discussed in a later chapter.

**Table 4.5**

**Descriptive Statistics of the main effect of grouping ( heterogeneously vs. homogeneously)**

Dependent Variable: posttest

Group	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Hetero	12.82	2.218	22
Homo	14.50	2.445	22
Total	13.66	2.458	44

The ANCOVA test showed that there is a significant difference related to the main effect of groups,  $F = (1.446)$   $df = (1,39)$   $P = (.019)$  as shown in table 4.6

**Table 4.6**  
**The effect of grouping students ( heterogeneously vs. homogeneously)**

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	157.637 <sup>a</sup>	2	78.818	31.605	.000
Group	14.879	1	14.879	5.966	.019
Error	102.249	39	2.494		
Total	8469.000	44			
Corrected Total	259.886	43			

a. R Squared = .607 (Adjusted R Squared = .587)

### Question two

- 2- **The effect of grouping students according to their levels (high vs. low achieving students)**

What is the effect of grouping students according to their level as (high achievers and low achievers) in the homogenous group and the heterogamous group on student's achievement in writing ?

**Table 4.7**

**The effect of grouping students according to their levels (high versus low achievers)**

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: posttest

Source	Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	143.144 <sup>a</sup>	2	71.572	25.136	.000
Achievers	.385	1	.385	.135	.715
Error	116.743	39	2.847		
Total	8469.000	44			
Corrected Total	259.886	43			

a. R Squared = .551 (Adjusted R Squared = .529)

Referring to table 4.7 there is no significant difference related to the main effect of grouping students as high and low achievers in both the homogeneous group and the heterogeneous group  $F = (.2)$ ,  $df = (1,39)$ ,  $P = .715$ .

### Question three

3- The effect of the interaction between grouping students according to homogeneity and heterogeneity and according to their levels as high and low achievers.

What is the effect of the interaction between grouping students according to homogeneity and heterogeneity, and grouping them according to their levels as high achievers and low achievers?

As shown in table 4.8 there is no significant interaction between both variables" grouping as homogeneous and heterogeneous and grouping according to level as high and low achievers as  $F = (4.7)$ ,  $df = (1,39)$ ,  $p = (.898)$ .

**Table 4.8**

#### The effect of the interaction between grouping and the levels of achievers

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: posttest

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Group	15.335	1	15.335	5.899	.020
Achievers	.754	1	.754	.290	.593
Group * Achievers	.044	1	.044	.017	.898
Error	101.384	39	2.600		
Total	8469.000	44			
Corrected Total	259.886	43			

a. R Squared = .610 (Adjusted R Squared = .570)

Although the interaction is not significant, the researcher compared the cell means as shown in table 4.9 and the findings are as follow according to the table 4.10:

The means of low achievers and high achievers are very close to each others in both groups. As for the high achievers, the means in the heterogeneous group is 13.21 while the mean in the heterogeneous group is 14.47. On the other hand the means of the low achievers in the heterogeneous group is 12.92, while the low achievers' mean in the homogeneous group is 14.05.

**Table 4.9**

**Descriptive Statistics of the effect of the interaction between groups and achievers' levels .**

Group * Achievers		Dependent Variable: posttest			
Group	Achievers	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
hetero	hi	13.214 <sup>a</sup>	.569	12.064	14.365
	low	12.920 <sup>a</sup>	.555	11.798	14.042
homo	hi	14.476 <sup>a</sup>	.537	13.390	15.562
	low	14.053 <sup>a</sup>	.503	13.036	15.069

a. Covariates appearing in the model are evaluated at the following values: pretest 11.11.

**Table 4.10**

**Comparing the cell means of high and low achievers**

	High	low
Hetero	13.21	12.92
Homo	14.47	14.05

**Summary of the results**

According to the data analyzed , the results concerning the posttest showed that the mean was higher than that of the pretest as the mean of posttest in the heterogeneous group and the homogeneous group was higher. On the other hand,

according to the ANCOVA test the analysis showed a significant difference in the main effect of grouping students homogeneously and heterogeneously on student's achievement in writing. The difference showed favour of the homogeneous group over the heterogeneous group which was reflected in the difference between the means of both groups. This can be interpreted in the way that students in the homogeneous group achieved better than the students in the heterogeneous group in writing as it will be discussed in chapter five. However, there was no significant interaction between students' levels as high and low achievers and the type of grouping them homogeneously and heterogeneously. The researcher also compared the cell means of both groups which showed that the low achievers and high achievers had no difference in their achievement in both classes. Finally the results and the answers to the three questions will be discussed in details in the next chapter which deals with the discussion, conclusion and recommendations.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Discussions

The results found in this study will be discussed according to the research questions:

1. What is the effect of grouping homogeneously versus heterogeneously on students' achievement in writing?
2. What is the effect of grouping students according to their level as high achievers and low achievers in the homogenous group and the heterogamous group on student's achievement in writing?
3. What is the effect of the interaction between grouping students according to homogeneity and heterogeneity, and grouping them according to their levels as high achievers and low achievers?

#### **The effect of grouping students homogeneously and heterogeneously on their writing achievement.**

According to the findings obtained by the analysis of students' scores in the pretest and the posttest, there was a significant difference in the mean results of both groups. According to the t test there was a significant difference in the main effect of the students in the homogeneous groups and the heterogeneous groups. As the treatment was the same in both groups the researcher felt that the students got equal chances to practice the activities suggested for teaching them during the treatment. As a result the class setting using the two types of grouping affected the students' scores in writing which is the main question of the study. Actually they equally gained some improvement according to the difference between the means of the pretest and the posttest as shown in table 4.1, table 4.2 and table 4.3.

However, the ANCOVA test showed that there was a significant difference also in favour of the homogeneous group which supported the results of the t test and which is shown in table 4.5 and table 4.6. In short, students in the homogeneous group achieved better gains than those in the heterogeneous group according to the findings of this study.

Students in the homogenous group are provided with a type of instruction that suit the level of each. When students are grouped in homogeneous group they will have the chance to be involved in activities that are selected for each level. The teachers are supposed to provide and prepare certain objectives for each group according to their levels and their needs. In this way all the students of both levels as high and low achievers will be supported by specific and individualistic way.

When high achievers are provided by advanced material they will feel more cognitively challenged and their needs will be satisfied with being hindered by being engaged in lower level activities which do not answer their needs. Also low achievers will be engaged with activities that are not too difficult for them. Their needs and the levels will determine the type of activities they should cover. They will be under less pressure of being compared to high achievers and feel discouraged.

Within homogeneous grouping, there is a chance for students to move from one level to the other on systematic and organized way. The techniques and materials the teacher uses will be determined to elevate certain levels for teams of students who will help support each other. Low achievers will have the chance to move from lower to higher level with teacher support. High achievers will have the

chance to move to advanced levels as they are supported by advanced materials prepared by the teacher.

These findings are congruent with many research findings obtained by other researchers. According to many research studies, students in homogeneous grouping benefit from their learning context. For example, Ediger (2001), proposed that homogeneous grouping provides opportunities for students to learn at their own pace and ability and that, this type of grouping is frequently used in classrooms and schools to increase students' achievement. In homogeneous groups, students learn at their own pace and ability. Ediger (2001), also added that talented students receive more high quality instruction in a homogeneous setting.

In addition, Meijnen and Guldemond (2002) suggested that homogeneous grouping does not demand greater skills on the part of the teacher because it makes it easier to teach certain concepts and skills. An advantage of this approach is its flexibility (Hallam, 2002). Moreover, students in homogeneous groups can progress and move from one ability level to the next when focus is set on their ability of concern. Tieso (2003) suggested that when ability grouping or homogeneous grouping is utilized in a flexible and temporary manner the significant achievement gains can be realized.

Shield (2002) found that, in homogeneous groups, students can experience things in both negative and positive ways. In homogeneous groups, teachers can individualize the pace, process, and products required of students (Shields, 2002). Students who are in homogeneous gifted classes, for example, reported that their teachers expected more of them than of students in the regular class (Shields, 2002). Shields (2002) further suggested that teachers of homogeneous classes for

gifted students tended to require students to engage in longer term, research style assignments, rather than frequent, lower level cognitive assignments generally given to a regular class. Shields also concluded that students in heterogeneous classes reported lower teacher expectations, less academic learning time, less homework, and less teacher feedback.

On the other hand the findings of this study do not match the findings of some other research studies. For example in grouping students heterogeneously, according to Richardson & Hines (2002), students have the chance to learn a variety of educational setting with different people when they are grouped heterogeneously. In heterogeneous grouping, students can learn from each other and low achievers can learn from high achievers. Teachers encourage students to use each others as a resource which in turn allows teachers to direct their attention where it is more required (Elbaum, Moody, & Schumm, 1999.) Ediger 2001, further stated that in heterogeneous grouping, students should achieve higher standards, regardless of ability or talent, and not be held back from optimal achievement.

Lyle (1999) argued that through interactions with their peers, students believed they had learned new literacy skills and new ways of engaging in literate practices. Lyle also indicated that the social experience of collaboration affects the course of development regardless of the students' abilities. Heterogonous grouping allows students to become both the teacher and learners for their groups. This type of grouping also provides opportunities for peer tutoring and advising. Moreover in the long run, heterogeneous grouping provides students with social skills that they will need both later in school and in the careers they choose.

Heterogeneous groupings proponents argue that the backgrounds and experiences of all students are important for enriching learning in the classroom. Johnson et al. (1991), Kagan (1995), and Millis and Cottell (1998) encourage heterogeneous groups for reflecting varied learning abilities. Similarly, Spear (1992) supports grouping practices that allow for larger peer interaction that allow students to model and adjust to a variety of peer influences. (Spear, 1992).

In a study conducted with fifth grade students, results showed that students in the heterogeneous class demonstrated greater academic self-confidence (Shields, 2002). Also Elbaum et al., (1999) suggested that a majority of general and special education teachers believe that when students with a range of abilities are placed together in the same group, lower ability students can learn from higher ability students and all students will benefit from working cooperatively. Lyle (1999) found that all the children agreed that they had been offered and received assistance from others in the mixed ability group and considered this help to be significant in the development of their reading and writing skills. In this type of grouping, low ability students continually look towards high ability students for guidance and acceptance. For example, students felt that their learning was improving when they were helped by others in their group. Through the collaborative process, the contribution of each student can be extended, challenged, or modified by the contributions of others in the group (Lyle, 1999).

Kagan (1995) suggested that heterogeneous grouping maximizes opportunities for peer interaction, peer tutoring and peer support while Johnson and Johnson (1989) mentioned some benefits of homogenous grouping including the increased social behaviours and improved self-esteem, attitudes toward school and acceptance of differences. Students tend to have higher self-efficacy

about their chances of being successful. One more finding about heterogeneous grouping especially for high achieving students is that through their explaining of the material to their classmates, they accomplished higher level processing of the subject material themselves and remembered it for longer time (Woodfolk, 2001).

### **The effect of grouping students according to their levels as high and low achievers in heterogeneous and homogeneous group.**

According to the ANCOVA test shown in table 4.6 chapter four, there was no significant difference in the effects of grouping students according to their levels as high achievers and low achievers in both the heterogeneous group and the homogeneous group on students' achievement in writing.

This finding suggests that low achievers and high achievers benefit from both homogeneous grouping and heterogeneous grouping. As for high achievers in the homogeneous group, it is suggested that they are supported by their higher level peers and in turn they might achieve more advanced gains. Also in addition to support from their peer, they also have support from the teacher who engages them in advanced activities that suit their levels. On the other hand high achievers in the heterogeneous group benefit from this type of grouping as they are involved in assisting and supporting their low achievers peers in cooperative activities. The rate of retention and training on writing will become better as they are using and teaching the strategies targeted by their teachers.

Low achievers also benefit from both homogeneous grouping and heterogeneous grouping. In heterogeneous groups low achievers are supported by their high achievers peers and their teacher. When they are assisted by the high achievers in the group every student will have the chance to be supported



according to his or her level which is very individualistic. In other words high achievers help low achievers each according to the needs of every student in the group. In addition to high achievers support, low achievers are also supported by their teachers. In the homogeneous group, low achievers are provided by activities that suit their levels and they are free from pressure of their high achieving peers.

Moreover, the findings of this study match the findings of previous research studies concerning high achievers who are suggested by many researchers to perform well if grouped homogeneously or heterogeneously. For example, in the majority of these studies, high achievers performed equally well in achievement tests after working either in homogeneous groups or heterogeneous groups.

**The effect of the interaction between grouping students according to homogeneity and heterogeneity, and grouping them according to their levels as high achievers and low achievers.**

According to the data analysis in chapter four there was no significant interaction between grouping students as homogeneous groups and heterogeneous group and grouping them according to their levels as high and low achievers as shown in table 4.8. The analysis also revealed that high achievers and low achievers in the homogeneous group and the heterogeneous group achieved the same gains. So there may be no difference when grouping high and low achievers in either way.

These findings match the findings of some previous research studies. For example Ediger (2001) argued that talented students receive more high quality instruction in a homogeneous setting. Meijnen and Guldemon (2002) suggested that this type of grouping does not require immense skills on the part of the teacher, making it easier to instruct and direct certain concepts or targeted skills.



Moreover, Hooper and Hannafin (1988) indicated that the achievement of high achievers in homogeneous groupings increased compared with high achievers in heterogeneous groupings.

In addition, Baron (1994); Fuchs, Fuchs, Hamlett & Karns (1998) and Knufer (1993) suggested according to some of their studies that high achievers performed better in homogeneous groups than in heterogeneous groups. In addition, Baer (2003) found out that in the college classrooms which have fairly wide range of student ability, homogeneous grouping often resulted in significant achievement gains among average and high achievers, while no harm was felt to the achievement of low achieving students. Karns (1998) also suggested that high achievers collaborated more effectively and produced work of better quality when they worked in homogeneous rather than in heterogeneous groups.

However, some research findings suggest the opposite. For example, Webb (1980) suggested opposite findings when he claimed that high achievers learned more in heterogeneous groups than in homogeneous groups because, according to Webb, in homogeneous group high achievers exchange fairly few explanations because they suppose that other students in the group could master the material without help.

### **Summary of the discussions**

The use of ability grouping or homogeneous grouping is feasible and practical in teaching EFL writing. Students' writing abilities can develop through the interaction with other students. However, homogeneous grouping along with mixed ability grouping or heterogeneous grouping enable the students to attain more practice and they allow more retention and more practice which lead to improvement in the writing achievement. Moreover, in grouping students either

homogeneously or heterogeneously they will have the chance of using more than one resource for instruction and learning. This would mean that instead of having the teacher as a sole resource in the class, they can have other students as resources in addition.

Both high achievers and low achievers benefit from ability grouping and mixed ability grouping. In mixed ability classes or heterogeneous classes, high achievers are involved in using much of the information they have in teaching and directing the low achievers peers. On the other hand, low achievers will have the chance to be exposed to more learning experience beside the teacher's instruction. Also in mixed ability classes low achievers will improve as their specific needs will be addressed for every student separately in each group which is done by their high achievers peers. However, this should be monitored by the teacher to match high achievers interventions with the learning targets.

In ability grouping or homogenous groups, high achievers will have the chance to develop higher or more advanced abilities as the levels they target will be built on their prior knowledge which is already advanced. They will also have the chance to elaborate more and handle certain topics deeply with the students of their same levels. Whereas low achievers will be given the opportunity to learn at their own pace and build up knowledge starting from the basic knowledge they have without the pressure from advanced students. They will be also given the chance to learn according to their abilities. Beside this, they will have support from their teachers who will have more chance for it.

The increase in students' achievement in homogeneous grouping compared to the achievement in heterogeneous group answers the main question of this study.

However, this does not mean that students in heterogeneous grouping do not improve. Actually it is felt in this study that both types of grouping affected students' achievement in writing positively. The reason for this is the amount of interaction which students went through during the treatment which represents the actual teaching strategies. It is also because they are both related to cooperative learning which has proven to be an effective way to increase and even maximize EFL language learning and acquisition.

According to the findings of this study, the achievement of students in homogeneous grouping showed more improvement than the achievement of students in heterogeneous group. This means that the findings of this study add more support to the effectiveness of homogeneous grouping.

When students receive immediate feedback of any kind either from their teacher or from their peer, their writing improves. Due to immediate responses students begin to ask relevant questions about the tasks in hand. They will also have to make decisions and learn to evaluate their writing while they are working on it rather than after they have completed it. During students' involvement in the stages of writing, the teachers may have the chance to conference with students in small groups. Also the students must be able to help each others. As a result each student must have a type of understanding of how to help and support peers so as to develop and revise their text.

Low achieving students are unlikely to be stigmatized or marginalized in the mixed-ability environment. The expectations for all learners are kept at higher levels and lower ability students will have opportunities to be assisted by their advanced peers.

According to the instructions and attitudes of Abu Dhabi Education Council (ADEC) it is a necessity these days to direct our classrooms to a more learner-centered environment. Finally, grouping students homogeneously or heterogeneously in the same classroom allows for this specific need.

### **Recommendations**

Homogeneous grouping is an effective type of grouping which helps increase students' achievement in writing so teachers can use it in their classroom practices. However, it is better to utilize both types of grouping even in the same class according to the activities and objectives targeted. For example, when students are engaged in the brainstorming process for writing, the teacher can use heterogeneous grouping because this will allow students to cover different levels of ideas. Also heterogeneous grouping is effective in the editing and drafting stages. While in the final stage of the producing stage, students can be grouped homogeneously because they need to write in each student's level.

High and low achievers benefit from grouping of any kind. This means that the teachers can vary the strategies of grouping according to the needs of the curriculum and according to the objectives whatever the levels of the students are. For example, in scaffolding stages, high achievers can be used as bridges for low achievers to reach certain levels. High achievers can work as models for the low achievers to follow. Low achievers are the supported and high achievers train with more focus on the target writing tasks.

Teachers need to engage students in activities that allow elaboration and explanation to increase achievement. The reason for this is that when students are engaged in elaborating certain ideas and explaining to their peers, their

achievement will improve as they are using the information they know and are applying what they learn. Also when students help their peers with their writing tasks they themselves will gain better improvement in their skills. When students exchange ideas for writing, they try to support their opinion with information which can be used for elaboration and expanding ideas.

Students should receive immediate feedback from their peers or from their teachers. Immediate feedback has proven effective in increasing students' learning and in turn increasing their achievement in writing. When students edit and correct spelling and grammatical mistakes for example to their peers while still in the task, it will help both the writer and the editor to be focused on the tasks.

Grouping students allows teachers to create a more learner-centered environment for better instruction. In teaching writing, when students are grouped either homogeneously or heterogeneously they are required to carry out certain tasks. Each student has a role in his or her group. In this way students are no longer passive learners who just receive the information from the teacher. This will engage the students in continuous process of thinking how to carry out their roles and participate in the success of their teams. Also, students participations will be the bases of any cooperative activities.

More research is needed in this area with the use of qualitative tools like interviewing or surveying teachers and learners. The use of more qualitative tools along with the use of quantitative tools will help us have more understanding of the effect of grouping especially the side related to motivation, perceptions and attitudes towards homogeneous grouping and heterogeneous grouping. Both

students and teachers can be included in this part as this will provide deeper understanding of the issue.

For more insight students' levels can be identified with more categories than high and low achievers only. For example, students can be identified as high, medium and low achievers in writing. This will lead to more detailed analysis about the effect of grouping on the writing achievement.



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## APPEDIXES

### Appendix (A) scoring rubric for rating writing

## WRITING ACHIEVEMENT RUBRICS (0-20 marks )

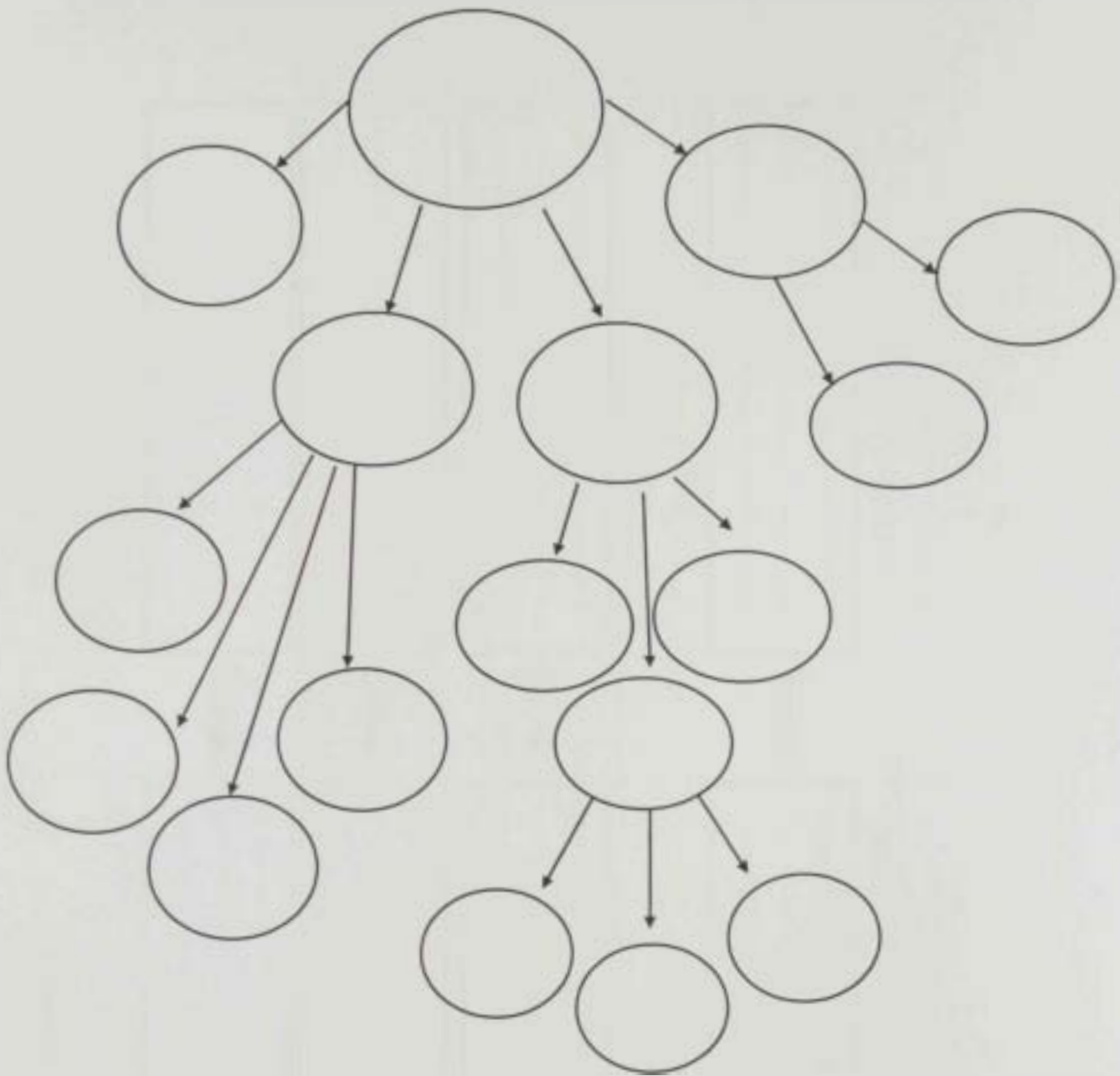
SCORE	CONTENT	GRAMMAR & SYNTAX	VOCABULARY	ORGANIZATION	MECHANICS
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Content clearly addresses the topic with logical flow of well developed ideas</li> <li>Single distinct focus</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A mixture of simple <b>AND</b> complex sentence structures free of errors that interfere with meaning or the expression of ideas.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A wide range of accurate and appropriate word choices that fully express complete ideas.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence of logical sequence that supports ideas : introduction, body, conclusion</li> <li>Opening that draws reader in.</li> <li>Effective closing.</li> <li>Piece <b>complete</b>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Excellent spelling, punctuation and capitalization.</li> </ul>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Content clearly addresses the topic with some developed ideas.</li> <li>Focus not in every point</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Simple <b>OR</b> complex sentence structures with errors not sufficient to interfere with meaning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Word choices adequate to convey the meaning with some accurate and appropriate words</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence of sequence but lacking one of the three structure components: introduction, body and conclusion.</li> <li>An opening but not necessarily focused. No attention to closing.</li> <li>Piece <b>nearly complete</b>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A very good spelling, punctuation and capitalization with few errors which do not interfere with the meaning.</li> <li>A repeated error is considered once only.</li> </ul>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Content partially addresses the topic but is off target in some way.</li> <li>Focus is not consistently</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sentences with a number of errors that may interfere with the meaning at some points.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Word choices adequate to convey the meaning : but few accurate and appropriate words</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One paragraph essay that merges the three components with no attention to opening and closing.</li> <li>Piece seems complete</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good spelling, punctuation and capitalization with some errors that do not interfere with the meaning.</li> <li>A repeated error is considered once <b>only</b></li> </ul>



	sustained				
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence of attempt to address the topic.</li> <li>• Focus not sustained</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sentences with errors obscure meaning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited vocabulary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No opening or closing</li> <li>• Piece is incomplete</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spelling, punctuation and capitalization with a number of errors that slightly affect the meaning.</li> <li>• A repeated error is considered once only</li> </ul>
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No evidence of attempt to address the topic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No sentences are clearly formed in writing. Just chunks of words.</li> </ul>	<p>Most vocabulary is inappropriate and /or inaccurate except for basic common language</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No sequence or awkward sequence that confuses meaning.</li> <li>• No sentences.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frequent errors that interfere with meaning in most of the sentences.</li> </ul>

Appendix (B) Graphic organizers for brainstorming

**Cluster Web**



**Causes**

**Effect**

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Appendix(C ): The scaffolding sheets for writing

**DISCUSSION TEXT TYPE**

**Purpose:** to give both sides of an issue

<b>TITLE</b>		<b>Language</b>
<b>Identify the issue</b>		*point linking connectives eg first, in the next section
<b>Introduction to the issue</b>		*Generalized participants eg students, builders
<b>Point/s for</b>		*thinking verbs to express a point of view eg feel, believe, hope
<b>Support / Evidence</b>		* opposing argument linking conjunctions eg on the other hand, however  * comparing language eg similarly, instead, alike, although
<b>Point/s against</b>		* objective language  * varied modality eg perhaps, might, should, must
<b>Support / evidence</b>		*relating verbs eg speeding is dangerous  *usually present tense
<b>Summary and/or recommendation</b>		

## EXPOSITION TEXT TYPE

**Purpose:** to state a position and argue it/persuade

TITLE		Language
<b>Identify a point of view</b>		*argument linking connectives eg first, finally
<b>Introduction to a point of view</b>		*generalized participants eg fisherman, drivers
<b>Argument 1</b>		*thinking verbs to express a point of view eg feel, believe, understand  * conjunctions of reason eg because, therefore, as, if
<b>Support / Evidence</b> 1.  2.		* strong modality eg, should, must, certainly. clearly  *relating verbs eg smoke is dangerous for health
<b>Argument 2</b>		*action verbs eg we must save...  *abstract nouns eg poverty, pollution
<b>Support / evidence</b> 1.  2.		* rhetorical questions eg is history important?  *persuasive  *logical
<b>Summary and/or recommendation</b>		*present tense

## EXPLANATION TEXT TYPE

**Purpose:** to show how/why something happens or works

TITLE		Language
<b>Identify the phenomenon</b>		*verbs to show cause eg will form a... as a result of... , leading to...
<b>Introduction to the phenomenon</b>		
<b>Explain In sequence: how and why</b>		*conjunctions of time and cause and effect eg when, as, next, then, following, as a consequence
<b>how and why</b>		* technical words topic related  *abstract and general nouns eg benefit, hospitals
<b>how and why</b>		*timeless present tense eg are, happens, turns  *factual  *passive voice
<b>how and why</b>		
<b>Summary / closing statement</b>		



## NARRATIVE TEXT TYPE

**Purpose:** to entertain and instruct, **show** a moral

TITLE		Language
<b>Orientation</b> who what where when why		*particular nouns and adjectives to refer to and describe, defined characters eg Ahmed was a young boy...  * action verbs eg curled up..., slammed shut...
<b>Complication</b>		* conjunctions and time connectives eg when, then, next, after, earlier  *figurative language to describe eg simile ... as hot as the sun eg metaphor ... trees are the lungs of the earth eg... personification ... the sea roared
<b>A series of events that develop the complication</b>		*descriptive language of mood eg excitement, fear, happiness
<b>Resolution - normality returns</b>		* complex sentences  *usually past tense  *can have dialogue
<b>Coda</b>		

## PROCEDURE TEXT TYPE

**Purpose:** to achieve a goal by following certain steps

TITLE		Language
<b>Statement of goal or aim</b>		*imperative, commanding verbs eg put, turn, take
<b>What you will need (Ingredients/ Materials)</b>		*adverbs to detail time, place, manner eg stir for 5 minutes... , place below the ..., turn carefully  *connectives of time to sequence eg after this, tie off... , finally, first, next
<b>Steps in sequence</b>  <b>how when where</b> <b>what why</b>		*reasons for doing things eg stir the cream so that it will ...  *simple present tense  *detailed information on how eg carefully where eg 5cm from top when eg after cutting
<b>Closing statement</b>		

## RECOUNT TEXT TYPE

**Purpose:** retell in order what has happened

TITLE		Language
<b>Orientation</b> Who what where when why		*adjectives to describe nouns eg the strong horse...  * specific participants eg my family
<b>Events in order</b>		*Conjunctions and time connectives to sequence eg when, then, first, yesterday  *action verbs eg the car swerved... chased, went  *complex sentences  *simple past tense
<b>Personal comments to place through out</b>		*first or third person pronouns eg he, her, us, I
<b>Reorientation which concludes/ and or final personal comment</b>		

## INFORMATION TEXT TYPE

Purpose: to present information - define, describe, classify

TITLE		Language
<b>Identify and classify the subject</b>		*timeless present tense eg the rainy season always begins in May
<b>A general statement about the topic</b>		*technical terms topic related eg longitude and latitude lines on a map ...
<b>Description in bundles of information - could have sub headings</b> 1.		* factual precise description eg snow falls in the winter... red and yellow leaves, straight lines
2.		* classification words eg similar to, belongs to  * verbs to describe behaviour eg birds fly north in winter
3.		*relating verbs eg lions are mammals  *general nouns eg schools rather than "our school"
<b>Closing statement</b>		

Appendix (D) Peer editing sheet

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Name of editor \_\_\_\_\_

**Tip: read the essay out loud.**

Step 1: Say one thing that you notice about the essay that is positive. :”Wow, you have nice handwriting!”

Step 2: Check **ONLY** for the points listed below.

If there is no problem, tick the “yes “column. If there is a problem, tick the “No” column and make a comment if you know how to fix it.

	Yes	No	Suggestion to fix the mistake....
<p><b>Punctuation</b></p> <p>Did he use full stop?</p> <p>Did he use commas?</p>			
<p><b>Capitalization</b></p> <p>Are names capitalized?</p> <p>Is the first letter of each sentence capitalized?</p>			
<p><b>Spelling</b></p> <p>(no more than 3)</p> <p>Do you think that most words spelled correctly?</p>			
<p><b>Grammar</b></p> <p>Do most sentences have a subject and a verb?</p>			
<p><b>Main points</b></p> <p>Did they take about all of the ideas in the prompt?</p>			

## Appendix (E) Peer editing checklist

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

My peer's name \_\_\_\_\_

### My peer Editing Checklist

Direction: Read each sentence and tick the picture that best describes how you feel about the statement.

	Yes	No	I can't tell
1. He used his best handwriting.			
2. He used capital letters and periods.			
3. He wrote the title of his essay / paragraph.			
4. His writing has a topic sentence.			
5. His writing has several detail sentences.			
6. He corrects spelling and grammar mistakes.			
7. His writing makes sense when I read it.			

Appendix (F) Proofreading sheet

Proofreading sheet

The following checklist will help you proofread, edit, and improve the written work.

When done, ask a classmate, parent or teacher to proofread it again.

Author----- Editor -----

	Yes	No	Comment
Is there evidence of prewriting activity?			
Does the title fit the piece?			
Are paragraphs used?			
Is the introduction effective?			
Is the main idea clear, with a sense of purpose?			
Is information placed in logical order?			
Is there enough supporting evidence?			
Does the writer stay on topic?			
Is the writing interesting?			
Is the vocabulary appropriate?			
Does each sentence begin with a capital letter?			
Does each sentence end with a capital letter?			
Does each sentence end with a proper punctuation?			
Is each sentence a complete thought?			
Are there words that should be capitalized?			
Are there other grammar mistakes that should be fixed?			
Is the conclusion effective?			
Is the handwriting neat?			



Appendix( G ) Self editing checklist

Editing Checklist

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Title of my writing  
 .....

✓	
	I read my writing myself to see if it made sense.
	My writing is focused on one important idea or topic.
	My introduction attracts a reader's attention.
	The title fits the piece and gets a reader interested.
	I replace weak words with specific words.
	I deleted unnecessary words by combining short sentences.
	I checked for correct punctuation.
	I checked for correct capitalization.
	I indented to begin a new paragraph.

Writing this piece was: hard work      not so hard work      easy

Editing this piece was: hard work      not so hard work      easy

Next time I would:

---



---

Appendix ( H ) descriptors for designing peer editing sheets for students writing

Descriptors to use in Designing peer editing worksheets

**Conventions**

- \_\_\_\_\_ The paragraphs are sound.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Each of the paragraphs has one main idea.
- \_\_\_\_\_ We have used correct grammar.
- \_\_\_\_\_ We have used correct punctuation.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Periods are at the end of the sentences.
- \_\_\_\_\_ We have quotation marks around dialogue.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The spelling is correct.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The handwriting is legible.

**Fluency**

- \_\_\_\_\_ The sentences begin in different ways.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The sentences build upon the ones before.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The sentences are different lengths.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The meaning of each of the sentences is clear.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The sentences flow and use correct grammar.
- \_\_\_\_\_ There are no run-ons.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The sentences are complete.

**Organization**

- \_\_\_\_\_ The report is sequenced in order.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The introduction is exciting and inviting.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The ideas flow and are well connected.

\_\_\_\_\_ We have a **satisfying conclusion**.

### ***Capitalization***

\_\_\_\_\_ We have capitalized the first word in **each** sentence.

\_\_\_\_\_ We have capitalized people and pet names.

\_\_\_\_\_ We have **capitalized** months and days.

\_\_\_\_\_ We have capitalized **cities, states and places**.

\_\_\_\_\_ We have capitalized title of books, movies, et cetera.

### ***Word choice***

\_\_\_\_\_ Every word seems **just** right.

\_\_\_\_\_ We **used** a lot of **describing** words.

\_\_\_\_\_ The words paint pictures in the reader's **s** mind.

\_\_\_\_\_ We used strong verbs **s** like **darted** and **exclaimed**.

\_\_\_\_\_ We used **synonyms** to add variety.

### ***Ideas***

\_\_\_\_\_ we used a graphic organizer to create and organize ideas.

\_\_\_\_\_ The ideas are written in our own words.

\_\_\_\_\_ The report is clear and focused.

\_\_\_\_\_ We understand the topic.

\_\_\_\_\_ The details give the reader important information.

\_\_\_\_\_ The ideas relate to one another.

\_\_\_\_\_ We have listened to suggestions from the teacher or peers.

### ***Sound ideas***

\_\_\_\_\_ It all makes sense and it has a purpose.

\_\_\_\_\_ I know this topic well.

\_\_\_\_\_ We have included interesting details not everyone would think of.

\_\_\_\_\_ Once you start reading you will not want to stop.

### *Good Organization*

\_\_\_\_\_ It start out with a bang.

\_\_\_\_\_ Everything ties together and flows from idea to idea.

\_\_\_\_\_ It builds to the good parts.

\_\_\_\_\_ The ideas are broken into logical chunks of paragraphs.

\_\_\_\_\_ At the end it feels finished and makes you think.

### *Voice*

\_\_\_\_\_ This really sounds like us and what we think.

\_\_\_\_\_ The reader can tell that we care about this topic.

\_\_\_\_\_ The reader can identify with our characters.

\_\_\_\_\_ We want you to read this and feel something.

### *Word choice*

\_\_\_\_\_ This is the best way to say it.

\_\_\_\_\_ I can picture the sitting, actions, and mood!

\_\_\_\_\_ The words are new way to say every day things.

\_\_\_\_\_ Listen to the power in the verbs.

\_\_\_\_\_ Some of the words remain in my mind.

### *Sentence Fluency*

\_\_\_\_\_ The sentences begin in different ways.

\_\_\_\_\_ Some Sentence and paragraphs are short and some are long.

\_\_\_\_\_ It just sounds good as it is read aloud.

\_\_\_\_\_ The sentence have power and punch.

### ***Conventions***

\_\_\_\_\_ Capitals are used correctly.

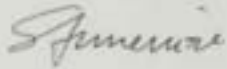
\_\_\_\_\_ Periods, commas, and quotations marks are in the right places.

\_\_\_\_\_ Almost every word is spelled correctly.

\_\_\_\_\_ We remembered to indent each paragraph.

Appendix (1) Jury of Referees for Research Instruments

Simon Finamore



ESL CONSULTANT, SSAT, Abu Dhabi.

Islam Mohamed



English Teaching Consultant, SSAT, Abu Dhabi  
MA in TESOL, Manchester University, UK

Tony McSheffrey

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Christy L K Morris

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