

**The Effect of the Process Writing  
Approach on Enhancing Secondary Stage  
Students' English Creative Writing Skills  
in the Field of Short Story**

**By:**

**Prof Dr. Awatef Ali Sheir**

Professor of Curriculum &  
Instruction of English,  
Institute of Educational Studies,  
Cairo University.

**Ashraf Ahmed El-Sayed Kaoud**

EFL Instructor

**Dr. Abdel Rehim Saad el Din El – Hilaly**

Professor of Curriculum  
Instruction of English, Faculty of Education  
Al Azhar University.

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## **The Effect of the Process Writing Approach on Enhancing Secondary Stage Students' English Creative Writing Skills in the Field of Short Story**

**Dr. Awatef Ali Sheir, Ashraf Ahmed El-Sayed Kaoud,**

**Dr. Abdel Rehim Saad el Din El – Hilaly**

### **Introduction**

Without a doubt, the most important invention in human history is writing. It provides a relatively permanent record of information, opinions, beliefs, feelings, arguments, explanation, theories etc. Writing allows us to share our communication not only with our contemporaries, but also with future generations. It permits people from the near and far-distant past to speak to us. Why then, given all of the beauty and benefits of writing, do so many students hate it? (Carroll, 2014, p.1).

In this concern, TESOL Association (1997) confirms that all our primary and secondary school pupils will be living and contributing to an increasingly diverse society and interdependent community of nations in the 21st century. This means that, in order for our student to realize their personal, social and long-term career goals, they will need to communicate with each other as well as with other individuals from other nations. This communication needs to be done skillfully, and appropriately in order to be effective. Therefore, the challenge of contemporary education is to prepare all students for life in this new world and in this new century.

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Janet and Ellen (1993) point out that students are subject to making language errors when they write. While making errors is normal part of learning a foreign language, students will need to work on eliminating these errors, particularly in formal writing.

This general agreement on the importance of writing in language skills has led educators and researchers to find ways for effective writing instruction. One of these ways is the use of the process approach which focuses on the writer as an independent individual and lays particular stress on a cycle of writing activities which move learners from the generation of ideas and the collection of data through to the publication of a finished text (Tribble, 1996; Brien, 2004).

On the other hand, creative writing plays an important role for learners at the personal and professional levels. Through creative writing, students can express themselves, their feelings, ideas, and plans. It is a tool which can turn imagination and inspiration into visible words. Thus, the current study comes as an attempt to treat the low level of secondary stage students in English creative writing skills in the field of short story and this is through the use of the process writing approach.

- **Creative Writing:**

Raimes (1991) considers writing as "a creative activity and a journey of self-discovery", pointing out that writing offers a way for students to express themselves, not to repeat learned responses. In the same concern, Sheir and Alodwan (2010, p.53) state that "All pupils have creative abilities and their creativity takes a wide variety of forms. Each individual has a wide range of ideas, perceive things in a personal way

and, at times, shows insight and inventiveness..... Some pupils may not be creative in one particular area but show creativity in a range of contexts across the curriculum. Where staff organized opportunities for creativity across the curriculum, pupils were more likely to find and develop their creative talents in particular areas".

As shown above and according to various studies, to describe writing as more creative than others, these certainly should reflect aspects of creative product such as fluency, flexibility, originality and elaboration. That's why Ramet (2007, p.13) defines creative writing as "having the power to create an imaginative, original literary production or composition." this can be applied to a very broad spectrum of writing genres. In this respect, Fodrey (2014,p.23) stresses "the need for teachers to focus on writing for discovery, writing to discover self and voice , and development of power and authority of one 's own writing ." while "also focusing on.... positioning the self within the world and writing for change."

In the present study, a creative piece of writing is that kind of writing through which students can express their thoughts, ideas, feelings, reactions, opinions, solutions, etc.... in an attractive literary style, taking into account the content, organization, vocabulary, language use, mechanics of writing and originality of the topic.

- **Importance of Creative Writing**

De Pereira (1991, p. 50) assures that writing has moved up in the scale of classroom priorities because of the many benefits it provides among which is that writing is a creative

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process, i.e. we sit down to write with a definite idea in mind, but as we write, new ideas develop. It seems imperative to find new directions for our writing classes. No longer should the production of paragraphs, compositions, and reports be the ultimate goal. We must also include a kind of writing that allows our students' powers of imagination to come into play. Creative writing opens up new frontiers in our classrooms not only by giving us a new context with innumerable linguistic possibilities, but also by giving students the opportunity to make full use of their creative potential. In the same concern, Pardlow (2003) assures that creative writing exercises do serve to foster students' creative growth while also fostering, more importantly, their development of practical writing abilities. He also assures that creative writing pedagogy can empower students who are often marginalized and silenced by the traditional composition curriculum. It is obvious that this kind of writing has an important role in individuals' literary development, especially that it enables learners to express themselves freely, a fact that might contribute to increase their self-confidence and facilitating the learning-teaching process.

In support of this claim, Bearden (2006) states that creative writing brings the following values to the classroom: creative writing deepens the experience of other content area, strengthens other writing done in the classroom and teaches conventions, stimulates creative problem solving, cultivates imagination, encourages reading, encourages development of self, creates community that supports learning beyond the creative writing focus, and creates meaning in a child's life. That's why the present research tries to investigate the effect

of the process writing approach on enhancing English creative writing skills of secondary stage students in the field of short story.

- **Characteristics of short stories:**

Stories are fun to read, and they can also be fun to write. Glossary of Terms for Literary Analysis (2008) defines the short story as a brief work of fiction that generally focuses on one or two main characters who face a single problem or conflict. In this respect, (Murdoch, 2002, pp. 9-17) maintains that "short stories can, if selected and exploited appropriately, provide quality text content which will greatly enhance EFL courses". He added that based on short stories, instructors can create a variety of writing activities to help students develop their writing skills.

A short story have a number of parts woven together. It should have a main character and a small cast of other characters. It should have a conflict, or problem, that the main character faces. This problem should be shown and solved in an incident or a series of incidents, which form the plot of the story. A story also needs a storyteller, or narrator.

In this concern, Dinneen and O'Connor (2008) (cited in Ibnian 2009, p.70) state that there are certain elements that should exist in the story: Setting; the time and place in which the story happens, characters; persons, or sometimes even animals, the conflict (problem), the plot (events), the solution, and the theme; the controlling idea or belief of the story.

As for the parts of the short story, Tann (1991, p.91) points out that each story consists of three parts: beginning, middle and ending. "The beginning includes the setting and

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the characters, whereas the middle includes the problem and events, and the ending includes the resolution and the conclusion".

Therefore, the researcher of the present research study considers short stories as an important ingredient in the students' curriculum because they could be used as a means to entertain students and develop their language skills. In addition to their value as vehicle to arouse interest in subject matter and pull diverse issues together, stories facilitate the growth of mental and moral capacities. One of the teacher's chief roles is to facilitate growth by presenting students with challenging material to explore, material in which discoveries and connections can be made.

Consequently, the researcher of the present research tackled the short story writing mainly as it represents one of the main components of the writing activities which the syllabi of the secondary stage concentrate on.

### • **The major skills of creative writing in short story:**

Having reviewed the related literature on developing students' creative short story writing skills, the researcher can specify these skills in terms of the skills related to content and organization, vocabulary and language use, mechanics of writing and the skills related to creative thinking skills (fluency, flexibility, originality and elaboration).

#### - **Content and organization**

The major skills related to short story writing concerning content and organization are: the clarity of elements of the story (setting, characters, the problem, the plot, the solution and the theme), sufficient details to support the main idea, relevant ideas, coherent content, well-organized paragraphs,



and logically sequenced events (Patricia & Richard, 2003; Dawid, 2004).

- **Vocabulary and language use:**

The related skills of vocabulary and language use in short story are: the appropriate choice of words and idioms, accurate use of words and idioms, and the accurate use of the structure of sentences (Arthur, 2003; Dawid, 2004).

- **Mechanics of writing:**

The related skills of mechanics of writing in short story are: spelling, punctuation and capitalization (Kane, 2000; Arthur, 2003).

- **Creative thinking skills:**

The researcher briefly tackles the most common creative thinking skills. These skills are: fluency, flexibility, originality and elaboration.

Concerning fluency, Porter et al. (1991) state that fluency is the ability to express thoughts in flowing, effortless style. Whereas, Kaufman (2009) defines fluency simply as how many different things one can name, regardless of their repetitiveness or practicality. On the other hand, Kaufman (2009) states that flexibility looks at how many different categories one can name or how many different types of ideas one may have. Flexibility is the ability to see things from different points of view, to use many different approaches or strategies. Hence, flexibility allows individual to change directions easily and give themselves permission to experience new people, places, ideas and things with open minds.

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As for originality, Porter et al. (1991) state that originality is the ability to express new, different and unusual ideas. It involves synthesis or putting information about a topic together in a new and creative way. Originality is when everybody starts off with the same task but ends up with all kinds of different solutions for their final answer. Concerning elaboration, Baer (1997) defines it as the ability to generate many details to expand and enrich one's ideas and added that elaboration is the ability to make an idea better or clearer by building upon it.

### • Tools for Creating Idea

Sheir and Alodwan (2010, p.68) state that there are many tools for creating ideas, either individually or with other people. One can use what works for him/her. Some of these are:

- **Absence thinking:** think about what is not there.
- **Art streaming:** keep creating until you get through the blocks.
- **Brainstorming:** the classic creative method for groups.
- **Brain mapping:** combining brain writing and mind-mapping.
- **Random words:** using a random word as a stimulus.
- **Role-play:** become other people. Let them solve the problem.
- **Reversal:** looking at the problem backwards.
- **Breakdown:** careful decomposition to explore the whole system.
- **Challenge:** challenge any part of the problem.
- **Visioning:** creating a motivating view of the future.

- **Guided imagery:** letting your subconscious give a message.
- **How-how diagram:** break down problem by asking "how".
- **Incubation:** letting the subconscious do the work.
- **Lateral thinking:** thinking sideways to create new ideas.
- **SCAMPER:** using action verbs as stimuli. SCAMPER (an acronym for substitute, combine, adapt, modify, put to other uses, eliminate, reverse).
- **Six thinking hats:** think comfortably in different ways about the problem.
- **Storyboarding:** creating a visual story to explore or explain.

Consequently, the present research study comes as an attempt to develop students' English creative writing skills in the field of short story, taking into account the importance of creating an encouraging environment that helps students express themselves freely and offers them more avenues and tools to express their creativity.

- **Educational Approaches of teaching writing:**

Several educational approaches to writing emerged at different times since the 1960s and continue to have an impact on writing pedagogy today. Each approach represents a particular focus in the teaching of writing to language learner's product, process, and genres. However, the most two popular methods of teaching writing to non-native speakers are: The product approach and the process approach.

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- **The Product Approach:**

During the product-centered era, a succession of approaches came about that were informed by a behavioral, habit formation theory of learning. Basically, they are all concerned with the same objective of creating a final product, and accuracy was of major importance, whether it was a report, story, paragraph, or essay. The product-oriented focus was on the mechanical aspects of the standard English rhetorical style and language – grammar, spelling, punctuation, and vocabulary. Conventional organization required, for example, the five paragraph essay (introduction, three paragraph body, and the conclusion), the thesis sentence and controlling idea. Product-centered pedagogy is basically teacher-centered in nature. In other words, the teacher tells the students what and how to write, and all products are written for the teacher. The products are graded, corrected, and commented on without any additional input, and then returned to the students (Jones, 2006, p.34).

A few scholars, Ghaleb (1993) and Chiang (2002), cite a number of researchers who found that this current-traditional method (product-oriented approach) was not adequately effective for writing instruction or for creative thinking and writing.

- **The Process Approach:**

As a reaction to the product approach era, the process approach (in a variety of formats) became an essential component of composition instruction and research in the United States in the late 1970s and 1980s. Writing research and pedagogy shifted from the final written product to attention on the process of writing which was viewed as a

complex problem-solving process. The focus of writing was on two major views: an expressive view which is free and creative writing and a heavy influence of a cognitive view (Elbow, 1998). The concept of writing was on the recursive and nonlinear mental strategies, cognitive and metacognitive, that students experience as they write. Writing also included interactive, communicative, and social activities that were involved in formulating and solidifying ideas.

There was dissatisfaction with the previously mentioned product approaches because many felt that those approaches did not foster thought or expression. As a result, many L2 researchers and practitioners began to investigate and implement process-centered approaches to L2 writing instruction. Since then, researchers have demonstrated that writers use the same processes for L1 as for L2, so the process approach was adopted for L2 writing. Cited in Ortega (2004), Zamel (1983) maintained that process writing is a pedagogy in which the teacher is involved with the students during the process and intervenes at various stages. In fact, the writing process has proven to be an effective approach with L2/FL learners (Kroll, 1990). The typical features of process-oriented pedagogy that are used in many ESL writing classes in the United States include prewriting exercises, opportunities to reflect on writing, teacher and peer feedback on content without immediate grading, multiple redrafting cycle, and substantive interactions via conferencing and peer-response groups (Auerbach, 1999; Ortega, 1997; Santos, 1992; Susser, 1993).

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- **Steps/Stages of the Writing Process:**

The writing process goes through several steps/stages. These steps/stages are pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing and publishing. These general stages of the process approach were derived from process theory and models. (Pennington, 1996, in Jones, 2006, p.39). Comparatively, the following table shows the differences between students writing as a product and writing as a process.

<b>Product writing and Process writing</b>	
<b>When students write as a product:</b>	<b>When students write as a process:</b>
1. The writing is teacher centered.	1. The writing is student centered.
2. The teachers' role is to assign and grade.	2. The teachers' role is to model and coach.
3. The teacher is the primary audience.	3. We write for many audiences.
4. The product is graded.	4. The process is evaluated.
5. The teacher is the primary responder.	5. The editing group or editing committee is the primary
6. We write on linear draft.	6. We write many, ever improving drafts.
7. A draft is done in class.	7. The entire process of thinking, writing, revising, editing, and publishing is done in class.

**Table: (1) (Adopted from Harp, 1993,p.46)**

Consequently, the present research study is more concerned with the product approach and the process approach in an attempt to investigate the effect of the process writing approach on enhancing secondary stage students' English creative writing skills in the field of short story.

- **Definition of Terms:**

- **Creative writing:**

India's National Newspaper (2003, p. 1) defines creative writing as "expressing thoughts and ideas in series of well-planned stages, to create a well –written and highly readable final product".

Ramet (2007, p. 13) defines it as "Having the power to create an imaginative, original literary production or composition".

**The researcher defines creative writing** as that kind of writing through which students can express their thoughts, ideas, feelings, reactions, opinions, solutions etc.... in an attractive literary style, taking into account the content and organization, vocabulary and language use, mechanics of writing and the originality of the topic.

- **Process writing approach :**

Harris & Hodges (1995) views the Process Writing Approach as "an ongoing process of several steps beginning with being motivated to write, generating ideas (via various sources/methods), drafting, revising, from various readers, getting feedback (between revisions), editing and finally publishing writing".

The researcher adopts Harris & Hodges' (1995) definition of the process writing approach and makes use of its steps in the classroom practices that students follow in composing their creative short stories.

- **Statement of the Problem:**

The problem of the study can be stated in the low level of secondary stage students, in Egypt, in English

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creative short story writing skills. Consequently, the present research attempts to answer the following main question:

**What is the effect of the process writing approach on enhancing secondary stage students' English creative writing skills in the field of short story?**

- **Purpose of the Study:**

The main aim of the present research is to develop the English creative short story writing skills of secondary stage students through the use of the process writing approach.

- **Hypotheses of the study:**

To answer the above question, the following hypotheses were formulated to be tested:

- 1-There is statistically significant difference among the mean scores of the experimental group (process writing approach) and the control group in the overall English creative short story writing skills Post-test in favour of the experimental group.
- 2-There is statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group on the pre-test and post-test in the overall English creative short story writing skills in favour of their post-test scores.

- **Delimitations of the study:**

- 1- **Approaches:** The educational approaches were limited to the process writing approach and the traditional approach (the product approach).
- 2- **Topic:** The study was limited to developing the English creative short story writing.



- 3- **Place:** The study was limited to first year secondary school students at El- kadima Secondary School for Girls in kafr El-Sheikh.
- 4- **Time:** The experimental treatment was implemented in a whole term of one academic year.

### **Method:**

#### **Participants:**

The participants of the research was sixty students, chosen at random, from first year secondary school students at El-kadima Secondary School for Girls in Kafr El-Sheikh in the school year 2013-2014. Students were randomly assigned to two groups. 30 students represented the experimental group (the process writing approach). The other 30 students represented the control group (the traditional teaching based on the product approach).

#### **Instruments:**

The researcher used the following instruments:

- 1- A checklist to identify the English creative short story writing skills needed for first year secondary school students (Prepared by the researcher).
- 2- A pre-post English creative short story writing test (Prepared by the researcher).
- 3- A scoring scale for scoring the English creative short story writing test (Prepared by the researcher).

#### **The English Creative Short Story Writing Skills Checklist:**

The checklist aimed at identifying the creative short story writing skills necessary for first year secondary stage students in short story writing and is based on the English

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syllabus of the Ministry of Education for first year secondary stage, and on previous studies focusing on developing English creative short story writing skills. This checklist included 13 skills classified under four categories: Content and Organization, Vocabulary and Language use, Mechanics of Writing, and Originality. A three-point rating scale ranging from highly required to not required is included in the checklist.

### **Procedures:**

The following procedures were followed in executing the experiment:

- 1- Administering the English creative short story writing skills pre-test to the whole sample (the control group and the experimental group), sixty students of first year secondary school students.
- 2- Teaching the experimental group by the researcher using the process writing approach. The control group was taught by the school teacher using the usual way.
- 3- Administering the creative short story writing skills post-test to the whole sample (the control group and the experimental group) after the treatment.
- 4- Scoring the students' creative short story writing skills test using the scoring scale developed by the researcher.
- 5- Collecting data of pre-and-post treatment raw scores.
- 6- Tabulation and analysis of data.

### **• Results of the Statistical Analysis:**

#### **-The First Hypothesis:**

"There is statistically significant difference among the mean scores of the experimental group (process writing approach) and the control group in the overall English

creative short story writing skills Post-test in favour of the experimental group."

To test this hypothesis, the researcher used the t-test for independent groups to measure the differences between the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group on the post-test of the English creative short story writing skills test. The obtained results of this hypothesis are shown in table (2) as follows:

**Table (2) Results of T-Test for the Experimental Group and the Control Group in Total Scores of English creative short story writing skills in post test**

E.C.W.S.	Groups	N	Mean	Df	SD	T - value		Level of significance	$\eta^2$
						Calculated	Tabulated		
overall	Experimental	30	44.76	58	3.4332	15.10	2.00	0.05	0.651
	control	30	34.70		3.2246				

Table (2) shows that there is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group on the post-test in the overall English creative short story writing test in favour of the experimental group (the process writing approach). The obtained (calculated) T-value is higher than T-tabulated (2.00) at (0.05) level of significance and (58) degrees of freedom, in favour of the experimental group (the higher mean score). Table (2) also shows that the effect size of the independent variable of the process writing approach was high (0.651) on the total score of the English creative short story writing skills test.

Based on the above table, it could be concluded that the experimental group (the process writing approach) had a

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positive effect on developing the overall English creative short story writing skills of secondary stage students.

### - The Second Hypothesis

"There is statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group on the pre-test and post-test in the overall English creative short story writing skills in favour of their post-test scores."

To test this hypothesis, the researcher used the t-test for paired groups to measure the difference between the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group on the pre-test and post-test in the overall English creative short story writing skills pre-posttest. The obtained results of this hypothesis are shown in table (3) as follows:

**Table (3) Results of T-Test for the Experimental Group and the Control Group on the pre-test and post-test in the overall English creative short story writing skills test.**

E.C.W.S.	Groups	N	Mean	SD	Df	T – value		Level of significance	η <sup>2</sup>
						Calculated	Tabulated		
overall	Experimental pre.	30	29.93	4.5542	29	16.10	2.09	0.01	<b>0.98</b>
	Experimental post	30	44.76	4.6555					
overall	control pre.	30	29.43	2.2404	29	11.82	2.09	0.01	<b>0.92</b>
	control post	30	34.70	2.2169					

Table (3) shows that there is statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group on the pre-test and post-test in the overall English creative short story writing skills in favour of their post-test scores. The obtained (calculated) t-value is

higher than t-tabulated (2.09) at (0.01) and (2.00) at (0.05) level of significance with (29) degrees of freedom.

- **Discussion:**

Results of this research showed that using the process writing approach proved to be effective on developing English creative short story writing skills of secondary stage students. This positive effect of the process writing approach could be attributed to the emphasis placed, during the implementation of the course, on the stages of the writing process approach. This approach views writing as an ongoing process of several steps beginning with being motivated to write, generating ideas, drafting, revising, getting feedback from various readers, editing, and finally publishing writing. All this helped the students to produce a creative product. Moreover, this approach confirms that learning a language necessarily involves social interaction and the process of writing is a part of this interaction. Through this study-centered, authentic and processed-based approach, students could show their ideas, feelings, opinions, and could express their creativity

The results of the experimental group (the process writing approach), is in line with those findings of other studies such as Bartscher (2001), Albertson and Billingsley (2001), Ammar (2001), Murdoch (2002), Banat (2007), Al-Ebeidy (2008) and Ibnian (2009). All these studies confirmed the effectiveness of the process writing approach on developing students' writing skills in general and the creative writing skills in particular. The results could also be attributed to the techniques of the process writing stages

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which opened the way for the teacher to guide the students by way of explanation, questioning, referencing, confirming students' knowledge, perceptions and methods, as well as correcting their misperception and errors. All these various sources of feedback gave the students an opportunity to think creatively and produce a creative product.

### • **Conclusion and Recommendations:**

Results of this research showed that using the process writing approach proved to be effective on developing English creative short story writing skills of secondary stage students. This is due to the stages of the process writing approach.

The research findings indicated that the process writing approach, challenged the traditional method in developing students' creative short story writing. The process writing approach helped the experimental group students develop their English creative short story writing skills in terms of content and organization, vocabulary and language use, mechanics of writing, and originality. Through this encouraging environment and the constructive stages of the process writing approach, students can show their ideas, feelings, opinions and express their creativity.

In the light of the findings of the present research, the following recommendations seem pertinent:

- 1- Finding showed that the process writing approach proved to be effective in developing the students' performance in short story writing, so it is recommended that teachers use this method in teaching creative short story writing.

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- 2- The Process Writing Approach views writing as an ongoing process of several steps beginning with being motivated to write, generating ideas (via various sources/methods), drafting, revising, getting feedback from various readers (between revisions), editing and finally publishing writing, so teachers have to take into considering the concept of continuous evaluation from the start to the end of the process of teaching creative writing using formative and summative evaluation.
  - 3- Teachers should provide students with enough opportunities to express their ideas, feelings, opinions and reactions freely as teachers in the recent trends, are more than information givers; they are facilitators, guides and co-learners.
  - 4- Formal and substantial supports from the Ministry of Education, are equally important for teachers who attempt to implement recent trends in teaching, such as teacher training programs, computer facilities, instructional guide and design menu of appropriate learning activities and so on.

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