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***Implementing Student Self-assessment to  
Promote Self-regulated Learning in Academic  
Writing within the LMD System***

**Case study: third year LMD students at the Department of English at the  
University of Bejaia**

**Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements  
for the Degree of LMD Doctorate in Language Sciences**

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## Abstract

The present research examines the effect self-assessment has on EFL students' self-regulatory practices and performance in academic writing. Previous research has shown that the ability to review and reflect on one's own writing can enhance both self-regulation skills and achievement. However, little has been done exploring this relationship on Algerian learners. To investigate this effect in the Algerian higher education, forty-nine EFL third year students from the department of English at the University of Bejaia participated in the study. Specifically, the study entailed a pre-post experiment with an experimental group (n=24) and a control one (n=25). Participants from the experimental group were actively involved in a 5-months classroom intervention in which they used different self-assessment techniques (checklists, rubrics, scripts and conferences) to review and reflect on their writing. To collect data, both qualitative and quantitative methods were used. Self-regulation was measured before and after the self-assessment intervention using a self-regulation scale and portfolio analysis was carried out to assess the students' written productions. Besides, we used writing logs as a research tool to get insight into the students' attitude, needs and expectations. Findings were supplemented by data gathered from the classroom observation. Significant effects of self-assessment were found for the self-reported self-regulation and writing performance of the participants involved in the self-assessment treatment. Basically, increased metacognitive awareness, enhanced self-efficacy and positive attitudes were the major influences of self-assessment on the participants. Nevertheless, the results also voiced some concerns regarding the implementation of the process in EFL writing instruction, notably the students' inexperience with self-assessment, time constraints, the students' low language proficiency, procrastination and absenteeism. The study underlines the need for teachers to engage students in constant self-assessment of their learning and to address self-regulation skills in EFL classrooms. The thesis has implications for both classroom practice and decision making.

**Key words:** EFL students, formative assessment, LMD system, academic writing, student self-assessment, self-regulated learning

## List of Abbreviations

**EFL:** English as a Foreign Language

**LMD:** Licence/Master/Doctorat

**FLL:** Foreign Language Learning

**SPSS:** Statistical Package for Social Sciences

**SRSD:** Self-regulated strategy development

**SCL:** Strategic content learning

**PBL:** Project based learning

**F:** frequency

**%:** Percent

**M:** mean

**SD:** Standard Deviation

**§:** paragraph

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### Résumé

### ملخص

## **General Introduction**

Foreign language education has witnessed a great shift from traditional/teacher centred methods (e.g., grammar translation method, audiolingualism...) to modern/learner centred methods (e.g., communicative approach, competency based approach, project-based learning, etc.). In the traditional trend, classroom language learning is based on the teacher as a transmitter of knowledge to passive receivers. In addition to being the only source of information, the teacher is authoritative as he/she controls everything (instruction, interaction and assessment) in the classroom. Moreover, learning is assessed in terms of the correct use of language. Yet, educators have noticed that students cannot transfer their knowledge outside the classroom. In other terms, teacher centeredness has failed to promote authentic communication. This teaching paradigm which is viewed as a mechanistic process or the application of rules following models that defeat communication created an urge for English as a foreign language (EFL) education reform. To achieve effective communication with the target language, educators have recently adjusted teaching methods and models to take into consideration the fact that students are active and engaged participants in the learning process. To say it differently, students are considered the core element of the classroom, for learning is a process wherein students actively create and build their knowledge and skills rather than passively receive information from the instructor. Students are then required to assume full responsibility for developing their competences (the communicative competence, the intellectual competence, the methodological competence and the social competence). Today, classrooms are no longer based on the teacher as the sole source of information and authority but are rather considered as social academies based on interaction, negotiation of meaning and authentic use of the foreign language. Besides, the teacher represents a facilitator and a guide instead. This shift in teachers' and students' roles aims at making learning more meaningful and communicative by providing students with opportunities to take responsibility for their

learning and make their choices in the learning process. That is, the aim of classroom instruction is to develop the students' competences mentioned earlier by fostering self-regulated learning. Students' ability to self-regulate their learning and adjust their knowledge and experiences has received significant attention in the last three decades. However, how to develop students' self-regulated capacities is still a matter of research. The present thesis is an attempt to explore the recent literature on self-regulated learning and to promote it in EFL classrooms within an Algerian context.

## **I. Background of the Study**

Foreign language learning (FLL) requires students to develop their communicative competence both spoken and written. In the case of writing, Lee and Tajino (2008) highlight that academic writing is important not only for developing students' communicative competence but also their critical thinking skills. Nevertheless, despite its perceived importance, students view it as a difficult skill to master (Kroll, 1990; Chamot, 2005; Kadri & Idri, 2016). This is because it is a productive skill which requires time and efforts (Dunlap & Weisman, 2006). Many studies have reported students' difficulties in writing (e.g. Bacha, 2012; Watcharapunyawong & Usha, 2013; Kadri & Idri, 2016). Among them, we cite linguistic and discourse problems. Most researchers relate students' writing proficiency to a lack of self-regulation (Harris et al., 2017). That is, students with low self-regulatory capabilities perform low in writing compared to students who are good self-regulators. In making their comments, Järvelä and Järvenoja (2011) explain that self-regulation strategies in writing contribute to students' increased attention, effort and persistence; students can plan, monitor, control and regulate the writing process. Drawing on this claim, students should take full responsibility for their writing and engage in this process cognitively, emotionally and socially. In other words, in order to develop their writing, students have to demonstrate high level of self-regulation. Self-regulation promotes not only individual learning of specific

domain content but also provides opportunities for students to actively engage in learning processes such as goal-setting, strategy use, self-monitoring and self-evaluation. It is, therefore, an important process through which students develop knowledge and skills related to both academic and lifelong learning. It has become an integral part of the learning process and is then considered one of the pillars of successful foreign language writing.

This construct has in fact been a matter of discussion for the last three decades; several studies have been conducted to investigate its pervasive effects on students' achievement (Pintrich, 2000; Graham et al., 2008, Harris et al., 2017). In practice, self-regulation can be manifested through different processes: goal-setting, planning, self-monitoring and self-evaluation. Some researchers investigated the effect of goal-setting on self-regulation and demonstrated its positive and crucial role (Zimmerman, 1998). Other researchers focused on motivational beliefs such as self-efficacy (Schunk & Zimmerman, 2007) and volition (Corno, 1993).

Many researchers have also focused on explaining the nature of the process. They have come to the conclusion that self-regulation is a cyclical process that involves many factors such as cognitive processes and motivational beliefs and students need to control all these factors. This control and regulation is manifested through the aforementioned self-regulation processes. Recently, attention has been directed to account for students' capacity to assess their learning process and determine their progress. Students need to regularly review and follow-up their progress and the strategies they use to achieve high language proficiency.

In linking self-assessment to self-regulation, findings reveal that students who engage in systematic reflection and review of their performance and take a proactive rather than a reactive role in their learning are more likely to develop their self-regulatory capacities and achieve better results compared to those who are passive learners (Gipps, 19994; Kitsantas &

Zimmerman, 2006; Boud & Falchikov, 2007; Andrade, 2010; Panadero, Tapia & Huertas, 2012). Self-assessment is considered as an important process in the self-regulation cycle. These constructs, self-regulated learning and self-assessment, are what make up the core of the present investigation.

## **II. Statement of the Problem**

The Algerian universities adopted a new educational system called *Licence, Master and Doctorate (LMD)* which has the aim of promoting students' ownership to form responsible citizens. In the case of language learning, EFL classes aim at promoting students' awareness and responsibility for their learning for the sake of engaging them in a systematic regulation, review and assessment of their progress so as to form reflective and self-critical students. As we may notice, most of the studies on self-regulated learning are conducted in western contexts. As concerns Algeria, we find that little research is conducted in this field. Most of the research conducted in the Algerian context explored other learning factors such as motivation and anxiety and little, if no attention, is given to self-regulated learning. Only few researchers in Algeria have attempted to explore students' proactive role in the learning process or investigate how they regulate it. Based on this finding, we think it worth addressing this void. In an attempt to move in this direction, the study addresses the question of how to promote self-regulation in academic writing within the LMD system adopted in the Algerian universities.

In this concern, Cooper (1998, p.59; as cited in Peatling, 2000, p.5) highlights the need to help students "understand and make sense of their learning through mindful reflection" on this process. To this end, self-assessment is one way to promote this reflection in EFL classrooms. This concept represents a type of evaluation wherein students judge and assess their learning to determine their progress. It can be implemented to promote students' sense of ownership and participation in the learning process, that is to develop students' self-regulated

capacities. Given these points, the central problem of this research is investigating the link between self-assessment and self-regulated learning in the Algerian context and more specifically to which extent self-assessment promotes self-regulated learning in academic writing in the Algerian universities. In other words, *what are the effects of student self-assessment on self-regulated learning in academic writing? The case of third year LMD students at the department of English at the University of Bejaia.*

To this end, the following research questions are addressed:

1. What most common difficulties do third year LMD students at the University of Bejaia face in their EFL writing?
2. To which extent are these students self-regulated?
3. In which ways does self-assessment promote self-regulated writing within the LMD system?
4. How can self-assessment help these students develop their academic writing?
5. What are the students' attitudes towards self-assessment?
6. What are the challenges experienced during the process self-assessment in the EFL writing class?

### **III. Hypotheses**

As developing skills in academic writing is a demanding and challenging process and because self-regulation is a crucial element for developing this ability, students need to engage actively in this process and assess their writing performance and progress. In this concern, Paris and Paris (2001, p. 99) draw our attention to the fact that self-regulation is likely to develop “when teachers create classroom environments in which students have opportunities to seek challenges, to reflect on their progress, and to take responsibility and pride in their accomplishments.” With respect to this claim, we suggest the use of self-assessment to engage students in the assessment process and promote self-regulated learning

in EFL writing classes. Put simply, we are interested in developing students' self-regulated skills through the process of self-assessment. Accordingly, we have an independent variable to manipulate in order to test its effect on the dependent variable. Self-assessment is the independent variable, whereas self-regulation and academic writing represent the dependent variables of this study. Students' self-assessment can support self-regulated learning through the process of reflection on their capacities and achievement. This effect relationship needs a cause/effect hypothesis to be tested in order to find an answer to our problem. Based on this, we are likely to hypothesise that:

1. If third year LMD students at the University of Bejaia used self-assessment techniques in their academic writing, they would develop their self-regulated capacities.
2. If these students used the self-assessment techniques accurately, their writing performance would be enhanced.

#### **IV. Aims and Significance of the Study**

The present work supports the use of self-assessment as a type of alternative assessment to develop students' self-regulation skills in academic writing. Academic writing requires students to engage in many processes such as conducting research, thinking, analysing and assessing; this calls for the use of one's self-regulation skills. Self-regulation plays an important role in academic writing through various cognitive, metacognitive and social processes. Notably, self-assessment is considered a crucial one (Vancouver, 2000; Schunk, 2003). That is, if students participate in the process of reviewing and assessing their writing, they become self-regulated learners. As a result, their academic writing will improve. It is worth noting that little is known about self-assessment and self-regulated learning within the Algerian higher education system; as such, this thesis is one of the first attempts to investigate academic self-regulation and self-assessment in an Algerian EFL context. Specifically, this study has a threefold objective. The first major goal is to develop students'

capacity for self-assessment and increase their metacognitive awareness of their own learning processes and therefore enhance their self-regulation skills. Secondly, as self-assessment enhances performance (Schunk, 2008; Andrade, 2010), the integration of the process into EFL writing instruction will encourage students to reflect on their own strengths and limitations; by so doing, it will assist them in improving their writing performance as well. As a final outcome of the research, we will suggest a number of pedagogical implications to assist teachers in the use of self-assessment in their EFL classrooms and support students' writing and self-regulation.

In short, our research will demonstrate to what extent self-assessment can promote self-regulated learning in academic writing and enhance both learning and teaching in the Algerian universities, thus contribute to the LMD reform.

## **V. Methods**

Our investigation seeks to determine the effects of self-assessment on self-regulated learning in academic writing; therefore, we opted for a mixed methodology.

The rationale behind this choice is that, first, the hypotheses set are based on causality, so our design is experimental (quantitative). Experimental research, according to Marczyk, DeMatteo and Festinger (2005, p. 3), "involves comparing two groups on one outcome measure to test some hypothesis regarding causation." The experiment is based on pre-post tests with two groups: experimental and control. Second, the nature and complexity of the research variables require understanding and getting insight into students' attitudes, motives and behaviour in the classroom; therefore, such an aim can be achieved through a qualitative study. Our choice of the qualitative method falls upon the use of a participant observation, students' portfolios and writing logs. Yet, it is worth mentioning that we have first conducted a pilot study based on informal teacher interviews, a pilot questionnaire and an informal classroom observation and discussion.

Put in a nutshell, our choice of methodology is the use of a mixed methods design which combines both quantitative and qualitative research methods of data collection. Mixing multiple methods ensures triangulation which represents one of the features of scientific research. Another benefit of using mixed methods is that it “affords opportunities to use the strengths of some methods to counterbalance the weaknesses of other methods.” (Axinn & Pearce, 2006, p. 2)

### **V.1. Population and Sample**

The population of this study is third year undergraduate students (N=232) studying for a degree in EFL at the department of English at the University of Bejaia, Algeria. Regarding the selected sample, two groups are chosen randomly as participants. One group (n=24) represents the experimental group and the other group stands as the control one (n=25).

Our choice of the population is not done at random. We have selected third year LMD students because their writing syllabus involves essay writing in EFL which is a challenging and demanding process. Therefore, there is obvious pedagogical utility for developing their self-regulation skills in order to help them enhance their writing performance and cope with difficulties. Besides, theoretically speaking, undergraduate students are interesting to our research because they are no longer novice writers; they are supposed to have accumulated the pre-requisite linguistic knowledge and have gained considerable experience in paragraph composing. That is, they should be ready to go beyond the sentence and paragraph level. Nevertheless, what they have to develop is their self-regulation and self-assessment as students. Moreover, at the end of the year, students who graduate will qualify for teaching, the further reason why they should be equipped with skills in self-regulation and assessment.

### **V.2. Data Collection Methods and Analysis**

Quantitative methods of data collection are used to measure a given problem and generate numerical data (Biggam, 2011, p. 130). Our quantitative method consists of an

experiment based on pre-post scales and tests. During the experiment, we implement self-assessment techniques (checklists, rubrics, scripts and conferences) on the experimental group during one academic year. The assessment program is designed according to the features of academic writing reported in the literature (O'Malley & Pierce, 1996; Oshima & Hogue, 2000, 2007; Savage & Mayer, 2005; Robitaille & Connelly, 2007; Hogue, 2008). This has the aim of supporting the students all along their academic writing class. However, the control group does not receive any treatment. The experiment is preceded by a self-regulation scale (pre-scale) to measure students' level of self-regulation and a writing test (pre-test) to assess their writing competence. The pre-scale and the pre-test helped to ensure equality between the two groups as well. Then, after the experiment, a post-scale is administered to both groups in addition to a writing post-test in order to compare the results. The pre and post scales consist of the same questions related to students' self-regulation habits including the strategies they employ to develop their writing and cope with their difficulties. Regarding the writing tests, the students are required to develop a piece of writing at the end of each unit of instruction. The students' compositions are scored by the researcher to help record the participants' progress. All the data collected through this quantitative method are analysed with the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) software version 25 which provides us with the descriptive and inferential statistics we need to measure our variables. The analysis of those results determines any change or improvement in the experimental group after receiving the treatment. However, numbers might be limited to explain how the change happens, so data obtained from the qualitative method can complement the results.

For the qualitative method, it is characterised by “intensive study, descriptions of events, and interpretation of meanings.” (Schunk, 2012, p. 12). That is, qualitative data provide in-depth information related to aspects which cannot be measured like students' attitudes and feelings. In this study, the qualitative method is represented by the use of a

participant observation, students' portfolios and students' writing logs. First of all, we start with participant observation which represents an important element of classroom practice. Its aim is to observe students' behaviour and reactions and record all that happens in the classroom in each session in order to develop our instructional plans and get insight into their aptitude, behaviour and attitudes. Concerning students' portfolios, they are based on a description of the students' written samples (collected in the classroom) based on the features of academic writing (layout, structure, unity, content, coherence and language). The analysis permits us to assess the students' compositions in terms of quality and determine improvement in their writing after experiencing self-assessment and receiving feedback from the teacher. Then, participants from the experimental group are asked to develop a writing log in which they report all what they experience during the experiment. The students' logs help the research by collecting rich and insightful information on how the self-assessment treatment helps them control the writing process, assess their works and improve their writing after receiving the necessary feedback. Information collected on students' attitudes, motivation and needs is of great importance because it helps us understand and conceptualise self-assessment from their standpoint.

In sum, the analysis and interpretation of the data collected through different tools will shed light on how the integration of self-assessment into EFL writing instruction has influenced our participants and help us conceptualise the process of self-assessment within the Algerian context.

## **VI. Structure of the Thesis**

Our thesis consists of six chapters. We start with a review of literature presented in two theoretical chapters. The first chapter reports the basic notions related to the LMD system in Algeria. It also explores the extensive literature on self-regulated learning, the important approaches and theories related to it and its role in academic writing as well. The second

chapter covers the main research findings on self-assessment and its implementation in EFL classrooms, with an emphasis on academic writing. Concerning the practical part, chapter three is devoted to the description and explanation of the procedures of data collection and data analysis used to achieve the aims of the study. Then, we report the findings in chapter four. The fifth chapter is devoted to the interpretation and discussion of the results in relation to previous research. Finally, we conclude, in the last chapter, with the strengths and the limitations of the study, a number of pedagogical implications and some suggestions for future research. In the general conclusion, a summary of the whole study is provided.

## **Part One: Theoretical Considerations**

### **Chapter One: Self-regulated Learning in EFL Classrooms within the LMD System**

With the development in information processing theory, learning strategies have been the focus of educational research for many years since students need to use learning strategies to facilitate their learning and cope with their difficulties. However, this construct has recently been found to be less helpful for researchers when investigating personal and strategic learning and as a consequence, the concept has been marginalised in educational psychology by the 1990s (Dornyei, 2005, p. 195), notably with the advent of socio-cognitive theories of learning. Scholars have shifted their attention to the exploration of the process of self-regulation. They have started to inquire which processes students use to regulate the whole process of learning not just the outcome, how they adjust them to achieve their goals and which processes are more efficient in specific learning contexts. The period of development of self-regulation began in the mid-1980s and stretched well into the 1990s. Starting from this period, self-regulation has appeared to be applicable to academic settings and publications on self-regulated learning have particularly increased (Boekaerts et al., 2000, p. 1) which later has become a “natural and organic part of the landscape” of education (Zeidner, Boekaerts & Pintrich, 2000, p.750). In the present chapter, we aim at exploring self-regulated learning in relation to the new educational system adopted in the Algerian higher education (LMD) to highlight its meaning, related processes and its promotion within the Algerian universities.

#### **I. The LMD System: an Overview**

With the advent in the world’s economy, of technology and globalisation, Algeria felt the need for a change in order to develop a universal education and keep pace with the world’s socio-economic standards and the international trade and business. Hence, a reform was launched in the 2000s starting from primary, middle and secondary schools to reach higher education. At the higher education level, the Algerian university started applying the

LMD system during the academic year 2004/2005. At the first year of implementation, this system was adopted by some universities only, namely Bejaia, Constantine and Mostaghanem.

### I.1. Structure

The LMD system is an acronym given to an educational system that gathers three degrees: Licence (equivalent of Bachelor of Arts), Master and Doctorate as shown in Figure 1.

1.

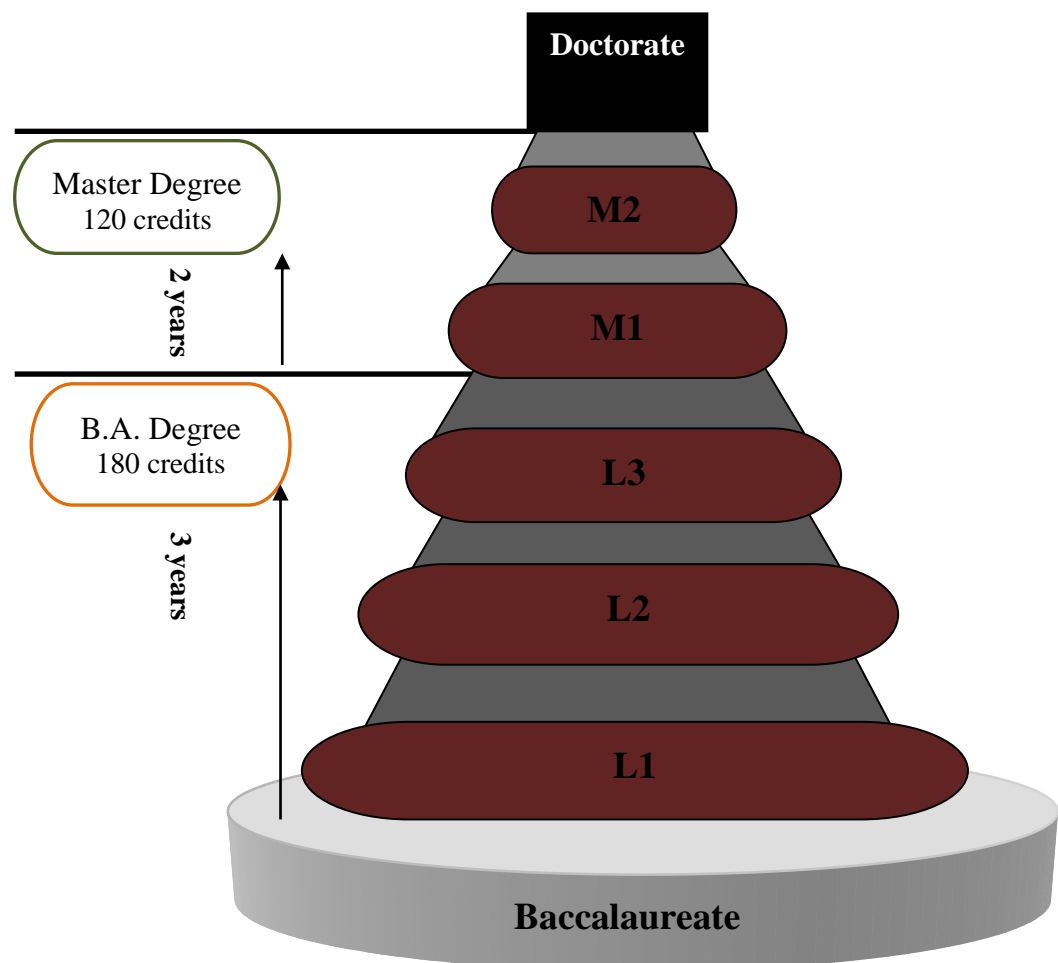


Figure 1. Structure of the LMD system (From guide de l'étudiant, 2015-2016, p.9)

As shown in Figure 1, the whole university course is supposed to take eight years of studies divided into three cycles. The first cycle concerns the Licence degree (B.A.) which is granted after three years of undergraduate study divided into 6 semesters requiring a gain of 180 credits at a rate of 30 credits per semester. The B.A. degree is considered a transition to

the second cycle, Master degree. The latter takes two years of study after obtaining the Licence degree which makes it baccalaureate +5. The Master degree necessitates validation of a total of 120 credits obtained in four semesters of study. The third cycle is the doctorate which requires three years of study and research and ends with a thesis to be defended in front of a jury. For Master student holders to enroll as PhD students, they have to pass the doctorate contest that takes place at the beginning of the academic year.

Algeria adopted the LMD system with major goals inspired primarily by Anglo-Saxon countries. This three cycle system was then adopted by European countries after the Bologna process. In 1999, twenty-nine (29) European countries signed the Bologna Declaration that seeks to establish a harmonised system of programs and common degrees (Teichler, 2012, p. 2). This credit system was introduced in Europe “in order to measure study achievements cumulatively and in order to have a common *currency* for decisions to recognize study achievement abroad upon return temporarily mobile students” (Teichler, 2012, p. 3). The major aim is making higher education more compatible and comparable, more competitive and attractive for non-European students and facilitating intra-European mobility (Teichler, 2012, p. 2). Simply put, the aim behind adopting this system in these countries is to improve the quality of learning and to feed the job market with qualified hands.

Because of the main challenges imposed by the evolving socio-economic situation in the world, it was of paramount importance to introduce some changes into the Algerian higher education system in order to improve both teaching and learning and this by adopting a system that corresponds and responds to the global needs and changes. The new educational system at university aims to enhance the academic domain, prepare students and equip them not only with knowledge but also with the skills and competences that permit them to cope with the job market challenges and manage their roles in both their professional and social life.

According to Mehiri (2017, p.1779), the reform includes re-foundation of the programs, assessment modes and innovation in teaching and learning. New technologies are integrated and the learning of English is highly valued. Drawing on other papers (e.g. Terry, 2008, pp. 115-116; Teichler, 2012, p. 4-6) the objectives of this reform in higher education can be summarised as follows:

- Ensuring high quality education by promoting scientific, technological, social and economic development;
- Linking higher education to the job market within the Algerian community;
- Encouraging flexibility in programs and mobility for students both at the national and international levels;
- Encouraging knowledge transfer through learning, training and professional services;
- Promoting flexible and innovative teaching and learning;
- Stimulating students to take initiative and cultivating the sense of autonomy, responsibility and creativity;
- Promoting staff mobility and cooperation between universities and across countries;
- Promoting lifelong learning and social change.

The LMD system has brought new insights into students' and teachers' roles, teaching and assessment methods and courses content. Unlike the traditional system, the LMD system emphasises some key elements (Idri, 2005, p.3) as explained briefly below:

**1. Semestrialisation:** For the sake of establishing a better organisation and promoting more flexibility in the new educational system, the division is based on semesters rather than years of formation. An academic year is divided into two semesters; one semester counts 16 weeks of study and assessment.

**2. Teaching units.** Modules are organised into units. Four main teaching units make up the system and these units group different subjects. The teaching of these units varies from one semester to the other, so subjects taught are different. In summary, they are:

- *The Fundamental (basic) unit:* it includes the core subjects related to a given discipline or specialty. Students should acquire and validate this unit which counts for 60% of the whole semester credit.
- *The Methodological unit* which is primarily destined to prepare students to acquire competence in methodology and enhance their research and autonomy skills. This unit counts for 30% of the semester credit.
- *The Discovery unit* in which students can get acquainted with new subjects in new fields, so that they can widen the scope of their knowledge for the purpose of facilitating the passage from one discipline to another and promoting professional training.
- *The Transversal unit:* it comprises foreign languages, social sciences and information and communication technology (ICT) courses.

**3. Credits.** This is the main feature of the LMD system; each course subject and teaching unit corresponds to a number of credits obtained through lessons, exams, trainings, research papers or any work that should be accomplished by students. The total number of credits for each semester is equal to 30, accumulated when the course is completed and all exams are successfully taken. Therefore, in order to validate their academic year, students should obtain the 60 credits required for the two semesters.

**4. Continuous evaluation.** In addition to the final written exams taken at the end of each semester, students are expected to be followed regularly and assessed on the basis of their active participation and engagement. All assignments completed and personal work performed by the student contribute to the final mark. That is, formative assessment plays an

important role in the reform.

**5. Tutoring.** This is a new pedagogical task for the teacher involved in the LMD system which addresses students' needs. Tutoring is teaching assistance which provides expertise, guidance and support (Guendouzi & Ameziane, 2011, p.24). For a better quality education, the new system emphasises a direct relation between the teacher and the student outside the academic sessions. This has the aim of supporting students with any information needed, responding to their needs and orienting them throughout their path in order to strengthen their abilities and motivate them to learn efficiently.

In fact, tutoring and continuous evaluation contribute to building a learner-centred classroom in which students control and regulate their learning and take responsibility to acquire methodological and pedagogical skills required for successful learning.

### **I.2. Changing Roles**

As a main feature of the reform, teaching and learning should happen by encouraging students' ownership and active participation in classroom activities. Classroom atmosphere should emphasise collaboration between students and teachers who have become now facilitators and mentors and no longer the ultimate authority as they used to be. The teacher's task is to familiarise students with the learning environment, motivate them to learn independently and facilitate access to the learning means and resources to maximise learning and ensure success. Students' role, on the other hand, has shifted from mere recipients of information to autonomous self-constructors of knowledge. Students are required to regulate their learning by managing aspects related to their thinking, emotions, behaviour and the learning environment.

As we may notice from its description, the LMD system is highly structured and organised to ensure high quality education and promote equality in the training. As far as the English language is concerned, the teaching of English is no longer limited to the mastery of

grammar and vocabulary; it rather centres on the development of students' communicative, intercultural, methodological, social-personal and ethical competences for the sake of fostering authentic interaction with the environment through the target language. On these bases, the LMD system introduces new courses such as ICT and ESP (English for specific purposes). In addition, the assessment process adopted integrates both students and teachers; that is, much importance is given to formative assessment.

### **I.3. Challenges Inherent in the Reform**

After more than a decade of implementation of the system in higher education institutions, it is possible to draw a picture of the general outcomes of the reform. Although the implementation of this new system has the aim of bringing about change and innovation, it is assumed that despite the settled ideal objectives of the reform, the current situation reveals a number of deficiencies among the staff, the students and the administration in terms of roles, responsibilities and outcomes. Actually, many attempts have been made by Algerian researchers and educators to investigate the effectiveness of this system and the extent to which teachers' and students' practices promote its objectives, notably in the EFL context. In this regard, Meziane (2011, p. 533) argues that the reform is still facing a real challenge of changing habits, attitudes and practices.

Drawing on a number of studies conducted on the LMD system in different language learning contexts across Algeria, an account of the main problems inherent in the reform is provided below:

- 1. Lack of awareness and knowledge about the system.** Students are not informed in advance about the objectives, content and expected outcomes of the new system (courses, credits, assessment, roles, tutoring, etc), the thing that made its implementation questionable and unclear for students (Idri, 2005, 2012; Rabehi, 2011; Nasraoui & Ben Zeroual, 2016; Mehiri, 2017).

- 2. Absence of a pedagogical training for the staff.** All researchers and educators insist on the fact that the reform was put into practice without a preparatory phase (Guendouzi & Ameziane, 2011; Idri, 2012; Sarnou, Koç, Houcine & Bouhadiba, 2012). Teachers are not familiar with the new objectives set, the content and the pedagogy.
- 3. Large classes.** As a matter of fact, most classes in Algeria are overcrowded which represents a challenge for teachers who find great difficulties to manage the classroom and plan for tutoring sessions (Idri, 2012; Maarcha, 2012; Rabehi, 2013). In this concern, Meziane and Mahi (2009, p.275) affirm that the number of students “was and remain an obstacle in terms of admission, follow up, support means and accompaniment structures making it difficult to implement (LMD) system in the current conditions.”
- 4. Lack of autonomy.** After years of implementation, Idri (2012) and Ghiat (2013) concluded in their study that autonomy is still unreached at the university level; Algerian EFL students are still passive recipients of information; they rely on their teachers to spoon feed them and exert little effort to learn independently. Idri (2012) adds that EFL students lack decision-making and problem solving initiatives. In a similar vein, Kadri and Idri (2016) reported in their study conducted at the university of Bejaia students’ poor self-regulation skills and their tendency to procrastinate.
- 5. Resistance to change.** Melouk (2013, p. 89) and Benettayeb-Ouahiani (2016, p. 9) revealed that language teachers in Algeria are still relying on old teaching methods and students are also somehow hesitant to adapt themselves to any classroom innovation. This may probably be linked to a lack of awareness and training as explained earlier.

- 6. Deficiency in the assessment modes.** Evidence gathered from previous research (e.g., Meziane & Mahi, 2009; Ghiat, 2013; Nasraoui & Ben Zeroual, 2016; Benettayeb-Ouahiani, 2016 and Kadri & Amziane, 2017) shows that despite the reform's emphasis on formative assessment, summative assessment seems to be the dominant, if not the sole, mode of assessment adopted in language learning classrooms, leaving no room for alternative assessment. Arguably, a lack of time and training on assessment can be major reasons for this resistance to change. Rabehi (2011) also reported one important fact, the lack of coordination regarding assessment criteria in EFL classrooms, a situation that Ghiat (2013, p.273) describes as the absence of assessment culture. This lack of coordination results in the absence of a standard assessment framework or national system of evaluation and therefore differences in content and teaching methods among teachers teaching the same subject. .
- 7. Lack of teaching material and learning resources.** One of the problems that handicaps the success of the reform as some researchers (e.g., Meziane & Mahi, 2009; Idri, 2012 and Hanifi, 2018) reported a shortage in teaching and learning material and resources, namely libraries, computer labs, laboratories, etc. Obviously, we cannot talk about ICT reform if universities are not equipped with the necessary hardware.
- 8. Students' dissatisfaction with current teaching methods.** Despite the reform's new curriculum and teaching methods, it remains theoretical because teachers' classroom practices and research findings (e.g., Benettayeb-Ouahiani, 2016) demonstrate reliance on old syllabi content and teaching methods and no room was left open to innovation and change.

- 9. Time constraints.** According to Rabehi (2011), teachers and students claim a lack of time because of the condensed programs. They further claim that there is a lot to teach, but there is no sufficient time to do so. However, one neglected fact here is that the LMD system focuses on learner-centredness which means that teachers are just facilitators; students should take full responsibility to develop their knowledge and enhance their skills, the thing that is unusual to them.

On the basis of the problems reported above, Ghiat (2013, p.273) and Meziane (2011, p. 532) contend that Algeria has adopted the Bologna degrees structure, but the quality of its components (teaching methods, programs, assessment and teaching/learning resources) remain unchanged. In more explicit terms, the application of the LMD system, as the researchers describe it, has been a matter of form and structure till present day. Theoretically, the reform's objectives seem promising, but the current situation shows that classroom practice is almost the same as years ago and the objectives of the reform have not been accomplished. The main reason for this is that the idealistic expectations of the reform confront with the socio-economic reality of the country and the structural environment in the Algerian higher education which are important factors to be accounted for before the implementation of such European system.

In such a situation, an important step to overcome the current challenges encountered in EFL classrooms is to raise students' awareness and encourage them to take an active role in their learning process and regulate their studies in order to reach a high level of proficiency and manage the new technologies as well as accomplish their role as citizens. Students should understand that they have to take part of the responsibility in their learning. Specifically, self-regulated learning is an important approach that should be encouraged to achieve the reform's objectives of forming future leaders. It is a learning approach that is based on students' full engagement in and responsibility for their learning process. Developing students' self-

regulation skills helps educators build a learner-centred environment in which learning is the centre of the classroom rather than teaching. This concept is detailed in the next section.

## **II. Self-regulated Learning**

### **II.1. Definitions and Nature**

Self-regulated learning may be confused with other concepts such as autonomy, self-directed learning and independent learning; yet the concept carries a different meaning. As a matter of fact, myriads of definitions of self-regulation have been provided in the literature and various explanations have been advanced. For a general understanding, Vancounter (2000, p. 304) provides a broad definition in which he refers to it as keeping and maintaining something regular at a desired state. That is, self-regulation represents direction of and control over one's intended actions.

Self-regulation is a construct developed first in psychology, then applied to other contexts. Guided by our research aims stated earlier, the concept needs to be approached from a learning perspective. Hence, we make specific reference to self-regulated learning which is defined by Dornyei (2005, p.191) as the degree to which individuals are active participants in their own learning. For more elaboration, Pintrich (2000, p. 453) provides a working definition in which he describes self-regulated learning as “an active, constructive process whereby learners set goals for their learning and then attempt to monitor, regulate, and control their cognition, motivation, and behavior, guided and constrained by their goals and the contextual features in the environment.” Basically, both Dornyei and Pintrich acknowledge students' active role and engagement in the learning process. This means that self-regulated learning is a self-generated process as it involves students to engage actively in the learning process and take full responsibility in developing their knowledge and skills. Furthermore, Pintrich (2000) specifies that self-regulated learning is about students controlling, monitoring and regulating their cognition, affect, behaviour and the learning environment in order to

achieve a learning goal.

By drawing on Pintrich's definition, a question arises concerning the actual processes students use in order to regulate the aspects of their learning highlighted in the definition, that is cognition, emotions, behaviour and the social learning environment. To understand this process, reference is made to Zimmerman, Bonner and Kovach (1996, p.141). The authors define self-regulated learning as a learning approach which involves goal setting, strategy use, self-monitoring and self-adjustment to acquire a skill. This definition caters some of the main self-regulatory processes students use when regulating their learning, namely goal setting, self-monitoring and strategy use.

Central to the aforementioned definitions is goal setting which appears to be the essence of self-regulated learning. Therefore, from the authors' perspective, self-regulated learning is characterised as a goal-oriented process. Basically, students regulate their learning by setting specific goals that guide them, then monitoring and managing their time, efforts, emotions and resources using the appropriate strategies to achieve those goals. Drawing on other sources too, all definitions of self-regulated learning acknowledge the active role of the student in the learning process and result in agreeing that it is the interaction of students' cognitive (thinking), affective (motivation and emotion), behavioural (participation and interaction) and environmental (the learning task, the social setting, teacher feedback) variables. It is worth mentioning that in our research self-regulation and self-regulated learning are used interchangeably.

In light of the aforesaid definitions, self-regulated learning appears to be a complex and multifaceted process, operating at different levels and involving various processes (metacognitive, cognitive, affective, behavioural and social). Understanding how these factors intervene and how a student manages to control them successfully is an issue that has attracted widespread interest. This brings us to an essential question concerning the nature of

self-regulation. Summarising across studies, two arguable assumptions are generated by researchers. Self-regulation can represent, on the one hand, *an aptitude* or inborn ability that denotes a personal attribute (Winne, 1997, p.397; Winne & Perry, 2000, p.534; Randi & Corno, 2000, p. 651). Here, self-regulated learning is inherent in self-directed engagement (Winne, 1997, p.397) and students demonstrate and exert their skills spontaneously when performing a task. This means that successful students inherently possess a large metacognitive knowledge and developed cognitive processes that enable them to regulate their learning efficiently. This can be noticed in students who outperform others in the classroom when given the same learning conditions without previous instruction or training on self-regulation. The same idea has been expressed more technically by Dornyei (2005, p.190) who advocates the existence of “some sort of trait-like strategic potential that enables some to excel” in a specific learning area. On the other hand, self-regulation is viewed as a *potential outcome of schooling* (Schunk, 1989, p.101; O’Malley & Chamot, 1990, p.149; Winne, 1997, p.397; Randi & Corno, 2000, p. 651; Schunk, 2009, p.807) which means that it is not an innate ability but rather a skill that can be developed through instruction and practice. Contrary to Dornyei’s (2005) interpretation of students’ self-regulation tendency, O’Malley and Chamot (1990, p.149) argue that successful students learn more forms of self-regulation than less successful students do. Therefore, self-regulation seems to be more in accordance with persistence and expertise than innate capacity. This is demonstrated by instructional programs that result in developing students’ self-regulated capacities (e.g. Santangelo, Harris & Graham, 2008).

## **II.2. The Social Cognitive Theory of Self-regulation**

There exist many self-regulated learning theories and models in the literature, each describing the concept from a particular approach and focusing on a specific aspect of self-regulation (e.g., Pintrich, Boekaerts, Winne, Zimmerman and others). For this reason,

understanding self-regulated learning entails first an understanding of learning. Learning has been addressed by several theorists who have attempted to explain how learners learn and which factors contribute to either their success or failure. Accordingly, it has been approached from different perspectives: behavioural, information processing, constructivist and social cognitive. Influenced by these paradigms, self-regulated learning has also been explained from these perspectives. In the present thesis, we adopt the social cognitive theory of self-regulated learning.

From a social cognitive perspective, learning is perceived as a change in students' behaviour brought about by intervening experiences (Schunk; 1989, p. 85). More specifically, human learning occurs in a social environment (Schunk, 2009, p.807; Schunk, 2012, p. 159) which necessitates reciprocal interaction among personal (cognitive and affective), behavioural and environmental factors (as shown in Figure 2) and students regulate their learning by monitoring these factors.

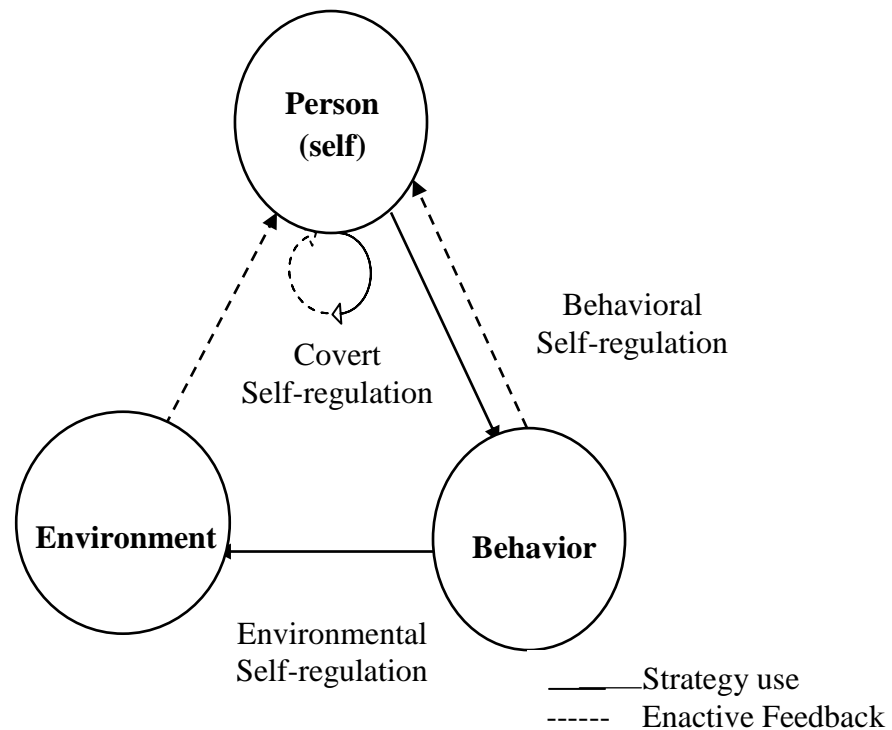


Figure 2. A triadic model of self-regulated functioning (from Zimmerman, 1989, p. 330)

According to this triadic model, self-regulated learning is a metacognitive, a cognitive

and a social process. First, self-regulated learning is a metacognitive process because it requires awareness and reflection on one's own thinking and learning. Second, it is cognitive because it involves cognitive processes such as: thinking, analysis and organisation that help students to process information in their mind. Last, self-regulated learning is considered a social process in the sense that it takes place in a social setting, so students' performance is influenced by various social and affective factors. To put it another way, students are said to be involved in their learning when they assume responsibility for their learning and actively monitor and regulate their cognition, affect, behaviour and the social environment. As an illustration, to perform a writing task successfully, students need not only personal processes such as self-monitoring, planning and setting specific goals but this performance is likely to be influenced by social factor such as: teacher feedback and support, peers and parents' encouragements. The importance of the social environment is a key variable in this theory. Put together, from a social cognitive standpoint, self-regulated learning involves students' use of personal or self-processes (e.g., goal-setting, self-efficacy) to strategically regulate their behaviour (e.g., participating in classroom, doing homework) and the immediate learning environment (e.g., arranging the learning setting).

Basically, as reported by Schunk (2009, p. 806), the social cognitive theory of self-regulation emphasises three factors. The first factor is what Pintrich (2000, p. 452) calls the active-constructive assumption about self-regulated learning. It is the proactive role of the student who engages actively in the learning process and exerts control over internal and external resources. In line with this perspective, Zimmerman (2002, p.65) made it clear that "learning is viewed as a process students engage in for themselves in a proactive way rather than a covert event that happens to them in reaction to teaching." A second point supported by social cognitivists is students' motivation. Self-regulation depends on motivational factors such as: goals, self-efficacy and expectations. That is, students who have an intrinsic interest,

set goals and believe in their capacities are more likely to succeed in regulating their learning efficiently. In this regard, Zimmerman (2002, p.66) supports the argument that motivational beliefs are highly predictive of students' success; he explains that the self-regulation profile of expert self-regulators reveals they display high levels of self-motivation and set goals for their learning. The third aspect in the theory is its non-unitary character. Self-regulated learning is a cyclical process involving different but interrelated factors (as personal, behavioural and social) that typically change during learning (Puustinen & Pulkkinen, 2001, p.277). In line with this perspective, most researchers view the structure of self-regulatory processes in terms of recursive phases wherein students may go forward or backward any time (Zimmerman et al., 1996; Boekaerts and Niemivira, 2000). In more explicit terms, students set learning goals, implement strategies and monitor these strategies and their efforts depending on the task and the social environment. Based on the evaluation of their progress, students decide to keep or adjust their learning strategies for subsequent learning experiences. However, the processes are not always processed in a similar way; students may adapt them in a variety of ways from one learning task to another, so that any phase may benefit from the other or bring alteration to the other. This will be explained in the next section.

Given the above synthesis about the social cognitive theory of self-regulation, this theory is chosen as the theoretical foundation of this study because it reflects a dynamic view of learning that occurs through interaction between the person and the context as it is the case for EFL writing. Moreover, it supports the view that self-regulation is not a fixed or linear process but rather a cyclical process wherein many variables are interrelated. These factors are fully explained in the coming sections.

**II.2.1. The sub-processes of self-regulation.** Social-cognitive theorists view self-regulation as comprising three sub-processes: self-observation, self-judgement and self-reaction.

**Self-observation (monitoring).** Schunk and Zimmerman (2003, p. 60) state that people cannot regulate their thoughts and actions if they are not aware of how they think and what they do (metacognition). Self-observation, according to Bandura (1991, p. 250), refers to deliberately paying close attention to one's thinking, feelings and performance with the conditions under which they occur and the effects they produce. In reference to EFL, self-monitoring concerns students' awareness and control of their cognition and psychology and evaluation of their actions and progress. This, in fact, provides important self-diagnostic information. Put differently, monitoring one's thinking and affect and observing one's behaviour can both inform and motivate (Schunk, 1989, p. 89). It is informative in the sense that paying deliberate attention to one's own learning provides insights and knowledge necessary to set goals, monitor strategy use and assess one's own performance; this, in turn, enhances motivation and increases expectations. This self-knowledge, according to Bandura (1991), affords directions for self-regulatory control. In other terms, students decide on future actions drawing on the information and insights gained from their deliberate attention to different aspects of their learning. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the degree and direction of change that accompanies self-monitoring depends on whether students focus their attention on their success or their failure (Bandura, 1991, p.253).

Self-observation can take place through self-recording (Schunk, 1989; Schunk & Zimmerman, 1997). More specifically, behaviour instances are recorded along with such features as time, place and duration of occurrence (Mace, Belfiore & Shea, 1989; as cited in Schunk, 2001, p. 2). That is, students' observation should occur regularly and close in time to their occurrence so that when students systematically record their performance, they can later judge their performance and determine their progress on the basis of what they have recorded during their observations. Regarding its effect, Schunk and Zimmerman (2007, p. 19), for instance, argue that self-recording enhances writing. Self-regulated students can observe most

aspects of their behaviour, yet they do not observe their actions only but those of others too. In other terms, observing teachers and peers models of learning play an important role as learning happens in a social setting.

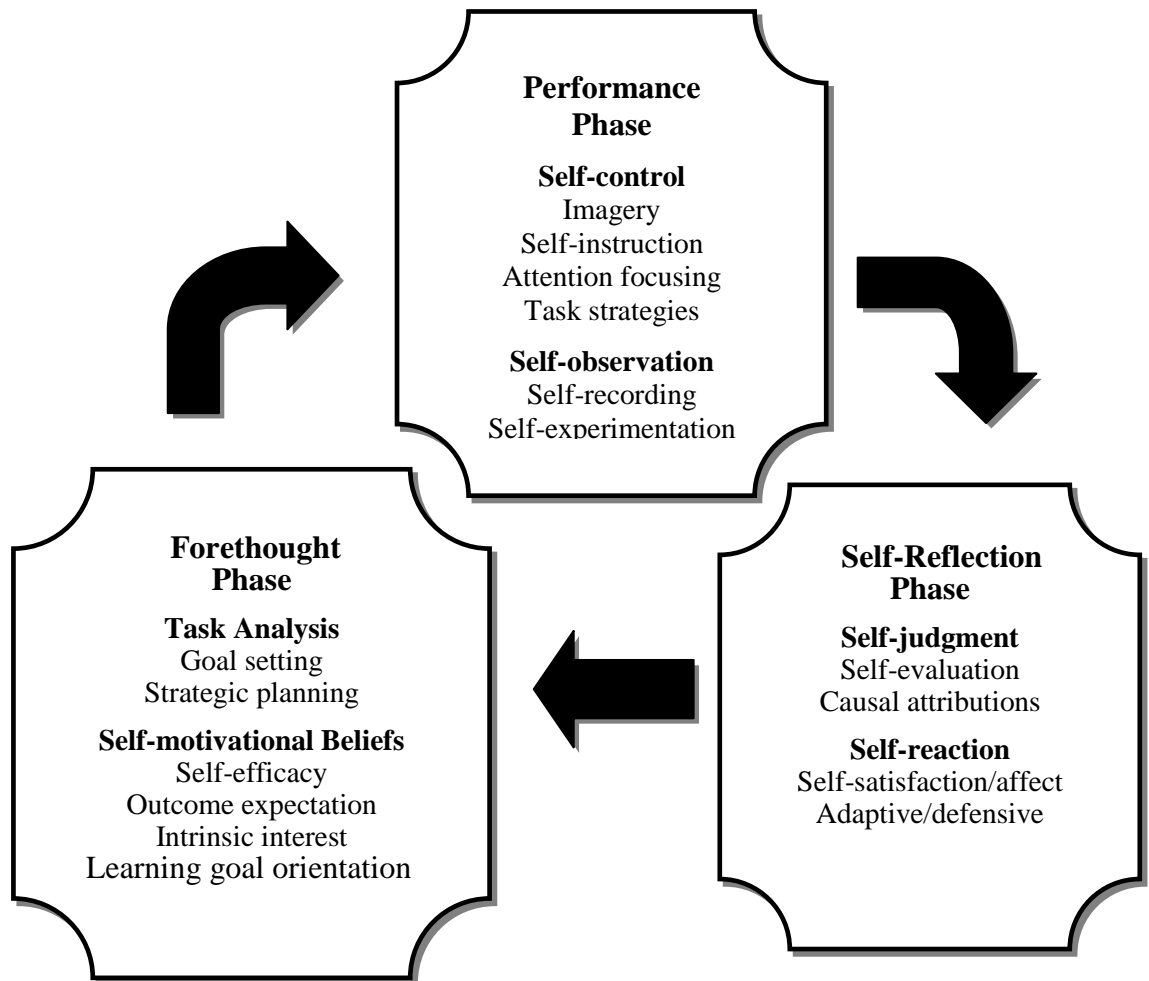
**Self-judgement.** Schunk (2012, p. 408) refers to this sub-process as comparing present performance with one's learning goal. That is, how students judge and value their progress in accordance with the goals they set. Similar to self-monitoring, Schunk (1989, p. 89) states that comparing one's performance against pre-determined criteria is informative of one's progress towards the goal and motivating. To explain, when students assess their performance against stated criteria they realise how well they have accomplished their task and they determine their level of proficiency; thus, self-judgement is informative in terms of strengths and weaknesses and helps in sustaining or adjusting one's employed strategies during specific tasks. As a result, students' self-generated feedback is likely to help them sustain their motivation and increase their self-efficacy and their engagement and participation as well. Yet, self-judgements are hypothesised to be affected by the type and importance of the standards employed (Schunk & Zimmerman, 1997, p. 2). This means that judgement and comparison of one's performance are attributed in reference to the norms and standards that have been established from the onset. Self-judgement is considered as a critical aspect of self-regulated learning.

**Self-reaction.** It refers to *perceived progress* (Schunk, 2012, p.411). In other words, self-reaction is the system that shows how students perceive their progress (success or failure) and react to it, thus being satisfied or unsatisfied with their performance. For Schunk and Zimmerman (2003, p.68), self-reaction involves evaluative reactions. They argue that positive evaluations increase motivation to improve performance, contrary to negative evaluations which may or may not decrease motivation to work harder depending on students' self-efficacy. Therefore, self-reaction sets the stage for future learning experiences. These

evaluative reactions, according to Bandura (1986), constitute a crucial aspect of self-regulation and represent a unique contribution of social cognitive theory (as cited in Schunk & Zimmerman, 1997, p. 3). In commenting on the effects of self-reaction on students' beliefs and motivation, Schunk and Zimmerman (1997, p.2) explain that when students perceive their progress as acceptable along with satisfaction of their accomplishment, their self-efficacy and motivation increase.

In sum, these three sub-processes are not mutually exclusive but rather interact with one another (Schunk, 1989, p.88). That is, when engaged in a learning task, students observe their own performance, judge their progress in reference to the goals they set, then react to those judgements. The self-judgements attributed are expected to determine one's subsequent willingness to continue this self-instructive practice (self-reaction) (Zimmerman, 1989, p.331). However, it should be noted that these sub-processes can also be affected by other personal (self-efficacy, outcome expectations) and environmental factors (nature of the task, teacher feedback).

**II.2.2. Zimmerman's Three Phases Model.** Self-regulated learning is argued by socio-cognitive researchers to be cyclical (e.g. Pintrich, 2000; Schunk, 2009), i.e. involving many processes that change during learning. This cyclical nature is captured in Zimmerman's (1998) three-phases model. In his model, Zimmerman (2002) explains that self-regulation emerges in learning contexts in three cyclical phases: forethought, performance and self-reflection. Put differently, to perform a learning task, a student approaches it in three different but interconnected stages. Our choice of Zimmerman's model is driven by its direct relation to the social cognitive theory and its simplicity as it takes students as the masters of the self-regulation cycle. The model is portrayed in Figure 3.



*Figure 3.* A cyclical phase model of self-regulation that integrates metacognitive processes and key measures of motivation (from Zimmerman and Campillo, 2003, p. 239)

**Forethought Phase.** This phase represents a preparatory stage wherein students analyse their learning task and activate their personal resources before performing a task. For Zimmerman (2002, p.67), two categories of processes are involved in this phase: task analysis and self-motivation. Task analysis involves metacognitive awareness and activation of prior knowledge that are processed through goal-setting and strategic planning. The second type of processes, self-motivation, concerns students' beliefs and feelings about their capabilities and learning, namely self-efficacy, outcome expectation, goal-orientation and intrinsic interests as shown in Figure 3. According to Zimmerman and Campillo (2003, pp. 241-242), the cognitive constructs involved in the first stage are predictive of learning and achievement because they assess decision making knowledge and skills required, whereas the motivational

constructs represented in stage two are predictive of effort and persistence because they assess beliefs about personal competence and value. Put differently, when students are presented with a learning task (e.g. *writing an essay*), they first reflect and activate their prior knowledge of the topic, evaluate it to determine its level of difficulty and requirements (time, efforts and skills), set specific goals that guide them; then, they select the strategies that will facilitate accomplishing the task (e.g. organisation, elaboration, etc ...). Accordingly, they proceed in carrying out an action plan. At this stage, how students think about their capacities and how they value the task are crucial. In academic writing, this phase is similar to the pre-writing stage of the writing process.

**Performance Phase.** This is the action phase wherein students transform their plans into action and start performing the task. It involves students to employ strategies and monitor their effectiveness (Zumbrunn, Tadlock & Roberts, 2011, p.5). That is, students focus their attention on performing the task by employing the strategies they selected and monitoring their time and efforts to reach their goal. There are two major classes of sub-processes employed during the performance phase: self-control and self-observation (Zimmerman, 2002, p. 68). Self-control refers to the actualisation of the action plan set during the forethought phase. The processes used at this stage are: imagery, self-instruction, attention focusing and task strategies. Zimmerman and Campillo (2003, p. 242) explain that these self-control processes help students to focus on the task and optimise their solution effort during problem solving activities. Self-observation, the second sub-process, is processed through self-recording of personal performance or self-experimentation to trace particular aspects related to it (Zimmerman, 2002, p. 68). The importance of self-observation in EFL learning is that it can lead to systematic self-discovery (Bandura, 1991). The information gained through self-observation is likely to be employed to improve one's performance and adjust the strategies used to accomplish the task.

**Self-reflection phase.** This phase refers to students' critical examination of their performance to identify their progress. Basically, self-reflection refers to students' reviewing and reflecting on their performance and reacting to it as well. From Figure 3, the self-reflection phase involves two major processes: self-judgement and self-reaction. There are two forms of self-judgement: self-evaluation and causal attributions. Zimmerman (2002, p. 68) describes self-evaluation as comparison of one's performance against a standard or goal and causal attributions as perceptions of the causes of one's own success or failure. The second process, self-reaction, also has two forms: self-satisfaction and adaptive/defensive responses. The first form involves feelings of satisfaction or dissatisfaction and affect about one's performance. As a result, students develop adaptive or defensive responses which are the second form of self-reaction. Adaptive/ defensive responses are conclusions followed by decisions students make about their learning approach for future performance. Specifically, adaptive responses involve adjustments designed to increase the effectiveness of one's learning method, whereas defensive responses entail efforts to protect one's self-image by probably avoiding engagement in future performances (Zimmerman, 2002, p.68). Zimmerman and Campillo (2003, p.246) contend that the self-reaction phase is predictive of students' future action. Positive self-satisfaction strengthens self-efficacy beliefs and enhances learning goal orientation (Schunk, 1996), whereas feelings of self-dissatisfaction reactions decrease one's sense of efficacy and intrinsic interest (Zimmerman & Campillo, 2003, p. 246).

In a nutshell, the model provides a structure on how students tackle an academic task and emphasises that self-regulated learning depends on students' proactive engagement in a cyclical and interconnected process of task performance.

### **II.3. Determinants of Self-regulated Learning**

From a social cognitive perspective, regulation of one's own learning is codetermined by many interacting factors that affect control and management of the learning process in

general and the writing process in particular. Extensive research has been undertaken to investigate the factors that influence self-regulated learning. Personal factors (cognitive processes and motivational beliefs) have been demonstrated to be the first determinant of the degree of self-regulation. In the absence or lack of control over personal factors, behavioural and social factors may dominate. Zimmerman (1989, p.332) asserts that a student is described as self-regulated when he or she can exert strategic control over each of the three types of influence. Arguably, the list of factors is a long one, as explained by Dornyei (2005, p.192), but only the most influential ones are made explicit in this section.

**II.3.1. Self-efficacy.** For social cognitive theorists (e.g., Bandura, 1991; Schunk and Zimmerman, 2007), self-efficacy plays a determining role in students' learning and achievement. It is defined as "the judgments that individuals hold about their capabilities to learn or to perform courses of action at designated levels" (Pajares, 2009, p. 791). In other words, students who feel self-efficacious believe that they are capable of successfully accomplishing a task and achieving desired outcomes. As regards its role in EFL, Bandura (1991, p.257) stresses that students' beliefs about their capacities play a role of self-aiding or self-hindering. Along the same line, Schunk and Zimmerman (2007, p.9) explain that students with high self-efficacy beliefs participate more readily in tasks, work harder, persist longer when facing difficulties and achieve at higher levels compared to students who are not sure of their capabilities. This means that self-efficacy beliefs represent a bridge towards students' success by influencing their choices and decisions regarding the amount of time to invest and how long to persist in when facing difficulties or appealing alternatives. Moreover, researchers have found that self-efficacy is linked to other motivational variables. For instance, Zimmerman and Bandura's (1994) study on the relationship between self-efficacy, goals and self-regulation of writing among students revealed that self-efficacy affected achievement through its influence on goals.

**II.3.2. Goal-setting.** Another motivational factor influencing self-regulation is the intended goal which represents an integral process of self-regulated learning. Schunk (2001, p. 1) explains goal setting as the process of establishing a standard or objective that serves as the purpose of one's intended actions or outcomes. Clearly, a goal refers to what a student aims at achieving when performing a specific task. In fact, goals are assumed to impact students' learning and achievement in different ways (Latham & Lock, 1991). First, goals direct students' attention towards the task at hand and help them focus only on what is relevant. Second, goals affect students' choice of learning strategies and the efforts they exert on a task. That is, goals help students select and employ the appropriate strategies they think will lead to goal attainment and also help in adjusting their efforts to the task difficulty and the goals set. Last, goals motivate students to persist in the face of setbacks. Put together, when students set specific goals for their tasks, they get motivated to regulate their learning in order to acquire knowledge and skills, so they focus their attention on developing their competence and expend efforts in order to achieve their goals and are likely to persist in the face of difficulties and attractive alternatives.

However, not all set goals have a significant impact on students' learning or automatically enhance self-regulation. The effects of goals on students' performance and learning depend on the goal's properties: specificity, proximity and difficulty (Schunk, 2001; Schunk & Ertmer, 2002). Contrary to general goals, setting specific goals enhances performance because they determine the amount of effort required for the task and increases the level of self-efficacy as learning is guided by well-defined standards (Schunk, 2001, p. 1). In relation to the standards, Latham and Lock (1991, p. 234) hold that specific goals facilitate self-regulation as they define for students what constitutes an acceptable level of performance. Specific tasks are also said to stimulate more planning (as cited in Latham & Lock, 1991, p. 228) as outcomes are clear. Concerning proximity which describes how far the goal projects

into the future, Stock and Cervone (1990; as cited in Latham & Lock, 1991: p. 238) and Schunk (2001, p. 2) reported three benefits of proximal goals: increased self-efficacy, persistence and self-satisfaction. The researchers explained that contrary to temporarily distal goals, proximal or short-term goals enhance self-efficacy before and after task completion, increase efforts and persistence and the attainment of the goal leads to positive self-reaction (satisfaction). As a way to make distal goals manageable, Schunk (2001, p.2) suggested breaking the goal down into sub-goals. For the last property, goal difficulty plays an important role in determining the amount of efforts to expend to attain the goal (Schunk & Zimmerman, 1997, p. 7). This is because students adjust their efforts to the level of difficulty of the goals they set; thus, they try harder for moderately difficult goals than for easy ones. The researchers further state that easy goals do not promote self-efficacy because they do not really inform students about what they are capable of doing. Put differently, if the goal is too easy, it does not encourage skill development and critical thinking; a fact that may likely lead to boredom. In contrast, if the goal is too difficult, it is highly demanding and may not be attainable; thus, it is likely to decrease students' motivation because they feel incapable of accomplishing that goal and probably incompetent.

In addition to goal properties, the type of the goal students set has also an effect on their achievement. A distinction is made in the literature between two goal orientations: mastery and performance goals. According to Kaplan and Maehr (2007, pp.142-143), mastery goal oriented students demonstrate a thirst for knowledge acquisition and skill mastery, whereas performance goal oriented students focus on competition and best performance to gain social approval. Research shows that mastery goal orientation relates positively to students' time and effort management trials (Schunk, 2005, p. 88). Moreover, students with mastery goals demonstrated good use of learning strategies, motivational control and better results (Pintrich, 2000). To illustrate, as goals are said to have an impact on students'

achievement, Schunk and Swartz's (1993a, 1993b) studies on self-regulated writing strategies demonstrated that learning by setting goals raised students' writing achievement. Likewise, Kitsantas, Robert & Doster (2004) concluded in their experimental study that mastery oriented students reported a higher degree of self-efficacy, more satisfaction with their performance and more strategic attributions than students in the performance goal condition.

**II.3.3. Volition.** When tasks must be completed in the face of competing intentions and environmental distractions, aspects of students' cognition and affect require specialised control that can be achieved only by employing high psychological control processes. These control processes are captured in what educational researchers label *volition* (willpower). To understand its role and importance in educational contexts, a brief definition is presented. Volition is defined as the tendency to maintain focus and effort towards goals against competing distractions (McCann & Turner, 2004, p.1699). Specifically, Corno (1993, p. 16) states that in academic settings volition represents "a dynamic system of psychological control processes that protect concentration and directed effort in the face of personal and/or environmental distractions, and so aid learning and performance". Put simply, volition refers to students' ability to exert power over their actions by monitoring their cognition and affect, sustaining their motivation and directing their efforts towards attainment of their goals in the face of learning difficulty or attractive alternatives.

The foundation for theories of volition was established by Kuhl with his action control theory. Its primary issue is how students move from goal commitment (intention) to goal attainment (action) (Corno, 1993, p.14). Pintrich (2000, p.462) describes it as *metamotivation*. In respect to this theory, volition is assumed to play a mediating role between goals and actions because goals are not strong enough to maintain one's motivation and do not guarantee its execution in the face of internal and external distractions (Garcia, McCann, Turner & Roska, 1998, p. 393). When academic and social preferences are in conflict,

students face a real challenge of managing to protect their goals and direct their personal and learning resources toward the attainment of those goals. Crossing the bridge from initial intentions and plans to final accomplishment can be fulfilled by the use of volitional control strategies. Some reported examples of these volitional strategies include: evoking images of success, reminding oneself of the set goals, self-reward and positive self-talk (McCann & Turner, 2004, p.1700).

In regard to its effect on students' performance and learning, effective volitional control over students' actions is demonstrated by researchers to enhance learning and performance by maintaining efforts and persistence (Zumbrunn et al., 2011) and sustaining motivation for goal striving (Corno & Kanfer, 1993; Schunk & Zimmerman, 2003). For instance, Garcia et al. (1998) found in their study that the positive effects of students' intrinsic goals and self-efficacy on cognitive engagement were increased by volitional control.

In short, volition is considered as the aspect of self-regulation that mediates the relationship between goals and actions during performance and helps students accomplish their goals (Schunk & Zimmerman, 2003). Hence, students who lack volitional strategies fail to persist and complete their tasks especially when facing obstacles and may end up procrastinating.

**II.3.4. Strategy use.** Most models of self-regulation assume that an important aspect of self-regulated learning is students' use of learning strategies to control and regulate their learning. A strategy is defined by Oxford (1990, p. 8) as “a plan, step, or conscious action toward achievement of an objective.” Accordingly, self-regulated learning strategies describe students' plans, behaviours and mental operations aiming at accomplishing a task in an efficient way. Hsiao and Oxford (2002, p. 372) contend that strategies “pave the way toward greater proficiency, learner autonomy and self-regulation.” The aim of using self-regulated strategies is therefore to facilitate self-regulation, enhance students' performance and improve

their learning. Specifically, students use various cognitive, metacognitive and motivational strategies to control their affect, monitor their cognition and behaviour and manage the learning environment; however, in the absence of any strategy or its inappropriate use, threatening variables may dominate and regulation becomes difficult. In examining the difference between successful and less successful students, researchers have found that low achieving students reported less self-regulated strategy use than high achieving peers (Oxford, 1989; Ertmer & Newby, 1996; VanZile-Tamsen & Livingston, 1999; Simsek & Balaban, 2010). Nevertheless, Ertmer and Newby (1996) and VanZile-Tamsen and Livingston (1999) point out that what actually distinguishes these successful students from the less successful ones is not the store of knowledge or number of skills they possess but their ability to use self-regulated strategies appropriately to reach their desired goals and optimise their academic performance.

More specifically, most definitions of self-regulated learning highlight strategy use as a key component for goal attainment (e.g., Zimmerman et al., 1996). We understand that strategy use is linked to goal setting. Supporting this view, Locke and Latham (1991, p.234) argue that strategies are considered the indirect result of the goals students set. It means that when students set challenging goals, this activates their knowledge and high level thinking which requires the use of specific strategies in order to attain those set goals. As far as writing is concerned, social cognitive theorists support the view that good writers are differentiated from poor writers by the strategies they use. In support of this claim, Järvelä and Järvenoja (2011) explain that students who learn to use self-regulated learning strategies in writing participate more readily, increase their ability to tackle writing problems better; they are successful at planning, monitoring and regulating the writing process.

It is worth mentioning that researchers agree that strategy use is affected by many variables, namely metacognitive awareness, individual differences, learning styles, affective

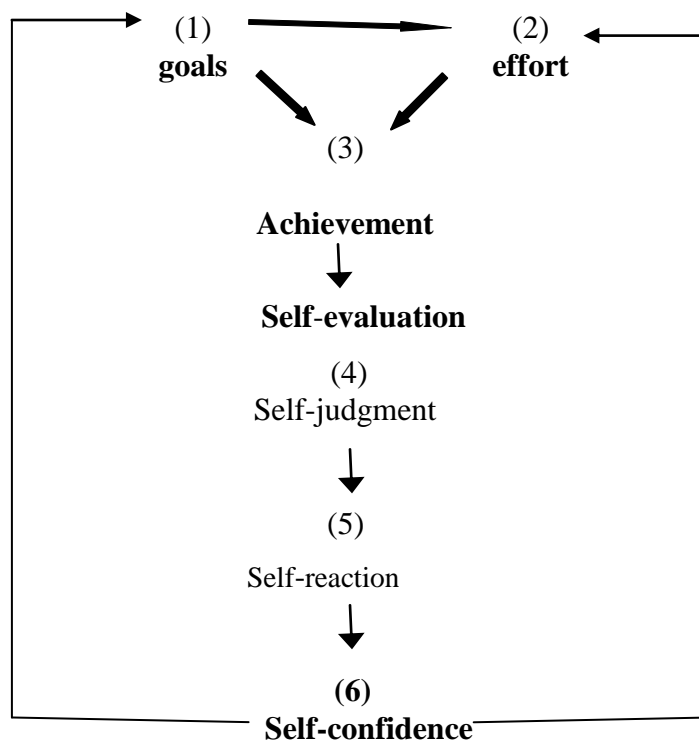
factors, teacher method and task requirements (Oxford, 1989, p.239; Simsek & Balaban, 2010, p. 37). In this vein, Wenden (1986b) holds that what students know about themselves and about their own learning process (proficiency level, feelings, aptitude, learning style) can affect their use of language learning strategies.

However, attempts to self-regulation are not always successful; students may develop ineffective or maladaptive strategies (Graham& Harris, 1997, p. 106). To support this view, Oxford (1989, p. 239), Paris and Paris (2001, p. 96) and Chen (2002, p. 12) highlight the need for teachers to teach students how to use the different self-regulated strategies effectively in a given task. Besides, Ertmer and Newby (1996, p. 21) argue that extensive practice and feedback are critical for the development of self-regulated learning strategies. This implies that students should learn how to use the different self-regulated strategies effectively in writing. A model of learning strategies will be discussed in the next section.

**II.3.5. Self-evaluation.** Schunk and Zimmerman (2007, p. 12) content that after performing a task, “learners respond to their efforts by evaluating their goal progress and adjusting strategies as needed.” Self-evaluation is a key self-regulatory process emphasised in the social cognitive theory of self-regulated learning. It is described by Ramdass and Zimmerman (2008, p. 36) as an “invaluable self-regulatory skill”. Roheiser and Rosss (2001, p.1) describe the concept of self-evaluation as student reviewing their work and judging its quality based on evidence and explicit criteria for the purpose of performing better in subsequent performance. Basically, self-evaluation involves self-reflection and identification of the strengths and limitations of one’s own performance. In this line, Ramdass and Zimmerman (2008, p. 19) maintain that students are more likely to become better self-regulated learners when they are able to evaluate their own learning, independent of teacher-evaluation. It is worth mentioning that of central importance to self-evaluation, as the definition suggests, is goals. Goals are the reference against which students judge the

effectiveness of their performance. Zimmerman and Campillo (2003, p.244) commented on this by pointing out that in the absence of specific criteria, self-evaluation is difficult.

Research evidence has demonstrated that self-evaluation has a significant impact on students' performance and motivation. For instance, Bandura (1991, p.257) asserts that this self-regulatory process serve both as a guide and incentive. It is a guide because it provides information on student' strengths and limitation and therefore gives them direction to their current and subsequent performance and incentive in the sense that it enhances students' motivation. Rolheiser (1996; as cited in Rolheiser and Ross, 2001, p. 6) put forward the model in Figure 4 that best illustrates these effects.



*Figure 4.* How self-evaluation contributes to learning (From Rolheiser, 1996; as cited in Rolheiser and Ross (2001, p.6)

Drawing on the scheme showed in Figure 4, the self-evaluation effects form a recursive process. According to Rolheiser and Ross (2001, p.1), positive self-evaluation encourage students to set higher goals and commit more personal resources and effort which lead to achievement. Students' achievement entails self-judgements which in turn results in

self-reaction. The authors then conclude that the whole process contributes to increased self-confidence and self-efficacy. These effects have been reported by Schunk (1996) who found that self-evaluation affected self-regulated learning and achievement outcomes through its effect on students' self-efficacy beliefs.

Nevertheless, researchers highlight that accuracy is an important condition in self-evaluation. Based on this model, if students develop inaccurate self-evaluation, the results will not lead to improved performance nor perceived self-efficacy. In this regard, Ramdass and Zimmerman (2008) support the role of training in increasing the accuracy of students' self-judgements. The researchers found in their study that self-regulatory strategy training enhanced students' self-evaluation skills considerably; students who received training on self-evaluation displayed significantly higher accuracy and lower bias in their judgements compared to students who did not receive training.

Given the importance of self-evaluation in the self-regulated learning process, this construct is the second concern of this thesis; it will be discussed in details in chapter two.

#### **II.4. Writing Strategies Used by EFL Students**

Because writing is a demanding and complex task (Graham et al., 1997), students need to use appropriate writing strategies in order to facilitate the writing process and cope with their difficulties. Regarding this, experts in the domain support the importance of writing strategies in helping students to simplify and organise the writing process (Santangelo et al., 2008) and in enhancing their communicative competence (Oxford, 1990).

Different models and classifications of learning strategies have been proposed. In reference to academic writing, O'Malley and Chamot's (1990) taxonomy of learning strategies is adapted in this research. The authors classified learning strategies into three main categories: metacognitive, cognitive and affective/social strategies which are further divided into specific strategies. This model is chosen because of its close relation to the social

cognitive theory of self-regulated learning, yet we have separated the last category into affective and social strategies and then expanded the whole list to include other sub-strategies. Drawing on O'Malley, Russo, Chamot and Stewner-Manzanares (1988, p. 220) and O'Malley and Chamot (1990, p. 119), the taxonomy is described in what follows.

**II.4.1. Metacognitive strategies.** Metacognition refers to the awareness, knowledge and control of cognition (Pintrich et al., 1991; as cited in Chen, 2002). It is commonly described as *thinking about thinking*. Metacognitive strategies entail students' awareness and understanding of their abilities and control of aspects related to cognition and learning. Metacognition enables both reflection on one's own learning process and the use and regulation of strategic activities (Dignath, Buettner & Langfeldt, 2008, p. 107). Four specific strategies are considered critical for students' development of metacognitive skills: selective attention, planning, self-monitoring and self-evaluation.

- **Selective attention.** As writing is a cognitive process, reflecting and recalling information is necessary. So, EFL students need strategies to focus and direct their attention towards the writing task to facilitate retrieval of specific information. According to O'Malley and Chamot's (1990), selective attention helps students to decide in advance to focus on specific information. This strategy is very important in all the stages of the writing process since memory is the fuel of learning. Underlying, cues and key words selection are considered strategies that students can use to attend to the information required.

- **Planning.** Before engaging in a given task, students should consider the task requirements (purpose, difficulty, time and effort) and activate their personal resources (prior knowledge, skills and strategies). Such information is quite useful for generating a preliminary plan at the beginning of a writing assignment. For O'Malley and Chamot (1990, p. 119), planning means previewing the main ideas and concepts to be expressed in writing. To illustrate, before writing an essay, students have to decide on what to write, how to

develop their ideas and how to organise the text as a whole. Essentially, planning involves brainstorming, goal setting, strategy selection and identification of expected problems and difficulties (Ertmer & Newby, 1996, p. 12). Tables, mind maps and listing are few examples of planning strategies.

- **Self-Monitoring.** It entails awareness of what one is writing and checking one's written production while it is taking place. Monitoring helps students focus their attention on what they write and discern good from poor performance and reveals inadequate learning strategies (Chen, 2002, p. 13). To explain, students observe their writing, follow the writing process by making reference to the goals they have set and track how well their plan and strategies are working.

- **Self-evaluation.** When accomplishing a task, students generally assess both the writing process and the final product. O'Malley and Chamot (1990, p. 44) describe self-evaluation as checking the outcomes of one's own production, that is judging how well one has accomplished the task. In other terms, by evaluating their writing, students judge if their goal is achieved and determine the effectiveness of their progress and the strategies employed. The self-generated feedback gained through self-evaluation helps them to identify their strengths and limitations and therefore decide either to keep on the same path or adjust their strategies to improve their work.

**II.4.2. Cognitive strategies.** They involve direct processing and manipulation of the writing material. O'Malley and Chamot (1990, p. 44) explain that cognitive strategies operate directly on information by manipulating it in ways that enhance writing. In fact, the list of cognitive strategies is a long one, but only the commonly used and most helpful strategies in EFL writing are elaborated in this section. These include: organisation, summarisation, elaboration, transfer, imagery and resourcing.

- **Organisation.** This includes restricting, grouping and giving order to the

information students write. Outlining, creating tables, classifying, re-grouping, connecting pieces, generating concept maps and listing differently are common strategies students can employ in EFL writing (Simsek & Balaban, 2010, p. 37). These strategies are helpful in the planning phase and during the drafting stage to help students organise their ideas.

- **Summarisation.** It refers to synthesising what one has to write (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990, p. 45). It is necessary for students to decide on the importance and relevance of the information to include in their texts, not writing everything, especially with time constraints. For instance, note taking, underlying or highlighting main ideas are useful techniques of summarisation.

- **Elaboration.** This strategy is defined by Schunk (2012, p. 420) as “expanding information by adding something to make learning more meaningful.” In order to write a well-developed text, students have to elaborate their text by relating different parts of new information generated to each others or making meaningful associations. Elaboration is effective in the drafting stage since students need supporting ideas, details and illustrations. Using new words in a sentence, paraphrasing information, applying analogies, substituting or recombining words and phrases, generating metaphors and making comparisons are some examples of elaboration strategies suggested by Simsek and Balaban (2010, p. 37).

- **Transfer:** It means using known linguistic information to facilitate writing (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990, p. 45). That is, students apply the knowledge they have previously learnt and skills they developed to assist their production, for instance vocabulary, grammar rules and writing conventions.

- **Imagery.** Referring to Oxford (1990, p.41), imagery involves using mental or actual pictures and visuals to represent information either in the mind or in an actual drawing. This cognitive strategy is helpful in writing because it triggers students' imagination and creativity.

- **Resourcing.** It refers to the use of the available reference material on the target language including dictionaries, encyclopedias or textbooks (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990). The use of learning resources is a way to revise and elaborate one's written production.

**II.4.3. Affective strategies.** The influential role of affective factors (e.g. self-efficacy, anxiety, etc) on students' achievement and learning has always been a matter of research. So, students need to regulate and control their feelings, emotions, attitudes and values when writing. Affective strategies, according to O'Malley and Chamot (1990, p. 45), involve taking control of one's emotions. The common affective strategies are self-talk and self-reinforcement.

- **Self-talk.** O'Malley and Chamot (1990, p. 45) refer to it as "using mental control to assume that a learning activity will be successful or to reduce anxiety". In other words, self-talk concerns what students say to themselves to feel comfortable, encourage themselves and reduce negative emotions. Students' internal speech is an important factor in determining attitudes, feelings and behaviour, enhancing motivation and reducing procrastination (Dembo, 2004, p. 121).

- **Self-reinforcement.** Self-reinforcement refers to the provision of personal motivation by rewarding oneself after a written task has been successfully accomplished (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990, p.139). For instance, when a student succeeds to write an essay and submit it on time, he deserves to praise himself. As examples of self-reinforcement, Zimmerman et al. (1996) suggest watching television, meeting or talking to a friend. Likewise, Bandura (1991, p.256) proposes making free time, relaxing breaks and recreational activities as self-rewards.

**II.4.4. Social Strategies.** From a social cognitive perspective, learning occurs in a social setting wherein social and environmental factors may cause distraction, so students need to manage their social interaction and arrange the physical environment by using

effective strategies. Below are displayed three main strategies: cooperation, seeking social assistance and management of the study area.

- **Cooperation.** This is a social strategy that concerns working with peers to review some points or get feedback on a written performance (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990, p. 45). This is useful in the editing and revising stages of the writing process to improve one's production. In line with the social cognitive theory, cooperation with others eliminates competition and cultivates group spirit. Collaborative writing and peer-assessment are relevant strategies to promote cooperation among students and obtain feedback.

- **Seeking social assistance.** Concerning this, O'Malley and Chamot (1990, p. 45) refer to it as students' tendency and efforts to solicit help from peers and teachers, eliciting additional explanation or verification. Regarding its importance in EFL learning, Karabenick and Gonida (2017, p.425) argue that seeking help or social assistance has been acknowledged as an important adaptive self-regulated learning strategy. That is, when students face difficulties at any stage, it is quite helpful to ask questions and seek clarification. For instance, a student may ask how to spell out a word. Karabenick and Gonida (2017, p.425) mentioned that students can seek help from different sources either face-to face or mediated via some form of technology.

- **Management of the study area.** In foreign language learning (FLL), students need to manage the learning environment to reduce any physical distraction in order to concentrate on completing their task. Management of physical setting is a strategy that requires locating a place that is quiet and free from visual and auditory distractions (Chen, 2002, p. 13). Zimmerman and Martinez Pons (1986) reported that this strategy has been found to be widely used by high achieving students than their low achieving peers. Examples of strategies for managing a study area include: eliminating noise, arranging adequate lighting and arranging a place to write (Zimmerman, 1989, p.330).

To sum up, all the strategies presented above are helpful in the writing process; students can improve their academic writing when they employ these strategies appropriately and become successful self-regulators.

### **II.5. Promoting Self-regulation in Academic Writing: Teacher's Role**

Writing is arguably the most difficult skill to achieve communicative competence (Chamot, 2005, p.121). This is mainly due to the fact that “it involves not only knowledge about grammar and vocabulary but rather it depends on high levels of personal regulation because writing is a self-planned, self-initiated and self-sustained activity” (Zimmerman & Risemberg, 1997, p. 73). Like Zimmerman and Risemberg (1997), many other researchers assert that the development of the writing competence depends on high levels of self-regulation (e.g. Englert, Raphael, Anderson, Anthony & Stevens 1991; Graham & Harris, 2000; Harris et al., 2017). This latter enhances writing performance through self-regulated processes such as goal-setting, planning and self-evaluation. In commenting on the role of self-regulation in developing students' academic writing, Järvelä and Järvenoja (2011) explain that students who learn to use self-regulated learning strategies in writing participate readily and increase their ability to tackle better writing problems; they succeed in planning, monitoring and regulating the writing process.

This implies that writing is a personal task requiring students to monitor their time, efforts, cognition and emotion. However, Schunk and Zimmerman (2003) stress that not all students are aware or capable of self-regulating their learning. This is because self-regulation, as Schunk (1989, p. 99) and other researchers believe, does not automatically develop as people become older, nor it is passively acquired from the environment. In the same direction go Corno and Randi (2000, p.652) and Zimmerman (2002, p.69) stressing that students are poorly prepared or insufficiently encouraged to be self-regulated as their classroom environment provides few if no opportunities for self-regulation to occur. Put simply, teachers

do not prepare their students to learn on their own. In support of this view, most researchers highlight the necessity and importance of teaching students to be self-regulated learners (e.g. Schunk & Zimmerman, 1997; Pintrich, 2000, Zimmerman, 2002). A wealth of evidence suggests two ways to develop students' self-regulation skills: self-regulated instruction and setting the learning environment.

**II.5.1. Self-regulated instruction.** Strategy instruction refers to “any process which seeks to develop intentionally the use of learning strategies on the part of the learner.” (Harris & Grenfell, 2004, p.121). Students can be taught self-regulated learning strategies that can help them effectively direct their personal quest for knowledge and develop their skills in order to improve their writing. Supporting this claim, Paris and Paris (2001) argue that teachers can provide explicit instruction on self-regulated learning. Basically, teachers can raise students' awareness on the importance of taking full control of their writing by providing instruction on the different self-regulatory processes and strategies that they need to employ in order to regulate their writing. However, arguments have been developed regarding the type of instruction to provide: explicit or embedded. As a result, many instructional programs have been designed. Some of the instructional programs that seem relevant to EFL writing are explained in what follows.

- **Self-regulation Strategy Development (SRSD) model.** This instructional program is developed by Graham and his colleagues. It is an explicit interactive program that provides knowledge needed to use the self-regulated strategies throughout the writing process (Harris, Graham, Friedlander and Laud, 2013, p. 539). Specifically, students are taught strategies for planning, drafting and revising texts and a number of self-regulatory processes such as goal-setting, self-monitoring and self-instruction (Graham and Perin, 2007). Instruction takes place across six flexible and recursive stages (Harris, Graham & Mason, 2006; Graham and Perin, 2007; Harris et al., 2017). First, teachers develop students' background knowledge

regarding pre-requisite skills in writing and self-regulation. Second, the teacher describes and discusses the writing strategies, their purpose as well as their benefits. The third stage concerns modelling the strategies; that is, students are shown how to employ the self-regulated strategies in their writing. Scunk and Zimmerman (2007, p. 7) consider modelling as an effective means of building self-regulatory and academic skills in writing and of raising self-efficacy. Next, students are trained to memorise those strategies. In stage five, the teacher supports the students by reviewing and using the strategies collaboratively (scaffolding). The final stage involves independent practice; students use the taught strategies on their own to improve their performance with little support. Empirically, SRSD has been shown to improve students' self-regulation and performance in writing. For instance, in their review of research studies conducted on SRSD; Baker, Chard, Ketterlin-Geller, Apichatabutra and Doabler (2009) concluded that this program provides a comprehensive approach to writing instruction with a clear set of procedures to follow to implement the practice the way it has been used in research studies and they also advocated that if the approach is implemented appropriately, educators can expect significant improvement in students' writing and self-regulation skills. More specifically, SRSD has been demonstrated to be effective in expository writing (Englert et al., 1991), narrative writing (Zumbrunn & Bruning, 2012) and persuasive writing (Belounis, 2018).

- **Strategic Content Learning (SCL).** This model is designed by Butler (2002) to promote self-regulated skills in different domains. The objective behind this model is to help students learn *how to learn independently* (Butler, Beckingham & Lauscher, 2005, p. 159). This instructional model supports students' reflective engagement in interactive cycles of self-regulation based on Zimmerman's three phases model: task analysis, strategy implementation and self-evaluation. It is based on the integration of multiple theoretical stands, notably constructivist and socio-cultural learning theories. Burler et al. (2005) clarify

that four main principles underline SCL. The central principle is that self-regulation should be integrated to instruction and not taught separately. That is, instruction is structured in ways that assist students in deliberate and critical selection and adaptation of self-regulated learning strategies for a particular task. Therefore, the goal is twofold: develop content and strategic learning at the same time. The second instructional principle underlying this model is students' active participation and self-construction of knowledge and skills. Students participate in the task and monitor the process by defining evaluation criteria, identifying and employing strategies and assessing their performance. The third principle supports guided practice. While students engage actively in the process of developing their knowledge and skills, the teacher should support them in the use of various self-regulated strategies through modelling and scaffolding. The last principle concerns collaborative practice in pursuit of a specific goal. Based on socio-cultural theories of learning, teacher and students work collaboratively to establish a shared framework for understanding (Butler, 2002, p.85). By integrating the four principles, students are encouraged to construct their knowledge through interaction between their prior knowledge and their current learning experiences, problem solving and collaboration with the teacher who supports their reflective engagement in cycles of self-regulated learning (task analysis, strategy implementation and self-evaluation). Butler (2002) provided a detailed account in her paper "Individualizing instruction in self-regulated learning" on how teachers can implement SCL.

▪ **Narratives.** As a response to researchers who disprove the idea of explicit instruction and rather advocate discovery instruction, Randi and Corno (2000) suggest implicit instruction on self-regulated writing through literature. In this model, Randi and Corno (2000) explored the use of story as a general model for developing self-regulated writing aptitude based on Bauman and Ivey's (1997) model of literature-based instruction. Bauman and Ivey (1997, p.247) describe the model as a curriculum balance which involves

providing instruction within the context of literature as an effective way to develop students' skills in writing and reading and provide them with useful leaning strategies. As an instructional model for self-regulated learning, this model is beneficial for both students and teachers. First, Randi and Corno (2000, p.666) believe that tightly linked to the social cognitive theory which emphasises observational learning, literature can be an effective means for acquiring self-regulatory skills. In this regard, Schunk (2003, p. 3) explains that models can raise efficacy among students who are apt to believe they, too, can be successful if they follow the same patterns of behaviour or thinking observed in a story. In our context, EFL writing, teachers can use literature to encourage and develop students' self-observation, reflection and evaluation skills as well as interactive capacities. Second, Randi and Corno (2000, p. 666) consider this discovery model as one which guides teachers in detecting adaptations suitable for their own classrooms and in creating ways to teach self-regulated learning through literary texts they select in person. Daloz (1986) states that great teachers offer stories, not answers (as cited in Randi and Corno, 2000, p.665). More importantly, as far as EFL writing is concerned, this is a typically situational learning model that develops not only self-regulated writing skills but also the writing competence as students analyse the written material.

- **Project-based learning (PBL).** This is another discovery based instruction which is also called problem-based learning. It is a comprehensive approach designed to engage students in investigation of complex and authentic problems to construct knowledge and develop skills (Blumenfeld et al., 1991, p.369). Teachers can implement this approach in EFL classrooms to support the development of self-regulated learning implicitly. Projects are, according to Blumenfield et al. (1991), centred round two important elements: a driving question and an activity (final product). That is, students engage in a learning project by asking a question then searching in an attempt to create a product that addresses the driving

question. In PBL, students seek solutions to problems by asking questions, designing plans, collecting and analysing data, discussing ideas, proposing explanations, challenging others' ideas, writing conclusions and communicating findings to others (Krajcik & Blumenfeld, 2006, p.318). Regarding teacher's role, Blumenfeld et al. (1991) explain that teachers initially provide modelling, scaffolding and coaching, gradually increasing the learner's independence. Providing instruction on self-regulated learning strategies that is embedded within projects is an effective instructional program. Drawing from Blumenfeld et al. (1991, p.376), projects are interesting to EFL writing classrooms, for they can develop students' self-regulatory skills in many ways. First, they help students to develop reflection, decision making and problem solving skills. Second, this approach links classroom content to real-life experiences, so student learn by doing. It is also adaptable to different types of learners and learning situations. Finally, it fosters motivation as there is a high degree of responsibility and choice over what and how the work is done. An example of a model that depicts the relationship among the phases of self-regulated learning and project-based learning is proposed by English and Kitsantas (2013, p.133). The model integrates Zimmerman's three phases model into PBL phases. The authors assert that a dynamic, reciprocal relationship exists between PBL activities in the classroom and the self-regulation processes that are internal to the student.

**II.5.2. Setting the learning environment.** Students are likely to self-regulate their learning when they are provided with opportunities and a supporting classroom environment. In this regard, Ertmer and Newby (1996, p. 21) contend that students can use their knowledge and skills if they are given opportunities to use them in a variety of learning environments and receive feedback on their use. In the same vein, Paris and Paris (2001, p. 99) highlight that self-regulation is likely to develop "when teachers create classroom environment in which students have opportunities to seek challenge, reflect on their progress and take responsibility

and pride in their accomplishment.” Particularly, as foreign language writing is a difficult and time consuming process (Elbow, 2000), students need to be encouraged to self-regulate their writing by creating an engaging and a supportive classroom atmosphere; hence, the role of the teacher is crucial. Winograd and Paris (1989, p. 32) state, “thoughtful, strategic teachers are essential element in promoting thoughtful self-regulated learning” (as cited in Ertmer & Newby, 1996, p. 21). Extensive practice and feedback are then considered critical for the development of self-regulated learning. Various activities can be adopted by teachers in EFL classrooms to foster self-regulation. For instance, Presley (1995) suggest the use of a variety of learning activities with varied degrees of difficulty to help students build confidence and self-efficacy (as cited in Mccann & Turner, 2004). In addition, Paris and Paris (2001) advocate the use of collaborative projects. Learning in collaboration boosts students’ self-efficacy and helps them improve their skills as well as learning new ones. Corno and Randi (2000, p.663) and Black, Harrison, Lee, Marshall and Wiliam (2004, p.19), in their turn, suggest integrating peer and self-assessment into teaching instruction to encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning, develop their self-reflection and critical thinking skills and receive alternatives from peers.

## **Conclusion**

Throughout this chapter, we have shown that numerous research works which addressed self-regulation highlight its role in EFL learning in general and in writing in particular. Self-regulated leaning is a self-generated and self-directed process whereby students take control and full responsibility for their learning by setting specific and attainable goals, then monitoring their time, efforts and resources to improve their performance and progress in their learning. Therefore, encouraging self-regulated learning in EFL classrooms is a key factor for successful implementation of the LMD system. Besides, we have seen that self-regulation is manifested through different processes; of all the processes implied, a

crucial one is self-assessment. This latter will be addressed in the forthcoming chapter.

## **Chapter Two: Understanding Self-assessment in EFL Writing Classrooms**

Most researchers and educators agree that one effective way to develop students' skills and learning is to provide them with opportunities to reflect on their own learning and control aspects that affect their progress. This can be achieved by engaging them in the process of assessment. The prominent role classroom assessment plays in supporting students' learning has recently gained much attention in EFL education. Classroom assessment should be meant to help students gain skills and experience in order to develop the ability to reflect critically and apply knowledge in real-world settings. Central to this practice is the use of self-assessment. To this end, the purpose of this chapter is to clarify some of the key terminology related to EFL classrooms and take a closer look at the relevant literature which defines the baseline from which our study set out. Specifically, it starts by looking at the different concepts of classroom assessment then goes on to define self-assessment and present an account of previous studies done on the topic with special attention addressed to EFL writing. Basically, self-assessment benefits and challenges are reported in addition to the conditions necessary for successful implementation of the process. A short summary ends the chapter.

### **I. EFL Writing: the Focus of the Study**

#### **I.1. Nature of Writing**

Writing is considered a crucial skill among the four skills required in language learning. Traditionally, writing had been restricted to the view of graphic representation of speech and subsequently defined in terms of a good mastery of language: grammar, vocabulary and writing conventions. Text focus was primarily on correctness. Later with the advent of theories of language teaching and learning, this productive skill has been acknowledged to fulfill different functions. As a result, the ability to write well in English is considered today a vital skill for success in both academic and social settings. More

importantly, contemporary theories of education recognise its multidimensional nature which involves not only accurate knowledge of language, but also the influence of various intra and extra linguistic factors.

Basically, a great deal of learning in academic settings is carried out through writing. In this context, it represents a medium through which students demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the different subject matters and good mastery of the language system itself. Besides, most of the quizzes and final exams students take are done through writing. This is described as “writing-for-learning” (Harmer, 2007, p.330). It means that writing is a means to practice language or learn disciplinary knowledge.

The second function writing is used for is communication. Similar to spoken language, students produce texts in an attempt to express ideas and feelings and share their experiences and interests with the world. This is in fact a creative act of self-discovery (Hyland, 2003, p.8) through which students can fulfill personal communicative purposes.

However, unlike speaking which is acquired naturally, writing either in native or foreign language contexts does not develop naturally but is rather learnt through formal instruction. As a matter of fact, it is not limited to knowledge of the textual and discourse features of a text; arranging and coordinating those patterns into a coherent and purposeful piece of writing is considered a problem solving activity that necessitates cognitive functioning and mental effort. The process entails a range of skills and competences employed as students generate information, plan, draft and revise their productions. In this context, writing is a thinking process (Brown, 2001, p.336) that makes thought available for reflection. This represents another function of writing.

Closely bound to communication is the notion of society. Writing is a means to fulfill social roles and create relations; by so doing, it is and considered therefore a social act. Hyland (2003, p18) holds that students follow certain social conventions to organise their

texts because they want the reader to recognise the purpose of their writing.

Taking into account the importance of writing as a personal, cognitive and a social act, Raimes (1983, p.5) encourages us to teach writing. She clearly states, “we have to teach writing.” This leads us to the next question of this section: *how to teach writing?*

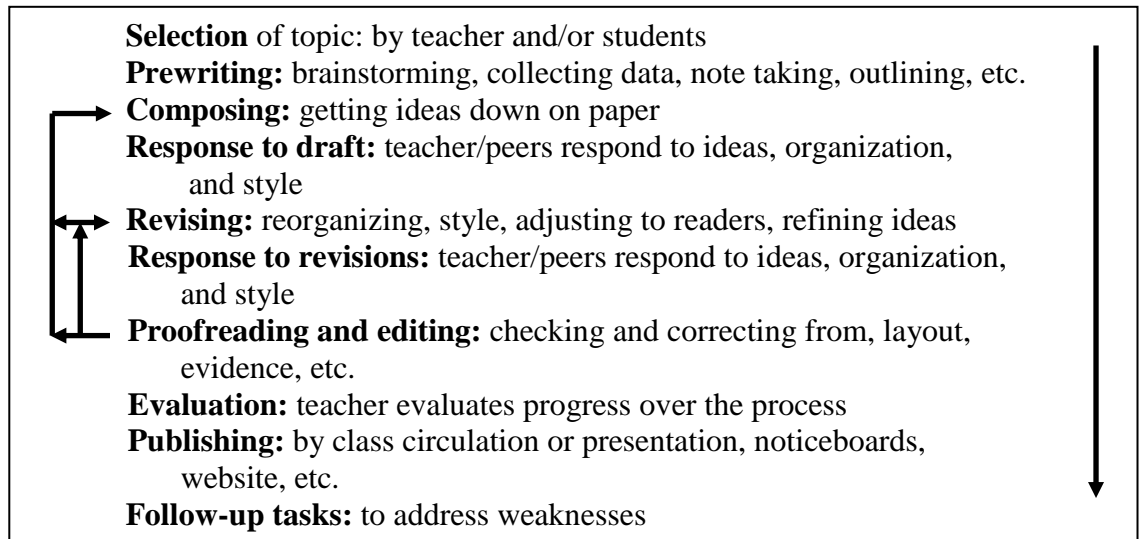
## **I.2. Approaches to Writing Instruction**

Being a complex skill, writing poses particular challenges for both students and teachers. Writing instruction has taken several orientations and a great number of approaches and methods have emerged, each stressing one specific aspect of the skill. Therefore, focus can either be on the textual patterns of the written text, the processes and skills required in the process of writing itself, or the social function it aims to fulfil. To scrutinise better this complexity of the writing skill, we have considered it necessary to give an account of the three main approaches to writing instruction in what follows: the product-based, the process-based and the genre-based approaches.

**I.2.1.Product -based Approach.** This is the product approach which has dominated much of the teaching instruction in EFL classrooms. Writing within this orientation is essentially concerned with what the end product looks like, and therefore, attention is focused on demonstrating mastery of the structural features of language used to produce written texts. A priority of teachers is developing students’ linguistic knowledge (grammar, vocabulary and mechanics) to help them produce accurate pieces of writing. Specifically, writing instruction takes place through four main stages: familiarisation, controlled writing, guided writing and finally free writing (Badger & white, 2000, p. 153). To explain, students are provided with model texts, they respond to those stimuli by analysing their textual features, imitate that model in parallel writing tasks with teacher’s assistance and then go further to replicate those features independently in their own productions. The strength of this approach is that it accounts for the linguistic patters required in texts which are an important dimension of

written language. In support of this claim, Brown (2001, p.335) emphasises the role model texts play in the product orientation and explains that what matters most in a product orientation is “a student’s final product measured up against a list of criteria that included content, organization, vocabulary use, grammatical use, and mechanical considerations such as spelling and punctuation.” In the same direction goes Hyland (2003, p.4) asserting that the product approach provides worth in “building vocabulary, scaffolding writing development and increasing the confidence of novice writers.” In response to these comments, the product approach is advocated at early stages of writing instruction as it is effective in consolidating and building students’ linguistic competence. Nevertheless, this behaviouristic orientation overlooks the processes students undergo when composing and the skills and knowledge they bring to the classroom are undervalued. That is, less attention is devoted to the writing process itself.

**I.2.2.Process-based Approach.** The writing process has been developed as a response to the shortcomings of the product approach. The way students approach writing tasks and the internal resources they bring into the classroom are at the heart of this model. Within this orientation, writing is the result of a complex interaction of a set of skills and processes students put together to create a piece of writing. Badger and White (2000, p.154) emphasise that students develop as writer rather than learn. On this basis, writing is viewed as a recursive, generative and cyclical process in which students go through multiple drafts to create a finished paper. In the same direction goes Harmer (2007, p.362) describing the process of writing as a wheel process because students plan, draft and edit, but then re-plan, re-draft and re-edit throughout the process. That is, students go forwards and backwards at any time as they compose. Hyland (2003, p.11) suggests the diagram in Figure 5 in which she summarises both students’ cognitive functioning and teacher’s role in the process.



*Figure 5.* A process model of writing instruction (From Hyland, 2003, p.11)

In reference to Figure 5, the process of writing can be summarised into five main stages: pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing and sharing. The pre-writing stage consists of establishing a goal for writing, activating background knowledge about the topic, then developing a preliminary plan. Subsequently, students transform their plan into a first sketchy draft by shaping their thoughts and brainstormed ideas and organising them so as to create a coherent and meaningful piece of writing. Besides, during this stage, main ideas are expanded in an attempt to back up their text with sufficient and relevant information about the topic. As students compose, they revise their texts for clear meaning and edit them for appropriate grammar. Revision and editing occur simultaneously with the other processes; in an attempt to bring appropriate change and give their draft a final professional look, students add, delete, substitute and correct any language or content anomalies they notice. Finally, students read their finished product in the classroom, share it with peers for peer reviewing or just turn in it to the teacher for assessment. Clearly, teaching under the process approach has a different orientation. A priority of the teacher is to develop students' metacognitive awareness of the writing process and assist them in the use of the appropriate strategies then provide feedback to inform their progress.

Despite the importance attributed to students' internal processes and mental efforts, the process approach may present a disadvantage to students because it does not back them up with sufficient input on the textual features of written language and its social aspect. In his regard, Hyland (2003, p.13) holds, "the process of writing is a rich amalgam of elements of which cognition is only one." Another limitation is that it assumes all students go through the same processes and employ the same set of skills whenever engaged in a writing task (Badger & white, 2000, p.157). Arguably, this does not always hold true as students are at different stages of writing development and have different learning styles and strategies.

**I.2.3.Genre-based Approach.** The genre approach can be considered as an extension of the product approach in which writing is essentially concerned with knowledge of the language. Yet, unlike the product approach, the genre approach views writing as a means of communication which connects the student (as a writer) to the reader of a particular social environment (Badger & white, 2000, p.155). Central to this approach is the notion of purpose. That is, the approach acknowledges the role of the social context in which written texts are constructed to suit a specific purpose addressed to a particular audience.

Teaching under the genre orientation parallels the product approach closely as it goes through the four stages of instruction mentioned previously. Models of different writing genres like academic writing, reports and letters are of high importance to familiarise students with the different purposes of communication and the discourse patterns of each genre. The strength of this approach is that it accounts for both text and context. However, the fact that the skills and processes of writing and the role writers themselves play in the composing process are overlooked remains an inconvenience towards the development of spontaneous writing.

As a final thought, it becomes clear that the three aforementioned approaches have different perspectives to writing and the teaching instruction in each approach has a different

orientation. In stressing the importance of the three types of knowledge: text, process and context, Baker et al. (2009, p.303) state,

Becoming an effective writer involves developing a constellation of skills and knowledge including organizing information and ideas, using established writing conventions (e.g., grammar, punctuation); writing legibly; identifying and implementing rhetorical structures; and writing in a way that engages a specific audience.

In other words, students need to develop their full awareness of the writing process they use to create texts and consider the purpose of writing, depending on the context. In addition, they need to know how to apply their linguistic knowledge of the target language in such specific context to achieve their communicative purpose. Drawing on this, contemporary theories of language teaching and learning advocate that writing instruction should typically incorporate insights from the three approaches into EFL classrooms so as the strengths of one approach can complement the weaknesses of the other. This is in fact an eclectic approach which Badger and White (2000, p.157) term the process genre approach.

Obviously, knowledge of theory and awareness of students' potential and needs help teachers to select the appropriate tasks and take the right decisions.

### **I.3. Assessment of Academic Writing**

Due to the nature and complexity of the writing skill, responding to students' writing, in terms of assessment, seems to be the most challenging aspect of classroom instruction. As a matter of fact, the question of good writing has always been a dilemma for educators and researchers in EFL writing. At the same time *what constitutes a good piece of writing or how to write well* is an important aspect, yet fairly challenging for students. A review of the literature shows that effective writing requires basically some criteria of acceptability. Once these criteria are fulfilled, the produced text can be judged as a good piece of writing. Nevertheless, the issue is that the list of criteria is not exhaustive as the criteria may differ from one text genre to another, from one institution to another or even from one teacher to

another.

By drawing on the major principles of the process-genre approach to EFL writing instruction, the criteria suggested by Raimes (1983, p.6) seem to be of great value to our research. Her model includes nine main dimensions she believes are the most influential aspects to achieve effective communication in EFL writing. The model is presented in Figure 6.

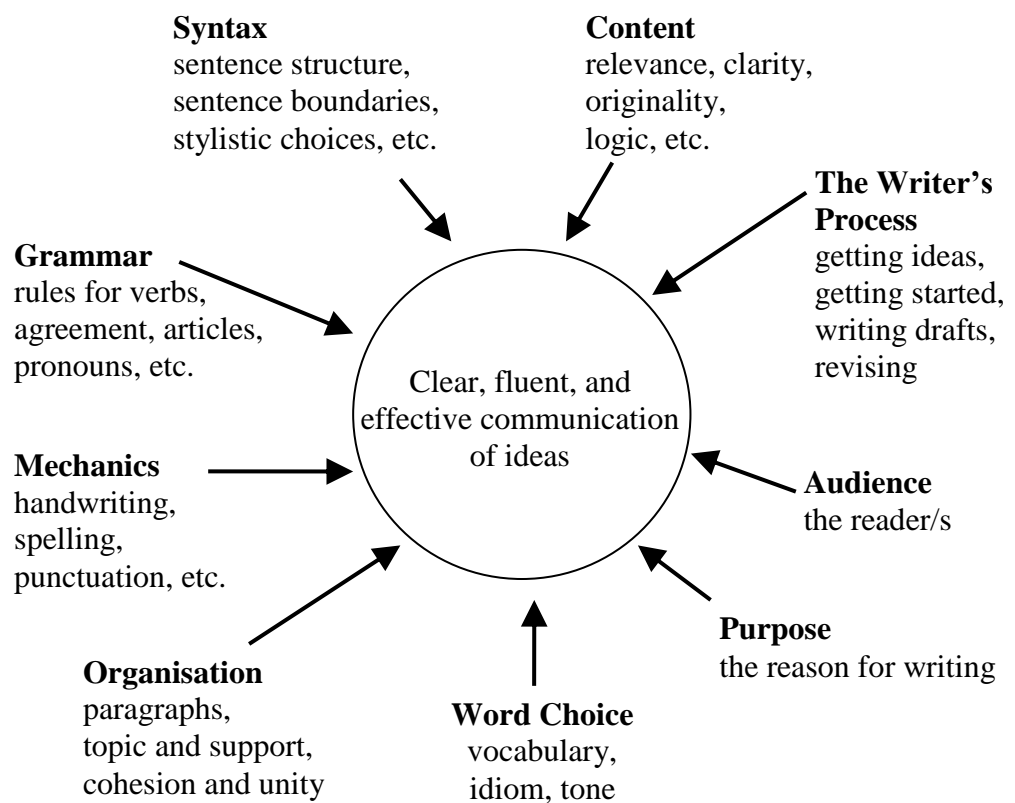


Figure 6. Writing dimensions (From Raimes, 1983, p.6)

The nine dimensions have been categorised into three kinds of knowledge demands and skills: text-based knowledge, cognitive-based skills and context based knowledge.

### 1.3.1. Text-based knowledge.

**1.3.1.a. Language-based knowledge.** The point of focus here is on the constituents of the system of the English language, that is grammar, vocabulary, mechanics and syntax. In fact, we can assume that these are the criteria that define good writing from the product

approach perspective. Of course, no one can deny the importance of language patterns in writing because when they are used accurately, meaning becomes clear and reading is smooth. In contrast, when grammar rules are used incorrectly or words are chosen inappropriately, the reader may find it effortful to get the point simply because all the linguistic elements aid in the construction of meaning.

***1.3.1.b. Discourse based-knowledge.*** By discourse patterns we mean the sequential and interactional relations between linguistic units, ideas and information that establish communication (Faerch & Kasper, 1984, p.215). Raimes (1983, p.6) highlights two elements: content and organisation.

**1. Content.** It refers to the ideas and thoughts expressed in the piece of writing and which are linked directly to the topic. These ideas should be, as displayed in Figure 6, relevant, clear, logical and original. In this regard, we can make reference to Grice's (1975, pp.45-46) cooperative principle and its associated maxims of :

- Quantity:* be as informative as required
- Quality:* provide true, evidence-based information
- Relation:* be relevant
- Manner:* be brief, concise and orderly

**2. Organisation.** Reference is made here to the way information is developed and structured to form a unified whole. Text structure, unity and coherence are the three key features that constitute and tie up the parts of a piece of writing together and make it stand as a text (of course with the other elements).

- **structure**, in academic writing, a text should generally have three parts: introduction, body and conclusion. Yet, each type of text has its particular internal structure depending on the type of text and purpose of writing.

- **unity** is another important criterion when organising a text. Unity in a text is achieved when all the sentences and information provided support one single point stated in the topic sentence or thesis statement (Savage & Mayer, 2005, p. 9).

▪ **coherence** refers to the logical flow of ideas; that is, how ideas hang together to form a unit of meaning. McCrimmon (1967) elaborated on this by explaining,

A paragraph is said to have coherence when its sentences are woven together or flow into each other. (...) the reader moves easily from one sentence to the next without feeling that there are gaps in the thought, puzzling jumps, or points not made. (as cited in Gutwinski, 1976, p. 27).

The author goes further to say that coherence is created by two means: continuity of thought and transitions. That is, students can produce coherent texts by establishing logical relationships between pieces of information, following a certain order of presentation, organising the ideas on the basis of the topic and purpose of writing and linking them using transitional devices. Nevertheless, when a piece of writing is not coherent, we talk about coherence breaks which are one of the major problems in students' written productions in EFL.

A clear distinction should be made between cohesion and coherence as they are sometimes used confusingly. Cohesion is defined by Gutwinski (1976, p. 26) as the textual connectivity of sentences and clauses which are signaled by certain grammatical and lexical features termed cohesive devices. These cohesive devices include: reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction and lexical cohesion (Halliday & Hasan, 1976). Therefore, cohesion concerns the appropriate and accurate linguistic features which make sentences stick together, whereas coherence refers to the logical relations between elements of a text at the discourse level which make the big parts flow smoothly. Cohesion is, in fact, one means to achieve coherence.

**I.3.2. Cognitive-based Processes.** The second type of information students need to develop awareness of is the writing process and the cognitive processes involved in. According to Raimes (1983, p.6), the development of effective writing depends on how students brainstorm ideas, generate plans, write drafts, revise and edit their productions. This

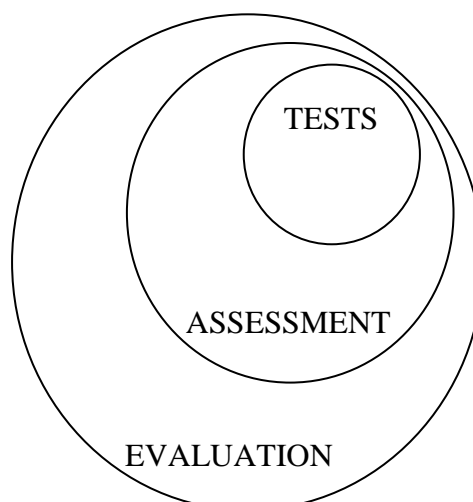
point has been discussed earlier. Nevertheless, the writing process cannot be assessed concretely by the teacher as it constitutes part of students' cognition and writing habits. The best way to do it is through questionnaires, interviews, classroom observation or students' self-assessment as students can provide more information about themselves.

**I.3.3. Context-based Knowledge.** The third type of knowledge that should be accounted in students' production is related to the purpose of writing and the reader's expectations. Context knowledge includes the features of a given communicative situation (Faerch & Kasper, 1984, p.216). Therefore, the criteria for assessing context knowledge depend on the type of text the student produces.

## II. Self-assessment in EFL Classrooms

### II.1. Classroom Assessment: the New Paradigm Shift

Evaluation, assessment and testing are all terms in common usage in EFL educational contexts, yet they are often used quite confusingly. The focus in this section is to clarify this terminology. In relation to classroom practice, evaluation and assessment have long been used interchangeably when in fact the two concepts carry our different meanings. Noticeably, the distinction between the two concepts is not tightly defined in the literature as the meaning of each concept depends primarily on its function and purpose, but effort is made in this section to elaborate on the difference in relation to our research context.



*Figure 7.* The relation between evaluation, assessment and testing (From Brown, 2004, p. 5)

In the literature, a distinction is made between the broader process of evaluation of the entire educational process and the specific process of assessment of students' achievement and learning. Richards and Schmidt (2002, p. 188) define evaluation as a generic term that involves making judgements on the quality or value of both the educational program (curriculum, objectives, material and testing system) and the individuals in the program (entrance to programs, placement, progress and achievement) for the sake of decision making. It involves all the educational and administrative parties in making decisions for accountability purposes such as enhancing programs, students' selection, promotion and certification of learning. In regard to individuals, evaluation refers to the process of making judgements on students' learning and achievement either qualitatively or quantitatively to account for learning, which is in fact assessment. A key point to retain here is that evaluative procedures related to students are undertaken through assessment. As far as purpose is concerned, while evaluation is intended to serve the entire educational program in the short term, assessment has a much more targeted perspective with a focus on students' learning and achievement in the long term. Nevertheless, Reeves (2000, p.102) asserts that the use of the term evaluation should be exclusively reserved to programs and assessment to students; he states, "In short, we assess people and evaluate things."

Concerning assessment, despite its wide use, it remains hard to set a clear-cut definition. In current literature dealing with classroom assessment, we find various definitions depending on its purpose, use and the context. Yet, we attempt to provide a working definition related to our EFL context. The term assessment is employed to describe a range of procedures used to gain information about students' learning and progress (Miller, Linn & Gronlund, 2009, p. 28). In other terms, it is the process of collecting, describing, analysing and interpreting information about different aspects of students' performance and learning on the basis of various sources of evidence. The results of this process are used to serve a key

part in the evaluation process. In this regard, Nunan (1992, p. 185) made it clearer that evaluation of students is both a process of collecting and interpreting information, that is assessment, and decision making (for the entire program).

Basically, there are two main approaches to assessment: traditional and alternative assessment. Some researchers also advocate that we can think of assessment as being summative or formative, whereas others refer to the two approaches as assessment of learning and assessment for learning (Stiggins, Arter, Chappuis & Chappuis, 2007, p. 29). In fact, all the terminology is attributed on the basis of the end-goal of assessment: certifying or supporting learning.

The first type of assessment, traditional assessment, is commonly called testing which refers to quantifying or measuring students' performance in a given domain through tests. According to Richards and Schmidt (2002, p.189) and Brown (2004, p.3), a test is defined as a formal and systematic procedure used to gather quantitative information about students' ability, knowledge or performance. That is, testing involves scoring students' performance in a given domain. It is carried out mainly as an administrative procedure to generate scores for evaluation purposes. In the growing literature on language assessment, it is important to differentiate between standardised tests (formal) and teacher-based tests (informal). Standardised tests or examinations are designed by experts, whereas teacher-based tests, as the name indicates, are prepared by teachers themselves. The difference between the two is mainly related to the content and format; the objective is the same: measuring students' achievement. To illustrate, proficiency tests like TOEFL and IELTS are examples of standardised tests, whereas end-term school exams are the best example of teacher-made tests.

As regards its purpose and content, traditional assessment is described by researchers as summative assessment. Summative assessment describes "any assessment activity which results in a mark grade which is subsequently used as judgment on student performance."

(Irons, 2008, p. 7) The term summative itself denotes summarising the achievement of students who are ranked on the basis of what they produce. It is carried out periodically after a certain period of instruction, generally, at the end of a school term, a course or a teaching unit, to give information as to what students have learnt, i.e. the outcome of language learning. Tests can be considered a decision making tool.

Originally, traditional assessment derived its principles from the behaviourist principles of learning with a focus on the product rather than the process (Brown, 2004, p.8; Berry, 2008, p. 9). Up to the mid nineties, testing had been the dominant type of assessment and much research was done on tests. Traditional assessment was considered objective, reliable and valid (Hamp-Lyons & Condon, 2000, pp.9-10; Berry, 2008, p.28; Kraska, 2008, p.62). Later, it has widely been challenged, notably in the field of education and language learning.

Drawing on a variety of sources, research evidence reveals some concerns regarding traditional assessment. Arguably, researchers have signaled its impact on the content of instruction which results in superficial and decontextualised learning.

In his paper “the real test bias”, Frederiksen (1984) used the word *bias* to refer to this impact. He explains that if important decisions are presumed to be related to test results, pressure for teachers to teach to the test increases (p. 194) and students are likely to be extrinsically motivated to prepare for the kind of tests they expect. In other words, teachers focus on teaching the aspects that will be covered in the test and plan their instruction accordingly; at the same time, students efforts will be directed to the reproduction of the taught elements so as to pass the test. Here, test results become the end-goal of learning. Inevitably, students concentrate more on their grades and pay less if no attention to what they have learnt or what they still need to learn. Likewise, Brown and Hudson (1998, p. 94) used to term (*negative*) *washback* to refer to the same idea as Frederiksen.

Researchers further argue that if tests take place at the end of instruction or academic year, the results are seldom used to adapt instruction to improve learning (Black & William, 1998, p.140; Wiggins & McTighe, 2007, p.4) simply because they do not “provide the day-to-day information needed in the classroom” (Stiggins et al., 2007, p.34). The point is that, as testing occurs at the end of instruction, the focus is on measuring how much students learn rather than how well their knowledge and skills improve.

In line with this research, assessment experts like Gipps (1994, p. 38), Shepard (2000, p. 5/9) and Wiggins and McTighe (2007, p.13) among others found that when teachers teach directly to the content and format of tests, students are often unable to transfer their knowledge thoughtfully and authentically to different problems or novel situations. This is because the ability to develop effective arguments and conduct significant research projects are considered essential skills which are very difficult to assess on a paper and pencil test (Achieve, 2004; as cited in Darling-Hammond & Adamson, 2010, p.4). Subsequently, as the summative function is over-emphasised, researchers also point out that externally imposed tests assess only the lower-order thinking skills of the student; therefore, they prevent and drive out thoughtful and challenging classroom practices (Crooks, 1988, p.467; Shepard, 2000, p. 9; Jonsson & Svingby, 2007, p.131; Wiggins & McTighe, 2007, p.4). In making this comment, Gulikers, Bastiaens, Kirschner and Kester (2006, p. 382) wrote, “The testing culture is characterized by so-called objective, standardized test instruments that focus on measuring atomized bits of knowledge at the expense of more complex, higher-order knowledge and skills.” In other words, traditional assessment generally encourages superficial and rote learning, with a focus on memorisation and recall of small and disconnected pieces of information which students are likely to forget shortly. As a result, scores appear to be relatively a poor indicator of achievement as they tell little about students’ actual strengths and limitations (Oscarson, 2009, p. 62).

In one word, Sadler (1989, p. 120) describes this type of assessment as *passive* because summative assessment “gives the message that assessment is not an act of the learner, but an act performed on the learner.” (Boud, 2000, p.156). As a result, such passivity affects not only their cognitive functioning, but also their motivational beliefs which in turn may have a negative effect on their learning. To illustrate, Crooks (1988) points out to the undesirable effects of tests on students’ affect which include: lower intrinsic motivation, low self-efficacy and increased anxiety. Consequently, Shohamy (1982, p. 13) explains that these negative feelings students experience during tests strongly affect their achievement. In fact, one source of these negative feelings can be the lack of control over the assessment as this type of assessment requires students to display their knowledge in a predetermined way (Brualdi, 1998, p.2). That is, tests in the form of true/false, filling the gaps or multiple questions involve short and correct answers.

Taking into account the above mentioned shortcomings, tests have been considered inefficient in supporting students’ learning and enhancing instruction. Within the late 1980s, the insight from teaching and learning theories led to a set of principles for assessment reform which has undergone a paradigm shift “from a testing and examination culture to an assessment culture” (Gipps, 2012, p.1). That is, classroom assessment has shifted from the measurement culture to the improvement culture and teachers’ assessment practices have become more competence-oriented than score-focused. As a response to these shortcomings, there has been a call for innovative forms of assessment which account for students’ potential, experiences and learning needs. Attention has consequently been directed towards greater interest in the new forms of assessment which are labelled *alternative assessment*. This type of assessment has been embraced in mainstream education since the pioneering work of Black and William.

Alternative assessment is a systematic approach to collecting information and making

inferences about students' learning on the basis of diverse sources of evidence collected in practical real world tasks (Richards & Schmidt, 2002, p. 23). It is also described as formative assessment. According to Sadler (1989, p.120), an assessment that is formative "is concerned with how judgments about the quality of student responses (performances, pieces, or works) can be used to shape and improve the student's competence by short-circuiting the randomness and inefficiency of trial-and-error learning." The strength of this definition is that unlike summative assessment practices that are intended to measure outcomes, formative assessment targets personal development and improvement of skills required for both academic and lifelong learning. That is, the point of focus is on the qualitative function of alternative assessment and its purpose which is improving learning. Put simply, instead of measuring what students achieve at the end of a term or year through tests; the emphasis is on identifying how well students are progressing in their learning experience.

Yet, the definition remains broad as it does not explain the nature of the process, how it is undertaken or the individuals involved in it. Black and Wiliam (1998, pp.7-8) provide a clearer picture of alternative assessment. They define it as "all those activities undertaken by teachers, and/or by their students, which provide information to be used as feedback to modify the teaching and learning activities in which they are engaged." The first point to notice in this definition is that unlike summative assessment in which the teacher holds all the power over the grading procedure, formative assessment offers opportunities to students to take part in the assessment process. That is, both the teacher and students are involved in making judgements on the quality of students' work for the sake of improving learning, so the balance of power in the classroom has shifted from teacher control to shared-responsibility. Another aspect worth considering, although not explicitly stated, is the on-going nature of alternative assessment; it is a regular and systematic process that is meant to provide evidence on students' performance and progress as learning occurs. This formative assessment,

according to Shepard (2000, p.10), should occur during instruction as part of the process and not postponed as only the end-point of instruction. That is, assessment should be considered an integral part of classroom instruction and a process that takes place all long the learning process, therefore an important aspect in both the teaching and the learning process. Such a new perspective to assessment has in fact been associated with the socio-cognitive and the socio-constructivist views of learning. The purpose of the process is also what differentiates formative assessment from other traditional assessment approaches or methods. From this viewpoint, assessment should always aim at meeting students' needs and help them improve their skills, not only at making them complete the task. Experts in formative assessment, Popham (2006, pp.3-4), Wiggins and McTighe (2007, p.103) and Black and Wiliam (2010, p.82) emphasise that for assessment to be considered formative, the results should be used, during the instructional segment in which the assessment occurred, to adjust teaching and learning. Similarly, Stiggins et al. (2007, p.46) maintain that the aim of formative assessment is "to improve learning while there is still time to act— before the graded event."

In an attempt to summarise the main characteristics of alternative assessment, Reeves (2000, p.108) listed five main points: focusing on complex learning, engaging higher-order thinking and problem solving skills, stimulating a wide range of active responses, involving challenging tasks that require multiple steps and requiring significant commitments of student time and effort. These characteristics add more details to the definitions of alternative assessment discussed previously.

If we are to compare traditional with alternative assessment, Table 1 summarises the main features of each type of assessment.

Table 1  
*Comparison of traditional and alternative assessments*

Aspect	Traditional (summative) assessment	Alternative (formative) assessment
Nature	Judgemental	Diagnostic
Function	Measuring final products	Monitoring progress
Purpose	Certification of learning	Improvement of learning
Time	End-term/fixed	On-going/flexible
Approach	Quantitative	Qualitative
Result	Scores	Feedback
Focus	Product	Process
Participants	Syllabus designers, administration, teachers, students	Teachers, students

While the word *formative* describes an on-going process that is primarily designed to inform, modify and improve learning, the word *summative* describes a periodic event that has as an end-goal ranking or certification of learning.

Based on what most researchers assert, traditional assessment seems to have no value. However, this does not always hold true; there are advantages of tests as just like there are concerns with alternative assessment practices. So, it is worth mentioning that by reporting the problems inherent in traditional assessment, our aim is not to completely abandon summative assessment, but we believe that a significant shift of balance is required in order to ensure both product and process learning. In this concern, many researchers point out to the fact that it is probably unrealistic to practically separate between summative and formative assessments in practice. These researchers agree by explaining that although formative assessment is more valued, the truth is that it is not sufficient; that is the reason why we need a balance between improvement and decision making (Boud 2000, p.155; Black et al., 2004, pp.15-16 and Stiggins et al., 2007, p.34). Ideally, integrating both types of assessment into classroom practice supports students' learning. This combination affords opportunities to use the strengths of one method to counterbalance the weaknesses of the other method. Effective

assessment, according to Banta and Palomba (2015, p.31), incorporates both summative and formative approaches to generate enough meaningful information about students' achievement and therefore increases the credibility of the assessment results, as information from multiple sources can be compared. As an illustration, Black et al. (2004, p.13) and Taras (2001, p.605) suggest that students should not receive grades until after they are assessed under formative assessment and respond to their teacher's feedback.

As regards EFL writing, the message of recent theories in assessment is to align assessment with writing instruction. Berry (2008, p. 51) states, "Teachers are familiar with the need to plan their teaching but not so familiar with the need to plan assessment. However, plans for teaching are incomplete unless they contain plans for assessment."

A key point to retain about the difference between the three concepts: assessment, testing and evaluation in relation to their function is made clearer in Wiliam and Thompson's (2007, p. 59) words "supporting learning (formative) [,] certifying the achievements or potential of individuals (summative) [and] evaluating the quality of educational institutions or programs (evaluative)". This indicates that the purpose, content and format of assessment are the factors that determine its impact.

It should be noted that 'evaluation' is used by many academics in the sense of assessment as used in this thesis for the sake of reducing confusion and facilitating understanding.

## **II.2. Self-assessment: Basic Definitions and Nature**

A generally held view among researchers investigating formative assessment is that it is not sufficient for teachers to provide feedback to students on their performance and learning; students have to take responsibility to monitor their progress and discover learning for themselves. In this regard, Paris and Ayres (1994, p. 7) assert, "Students need to be active participants in assessment of their own learning rather than passive respondents to a series of

tests.” In other words, the learning process should be favoured at the expense of the final product which will gain effectiveness when the process has been given due concern. Therefore, it is important to account for the role students themselves play in the process of assessment. In fact, much of the current literature on formative assessment is centred on self-assessment.

It is not surprising that self-assessment is commonly understood as students commenting or grading their performance. Yet, it is necessary here to go beyond this conceptualisation to provide a true picture of the concept. For Andrade and Valtcheva (2009, p. 13), self-assessment is more accurately defined as “a process of formative assessment during which students reflect on the quality of their work, judge the degree to which it reflects explicitly stated goals or criteria, and revise their work accordingly.” In this definition, the authors highlight three important attributes of self-assessment.

Firstly, the word formative should be given close attention. It describes self-assessment as an on-going process that requires systematic and constant review and comparison of one’s own performance. In fact, researchers made a distinction between global self-evaluation and task-specific self-assessment (Goodrich, 1996, p.25; Andrade & Du, 2007, p. 160). We stick to Goodrich distinction in which self-evaluation refers to the process of globally reflecting on one’s own qualities as a learner, whereas self-assessment refers to the process of reviewing the quality of one’s own performance in a specific learning task. In EFL, for example, Oscarson (1984) illustrates the differences between the self-evaluation of a student’s general ability to understand or speak English and the self-assessment of a linguistic situation like the student’s ability to introduce a friend or ask for a telephone number (as cited in Goodrich, 1996, pp. 26-27). Accordingly, self-assessment is a form of alternative assessment which needs to be aligned with instruction. In this, the point of focus is on supporting students’ learning and enhancing its quality.

Second, Andrade and Valtcheva (2009, p. 13) stress the active role of students in the assessment process. When assessing their own work, students engage in constant monitoring of their thinking, actions and task performance in order to determine if they have achieved their goals and performed the task successfully. What is particular and unique is that they assume part of the assessment responsibility.

Another point the definition spotlights is the term *criteria*. Criteria refer to specific guidelines by which work is to be assessed (Goodrich, 1996, p.24) or “a designated degree of performance or excellence” (Sadler, 1989, p. 129). In this regard, Taras (2005, p.467) maintains that a judgement cannot be made within a vacuum; points of comparison (standards and goals) are necessary. The inclusion of criteria makes it clear that self-assessment is not done at random, but it is a systematic process that should be guided and facilitated by pre-defined benchmarks. Students assess their work against the elements pre-defined at the beginning of a task and judge their performance according to the extent to which it reflects those criteria. Therefore, the task becomes goal-oriented and authentic. Clearly, criteria represent a reference point and thus a preliminary condition for effective self-assessment.

The last element of interest in the definition is revision. Revision is actually what characterises self-assessment as a formative process. Basically, the purpose of conducting self-assessment is to use the self-generated feedback and teacher feedback as well to bring the necessary correctives to the work being assessed and improve it.

By its very definition, self-assessment places a great deal of the assessment responsibility on students’ shoulders; nevertheless, one question we need to consider is whether students are able to assess their own performance or progress alone. It is clear that they cannot succeed in this complex process alone; the need for guidance by an expert is more than required. Thus, Hancock (1994, p. 3) sheds light on another key element of self-assessment *the teacher’s role* and stresses the role of both the student and the teacher in the

process. Accordingly, self-assessment can be defined as an ongoing process that involves both the student and the teacher in making judgements on students' progress in their learning. This means that students may be unable to accurately determine their level of language proficiency by their own, so they need their teacher to guide them and facilitate the assessment process. Teacher's role in self-assessment is to provide feedback on both students' performance and their self-assessments.

Taken all together, the two aforementioned definitions elaborated on and most of the works on self-assessment indicate that self-assessment is centred on four main elements: reflection, criteria, revision and feedback.

Regarding the nature of self-assessment, the definitions provided above imply that, as a form of alternative assessment, self-assessment is an instructional tool used by teachers in their classrooms to involve students in the assessment process. Unlike teacher assessment, self-assessment has the aim of sharing the assessment responsibility with students by engaging them in continuous review and analysis of their own progress. Therefore, with the integration of self-assessment into teachers' assessment practices, there is a shift from the culture of control and authority to the one of collaboration. Here, students represent a primary source of evidence for teachers leading to self-regulated learning. As such, self-assessment, which is commonly known as self-evaluation, is a self-regulatory process and more specifically, a metacognitive strategy. From this viewpoint, self-assessment is considered a skill that students need to develop in order to take charge of their own learning and reflect on their progress. Here the function and purpose of self-assessment are what determines its nature. In putting order to this claim, Boud (1989, p.2) clarifies that if students' self-assessment results count in summative assessment, self-assessment is considered part of formative assessment, but if they do not, then self-assessment is restricted purely to a learning process. In our research, we consider them jointly for the sake of developing student' self-

regulated capacities.

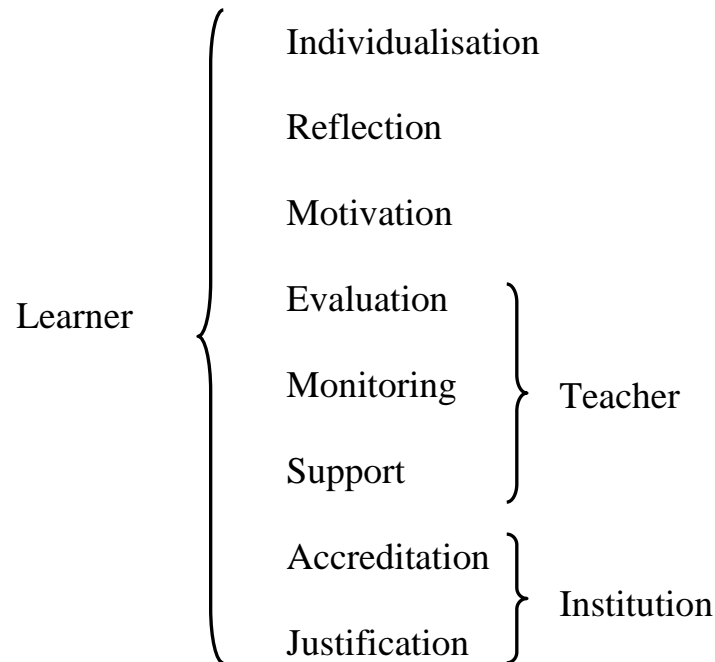
In a nutshell, self-assessment is an on-going process that involves the proactive role of students who compare their performance against pre-defined criteria in order to improve it under their teacher's support and coaching. Angelo and Cross (1993, p.4) describe this process as on-going, learner-centered, teacher-directed, mutually beneficial and content-specific.

### **II.3. The Value of Self-assessment**

Stefani (1998, p.345) highlights that the major goal of education is the development of self-regulated and lifelong learners, but to develop such skills, students must first develop skills in self-assessment. In the same direction goes Boud (2000, p.156 ) stressing that if classroom assessment is exclusively in the hand of teachers, it is difficult to see how students can become masters of their learning and develop the self-regulation skills needed to prepare them for lifelong learning. As far as EFL is concerned, students need to reflect on their language learning and monitor their progress, without such reflection and monitoring, it is difficult for them to recognise what they have learnt successfully and what aspects they need to improve on. In relation to the LMD system, formative assessment is given special attention as it represents one of the major elements of the evaluation reform. We have previously highlighted the reform's objectives in which students' independent learning and autonomy are central. To achieve this objective, students should be engaged in the process of learning and assessment. As a form of alternative assessment, self-assessment is increasingly gaining significant attention in FLL. Referring to Boud (1989, p.3) and Taras (2015, p.15), the ability to self-assess one's own work is an important element in learning and self-regulated learning; therefore, it is a skill that must be cultivated.

Ample evidence shows that when appropriately implemented, self-assessment can have potential benefits on students' achievement and learning in general (Black & William,

1998; McDonald & Boud, 2003; Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006; Boud & Falchikov, 2007; Andrade & Valtcheva, 2009) and on their academic writing in particular (Andrade & Boulay, 2003). Gardner (2000) compared teacher and student assessment and summarised the benefits of both processes in Figure 8.



*Figure 8.* The benefits of self-assessment (From Gardner, 2000, p. 51).

As noted previously, self-assessment is considered both as a learning process and an instructional tool. Figure 8 confirms our claim. What is particularly unique about self-assessment is that it benefits not only students but all the educational parties (teachers and institutions) as illustrated in the figure. Similar to Gardner (2000), other researchers have also provided strong evidence on the significance of self-assessment. The effects can be gathered under the following four levels: metacognitive, cognitive, affective and pedagogical.

- **Metacognitively.** There are strong arguments that self-assessment is one of the effective means for developing both critical self-awareness of learning and skills in learning how to learn (Nunan, 1988, p.116). Learning requires students to understand what they learn and how they learn; thus, assessing one's own progress promotes reflection which is vital in self-regulated learning. In this vein, Kurnaz and Çimer (2010, p. 3667) explain that

self-assessment helps “students gain insights into their own understandings”. Said differently, when students follow up their progress, they get deep into their thinking and become aware of their potential and approach to learning. This self-awareness of thinking and actions refers to self-monitoring (McMillan & Hearn, 2008, p.41). That is, when engaged in the assessment process students exert control over their thinking and thus monitor their performance. As far as EFL writing is concerned, Andrade (1999, p. 5) asserts that learning to write well and developing the metacognitive skills necessary to assess one's own thinking go hand-in-hand. In commenting on the role of self-assessment in the development of metacognition, students are described as *reflective practitioners* (Kwan & Leung, 1996, p. 205) who learn “to see themselves through new, self-critical eyes” (Donna Qualley, as cited by Bower, 2003, p.48). It becomes clear from these arguments that the benefits of self-assessment are described in terms of monitoring and executing metacognitive knowledge over learning.

▪ **Cognitively.** Another major argument for developing self-assessment is to improve learning and lead to students’ empowerment and self-regulation. The use of self-assessment in classrooms entails that students craft their responses and not just select among pre-determined options as Taras (2010, p.202) so rightly says, “between doing and having it done for you.” At this stage, different cognitive processes including critical thinking and problem solving are developed as students rely on their own potential and decisions. As a result, self-assessment yields a more intricate picture of students’ strengths and weaknesses (Harris, 1997; Russell & Airasian, 2012).

Regarding EFL writing, Harris (1997, pp. 17-18) states, “if teacher assessment of writing is done after students have assessed their own work and thought about their problems, they can be encouraged to think about and compare their assessments.” Students’ attention is directed towards the task at hand and they are encouraged to reflect critically on their written work to identify discrepancies between current and desired performance and accordingly

decide on how to improve on. For instance, if a teacher just assesses the students' written essays and provides them with scores, students may focus on the scores at the expense of the quality of the work. In contrast, when students participate in the assessment process, it helps them generate immediate personalised feedback about the quality of their compositions, their strategies and plans and allows them to discover what has been successfully achieved and what needs further consideration. In other words, the assessment process helps closing the gap between the current and the target situation. Blue (1994, p.5) elaborates on this point by explaining that self-assessment is a way for students to refine their objectives in the light of the progress they made and gain insight on how to direct their efforts for future learning experiences. Jacobs and Farell (2001, p.7) agree when asserting that self-assessment enables students to make informed decisions and meet their own individual needs. That is, the feedback students generate from self-assessment is twofold: it is used to refine their current performance and direct their subsequent learning experiences.

Closely linked to the development of students' cognitive processing, their ability to use self-assessment to enhance performance is also assumed (Orsmond, Merry & Reiling, 1997, p.357; Roheiser & Ross, 2001, p.1). Ross, Rolheiser and Hogaboam-Gray (1999) found in their study that when it comes to writing assessment, students become better writers as self-assessment elicits their cognition about their performance; students learn to make their own decisions. Likewise, Boud and Falchikov (2007, p.1) concluded that self-assessment directs attention towards what is important, acts as an incentive for study and has a powerful impact on how students approach their writing.

- **Affectively.** According to assessment experts, self-assessment is assumed to increase students' internal control and motivation and make learning more meaningful (Rolheiser & Ross 2001; Elliott & Higgins; 2005; Panadero & Alonso-Tapia, 2013). In this regard, Sullivan and Hall (1997, p. 290) assert that the aim of self-assessment is to motivate

student learning and self-reflection by providing conditions which stimulate interest, thinking and involvement. Specifically, McMillan and Hearn (2008, p.43) explain that self-assessment promotes a mastery goal orientation in which the focus is on improving knowledge, understanding and skills, as opposed to a performance goal orientation in which the greater focus is on the final score. To clarify, when students are engaged in the assessment process, they exert control over what they learn and feel capable and competent; hence; they increase their motivation and sense of efficacy. Similarly, Blue (1994, p. 4) contends that self-assessment helps in building a positive self-image and increasing students' self-confidence. Practically, this is demonstrated in several studies on self-assessment and rubric use which document positive effects on student self-efficacy (Andrade, Wang, Du & Akawi, 2009).

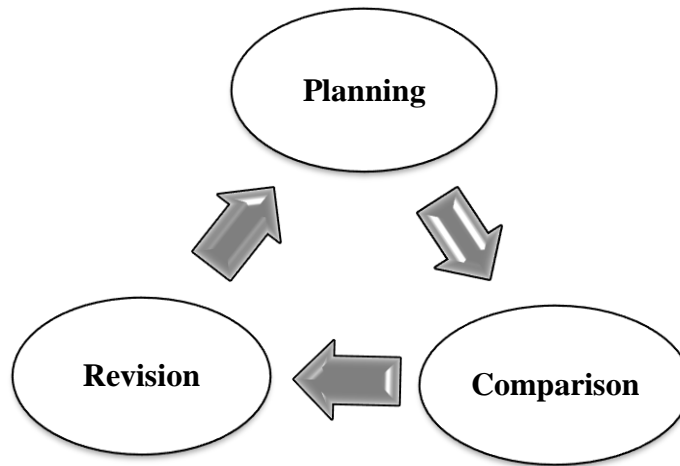
▪ *Pedagogically*. In the literature provided on self-assessment, researchers (e.g. Gardner, 2000; p.51; Shepard, 2000, p.12) maintain that self-assessment is used not only to monitor and promote individual learning, but also to improve teaching practices. Building on such claim, ample research and theory report that self-assessment is firstly a key process for building a learner-centered classroom. Sullivan and Hall (1997, p. 290) highlight that as an assessment tool, self-assessment is very much student-oriented in its focus. Likewise, Gottlieb, (2000, p. 97) confirms that “Multiple opportunities for self-assessment within instruction allow second language students to develop as independent learners while acquiring English”. That is, constant self-assessment encourages students to take an active role in their learning experience and assume their responsibility in constructing their knowledge. It conveys the idea that learning is a continuous and manageable process.

Second, researchers stress the intrinsic link between instruction and assessment. According to Darling-Hammond and Adamson (2010, p. 6), self-assessment focuses teachers' attention directly on the improvement of classroom instruction than on certification of learning. To support this claim, Russell and Airasian (2012, p. 8) explain that self-

assessment provides useful data for teachers to interpret students' results by getting insight into their thinking, their learning strategies and emotions and therefore understand why they perform as they do. Subsequently, they can identify students' learning difficulties and address their needs. On the basis of this, they decide on the necessary changes in classroom practice and put the right support in place, therefore enabling a coherent and aligned curriculum (Taras, 2015, p. 1). Put differently, self-assessment allows teachers to depict students' abilities and support the development of these abilities. Moreover, self-assessment helps teachers to relate aspects of students' poor performance to specific remedial activities; this leads to further progress and success, which are important motivating factors in language learning. In making this comment, (Harris, 1997, p. 17) writes, "Self-assessment can help to compensate by providing a continuous, personalized, and formative element of assessment, in settings where the only practical assessment measures may be periodic tests." This feedback is useful for improving both learning and teaching. Arguably, these benefits place high demands on teachers to integrate self-assessment into their teaching practices.

#### **II.4. The Self-assessment Cycle**

In the definition of self-assessment, a point of focus is on the nature of the process. We explained that self-assessment is an ongoing process that should be embedded in classroom instruction and not a separate end of it. Although the growing literature on self-assessment has implications for the use of this process and researchers and educators have attempted to explain how students assess their work, there still exists a lack of a comprehensive theory or model of self-assessment. Nevertheless, based on Sadler (1989), McMillan and Hearn (2008) and Andrade (2010), a three cyclical model for self-assessment is generated in this thesis. Accordingly, self-assessment occurs in three steps related in a cyclical and ongoing process: planning, comparison and revision as shown in Figure 9.



*Figure 9.* The self-assessment cycle

**Phase 1: planning.** Andrade (2010, p.4) refers to this phase as “expectation”. According to her, it involves setting clear and reasonable goals of assessment and identifying explicit assessment criteria. With the paradigm shift from the competition culture to the competence culture, researchers stress that self-assessment should be done in relation to a specific level of achievement and not in relation to the self or others (Boud, 2000, p. 156; Hamp-Lyons & Condon, 2000, p. 8; Banta & Palomba, 2014, p. 23). During this phase, students focus their attention on assessment requirements by discussing the main criteria on which the work should be assessed; criteria help them understand key expectations of performance and set the scene for the second phase (comparison).

**Phase 2: comparison.** This phase involves identifying progress toward targeted performance by comparing current performance to the pre-established criteria (Sadler, 1989, p. 121; McMillan & Hearn, 2008, p. 41). Essentially, when the expectations and criteria are clearly defined and grasped during the planning phase, students can compare their current performance to what they are expected to achieve. This phase involves generating feedback about one’s own performance. In this regard, Bruce (2001, as cited in McMillan & Hearn, 2008, p. 41) states that the judgements students generate on their performance provide them meaningful information about what they know and what they still need to learn. Put

differently, this comparison yields information and details that are useful to improve performance in the last phase. For instance, when writing an essay, students develop a first draft then try to monitor their performance by identifying the strengths and weaknesses of their compositions. They can monitor their performance using different strategies in order to check their productions and ensure that their writing meets the task requirements (content, organisation, language, etc.). In their study, Kurnaz and Çimer (2010) reported that students use different strategies to assess their learning. These strategies include: self-testing, self-questioning, self-explanation, getting help from others, summarising and repeating. Moreover, for students' self-assessment to be effective, various self-assessment forms, namely rubrics, scripts, checklists and conferences, have been suggested in the literature. These are fully described in the next sections.

**Phase 3: revision.** In this last phase, students use the feedback they generated to revise their work and make appropriate adjustment to improve performance. In this regards, Sadler (1989, p. 121) emphasises that students need to make sense of the feedback they gain during the assessment process by engaging ‘in appropriate action which leads to some closure of the gap.’ Likewise, Harris and McCann (1994, p. 66) explain that after receiving their teacher's feedback, students go over their own compositions to compare their assessments to the teacher's and try to correct their mistakes. At this point, students choose the appropriate strategies and actions to correct misunderstanding and extend learning. Revision promotes the perception of performance being controllable and learning as an on-going and constructive process and not as a fixed linear process in which students have no opportunity to improve their performance. Andrade and Valtcheva (2009, p. 14) highlight that students are not to self-assess thoughtfully unless they know that they will have an opportunity to actually make improvement based on their self-assessment. It is worth mentioning here that revision and criteria are the two elements that distinguish self-assessment from other forms of traditional

assessment.

Essentially, these three phases make up the cyclical process of self-assessment. Sadler (1989, p. 121) stresses that they are necessary conditions which must be satisfied simultaneously rather than as sequential steps. This is because self-assessment is viewed as an on-going and recursive process.

## **II.5. Self-assessment as a Self-regulatory Process**

In the previous sections, we sought to provide a clear conceptualisation about the nature of the main variables of the present study: self-regulated learning and self-assessment. In this section, we need to elaborate on the link between the two constructs in order to reach our research aim.

Self-assessment is assumed by many researchers (e.g., Paris & Paris, 2001, p. 95; Butler & Lee, 2006, p.514) to be a complex metacognitive, cognitive and social process, therefore an essential component of cognitive and socio-constructivist theories of learning and motivation (McMillan & Hearn, 2008, p.42; Taras, 2009, p.64). This principle aligns closely with the social cognitive view of self-regulated learning as well. As explained in the previous chapter, self-regulation has been argued by social cognitive theorists like Zimmerman and Campilo (2003, p.239) to be a cyclical process involving three phases: forethought, performance and self-reflection.

They further argue that various self-regulatory components come into play during the different phases and self-assessment is considered a crucial one (Vancouver, 2000; Paris & Paris, 2001; Schunk, 2003; Ramdas & Zimmerman, 2008; Andrade, 2010). To elaborate more, self-assessment is linked to monitoring one's own learning and becoming an independent learner and as such is part of the metacognitive process in learning (Gipps, 2012, p.37). Here, self-assessment is considered a metacognitive strategy which is a vital process in self-regulated learning. In addition, Taras (2010, p.202) points out that self-assessment

promotes students' senses of responsibility and ownership, two critical aspects of self-regulation that must be nurtured throughout students' learning.

Another point worth mentioning here is that self-assessment is fundamental to the concept of self-regulated learning because it focuses students' and teachers' attention on learning instead of accreditation. That is, it helps them to see both assessment and learning not as a means to qualification, but rather as a way to acquire knowledge and develop students' competence. In this concern, Andrade (2010, pp. 2-3) argues that a central purpose of both self-regulation and self-assessment for students is to gain personal feedback that can be used to deepen their understanding and enhance their learning. At this point it is helpful to think of self-regulation as personalisation of learning and self-assessment as a vehicle to promote this personalisation.

Moreover, self-assessment involves students to reflect on and judge the quality of their work and because reflection and judgement are central in self-regulation, self-assessment is a key sub-process in the self-regulation cycle. A key point to retain here is that we believe self-regulated learning is a learning approach that describes how students manage and monitor all aspects of their learning and self-assessment is a self-regulation process that focuses on specific aspects of one's performance in a given task. In the context of EFL writing, self-regulation concerns the critical assessment and regulation of one's own thought processes and motivational beliefs, while self-assessment generally focuses on monitoring and assessing the concrete products of those thoughts and feelings (Goodrich, 1996, p. 4).

A review of the literature on the relation between self-assessment and self-regulation reveals that self-assessment is approached from different viewpoints. Zimmerman and Moylan (2009), for instance, place self-assessment in the last phase (self-reflection). However, other researchers place it at the second phase (performance). Other theorists go further to conceptualise this process during all the phases of self-regulation (Andrade, 2010).

In our study, we emphasise the on-going and cyclical nature of self-assessment and argue that self-assessment actually occurs during the three phases. By integrating the self-assessment model we proposed earlier to the model of Zimmerman we have adopted in this study, we suggest the model presented in Figure 10.

### Students' cognitive & affective processing

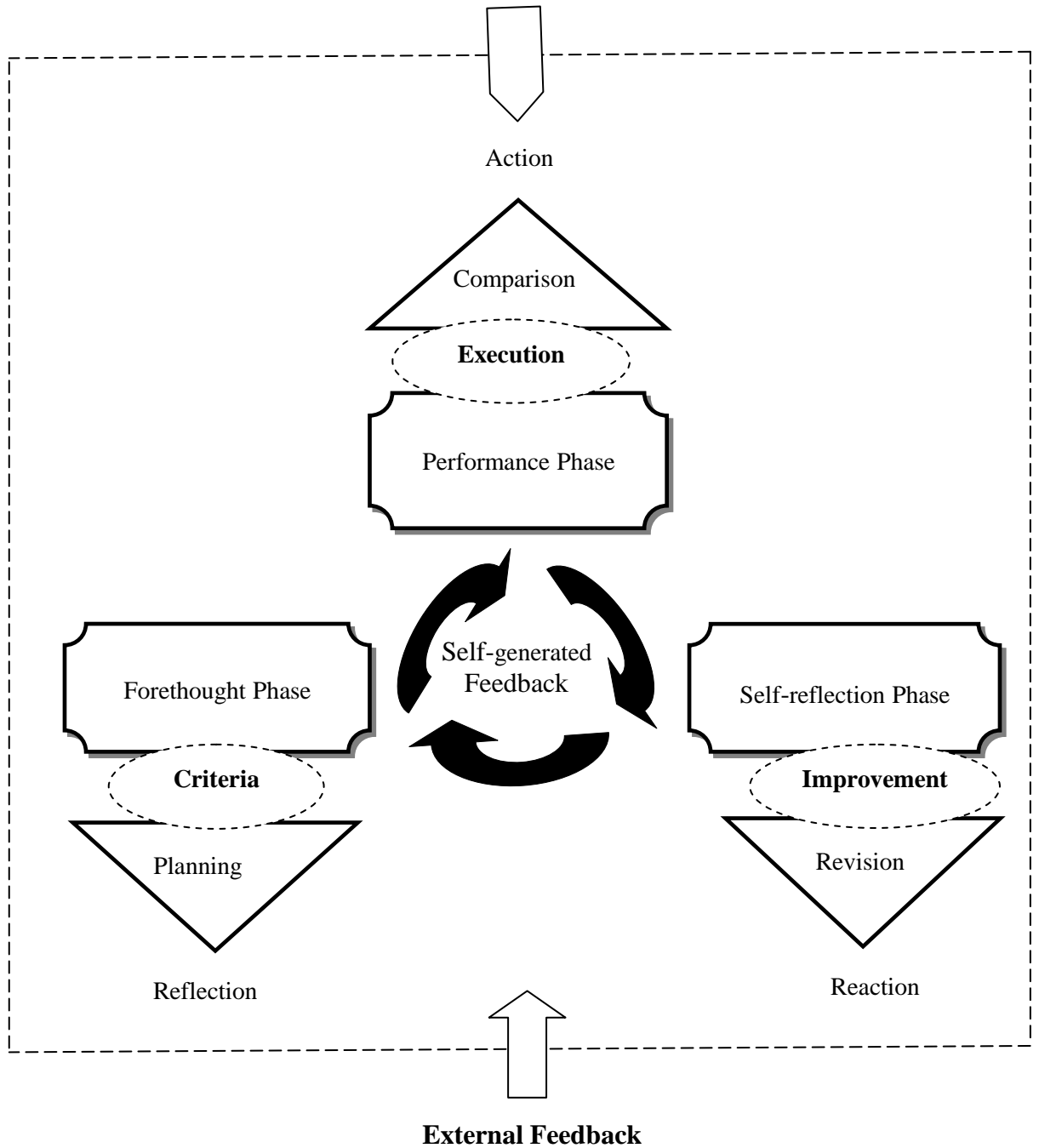


Figure 10. An integrated model of self-regulated learning and self-assessment

Our perspective on self-assessment is derived from the assumption that students do not assess the final product only but actually the entire process they follow to achieve that product. That is, self-assessment is based on reflection, action and reaction; these are also the key features of self-regulated learners. This process takes place then throughout the self-regulation phase to provide information as learning occurs, not only at the end by emphasising the final product as a separate activity, as portrayed in Figure 10. Therefore, it occurs right from the first phase, i.e., the forethought. The reason why students should learn to assess their performance from the forethought phase is that criteria of assessment should be clarified right from the onset.

Additionally, students need to check out and adapt their plans to the task demands. Boekaerts and Cascaller (2006, p.203) and Andrade and Valtcheva (2009, p. 16) maintain that when criteria are available at the start, students can plan their actions strategically. That is, when students generate a plan for a specific task, they need to check and adapt their plan to any unexpected event or any performance error they identify as far as they execute the plan. Subsequently, they carry on assessing their work during the performance phase. In the performance phase, as already explained, students put their plans into action and guide their performance with the strategies they chose, so they need to see if they are performing their task appropriately. This is typically what happens in the writing process. Editing and revising are two processes that occur recursively even during the drafting stage (performance). Therefore, at the performance phase too, students assess the efficiency of the strategies they employ to help them determine the effectiveness of their plans and accordingly decide whether to proceed to the next step or modify the current situation. During the self-reflection phase, as put forward, students reflect on and judge their performance to identify potential strengths and weaknesses and therefore decide on the necessary correctives to enhance their performance.

## II.6. Teacher Feedback within Self-assessment

Central to the process of language learning is feedback. A shared view among researchers is that students should be empowered to be self-regulated learners through meaningful and constructive feedback on their performance and learning (e.g. Butler & Winne, 1995; Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006; Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Feedback or *knowledge of results* refers to information teachers provide to students on how their current state of performance relates to the goals they set at the start of the task. It essentially entails teachers to respond to students' learning by pointing out areas of both strength and limitation and guide them through the solution process. Rowntree (1987) considers feedback so vital that he calls it "life-blood of learning" (as cited in Taras, 2001, p.608).

The importance of feedback lies in the provision of information which students draw upon to bring about the necessary changes to improve current performance and inform subsequent learning experiences. In respect to this, Brown (2001, p.358) describes it as "input to the learner for the next composition."

In their model of feedback, Hattie and Timperley (2007, p.90) discriminate between four levels of feedback: feedback on task (FT), feedback on the leaning process (FP), feedback on self-regulation (FR) and finally feedback on the self (FS); claiming that feedback on the learning process and self-regulation are the most powerful in terms of deep learning and mastery. The authors, among many others (e.g. Butler & winner, 1995; Labuhn, Zimmerman & Hasselhorn , 2010), advocate that feedback should move from the task to the process of learning with the focus on self-regulation.

A great deal of research has been carried out to investigate the powerful effects of feedback on different aspects of learning: performance (Parr & Timperley, 2010; Bruno & Santos, 2010), self-assessment (Taras, 2003; Oscarson, 2009; Boud, Lawson & Thompson, 2013) and self-regulated learning (Labuhn et al., 2010). Basically, two dimensions of

feedback have been reported: cognitive and motivational. Puustinen and Pulkkinen (2001, p.280) hold that feedback provides students with information on the efficiency of their tasks and serve as the basis for comparisons, attributions and adaptation. On their part, Hattie and Timperley (2007, p.102) argue that it can empower students to improve their performance by providing them with directions, alternative strategies as well as corrective advice and ultimately engaging and motivating them.

Arguably, theoretical and empirical evidence on feedback reveals its complex and multifaceted nature. It is assumed that feedback is not straightforward but rather mediates performance and learning through a series of recursively and interrelated cognitive and affective self-regulated processes and it is processed jointly with students' self-generated feedback (Butler & winner, 1995, p. 255; Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006, p.203). As a result, external feedback aids students to confirm their assessments, add to, overwrite, tune, or restructure information and understanding (Butler & winner, 1995, p. 248).

As far as self-assessment is concerned, Sadler (1989, p.143) stresses the role feedback plays in the process and explains that students develop skills in self-assessment through moving beyond "teacher-supplied feedback to learner self-monitoring". In relation to this, Taras (2003, p.562) explains that feedback helps students overcome their unrealistic expectations and become aware of weaknesses they have not noticed and therefore focus their attention on their progress. Likewise, Boud et al. (2013, p. 4) hold that feedback helps students explore reasons behind their poor judgements and find ways to improve future assessment by reflecting on what they have missed in making their judgements that others have noticed.

However, feedback can be disadvantageous to students as much as beneficial (Boud, 2000, p.162). For instance, in the studies where feedback had a negative effect on students, the feedback turned out to be provided as marks with no indication on how to improve (Black

et al., 2004), tended to focus on social comparisons (Black & Wiliam, 2010) or was directed to the self (Hattie & Timperley, 2007).

It becomes clear, then, that the effectiveness of feedback depends largely on the focus provided together with feedback, the way feedback is provided, teachers' and students' knowledge and beliefs, timing and the cultural environment. This is the reason behind the researchers call for specific and constructive feedback (Gipps, 1994; Black et al., 2004; Sadler, 2009). Specifically, Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006, p.205) suggest seven principles maintaining that good feedback practice,

1. helps clarify what good performance is (goals, criteria, expected standards);
2. facilitates the development of self-assessment (reflection) in learning;
3. delivers high quality information to students about their learning;
4. encourages teacher and peer dialogue around learning;
5. encourages positive motivational beliefs and self-esteem;
6. provides opportunities to close the gap between current and desired performance;
7. provides information to teachers that can be used to help shape teaching.

## **II.7. Conditions for Promoting Self-assessment: Teacher's Role**

The successful implementation of self-assessment in EFL classes has been the subject of discussion in recent years. How self-assessment can be used in an accurate and productive way is a sensitive issue that is addressed by educators and researchers who have attempted to offer advice on how teachers can engage students in the assessment process and increase the effectiveness of their judgements. Although Panadero and Alonso-Tapia (2013, p. 563) and Taras (2015, p.12) claim the lack of specific studies on the acquisition of self-assessment skills, it is possible to integrate self-assessment successfully into classroom practice.

In short, to fulfill its full potential, self-assessment should be undertaken with thoughtfulness and significant preparation. To this end, various suggestions have been provided in the literature in regard to the learning task, the assessment purpose, students' level and the learning environment. Essentially, according to Stiggins et al. (2007, p.41), students should ask themselves three questions when dealing with assessment: “(1) —Where am I

going? (2) —Where am I now? and (3) How can I close the gap?” In other words, students need to establish where they are heading (target performance), where they are in their learning (current performance) and what needs to be done to get to the target performance (revision). Based on early works on self-assessment (Goodrich, 1996, p.31-32), a list of characteristics of instruction that promotes the development of self-assessment skills and helps assist students in effectively answering the three questions cited above have been proposed.

**II.7.1. Awareness of the value of self-assessment.** Gardner (2000, p. 49) stresses the need to raise students’ awareness of the usefulness of self-assessment. Students should understand clearly the importance and utility of reviewing their works on their own and developing their assessment skills and strategies in order to be able to determine their progress and identify their strengths and weaknesses. Promoting this awareness is the primary responsibility of the teacher who should support students in the development of a clear understanding of the concept of self-assessment. In making this comment, Zimmerman (1989, p.2) asserts that the goal of a teacher should be to empower students to become self-aware of their own strengths and limitations in learning. Once students value and understand the significance of self-assessment, they can make sense of their learning and hence increase their motivation to engage in this process.

**II.7.2. Access to assessment criteria.** In the definition of self-assessment provided by Andrade and Valtcheva (2009, p. 13), the reference to some standard or criteria according to the purpose of task to be assessed has been highlighted. In the where am I going? question, the criteria characterising a good work such as a written essay are given prominence. These criteria ensure accuracy and objectivity in students’ judgement enhancing, therefore, the quality of the assessment practice as they have a major impact on student learning (Orsmond et al., 2000, p. 24). A critical point to be mentioned is that students need to have access to the assessment criteria right from the start. Frederiksen and Collins (1989, p.30) used the term

*transparency* to express the idea that students must have a clear understanding of the criteria by which their work will be assessed. In reported studies considering the importance of understating criteria in self-assessment, Shepard (2000, p. 60) argues that the provision of criteria has a significant role in directly improving learning and developing metacognitive knowledge while monitoring one's own efforts. Moreover, Orsmond et al. (1997) and Andrade and Du (2005) found that having a good grasp of the criteria helped students perform their learning task successfully and increased their motivation and confidence.

In another compelling study, Cohen, Lotan, Abram, Scarloss and Schultz (2002) found that students who were informed of the assessment criteria had performed better than those who worked without criteria. The strong argument for assessment criteria is that self-assessment policy focuses students' attention on understanding where they are in regard to accepted language proficiency rather than where they stand in relation to other students. Students in Andrade and Du (2007, p.165) described assessment without criteria as "a guessing game". Alonso-Tapia and Panadero (2013, p. 560) elaborated on this by explaining that students doubt whether they are performing the task correctly or not so they need to make reference to these stated criteria in order to check if they are on the right path; otherwise, they decide to adjust their plan and strategies.

In order to make criteria explicit, researchers advocate the use of different self-assessment tools, to name a few rubrics, checklists and portfolios. For instance, McMillan and Hearn (2008, P.45) suggest, "by providing criteria through rubrics, models, or anonymous exemplars, students concretely understand outcomes and expectations and then begin to understand and internalise the steps necessary to meet the goals."

On another register, there is a debate concerning who is responsible for the identification of assessment criteria. Referring to Stefani (1998, p.346), criteria can be teacher-generated, self-generated or collaboratively negotiated between the teacher and

students. The first issue concerns students' participation in the process of identifying the criteria. Contrary to summative assessment in which teachers are the only ones who set marking benchmarks for assessment, alternative assessment entails students not only to be engaged in assessing their own work but also to establish the criteria by which their work will be judged (Boud, 1991; as cited in Boud, 1995, p.3; Rolheiser & Ross, 2001, p7). In this regard, Mok et al. (2006, p.416) explain that through the process of identifying criteria, students develop a deeper understanding of the learning task and learning goals.

The other issue surrounding self-assessment criteria is negotiation. This means that students need to have not only access to the criteria but assessment standards should also be openly discussed with teachers so as to clarify expectations. Because students may have a less well-developed sense of assessment criteria compared to the teacher (Boud, 1989, p.28), researchers suggest that they can be encouraged to generate their criteria first then discuss them (Sadler, 1989, p. 121; Stefani, 1998, p. 346).

Regarding teacher-generated criteria, if they are not negotiated, teachers should be aware of the potential danger of the uncritical acceptance of these criteria by students (Andrade & Du, 2007, p.165). In their study, Andrade and Du (2007), students reported that they had to respond to their teacher's expectations and give them what they wanted.

All in all, a shared understanding of the assessment criteria is a key to accurate and effective self-assessment.

**II.7.3. The task to be assessed should be specific.** Self-assessment should be designed to be appropriate for a specific task; this is opposed to general task self-assessment. Panadero and Alonso-Tapia (2013, p. 564) argue that if the task is too broad or not well-defined it may be complicated and difficult for students to assess. In contrast, when self-assessment is related to a specific task, students have a concrete activity that they can assess fairly and can engage purposefully in the process, and therefore take advantage of the

assessment. In addition, assessment should be directly linked to the content of classroom instruction. Bell and Cowie (2001, p.551) made reference to the concept of *disclosure* to mean the extent to which a task produces evidence of students' performance and thinking. Similar to Brown and Hudson (1998, p.94), Angelo and Cross (1993, p.5) provided clarity when stating "Classroom Assessment is context-specific: what works well in one class will not necessarily work in another." Methodologically, this refers to assessment validity. Butler and Lee (2006, p. 508) made a distinction between two self-assessment formats: *off-task* self-assessment type which asks students about their performance in general in decontextualised formats and *on-task* type of self-assessment which requires students to assess their performance on specific tasks immediately after instruction. By examining the effects of the two on EFL students' self-assessments of their skills in oral performance, the researchers (Butler & Lee, 2006) found that students assessed more accurately in specific (on-task) contexts as compared to more general (off-task) contexts. Regarding the benefits associated with specific self-assessment task, Andrade (1999, p. 13) argues, "In comparison to global self-evaluations, task-specific self-assessment has significant effects on students' performance. It is generally more valid, promotes self-monitoring, increases persistence and improves performance."

Therefore, when implementing self-assessment in their classes, teachers should choose the appropriate tasks, so as the assessment will be meaningful to students and productive. The choice of the assessment task, according to Brualdi (1998, p.1), should be done carefully based on time constraints, feasibility and availability of resources in the classroom.

**II.7.4. Models of self-assessment.** We should note, however, that just asking students to self-assess their work does not guarantee accurate and productive results. To support effective assessment, there is a need to design and implement self-assessment in reference to existing models. Self-assessment models can be adapted in order to provide explicit instruction and

modelling. Essentially, when students are provided with concrete examples and authentic situations, they understand better how the process functions and how to internalise its principles. In this regard, Stiggins et al. (2007, p.43) advocate models of both strong and weak performance; students should be familiarised with work that demonstrates both strengths and weaknesses.

As far as EFL writing is concerned, Stefani (1998, p.348) claim, “Teachers/tutors very rarely guide students through or model the process of structuring an essay. This issue requires serious consideration if we truly hope to enable our students to become autonomous, independent and reflective learners.” As a result, when encouraged to analyse and reflect on modeled performance, students develop a vision of good work and can accordingly improve their assessment skills.

**II.7.5. Direct instruction and assistance.** It was made clear throughout our thesis that teachers have part of the responsibility in the development of students’ self-assessment. As Gardner (2000, p. 55) states, “It should be clear that self-assessment is not about leaving students to fend for themselves. It is about teachers creating opportunities for students to make responsible choices which individualise assessments to their own needs”. In a similar vein, Black et al. (2004, p.14) maintain that self-assessment happens only when teachers help their students, especially low achievers, to develop the skill. That is, students need to be assisted in developing accurate and productive self-assessments.

So, onus is placed on teachers to share assessment expertise, discuss criteria with students, and provide models so that students develop understanding and necessary skills for accurate self-assessment. The point here is that students may develop inaccurate judgements, so they need scaffolding and support in the development of their assessment skills. In response to this, Gardner (2000, p. 55) contends that teachers have three tasks to accomplish in the self-assessment process as shown in Table 2.

Table 2  
*Teacher's role in self-assessment (From Gardner, 2000, p. 56)*

Role	Teacher's Knowledge, Expertise and Skills
Awareness raising	<p><b>Knowledge:</b> Teachers know their students (educational background, cultural context, etc), so they know the problems which need dealing with.</p> <p><b>Expertise:</b> Teachers can identify the benefits of self-assessment for their students.</p> <p><b>Skills:</b> Teachers can attract their students' attention.</p>
Provision of guidance and materials	<p><b>Knowledge:</b> Teachers know about assessing learning.</p> <p><b>Expertise:</b> Teachers are skilled assessors of learning.</p> <p><b>Skills:</b> Teachers can produce assessment materials. Teachers can help learners focus an assessment.</p>
Interpretation results	<p><b>Knowledge:</b> Teachers know about the target language.</p> <p><b>Expertise:</b> Teachers can judge the significance of results.</p> <p><b>Skills:</b> Teachers can translate assessment outcomes into learning goals.</p>

The first role of the teacher is to raise students' awareness of the significance of assessing their own progress as noted earlier. This has the aim of developing students' metacognitive knowledge and skills as teachers know their students better. Second, teachers should teach students the principles of self-assessment to guide them and provide them with directions on how to conduct fair and effective assessment. In this vein, Rolheiser and Ross (2001, pp.2-3) and Ross (2006, p.9) stress that students should be taught how to apply assessment criteria to their own work and get help to connect particular levels of achievement to the strategies employed and effort expended during the task. In addition, students need assistance and support when they face difficulties. McMillan and Hearn (2008) agree when they maintained that in order to use self-assessment effectively, teachers must pass the assessment responsibilities to their students by scaffolding and modelling goal setting, reflection, strategy use and self-assessment (p. 44). Andrade (1999, p. 5), for her part, explains modelling as an instructional technique in which students learn by observing an expert engaging in a desired behaviour. Teachers are experts in assessment and learning material, so they can provide instruction and modelling to support students to develop the

necessary skills. Nevertheless, a critical point worth considering here is that teachers should be first trained on how to implement self-assessment in order to effectively model the skills and direct students throughout the process. Regarding the last point stressed by Gardner (2000), teachers should make results visible to students and help them interpret those results in reference to the task and assessment standards, for students need to answer the questions: where am I? and how can I close the gap? Students get answers to these questions when they understand their progress.

**II.7.6. Opportunities for revision and improvement.** As for the last question of Stiggins et al., (2007, p.41), how can I close the gap, teachers should assist students in closing the gap between where they are now and where they are going by setting opportunities to revise and improve their performance. That is, after detection of incorrectness and gaps, students should be allowed to correct and improve their performance. The purpose of engaging students in the assessment process is to encourage them to identify their mistakes on their own and take the necessary correctives to perform better. In making this comment, Boud (2000, p.158) maintains, “Unless students are able to use feedback to produce improved work, through for example redoing the same assignment, neither they nor those giving feedback will know that it has been effective.”

Besides, if students are not allowed to self-correction, they feel powerless and lose their motivation (Alonso-Tapia 1990; as cited in Panadero & Alonso-Tapia, 2013, p.566). This seems to fit well with the process of writing in which students go through multiple drafts as they develop a piece of writing (Raimes, 1992; as cited in Jacobs & Farrell, 2001, p.11). Therefore, students need to use the self-generated feedback in combination with teacher feedback to refine their written productions. Giving opportunities to students to revise their work means as well helping them understand the signification of this step. In supporting this view, Berry (2008, p. 85) points out that teachers should “Help students see the value of being

actively involved in thinking about how and why they came to the answer they did". In a similar view, Ames (1992) recommends that feedback must be linked to opportunities for improvement so as to promote a mastery orientation and encourage the perception that performance is controllable and depends on effort. In fact, this is what differentiates formative assessment from summative assessment in which students have no room for revision and improvement.

**II.7.7. Practice.** A shared view among researchers and educators is that students need extensive practice to allow self-assessment mechanisms to be internalised and fully developed. Taras (2001, p. 611) explains that self-assessment is a difficult skill that needs practising in as many and varied situations as possible. Students need to assess their progress in a systematic and regular way. Practice has a direct link with the second question raised by Stiggins et al. (2007, p.41): where am I now? Accurate answers to this question can be obtained through regular and systematic assessment of their progress; it helps students to identify their weaknesses and strengths and be aware of their achievement. By way of illustration, to gain self-assessment skills in writing, students need first to assess different text genres according to specific criteria for each genre. As long as they gain expertise on the assessment of each genre, they internalise these steps and become skillful in the whole self-assessment process. As a way to assist students in strengthening their self-assessment skills, Sadler (2009, p.177) suggests developing expertise in self-assessment through guided practice to equip students to become self-critical and able to self-monitor their own work while performing a task. Moreover, integrating students' self-assessment into daily classroom instruction is the best way to maximise students' use of self-assessment. Essentially, practice is likely to increase the accuracy of self-assessment. That is, the more experience the student gains of how to assess fairly and productively, the more likely the accuracy of the self-assessment is achieved. Regular comparisons of one's own performance enhances students'

performance as it helps them acquire the necessary knowledge and skills for effective assessment and close the gap between current and target situation and therefore allow the process to be an integral part of the learning process. Taras (2001, p.611) believes self-assessment practice to have a greater cumulative value.

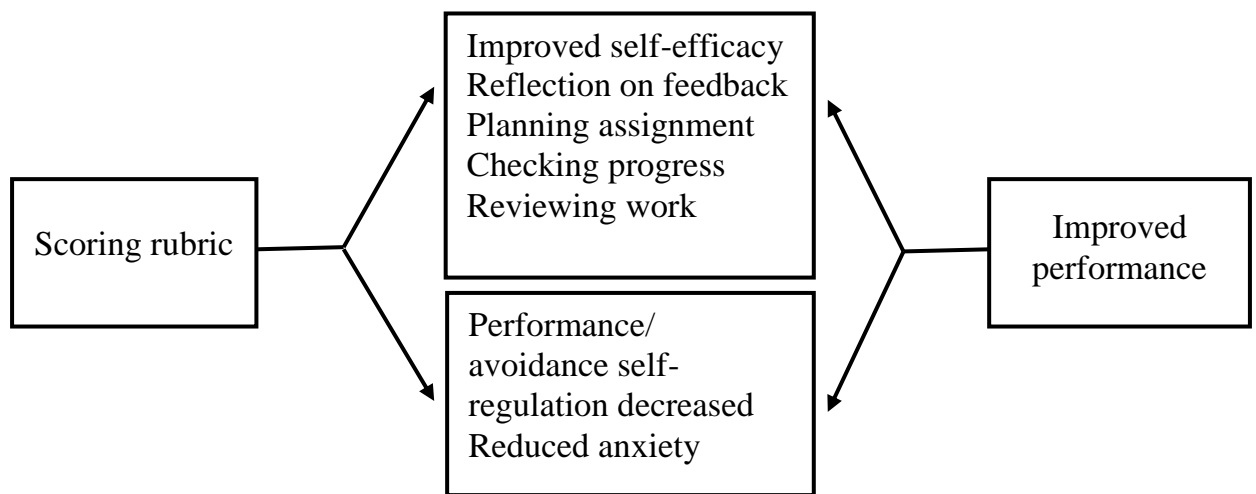
## **II.8. Self-assessment Techniques used in Academic Writing**

As recommended in the literature, self-assessment can be implemented using different forms and techniques, to name a few rubrics, scripts, checklists, portfolios and conferences. What follows is a brief description of these techniques.

**II.8.1. Rubrics.** A rubric is a popular self-assessment form; it is defined as a document that lists criteria of assessment and describes varying levels of quality, from excellent to poor, for a specific task (Andrade, 2000, p.13). In fact, a rubric is a scoring tool used to assess one's performance; it details the assessment criteria with levels of achievement so that students can compare their work with the desired performance to determine the degree to which standards are met. Basically, rubrics have three important elements: a list of the assessment criteria, a scale for the different levels of performance and a description of each level (Panadero et al., 2012, p.807). They can be holistic or analytical. Holistic scoring involves the assessor who makes an overall judgement on the quality of the work, while in analytic scoring, the assessor assigns a score to each of the dimensions being assessed in the task (Jonsson & Svingby, 2007, p.132). According to the authors, in EFL writing, analytical scoring is best appropriate.

Although there is substantial evidence that rubrics are common assessment tools in EFL classrooms, the question that research is still considering is the extent to which rubrics are effective in promoting self-assessment and self-regulation. Advocates of the use of rubrics for self-assessment believe that this tool can promote self-assessment and enhance learning. For instance, most researchers working on assessment (e.g. Sadler & Good, 2006; Jonsson &

Svingby, 2007; Andrade, 2008) reported works that document the potential benefits of rubrics in promoting learning. The authors explain that this self-assessment tool orients students toward quality by articulating expectations and guiding them all along the writing process. Other compelling studies also documented the positive outcomes of this technique on both self-assessment and self-regulation (Saddler & Andrade, 2004; Andrade, 2008; Panadero & Romeo, 2014). Panadero and Jonsson (2013, p. 139) summarised all the cited effects in Figure 11.



*Figure 11.* Rubric and moderating effects that improved performance (From Panadero & Jonsson, 2013, p. 139).

As shown in Figure 11, rubrics have potential benefits on both students' cognition and motivation. They have a prominent role in clarifying expectations, encouraging reflection, providing information in the form of feedback, boosting students' motivation and reducing anxiety. Regarding self-regulated learning, Panadero and Romero (2014) reported in their study that rubrics have been found to have positive effects on self-regulation as they increase the use of strategies and improve performance. To take advantage of these benefits, Brualdi (1998, p.2) suggests that teachers can either use previously developed rubrics or create their own.

However, rubrics have not always been proved to have a positive impact on learning; they might have insignificant effects when they are used for summative purposes or define the

concept of quality narrowly (Andrade, 2008, p.61). This is because rubrics may orient students towards performance goals rather than mastery ones if they are product-oriented. When the end goal of rubrics is summative, its effectiveness in the self-assessment process remains problematic. In response to this shortcoming, researchers maintain that rubrics should be well organised and properly constructed following expert models; only in this case they have significant effects on students' self-assessment, self-regulation and learning (Andrade, 1999; Saddler & Andrade, 2004; Alonso-Tapia & Panadero, 2010, Metatha & Nedjai, 2015).

**II.8.2. Scripts.** They are described by Alonso-Tapia and Panadero (2010, p. 387) as specific and well-structured set of questions, statements or guidelines designed to follow an expert model all along a learning task. They can be understood as a scaffolding device containing a series of instructions that guide students step by step throughout a task. Scripts are delivered at the beginning of a task to guide students throughout the process. This scaffolding device has the aim of improving learning and promoting self-regulation. In EFL writing, scripts are useful to students; they assist them in how to approach the written task from beginning to end. Unlike rubrics, scripts do not have a scoring feature. They are useful in that they point to the aspects of performance that need more attention to ensure both understanding and completion of the task (Alonso-Tapia & Panadero, 2010, p. 387). In this regard, the authors explain that scripts have positive effects as they promote self-monitoring and orient students' motivation toward learning and mastery goals rather than performance ones. In their experimental study, Pandero et al. (2012, 2013) found that the use of scripts enhanced self-regulation more than the use of rubrics as scripts are more process-oriented than product-oriented, but at the same time the authors reported they are cognitively highly demanding and thus less motivating.

**II.8.3. Checklists.** A checklist refers to points to be considered and is used by students to check their texts and then by the teacher to assess students' texts (Raimes, 1983,

p.147). It contains a series of statements or questions that describe different writing dimensions; students answer by yes or no. Checklists serve as guidelines which capture students' attention on critical aspects of their compositions as they specify the assessment criteria. They increase students' metacognitive awareness of expectations. Along the same line, they are considered by Yoshimura (2009, p.1872) as an aid to cognitive modelling. They assist students in reflecting on their own production in an attempt to identify areas of strength and weakness. Compared to rubrics, checklists do not entail scoring, the aspect that can motivate students and increase their response.

**II.8.4. Portfolios.** A portfolio is commonly described as a purposeful and systematic collection of students' work that demonstrates to students and others (notably teachers) their efforts, progress and achievement in a given area (Genesee & Upshur, 1996). Students collect and keep samples of their works (during their learning process) to compare and analyse them, then assess their progress. Portfolios are very useful in EFL writing as students can keep samples of their written compositions in order to review their performance and follow up their progress. In this context of writing assessment, a portfolio specifically refers to "a collection of texts the writer has produced over a defined period of time" (Hamp-Lyons & Condon, 2000, p.4-5). Most portfolios, according to Hamp-Lyons and Condon (2000, p.4), include reflective writing which quite accurately reflects students' abilities. In other words, the collected samples of texts provide a picture of students' level of proficiency in the skill.

It is worth mentioning that Moya and O'Malley (1994, p. 2) drew a distinction between a portfolio and portfolio assessment. They explain that a portfolio is a collection of students' works which refers to data, whereas portfolio assessment covers the range of procedures used to plan, collect and assess the multiple sources of data maintained in the portfolio. Clearly, we can understand portfolios as a learning tool, whereas portfolio assessment as an assessment device. Drawing on this, a portfolio can serve two purposes:

learning or assessment and therefore the purpose of the portfolio is what determines its content, format and timing. This is what Nunes (2004, p.327) explains,

For some teachers, the portfolio is part of an alternative assessment programme and it can either include a record of students' achievements or simply document their best work. For other teachers, the portfolio documents the students' learning process, and still others use it as a means of promoting learner reflection.

Based on this statement, teachers who use portfolios for learning purposes aim at encouraging reflection, whereas those who use them as an assessment tool intend either to make assessment meaningful and promote improvement (process oriented) or to assess best performance (product oriented). When both views are adopted, portfolios permit students to reflect on their writing performance and competence and offer teachers information for assessing learning as well as instruction (Hamp-Lyons & Condon, 2000, p.6/9).

The rationale for using portfolios in the assessment of student language development, according to Moya and O'Malley (1994, p.3), derives from three major considerations: the limitations of summative approaches, the complexity of the construct to be assessed and the need for formative and innovative assessment techniques in the EFL classroom. Therefore, the strength of portfolios is that unlike traditional assessment tools, they account for both product and process. In recommending the use of portfolios in EFL writing classrooms, Hamp-Lyons and Condon (2000, p.8) assert that because writing is a complex system involving a set of variables (writer, reader, knowledge, skills, assessors, etc), a varied approach to assessment is therefore required to accommodate these variables and exhibit flexibility over time and across situations.

Portfolios have long been argued to be an effective tool for self-assessment. The extensive literature on the advantages of portfolios reports their positive effects on different aspects of students' learning. For example, O'Malley and Pierce (1996) argue that a portfolio is a unique opportunity for students to learn to monitor their own progress and take responsibility for meeting goals set jointly with the teacher. Students can therefore gain skills

in self-assessment and self-regulation through this responsibility and monitoring. Similarly, Paris and Ayres (1994, p. 62) explain that in addition to responsibility and ownership, portfolios stimulate students' reflection and critical thinking. In their study on ESL students, Song and August (2002) found that portfolios were very useful for assessing students' writing. Likewise, after having trained EFL Algerian students on the use of portfolio assessment in writing, Chelli (2013) found a significant improvement not only in students' writing but also in their attitudes, expressed in the interviews she conducted, and in the development of meta-cognitive skills necessary for effective learning. In a recent study, Mak and Wong (2017) explored the effects of portfolio assessment on self-regulated learning and found significant results too.

Nevertheless, portfolios are not effective in promoting self-assessment unless their objectives are clearly stated and guidelines and feedback are provided to students (Brown, 2004, p. 257).

In short, portfolios can be both an effective formative assessment tool and a learning tool. As they provide a systematic documentation of students' language growth, they are considered an authentic source of feedback for both students and teachers.

**II.8.5. Conferences.** In the context of self-assessment, the term conference has come to refer to a purposeful dialogue between teachers and students (Paris & Ayres, 1994, p. 84). In other words, it refers to classroom discussion and negotiation established between the teacher and students in order to review students' performance and determine their progress. The aim of conferences is to gain insight into students' learning and performance, discuss their strengths and weaknesses and think of ways to improve subsequent learning experiences. In their paper, Brown and Hudson (1998, p.90) listed some advantages of conferences which include: fostering students' reflection, developing their self-image, observing and gathering information about students' growth. By the same token, McMillan and Hearn (2008, pp.46-

47) reported that through such reflective tool, students can benefit from explaining their work and their self-assessment and resolve questions and uncertainties about their performance. In the same direction goes Brown (2004, p.265) stressing that conferences can also be used for reviewing portfolios and giving feedback to students on their performance and process.

As one important condition, successful conferences depend on students' expectations and preparation for the conference (Paris & Ayres, 1994, p. 87). Second, they should include a summary sheet for an overall assessment of either oral or written performance.

In sum, rubrics, scripts, checklists, portfolios and conferences are efficient tools to promote self-assessment as they articulate expectations and list the criteria of assessment. However, the choice of which technique to use is determined by the assessment goal (product, progress), the type of the activity (written or oral), the content to be assessed and the learning environment.

## **II.9. Self-assessment Concerns**

As far as self-assessment of writing is concerned, the nature of writing on the one hand and the complexity of the self-assessment process itself on the other hand make the process of assessment challenging for students. By contrasting assessment of writing to other fields like math or science, Williams (2003, p.297) argues, "Writing assessment, however, requires teachers to consider a complex array of variables, some of which are unrelated to specific mastery of a given writing lesson." The considerable literature on self-assessment shows strong evidence that the potential benefits of self-assessment are tempered by some inherent problems which may present a disadvantage for both teachers and students. Self-assessment as put forward is a complex and multifaceted concept affected by both personal and environmental factors. Personal factors are related to both students' cognitive and affective processing such as: attitudes, language proficiency and motivation. Environmental factors, however, are independent of students and teachers, namely prior experience, time

constraints and training.

### **II.9.1. Personal Factors.**

*IV.9.1.a. Attitudes.* One major challenge in the development of self-assessment is attitudes. As a matter of fact, students' and teachers' practices are underpinned in their conceptualisation of the educational process (teaching, learning and assessment) and in their roles in these processes. The first problem with attitudes is related to beliefs about learning in general and assessment in particular. In this regard, Oscarson (2009, p. 49) stresses that teachers' and students' beliefs about learning influence the way they think about assessing progress, judging and interpreting end results. Practically, both teachers' and students' attitudes impact significantly self-assessment practices and outcomes.

As far as students are concerned, there is relatively a limited body of research relating to their attitudes about self-assessment. Nevertheless, drawing on the available limited sources that addressed the issue, students appear to view self-assessment in two different ways. Findings reveal that some develop positive attitudes towards self-assessment and recognise its potential benefits, while others have negative attitudes and feel reluctant to participate in this process. To illustrate from research evidence, Hanrahan and Isaacs (2001), Andrade and Du (2005, 2007) and Chelli (2013) looked at students' attitudes towards self-assessment and found that, after extended practice, students reported positive attitudes towards the process. In a similar vein, Mok et al. (2006) used self-assessment in teacher education, having students self-assess themselves at the beginning, middle and end of learning sequences. The students found self-assessment supportive and reported they have become more aware of their own learning and thinking at the end of the study. In other studies, however, researchers found that students developed negative attitudes towards self-assessment. In their study, McMillan (2006) reported that portfolio assessment was time consuming, anxiety provoking and ineffective in enhancing students' learning. In a more recent study, Butler and Lee (2010)

revealed that students' attitudes towards self-assessment were not very exciting in general.

One possible reason for students' negative attitudes is that they may not be aware of the purposes of the assessment procedures (Rea-Dickins, 2006, p. 182). This is quite obvious; if students do not understand the goals of self-assessment, they develop little, if no, interest towards the process. In this regard, Orsmond et al. (1997, p. 365) explain that students may see the assignment as a piece of work which is done simply to get a mark and thus dissociated from the learning process. A further possible explanation is that students believe that assessment is the teacher's mere responsibility. For instance, Taras (2001) and Falchikov (2003) reported in their papers that assessment was perceived by students as the teacher's job. In the Algerian context, M'zad-Mertani (2016) revealed that EFL students still have a traditional view of teacher as the only competent assessor. Closely linked to the previous reason, a third possible justification is that traditional approaches to instruction, i.e., teacher-centred classrooms, encourage students to be passive learners. In commenting on this point, Hedge (2000, as cited in Oscarson, 2009, p.77) claims that the traditional approach to writing tends to convey the idea that the teacher is responsible for improving students' writing. The issue here is that, due to traditional teaching, many students are reluctant to self-assessment because they expect from their teachers to retain the central role both in teaching and assessment (Pierce, 1999, p.131). Not surprisingly, students' negative attitudes are likely to cause difficulties in the implementation of the process as students are the focal part in it. In this regard, Brown and Harris (2012, p. 46-47) argue, "what students think about the nature of assessment, their roles, and the purposes of the assessment is likely to affect how they respond to and participate in these practices, also influencing their ability and desire to be self-regulated learners." So, students' negative attitudes have consequences on both their learning experience and teachers' classroom practices.

As regards teachers' attitudes, empirical research shows inconsistent findings. There

are teachers who regard self-assessment as beneficial for students' performance and therefore believe that students should take part in this process (Tshabalala & Ndimande, 2016; Kadri & Amziane, 2017), whereas others still think of assessment as strictly the teacher's mere responsibility (Sadler, 1989; Gardner, 2000). As a result, these teachers are reluctant to self-assessment and maybe other forms of alternative assessment as well. Researchers have pointed out that one major reason for teachers' unwillingness to integrate this formative assessment is their fear to undermine their authority in the classroom (Sadler, 1989; Gardner, 2000, p.52; Black et al., 2004, p.20). Supporting this claim, Shepard, (2000, p.5) affirms that teachers still hold beliefs consistent with traditional measurement and think that to ensure fairness, assessment should be standardised. In other terms, teachers worry about the subjectivity that might be involved in making continuous and personalised assessment, so they prefer formal and standardised procedures. Consequently, these negative attitudes are likely to affect their assessment practices.

It should be noted that teachers' beliefs do not always match with their actual assessment practices (Bullock, 2011; Szócs, 2015). For instance, Kadri and Amziane (2017) found in their study conducted on Algerian EFL teachers that although teachers of writing reported positive attitudes towards students' self-assessment, they do not implement it in their classrooms. One probable reason can be found in the insufficient or absence of teacher training and development about self-assessment (Akrasian, 1991) or former unsuccessful experiences (Stiggins, 1994; as cited in Brualdi, 1998, p1).

Still regarding attitudes, the problem lies in the beliefs that students have no ability to accurately assess their performance. In their study, Andrade and Due (2007) reported students' perceived inability to self-assess; they placed less value on themselves as a source of feedback on their work at the beginning of the treatment. In another study, Nikolovska (2015) reported that there are teachers who underestimate students' capacity to assess their own

work. Likewise, in a study conducted in Algeria, M'zad-Mertani (2016) found that 75% of teacher participants who were aware of self-assessment did not trust their students' ability to self-assess their learning. The author reported that teachers justified their beliefs by either student's lack of knowledge and training or simply their incompetence in self-assessment.

Consequently, teachers' negative beliefs about students' incompetence in self-assessment have in turn serious impacts on students' attitudes about themselves. Boud (2000, p. 156) makes it clear that teachers' attitudes about their students' influence students' thinking and behaviour to a great extent; "Unless staff have expectations that students will succeed, it is difficult for students to believe this themselves." Furthermore, he argues, "It is ethically irresponsible to admit students and assume they will not succeed because by so doing creates a climate not conducive to learning." Obviously, teachers' doubt about students' capabilities affects students' self-efficacy and decreases their motivation to invest time or efforts in something they already think, based on their teachers' beliefs, they will not succeed in it. In sum, teachers' attitudes influence not only their teaching practices but also students' learning.

**II.9.1.b. Language Proficiency.** As far as assessment of writing is concerned, a further block to self-assessment is language proficiency. Students' poor language proficiency influences, to a great extent, the accuracy of their assessments. Indeed, if students do not master the linguistic features of language (grammar rules and vocabulary) and writing conventions, they are indeed unable to notice their strengths and weaknesses. Research findings demonstrate this link (e.g. Kruger & Dunning, 1999; Ross et al., 1999; Butler & Lee, 2006; Taras, 2015). Researchers have found that proficient students tend generally to underestimate their performance, while beginners and low proficient students are liable to overestimate it (Boud, 1995; Falchikov & Boud, 1989). Likewise, Kruger and Dunning (1999) reported that unskilled students in grammar generated less accurate self-assessment than their more skilled peers. Colthart et al. (2008) reached the same conclusion that the least

competent students are the least able to self-assess accurately. This is because students with poor writing proficiency are not aware of their problems in writing, so they are not adept at spotting the limits of their skills when assessing their performance; they tend to see everything correct. Kruger and Dunning (1999) used the phrase “unskilled, unaware” to describe these students. They further elaborated on the issue affirming that incompetent students in grammar have more difficulty to recognise their actual level because of lack of metacognitive skills. Along the same line, Taras (2001) revealed in her study that a number of students felt they had neither the experience nor the knowledge necessary to assess their own performance. In a more recent study conducted in an EFL Algerian context, Kadri (2018) reported the same results when she compared students’ self-assessment of their writing to their teacher’s assessment. She found that language proficiency was the major cause for students’ inaccurate self-assessments.

As a solution, Pierce (1999, p.132) advocates the use of simplified language, visuals and graphics as means for scaffolding self-assessment skills among low achievers.

**II.9.1.c. Affective Factors.** High level of motivation has always been argued to be a necessary condition for learning (Gipps, 1994, p.40; Black et al., 2004, p.18; Banta & Palomba, 2015, p.32). Likewise, research on self-assessment suggests that students’ affective factors may bias self-assessment in languages with the generally held belief that the low degree of motivation that students bring to the self-assessment task represents one of the factors that affect the self-assessment process. In this regard, Sitzmann, Ely, Brown and Bauer (2010, p.182) argue that self-assessment seems to be influenced by students’ feelings about their actual learning experience and their motivation. To illustrate, AlFallay (2004) attempted in his study to investigate whether there is a relationship (positive or negative) between the psychological and personality traits of EFL students and the accuracy of their self and peer assessments. The author confirmed the generally held view that highly motivated students are

more likely to engage in the process of assessment and persist longer compared to less motivated students. Besides, both over and under confidence can negatively impact the accuracy of self-assessments (Dunlosky & Rawson, 2012).

Anxiety has also been reported to affect self-assessment. In their study on English students studying French, for example, MacIntyre, Noels and Clément (1997) found that the more anxious students tended not only to achieve weaker results but also tended to underestimate their ability. The less anxious students had, however, a tendency to overestimate their ability.

## **II.9.2. Social Factors.**

**II.9.2.a. Prior Experience.** With respect to students' experience in self-assessment, most researchers believe that it is an important condition in self-assessment accuracy. If students are not familiar with the process, they are likely to fail in developing accurate judgements. In making this comment, Heilenman (1990, p. 51) states, "The more experience that learners have in a domain, [...] the more likely they are to be aware of the limits of their skills and knowledge" (as cited in Oscarson, 2009, p.70). Consequently, lack of exposure to self-assessment experiences can be a major cause for students' negative attitudes towards self-assessment and their reluctance to engage in the process. Darling-Hammond and Adamson (2010, p. 22) made it clear in their statement, "In some states, people objected because the assessments were unfamiliar and stretched the boundaries of traditional testing." In response to this shortcoming, McMillan and Hearn (2008, p.42) believe training students to use self-assessment skills is likely to increase their persistence on difficult tasks as well as their confidence and responsibility. This is because students need to learn how to assess their work so as to help them understand how to apply assessment criteria to their work and revise their work accordingly. To illustrate, by investigating the effects of training self-assessment on narrative writing skills, Ross et al. (1999) found that teaching self-assessment skills both

increased accuracy, especially for those who tended to overestimate, and had a positive effect on achievement among low achievers as it helped them better understand teacher expectations.

*II.9.2.b. Time constraints.* As self-assessment is a complex process, researchers maintain that one of the major complications in its implementation is related to time (Moya & O'Malley, 1994, p.13; Williams, 2003, p.314). That is, the process of getting students to be independent in the way they learn and take their responsibility in identifying their strengths and limitations by their own is a long-term process. Black et al. (2004, p.14) assert that it takes time for students, in particular low-achievers, to develop skills in self-assessment. Similarly, Oscarson (2013) admits that despite the benefits of self-assessment, it is time consuming. In response to this issue, researchers (e.g. Orsmond et al., 2000; Rolheiser & Ross, 2000; Black et al., 2004; Black & Wiliam, 2009) insist on the fact that allowing enough time for students to adequately develop self-assessment abilities is a crucial factor for effective self-assessment.

Another issue related to time is that classroom time assigned for writing instruction is limited. This represents unfortunately a disadvantage for teachers as the development of the writing skill itself is demanding and time consuming. Pierce (1999, p. 134) clarifies that making time for reviewing and assessing students' work as a whole class or in pairs will take longer than the time involved in scoring multiple choice or single answer tests. Clearly, changing roles, designing authentic tasks for assessment, as well as devoting oneself to respond to students' self-assessment, in addition to writing instruction, is a challenging and demanding task for teachers, especially in large classes as it is the case in Algeria.

In short, the skills needed for self-assessment practice and the degree of involvement of students and teachers alike require much more time than what is presently allotted. As one of the participants in Black et al. (2004, p.14) expressed, "I think the process is more effective

long term. If you invest time in it, it will pay off big dividends...”

## **II.10. Validity and Reliability**

Despite the wide use of self-assessment in EFL classrooms in various countries, a central concern for this process is the credibility of the results, notably the validity and the reliability of the measures. These two constructs have always been questionable. Teachers are thus faced with the challenge of demonstrating that evidence derived from students’ self-assessments is both valid and reliable.

As far as validity is concerned, an assessment is valid if it assesses what it intends to assess (Benett, 1993, p.84; Gipps, 1994, p.vii). In other words, validity entails checking whether the assessment tool actually assesses the knowledge and skills taught. Supporting this point, Williams (2003, p. 301) states that the question of what teachers are measuring when they assess writing is at the heart of assessment validity. He refers to validity as the match between what is being taught and what is being assessed and stresses that valid assessment does not measure anything that is not taught (p.302).

Researchers claim that validity is probably the most complex and difficult to achieve (Nunan, 1988, p.118; Gipps, 1994, p.76) because there are various types of validity to consider depending on content, purpose, design, language and timing. Unlike some previous studies (e.g., Butler & Lee, 2006, p.507) that claim that self-assessment has often been considered *subjective*, AlFallay (2004, p. 418) believes self-assessment can be a valid and a reliable assessment tool.

As for reliability, the question most often examined in respect to language self-assessment seems to be students’ accuracy, that is if students are capable of accurately assessing their own performance. Gipps (1994, P. vii) defines reliability as,

the extent to which an assessment would produce the same, or similar, score on two occasions or if given by two assessors. This is the ‘accuracy’ with which an assessment measures the skill or attainment it is designed to measure.

In other words, it is related to the accuracy of the assessment within the same individual (assessor) across assignments and the consistency of the assessments among different assessors. Regarding self-assessment, reliability exists to the extent to which students accurately assess their knowledge and skills against the pre-established criteria and the extent to which their assessment is consistent with their teachers'.

Research evidence on self-assessment reliability reveals inconsistent results across studies; some demonstrated that students are not able to accurately self-assess in relation to the assessment standards set, whereas others concluded that self-assessment can be reliable provided that classroom conditions are satisfied. In the former case, some studies reported discrepancies between students' and teachers' assessments; patterns of overrating and underrating have been observed. In their study, Lew, Alwis and Schmidt (2010) concluded that students were poor assessors. In a more recent study, Kadri (2018) made a comparison in her study on students' self-assessment of their EFL writing compositions and their teacher's assessments and found a large discrepancy between the two measures. In this regard, Gipps (1994, p.69) explains that essay type-questions and other performance-based assessment tasks are less reliably marked than standardised tests due to the complexity of the marking scheme and the subjectivity of the judgements made. That is, criteria of assessment in standardised tests are simple and easy to apply compared to essays which require consideration of various components of writing performance. In the latter case, researchers have found opposite results. In early works with education students, Bachman and Palmer (1989, p22) reported high coefficient alpha reliabilities and concluded that the obtained reliabilities are much higher than had been expected. Likewise, Sullivan and Hall (1997) discovered good agreement between students and their teacher; they related these results to proper introduction of self-assessment and practice. In a more recent study, Kuncel, Credé and Thomas (2005) found that high achievers generated accurate self-assessment, but accuracy was diminished

for lower achievers.

We can notice from the research evidence reported that results are different. Although some research has typically demonstrated self-assessment to be an under or overestimation of one's performance, other research has found it to be an efficient measure. Clearly, self-assessment results depend on the conditions under which self-assessment is implemented and the intervening variables elaborated on previously. This means that different factors may interfere in the self-assessment process and therefore can affect its validity and reliability. These factors, according to Ross (2006) and Gipps (2012), include unclear expectations, lack of experience, students' low language proficiency and others. In response to this issue, three conditions have been suggested by assessment specialists to minimise bias and make assessment more valid and reliable; they have proposed sufficient training and practice, explicit criteria and feedback (Angelo & Cross, 1993; Williams, 2003; Sung Chang, Chiou & Hou, 2005; Ross 2006; Gipps, 2012,)

## **Conclusion**

This second chapter supports the use of self-assessment as a type of alternative assessment to promote self-regulated writing. Throughout the chapter, we have introduced EFL writing, provided an account of the most important concepts related to classroom assessment, mainly evaluation, assessment, testing, feedback and criteria and explained the main approaches to assessment. In particular, it centres on students' self-assessment. Essentially, the review of literature identified the different self-assessment techniques useful in EFL writing, the requisite conditions for effective implementation of self-assessment in EFL writing classrooms, the powerful effects of self-assessment on students' learning as well as the challenges inherent in the process. As a final point, issues related to the validity and the reliability of self-assessment have been discussed.

### **Chapter Three: Research Design and Methodology**

As aforementioned, the current study sought to investigate how the integration of self-assessment into EFL writing classrooms can promote self-regulation and further the development of more constructive and fairer assessment practices. The previous chapters dealt with what is related to the theoretical background about our variables in which our theoretical perspectives have been clearly justified. We have explained that we have adopted the social cognitive perspective of self-regulated learning underpinned by Bandura (1977, 1991) and Zimmerman's (1998) view of self-regulation as a triadic model of cognitive, affective and social processes. In the present chapter, we move to the description of the practical part of the investigation. It is then worth-mentioning that this chapter helps us, the researcher, to situate and orient ourselves towards an appropriate methodology that provides a clear cut of the research steps. Specifically, the methodology and the rationale behind the choices made in this investigation are discussed. We start with a full description of the participants involved in this investigation. Information about their age and gender is presented. Then, the methods and instruments of data collection are described in details with reference to their aims. Afterwards, we move to explain the procedures of data collection and analysis. All the procedures are presented with a specific timeline. Ethical considerations are also addressed and validity and reliability concerns are highlighted. The chapter ends with a short summary of the whole methodological orientation of this investigation.

#### **I. Participants**

Research in educational settings involves members of a particular category that represent the population of the study. Population is defined by Gorard (2013) as all the cases, units or persons involved in a study. The target population of the present study is third year EFL undergraduate students at the department of English at the University of Bejaia, Algeria. The total number of third year LMD students enrolled in the department for the academic year

2015/2016 is N= 232. Nevertheless, experimenting on all the students was not feasible taking into account the nature of the research problem, the data needed and the time allocated for the study. Hence, our research limited its focus to a representative sample which included two groups of third year LMD students assigned randomly by the administration. Students at the University of Bejaia are grouped by the administration on the basis of the alphabetical order of the family name. The number of students in our classes was fifty-one (51) but two (2) students were absent during the whole year. So, the sample consisted of forty-nine (49) students with 22% of the sample being males and 78% being females. The mean age for this sample is 22.53 years, SD =1.80. The forty-nine (49) students represented 21.12% of the entire population. A general description of the participants is presented in Table 3.

Table 3  
Description of the participants

Group	n	Age				Gender	
		[21-23]	[24-26]	≥30	No information	Male	Female
Experimental	24	17	4	1	2	7	17
Control	25	21	4	0	0	4	21

As shown in Table 3, one group (n=24) represented the experimental group and the other one stood as the control group (n=25). The participants' age ranges between twenty-one (21) to thirty-one (31) years old. This shows that our sample is not homogenous in terms of age or gender. Yet, it is of great importance to highlight that most of the students are young adults aged between twenty-one (21) and twenty-three (23).

Our decision to select third year LMD as the sample of this study was not done at random. First, the syllabus of the course of academic (EFL) writing for third year undergraduate students involves essay writing; the students are instructed on how to develop academic essays, a process which is challenging and demanding as it requires the development of self-regulation among students. That is the reason why we stressed the need

for students to be self-regulated learners and develop their academic writing competence. Second, third year students were particularly interesting to our research because they were expected to have accumulated the pre-requisite linguistic knowledge and have gained considerable experience in paragraph writing. That is, they should be ready to go beyond the sentence and paragraph level, the thing that would facilitate the development of the researcher's instructional and experimental plans. It should be noted as well that these undergraduate students were preparing for B.A. graduation which means that, at the end of the year, students who graduate would qualify for teaching, the further reason why they had to develop awareness and skills in self-regulation and assessment.

## **II. Methods**

The nature of the research problematic issue, the type of data needed, the hypotheses set and the aims of the study determined the choice of the research approach. In this regard, Babbie (2013, p.114) highlights that there is no one best method of data collection as each research method has its strengths and weaknesses and some methods are more appropriate for certain concepts than others. This research study aimed at investigating how self-assessment in an Algerian EFL context could facilitate the development of self-regulation among students in their academic writing. The variables under investigation are related to students' cognitive, affective and social factors which made our study a complex one as many factors are interrelated and maybe difficult to accurately measure. Given the need to illuminate the problem from different perspectives, we believe the most appropriate design is the use of a mixed methods approach for data collection.

Both qualitative and quantitative data were generated through the use of a variety of research instruments that included: a questionnaire, a scale, a participant classroom observation, assessment grids, writing logs, as well as written compositions produced by the students (portfolios). Each instrument is described in details in section III. This combination

is recommended in social sciences. As put forward by Axinn and Pearce (2006), mixing multiple methods “affords opportunities to use the strengths of some methods to counterbalance the weaknesses of other methods” (p.2) as it ensures more objectivity and validity to the results obtained. Another benefit of using mixed methods is that it ensures triangulation which represents one of the features of scientific research. Triangulation, according to Mackey and Gass (2005, p. 181), “entails the use of multiple, independent methods of obtaining data in a single investigation in order to arrive at the same research findings.” In other words, a multiple method approach allows a researcher to consider the variables under investigation from different angles, thus yielding a greater understanding of the research problem. This procedure has a dual purpose: it is required for the sake of collecting the appropriate data about self-assessment and self-regulation and it finds out answers about our questioning and verifies our stated hypotheses.

Compared to self-assessment, self-regulation and academic writing represent the dependent variables of this study. This effect relationship represents a cause/effect connection that needs to be tested in order to find out an answer to our research problematic issue. Based on this, our design is experimental. Experimental research, according to Marczyk, DeMatteo and Festinger (2005, p.3), “involves comparing two groups on one outcome measure to test some hypothesis regarding causation.” Our study is experimental because it involves manipulation of the independent variable, self-assessment, to determine its effect on the dependent variables, self-regulation and writing. Specifically, we relied on a randomised subjects, pretest–posttest control group design (Ary, Jacobs & Sorensen, 2010, p. 307) as shown in Table 4.

Table 4  
*Randomised subjects, pretest-posttest control group design*

Group	Pretest	Independent variable	posttest
Experimental	+	Self-assessment	+
Control	+	—	+

Table 4 shows that the present study involved two treatment groups: experimental and control. The experiment comprised a self-assessment intervention with pre and post tests. Specifically, we used a self-regulation scale and writing tests. This quantitative method aimed at determining the effects of self-assessment on the students' self-regulation and academic writing performance. Yet, the nature and the complexity of the research variables required understanding and getting insight into the participants' attitudes and motives; therefore, such an aim could be achieved through a qualitative study.

On the use of the latter methodology type, Dörnyei (2007, p. 36) states, the significance of qualitative research in applied linguistics has been increasing, since "every aspect of language acquisition and use is determined or significantly shaped by social, cultural, and situational factors, and qualitative research is ideal for providing insights into such contextual conditions and influences." As far as the socio-cognitive theory of self-regulation is concerned, the interaction between personal, behavioural and social factors is a complex process that cannot be explained by statistics. To gather qualitative data related to our variables, we relied on participant observation, students' portfolios and students' writing logs. This qualitative method has been adopted to gain insight into the viewpoints, experiences and practices of our participants and establish a deeper understanding of their cognition and affect during the process of writing and self-assessment. A global picture of our methodology is presented in Table 5.

Table 5  
*Data collection methods and tools*

Research Method	Research Instrument	Focus
Quantitative	Scale Questionnaire	Measure students' level of self-regulation Explore students' self-regulation skills and writing approach
	Assessment grid	Score students' writing performance
Qualitative	Participant observation	Explore students' behaviour within the EFL learning environment
	Students' portfolio	Document students' writing progress
	Writing logs	Explore students' feelings, attitudes and needs during the self-assessment process.

Nevertheless, since the investigation varies from quantitative and qualitative to collect the maximum of data needed over a long period of time, the present study can fall into action research which “seeks to bring together action and reflection, theory and practice, in participation with others, in the pursuit of practical solutions to issues of pressing concern to people, and more generally the flourishing of individual persons and their communities” (Reason & Bradbury, 2001, p. 1). Therefore, the participatory, collaborative and reflective nature of action research made it a suitable research approach for addressing our research problem. This approach is particularly relevant for our research as it satisfied our needs and expectations to have a better understanding of what was happening in the classroom and of how our study intervention impacted the students' writing outcomes.

### **III. Materials and Instruments**

As already highlighted, both qualitative and quantitative data were generated through the use of a variety of sources that includes: a pilot questionnaire, a self-regulation scale, a participant observation, assessment grids, portfolios (students' writing compositions) as well as writing logs. These instruments are fully described in what follows. It should be noted that as part of the course requirements, almost all the students participated in the study except those who did not attend our classes.

### **III.1.Participant Observation**

Writing about classroom observation, Creswell (2012, p.214) argues, “To truly learn about a situation, you can become involved in activities at the research site. This offers excellent opportunities to see experiences from the views of participants.” The theoretical perspective that underpins the present study, the socio-cognitive view of self-regulation, stresses the interrelated relationship between students’ cognitive, affective, behavioural and social factors that shape learning; thus, a regular observation deemed necessary to diagnose all the conditions that facilitated or hindered students’ self-regulated learning and self-assessment. Moreover, the elaboration of any writing instructional plan urges teachers to develop classroom observation to record students’ strengths and weaknesses and support them during the writing process. For these two research and instructional purposes, we opted for the use of a participant observation as a means to refine our research plans and capture the natural EFL environment in which the students’ writing developed.

It is participant because we were involved in the group and we took part in the tasks; we were the teacher and the researcher at the same time. Yet, we started with an informal observation to get to know our participants and identify the learning context which was part of the pilot study. The purpose of the informal observation was to diagnose the students’ motivation and commitment to writing and the strategies they used in the classroom and identify their lacks, needs as well as their expectations. Afterward, we developed a more formal and structured observation during the main study. An observation form was designed in line with our objectives and research questions (see appendix A).

### **III.2.Pilot Questionnaire**

A questionnaire is a research tool used to yield factual, behavioural and attitudinal information (Dornyei & Taguchi, 2010). In our research, the objective for choosing a questionnaire was to explore our participants’ self-regulatory skills and collect information

about their attitudes and behaviour in EFL writing classrooms. The pilot questionnaire (see appendix B) consists of two sections: background information and students' writing skills. Section one is devoted to collect factual information about our participants. Specifically, they were requested to precise their age, gender and motivation towards their choice to study EFL. A description of our participants is important to understand the characteristics of the subjects involved in the study. The second section of the pilot questionnaire consists of seven (7) semi open-ended questions related to the participants' attitudes towards the writing skill, self-regulation strategies and metacognitive knowledge as well as their problems in writing. The participants answered the questionnaire anonymously in the classroom with the presence of the researcher. They were allowed complete freedom to answer the questions and express themselves the way they preferred and were encouraged to seek clarification whenever needed as well.

### **III.3. The Treatment**

The present investigation is an experiment in nature based on pre and post tests. This experiment involved implementation of self-assessment techniques (checklists, rubrics, scripts and conferences) so as to integrate self-assessment into writing instruction during the whole academic year of 2015/2016. We had one hour and half per week with both groups, experimental and control, as mentioned in Table 6.

Table 6  
*Timetable of EFL writing instruction*

Group	Day	Time	Location
Instructional	Tuesday	From 8 to 9:30 a.m.	Building 3 room 6
Control	Tuesday	From 11:20 a.m. to 12:50 p.m.	Building 3 room 15

A period of six (6) months was devoted to the study. The training program started in 27<sup>th</sup> October, 2015 and was completed in 26<sup>th</sup> April, 2016. A full timetable is presented in appendix C.

The self-assessment program was designed in line with the study aims, the course syllabus and the LMD reform's goals. It was specifically underpinned by the social cognitive perspective of self-regulation explained in the theoretical chapter. This research program is divided into two main phases: instructional and experimental. Table 7 summarises the procedures of both phases.

Table 7  
*The research phases*

The phase	The stage	The focus
Instructional Phase	Direct instruction	Explain the linguistic and discourse features of different types of texts
	Modelling	Analyse model texts
	Practice	Students develop their personal texts
Experimental Phase	Planning	Students and teacher negotiate the purpose and criteria of self-assessment
	Performance	Students review and assess their productions using self-assessment forms
	Revision	Students produce a final version after revision

The instructional part was informed by the process genre approach to EFL writing that accounts for both the process and the purpose of writing. Our emphasis was, on the one hand, on the process perspective which share similar principles with self-assessment and self-regulation theories; students' metacognitive awareness and cognitive abilities can considerably improve when students plan, generate, revise and assess their writing within a social learning environment (EFL classrooms). The first stage of writing instruction involved direct instruction on the writing process following the syllabus displayed in appendix D. On the other hand, instruction on the different genres assisted students with knowledge of criteria and models for self-assessment. The genre approach develops students' awareness of writing conventions as purpose, form and organisation of their texts. The teacher explained what is related to theory, i.e., the characteristics of academic writing that correspond to each type of text. Nevertheless, no instruction was provided on language patterns because this aspect was

covered in the previous years (first and second years). During the second stage of instruction, modelling, the students were given a model text to analyse in order to reflect on and understand the instructions provided. During the last stage of instruction, practice, the students were requested to practice their writing skill based on the theoretical knowledge internalised during the instructional stage; the students had to develop a piece of writing (a paragraph during the first semester and an essay during the second) in the classroom. Each time, they had one hour and a half to complete the assignment. Specifically, this stage was designed in line with Zimmerman's three phases model discussed in the first chapter. That is, students planned their writing (pre-writing stage), implemented strategies and monitored their progress while composing (drafting stage) and simultaneously reflected on their texts (editing and revising stages). It should be noted that both the experimental and control groups went through this instructional phase as part of the syllabus and the researcher's teaching method.

By the end of instruction, the students from the control group handed their works waiting for the teacher feedback (sharing stage), whereas the students from the experimental group participated in the experimental phase. This phase emphasised the need for the students to engage in the three cyclical phases of self-assessment elaborated in chapter two. First, the students started planning their assessment by negotiating the purpose and criteria of self-assessment as a classroom discussion. As a second stage, the students used the self-assessment forms to identify their strengths and weaknesses (performance). The self-assessment forms have been elaborated according to the instructions provided on academic writing. Basically, all criteria of assessment were modeled during the instructional phase. After completion of the self-assessment, the participants' works were assessed by the instructor who provided feedback on both the students' writing performance and their self-assessment. During the last stage, revision, the participants made use of the instructor's feedback in accordance with their self-generated feedback to improve their performance by

editing language anomalies and revising the texts for further development. They finally handed a revised version of their works. The aim of this experimental phase was to engage the students in the self-assessment process and develop their reflection and critical thinking skills.

Regarding the teacher feedback, the students' works were assessed using the writing codes presented in appendix E (adopted from Oshima & Hogue, 2007, p.184). It was mainly formative and it involved the use of assessment grids (see appendix F) to ensure a more objective and fairer judgement. The feedback on the students' compositions focused on both linguistic and discourse patterns. Specifically, we used indirect error correction and written commentaries as a type of feedback based on the criteria provided in the self-assessment forms and grids. It is worth mentioning that the students from both groups received the same constructive feedback.

As a procedure of the experimental design, it should be noted that we administered a scale before and after the intervention to participants from both groups. The scale is fully described in the next section.

#### **III.4. The Self-regulation Scale**

It concerns the self-regulation scale that measured the students' degree of self-regulation before and after the treatment (see appendix G). The scale was adapted from the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ) (Pintrich & De Groot, 1990; Pintrich, Smith, Garcia & McKeachie, 1991; 1993) and the Academic Self-regulated Learning Scale (Magno, 2010; 2011) which were modified to suit our research aims. In addition, some items were created to meet the requirements of our study based on the theoretical framework developed in the review of the literature. The scale is composed of twenty-four (24) items. The items are a 4-point frequency scale of measurement ranging from (1) *always* to (4) *never*. The participants were required to indicate how often they experienced the statements. The scale is subdivided into four sub-sections each highlighting one specific component of the

socio-cognitive theory of self-regulated learning: self-efficacy, goal-setting, strategy use and self-assessment. These are described in Table 8.

Table 8  
*Dimensions of the self-regulation scale*

Dimension	Sub-section	N° of items	Focus
Dimension 1	Self-efficacy	3 items	Perceived ability in academic achievement: certainty, expectations, and satisfaction
Dimension 2	Goal-setting	4 items	Pre-writing strategies: planning and goal-setting
Dimension 3	Strategy use	9 items	The use of writing strategies: cognitive, affective and social.
Dimension 4	Self-assessment	8 items	Self-assessment processes: awareness, editing and revision.

The self-efficacy sub-scale concerns statements related to the students' motivation and beliefs about their writing competence. This sub-scale is composed of three (3) items related to students' certainty, expectations and satisfaction. The second sub-scale, goal-setting, comprises four (4) statements including: reflection, brainstorming, planning and questioning. This had the aim of exploring the students' frequent use of metacognitive strategies during the pre-writing stage of the writing process. As far as writing strategies are concerned, we devoted nine (9) items to explore the common strategies the students use. This sub-scale is divided into three general types of strategies: cognitive, affective and social, designed in line with O'Malley and Chamot's (1990) taxonomy of writing strategies explained in chapter one. The nine strategies are: note taking, organisation, summarisation, elaboration, persistence, self-reminding, self-challenging, anxiety control and help seeking. The final sub-scale involves eight (8) items about self-assessment, including: awareness, self-detection, self-correction, multiple readings, grammar editing, spelling editing, coherence revision and goal comparison.

The scale was first piloted to ensure that the wording of the statements was clear and corresponded the students' level of understanding. After analysing the participants' answers,

it was concluded that the students had no difficulty in interpreting and responding to the statements. Nevertheless, minor modifications were introduced. Of the total number of students in the two groups (fifty-one, 51), forty-nine (49) participants completed the main scale which was administered before the self-assessment treatment. The pre-scale was intended to measure the students' level of self-regulation "to check on the equivalence of the groups on the dependent variable before the experiment begins." (Ary et al., 2010, p. 317) Then, forty-five (45) students answered the self-regulation scale after the treatment. The aim of the post-scale was to measure the students' level of self-regulation after the intervention to determine any significant improvement. The self-regulation scale as a whole can be considered reliable with Cronbach alpha equal to .67 (pre-scale) and .81 (post-scale).

Similar to the pilot questionnaire, the pre and post scales were administered and collected anonymously to conform to the research ethics required and the participants were given total freedom to respond to the items.

### **III.5. Self-assessment Forms**

The integration of self-assessment all along the writing program was designed according to the features of academic writing (Raimes, 1983; O'Malley & Pierce, 1996; Oshima & Hogue, 2000, 2007; Savage & Mayer, 2005; Robitaille & Connelly, 2007; Hogue, 2008). Specifically, we devised four different techniques: checklists, rubrics, scripts and writing conferences; these techniques are displayed in the appendices (appendix H, I, J and K). Each type of paragraph or essay has a specific self-assessment form related to its characteristics, but all the four techniques involved the same assessment procedures. Drawing on Raimes' (1983, p.6) taxonomy of writing, the criteria are basically related to: layout, structure, unity, content, coherence and language. These criteria were all explained and modeled during the instructional phase, so the participants were supposed to have a clear grasp of them. The participants were divided into four different groups of six students; each

group was assigned one assessment technique.

The checklists involved the students to check whether their compositions met the assessment criteria mentioned. Statements are specific and require yes/no answers, contrary to the rubrics which entail an analytical description of levels of proficiency in relation to the features of academic writing and the participants were required to grade their composition through the scale that varies from excellent to poor. Concerning the conference, this technique required a group of students to share their works in order to discuss the main points of strength and limitation. However, because of time limitations, the students did not have time to share as a group, so we assigned them into pairs instead so as to facilitate reading and assessment. Each pair was requested to read and comment on both their own composition and their peers' using the conference form. When the students completed the self-assessment process, they were invited to discuss the works with the teacher to make use of all the feedback received (self, peer and teacher). Unlike the other forms, the script was handed to the students before starting writing to follow the guidelines that assisted them in the writing process. The aim of using different techniques was to observe and note the participants' reactions to each of them and eventually assess their effectiveness.

### **III.6. Students' Portfolios**

As explained previously, during the last stage of the instructional phase, the students were instructed to demonstrate their writing competence by applying the theoretical conception they internalised about academic writing independently in their own productions. They were required to develop either a paragraph (in the first semester) or an essay (in the second semester) at the end of each unit of instruction. The students had different topics to write about; some were free and others were pre-defined by the teacher depending on the course instructions and goals. An overall of four written assignments were attributed to the participants from both groups. A detailed description of the assignments is displayed in Table

9.

Table 9  
*Description of the writing assignments*

Test	Task	Instructional Purpose	Research Purpose
Pre-test	Write a paragraph about 10 to 15 lines on the internet	Practice paragraph writing	Compare the performance of both groups prior to the experiment Identify students' errors
Progress test1	Write a paragraph about 10 to 15 lines on a free topic following the writing process	Practice paragraph writing Engage students in the five stages of the writing process and assist them in the use of appropriate writing strategies	Assess and follow up students' progress after four weeks of instruction and experimentation
Progress test 2	Write a 5-paragraphs essay describing a person (descriptive essay)	Practice essay writing Assist students in the use of the five senses in description	Assess students' progress after eight weeks of instruction and experimentation
Post-test	Write a 5-paragraphs essay creating a personal story (narrative essay )	Practice Essay writing Stir students' creativity	Compare students' performance at the end of the experiment (eleven weeks of instruction)

These assignments fulfilled two ultimate goals. They were first a way for the instructor to determine how well the students had fulfilled the syllabus goals set for writing at their course level and second a means to engage them in constant self-assessment of their own compositions. After completing each assignment, all the students handed their compositions. We have already explained that the participants from the experimental group had to submit another composition which was a revised version of the first draft after completing the self-assessment practices and receiving the teacher feedback. All the students' compositions were assessed by the teacher and the participants kept the samples as portfolios to record their writing progress (see the students' portfolios appendix in the separate volume). The portfolios had the aim of keeping the students aware of their level of achievement and getting them to identify their strengths and weaknesses and reflect on how to improve their writing.

Ultimately, the assessment of the portfolios provided evidence that served as an answer to the second research hypothesis about the effects of self-assessment on students' writing performance. It is worth-mentioning that the students carried out self-assessing their writing after the post-test (see appendix C).

### **III.7. Writing Logs**

In developing both self-assessment skills and self-regulation strategies, understanding and getting insight into the participants' attitudes, motives and experience is prevalent. To this end, the students were invited to keep a reflective writing log (see appendix L). To understand how our participants perceived self-assessment and how they reacted to this experience, the students were encouraged to reflect on how the self-assessment process had influenced their self-regulated capacities and writing performance and to report all what they had experienced during the academic year. Our choice to use this qualitative research tool was motivated by the two research and learning goals it serves. That is, on one hand, we collected qualitative data to answer the research questions and test the hypotheses. On the other hand, it was considered another learning opportunity that encouraged the students' reflection and assessment of their progress at the end of the academic year. As a research tool, a writing log is considered a rich source of data recorded directly from the participants; it allows researchers to get into participants viewpoints and experiences over a span of time (Friesner & Hart, 2005, p.120). In this study, we aimed at gaining a deep understanding of our participants' attitudes and motivation towards the self-assessment process as they occurred in the EFL context of writing. Therefore, it helped us in collecting insightful and diversified information on how the self-assessment treatment contributed to the development of the participants' self-regulated skills and influenced their writing. Additionally, this research tool allows participants a high degree of freedom to express their viewpoints and share their experiences independent of the researcher's supervision which excludes any threat of bias or

manipulation from the researcher's part.

#### **IV.Data Collection Procedures**

As already mentioned, this investigation was carried out using mixed methods combining different sets of data collection tools that enabled an in-depth analysis of the outcomes of the study. Data were collected over six (6) months (eighteen (18) weeks) excluding exam periods and holiday breaks. Data collection took place in two different phases: the pilot study and the main study. A timeline of the procedures of the research is listed in Table 10 which illustrates at what point in time during the study each of the instruments was used and how they relate to each others in time.

Table 10  
*Time-table of data collection procedures*

Phase	Week	Date	Research procedure
Pilot study	1	27 <sup>th</sup> October -2015	Informal teacher interview
	2	10 <sup>h</sup> November, 2015	Informal observation Classroom discussion
	3	17 <sup>th</sup> November ,2015	Pilot questionnaire Pre-test
Main study	4	24 <sup>th</sup> November , 2015	Formal observation Pre-scale
	4-16	24 <sup>th</sup> November, 2015- 19 <sup>th</sup> April, 2016	Self-assessment treatment
	13	15 <sup>th</sup> March , 2016	Post-test
	16-17	19 <sup>th</sup> -26 <sup>th</sup> April, 2016	Post-scale
	18	26 <sup>th</sup> May, 2016	Collection of the writing logs

##### **IV.1. The Pilot Study**

In order to test the reliability of the research instruments and determine our research procedures, a preliminary work in the form of a pilot study was undertaken. This research phase took three (3) weeks; it involved informal teacher interviews, a questionnaire, an informal classroom observation and discussion as well. This provided us with the opportunity to explore the participants' previous learning experiences, predict problems and estimate the time needed to complete the assessment treatment and the influence of the classroom learning

conditions. The pilot questionnaire aimed mostly at assessing the researchability of the topic and determining the feasibility and reliability of the data methods used. For each group, the same procedures were respected as explained in the previous sections.

As shown in Table 10, we conducted interviews with teachers in charge of the EFL writing course on 27<sup>th</sup> October, 2015. It was mainly an open-ended discussion with the teachers as an attempt to explore their viewpoints about the writing syllabus, students' writing proficiency and their self-regulation skills. On 10<sup>th</sup> November, we started observing the participants and simultaneously had a classroom discussion; general remarks on their learning experiences and attitudes were noted. A week after, 17<sup>th</sup> November, we administered the piloted questionnaire and assigned the participants the pre-test, which is part of the main study.

#### **IV.2. The main Study**

Once the pilot study suggested the suitability of the experiment, the second phase of the research, the main study, began. It was reinforced with the observations and the results of the pilot phase. The main study started with a formal classroom observation and the administration of the self-regulation pre-scale on 24<sup>th</sup> November, 2015 as shown in Table 10. On the same day, we introduced the students to the self-assessment treatment. This phase lasted five (5) months. During this period, self-assessment was integrated into EFL writing instruction. In the last two weeks of the research experiment, 19<sup>th</sup>- 26<sup>th</sup> April, 2016, the self-regulation post-scale was administered. After one month, 26<sup>th</sup> May, the students handed back their writing logs.

#### **V. Data Analysis**

The analysis of the data collected through the different tools shed light on how the treatment had influenced our participants. The first set of analysis involved the use of descriptive and inferential statistics to generate numerical data. The analysis of those results

determined the effects of the self-assessment treatment on the experimental group. The statistical analysis was facilitated by the statistical package for social statistics (SPSS) software version 25. SPSS was used to quantify the students' answers in the pilot questionnaire and compute the self-regulated scale. Regarding the pilot questionnaire, the results are reported in terms of frequencies and percentages. Likewise, frequencies and percentages for the experimental and control groups were calculated to determine the students' level of self-regulation and means and standard deviations were computed to compare the results of the pre and post scales to determine any significant change after the experiment. Then, answering our first hypothesis required running parametric tests (*t*-tests). The independent *t*-test was used to compare the level of self-regulation among the experimental and the control groups, whereas the dependent *t*-test involved a comparison of the results of the same group before and after the design for each group: experimental and control. Regarding the second hypothesis, we generated scores for the students' written texts as a means to compare the students' performance in the writing tests and subsequently we run *t*-tests to check the significance of the results.

The second type of analysis involved error analysis and content analysis. The qualitative data generated from these two methods of analysis served the goal of reinforcing our understanding of the development of self-regulation and writing through self-assessment and the factors that influenced the three variables. Error analysis was conducted to assess the students' writing compositions; it concerned the analysis of the linguistic patterns of the pre-test performance. Specifically, there was a description of the types of errors the students committed in terms of grammatical and lexical deviations from the English language rules. The students' errors were collected, identified and described on the basis of Corder's (1981) linguistic theory of error analysis. The investigation of the students' errors served two purposes: diagnosing and prognosing (Corder, 1967). On the one hand, identifying students'

errors in their EFL writing compositions can tell us a lot about their grasp of the target language during the learning process. On the other hand, the in-pointed problems and difficulties students face when writing inform teachers and help them to modify teaching material to deal with the students' problems by determining areas that need reinforcement in teaching instruction.

Subsequently, content analysis served to describe the discourse features of the compositions in terms of the criteria of good writing (layout, structure, unity, content, coherence and language) in reference to Grice (1975), Halliday and Hasan (1976), Raimes (1983) and Oshima and Hogue (2006). This analysis permitted to assess the students' compositions in terms of quality to determine their writing achievement at the start then identify any significant improvement in their performance after using self-assessment and receiving feedback from the teacher. Content analysis was also employed to analyse the writing logs; the participants' answers were grouped under thematic headings. The students' logs informed the research by collecting insightful and rich information on how the self-assessment treatment had helped them control the writing process, assess their works and improve their writing. Evidence gained through the observation served in the interpretation of the results. In short, this method of analysis allowed us to frame self-assessment from the students' perspective by exploring their feelings, attitudes and experiences.

Regarding the other tools used in the pilot phase, we provide a summary of the main results obtained in the teachers' interview and the classroom observation and discussion, in addition to the data generated from the pilot questionnaire.

## **VI. Ethical Considerations**

Central to the research design, issues related to ethical practices are considered. In making this comment, Creswell (2012, p.23) asserts, "ethics has become a more pervasive idea stretching from the origins of a research study to its final completion and distribution."

In respecting this research principle, we have tried in every way to conform to the ethical norms related to scientific research. Ethical issues in the present study are related to both the researcher and the research design.

Prior to the study, we contacted the head of the department of English at the University of Bejaia by sending her a formal letter in which we requested to teach at the department and sought permission to conduct our experiment with third year students. After getting the approval, a schedule was established by the administration as shown in Table 6.

Once the study started, a fundamental ethical issue was to ensure the participants were aware of the nature and purpose of the study. They were informed that self-assessment is part of a research study that would primarily contribute to enhance teaching and learning at the university and the results would not impact their grades as the treatment is formative in nature. Another important ethical consideration is anonymity and confidentiality. The students were assured that their responses were anonymous as no personal identifiers were used on the instruments of data collection and the results would remain confidential.

As far as the researcher is concerned, we have tried to conform to the ethical issues related to both the theoretical and the practical parts of the thesis. Data were reported honestly without altering any responses or finding to suit specific research needs. Additionally, credit is given to all reported material. It should also be noted that the researcher has no relationship with the participants and the setting beyond being it the context of the research investigation.

## **VII. Validity and Reliability**

Validity and reliability are important concepts in scientific research. Care was taken when designing the research steps to ensure the research is valid and reliable. First, our research was informed by both quantitative and qualitative data which increased the validity of the research by ensuring triangulation, one of the characteristics of scientific research. According to Seliger and Shohamy (1989, p. 12), “The advantages of triangulated types of

design lie in the increased validity of the data, as information about the same research question is sought from different sources” (as cited in Oscarson, 2009, p.108). The research problem was also piloted before starting the experiment. Besides, as both experimental and control groups took the same pre-tests and post-tests under the same conditions and there were no significant differences in the pre-tests, our research findings can be considered credible and there was no threat to internal validity (Ary et al., 2010, p. 317). Furthermore, as far as the main instrument for measuring the students’ self-regulation is concerned, the scale used was adapted from previous research which proved its validity and was designed in consistency with the social cognitive theory, as already explained. Finally, the reliability coefficients computed for the pre-scale (.67) and the post-scale (.81) indicate that the instrument is reliable.

## **Conclusion**

As an attempt to investigate how self-assessment can contribute to the development of self-regulated writing, the methodology adopted in this study is characterised by several research approaches; it has features of an experimental study, a descriptive case study and an exploratory investigation as well. Throughout this chapter, we have provided a detailed description of the subjects involved in the study, the data collection methods and tools and the procedures of data collection and analysis. In regard to the data collection, the quantitative method makes use of the pilot questionnaire, the pre and post scales and the students’ achievement scores, whereas the qualitative method is represented by classroom observation, students’ portfolios and writing logs. Data analysis include: descriptive and inferential statistics, error analysis and content analysis. In the end, ethical considerations and validity and reliability concerns have been addressed.

## **Chapter Four: Results**

In the previous chapter, a detailed account of how the research was carried out is given. Throughout the chapter, we have provided a description of our research design and the rationale behind our choices. Various tools were used to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. The objective of each tool was highlighted as well as the procedures of data collection and analysis. This chapter is divided into two sections reporting the results of both the pilot and the main studies. The first section is devoted to the analysis of the results of the pilot study. The second section devoted to the main study is divided into four sub-sections, each of which presents the results relating to one of the research questions. The first sub-section reports the statistics obtained in the pre-scale for each group which ends up with a comparison of the means of the two groups. Likewise, sub-section two shows the statistical results of the post-scale for each group and a comparison of both groups. Sub-section three is devoted to the portfolio assessment; both numerical and qualitative data are reported. In the last section, we report data on students' writing logs which have been profiled into thematic headings.

### **I. The Pilot Study**

#### **I.1. General findings**

As already explained, a pilot study was conducted before the main study. First, the self-regulation scale was piloted before the main study. The piloted scale entailed twenty-seven (27) items reduced later to twenty-four (24) as the analysis of the results led to the elimination of three (03) items because they were considered as repetitive. Besides, many items underwent a paraphrase operation or were simplified as they were misunderstood by some students. The analysis revealed almost similar results to those obtained in the main pre-scale that is reported in the next section. The most important finding was that the students' level of self-regulation was low. Second, we conducted informal interviews with the teachers

of writing at the department of English and administered a pilot questionnaire to the same students participants of this study. In the classroom, a discussion was established with the students regarding their previous experience in EFL writing classrooms and issues about their writing proficiency level were explored. Together with the notes from the informal observation, the data from the discussion permitted us to confirm the students' low level of self-regulation in addition to writing difficulties. The students revealed different realities about their actual writing competence. Most of the students (70%) admitted they had a low proficiency in EFL writing and some even considered themselves as beginners who were unable to express their thoughts and feelings in written texts, whereas few ones believed they were competent in writing. When questioned about the causes of their lack of awareness and about their writing difficulties, almost all the students (90%) criticised the previous ineffective writing methods which according to them were one of the causes of their deficiencies. These students criticised the teaching methods adopted by teachers at the University of Bejaia and explained that writing instruction during their first and second year of B.A. was limited to direct instruction on the structural properties of language (grammar and mechanics) and text structure, though it was not effective in developing their linguistic competence. They also highlighted the lack of classroom practice and feedback. According to them, they had few opportunities to write paragraphs in the classroom and in the few cases they did, they did not receive constructive feedback on their performance. In addition, we have noted that the students had different teachers in their previous years at university and received different kinds of instruction. As a final thought of the discussion, the students expressed their wish to develop their writing competence and receive feedback on their performance. Likewise, the teachers who were interviewed expressed similar remarks concerning the students' writing proficiency, but they attributed these problems to a lack of students' autonomy and time constraints; no teacher made reference to their classroom practice. In what follows, we report

the data obtained from the pilot questionnaire.

## **I.2. The Pilot Questionnaire**

This section focuses on the writing skill through the analysis of the semi open-ended questions regarding the difficulties the students face when writing a paragraph or an essay and how they perceive the skill. Besides, the questionnaire sought to generate data regarding self-regulated writing strategies the students employ to confirm our research assumption about students' lack of self-regulation skills. Both a statistical and a descriptive approach was adopted to analyse the students' answers. Specifically, the answers were quantified and computed in terms of descriptive statistics as we have multiple answers. The percentages and frequency of each question are reported in a separate table as shown in what comes next. The results of this section, coupled with those of the portfolio assessment, provide evidence that allows answering the first research question about the students' problems in writing. It should be noted that the first part of the questionnaire which concerns background information about the students was already reported in the methodology chapter to serve as a description of the participants of the study.

Table 11  
*Question 1: students' motivation towards writing*

Group	Yes		No		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Experimental	17	71	7	29	24	100
Control	17	68	8	32	25	100

In an attempt to measure the students' motivation towards EFL writing, we shall rely on the results presented in Table 11. The table shows that both groups, experimental and control, shared the same motivation. The majority of the students (71% in the experimental group and 68% in the control group) reported they liked writing. These participants explained that writing in English was a key to improve their English in general and their writing

competence in particular. They further explained that through writing, they could express their ideas and thoughts, so this extended both their thinking and imagination. Moreover, intensive writing represented a way to learn from the mistakes they commit. However, the rest of participants, 29% from the experimental group and 32% from the control one, admitted that they disliked the skill. These participants provided justifications for their lack of interest in EFL writing. The participants from both groups explained that they did not like to write because of the difficulties they face. Because of these difficulties, they did not manage to express their ideas and thoughts, so they preferred not write at all. Moreover, the participants from the control group added that time represented a challenge for them; they always needed much time to finish composing their texts. So, they did not feel motivated to write.

Table 12  
*Question 2: students' attitudes towards writing*

Group	n	Attitudes					
		Important				No answer	
		Difficult					
	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Experimental	24	21	87.5	15	62.5	1	4
Control	25	20	80	13	52	2	8

Table 12 describes the students' answers to question two regarding their attitudes towards writing. According to the answers, we notice that the participants from both groups have developed similar attitudes towards the writing skill. The vast majority of the students (87.5% from the experimental and 80% from the control one) recognised the importance of writing in English. These positive attitudes helped us to assist the students in developing their potential. However, there are students who perceived writing as a difficult skill. Sixty-two point five percent (62.5%) of students from the experimental group and 52% from the control group believed that EFL writing is a challenging process that requires time and efforts.

Table 13  
*Question 3: students' difficulties in writing*

Group	n	Area of difficulty										No answer	
		Grammar		Vocabulary		Organisation		Content		Brainstorming			
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Experimental	24	11	45.5	10	41.8	3	12.5	11	45.5	0	0	2	8.3
Control	25	3	12	9	36	0	0	13	52	3	12	3	12

The students' answers to the third question regarding their language proficiency are presented in Table 13. It appears that, although the two groups reported problems in both structure and content, these difficulties differ between the two groups. We can notice that the participants from the experimental group regarded grammar, vocabulary and content as their biggest problem in writing. These students explained how hard they sometimes struggled to find the appropriate words that connote or denote exactly what they intended to say and there were many grammatical rules they ignored. In addition, they were unable to develop their texts; that is, they could not write a lot about the topic and three students further admitted that they did not know how to structure a text. Surprisingly, the participants from the control group reported less difficulty in grammar; only three (3) students admitted their grammatical incompetence. What seems to cause great difficulty to these students is content. Half of the participants (52%) claimed they could not write well-elaborated texts with enough supporting ideas; they often lacked adequate evidence. Besides, an important number of participants (36%) recognised their shortage of vocabulary; they explained that they always found it hard to get the right words to express their intended message. Few students (three) also identified another problem when writing in English; this is related to brainstorming and planning. These students highlighted that they did not know how to generate information about the topic before starting to write. Few students as we can see did not answer the question. We can understand from this reluctance that these students were not aware of their weaknesses in

writing or that they simply did not want to share information about their proficiency level.

Table 14  
*Question 4: students' strategies in writing*

Strategy	<i>Descriptive Statistics</i>			
	<i>Experimental group</i>		<i>Control group</i>	
	F	%	F	%
Planning	3	12.5	2	8
Brainstorming	10	41.6	8	32
Questioning	2	8.3	0	00
Organisation	8	33.3	8	32
Summarisation	3	12.5	1	4
Drafting	5	20.8	3	12
Revision and edition	3	12.5	3	12
Use of sources	3	12.5	1	4
No answer	8	33.3	12	48

As far as question four about the students' writing strategies is concerned, Table 14 summarises the students' answers which let brainstorming appear as the most prominent strategy among the participants, 41.6% of answers from the experimental group and 32% from the control one. Besides, organisation seems to be another common strategy mentioned by 33.3% of participants from the experimental group and 32% from the control one. Drafting was also reported to be used by some students from the experimental group, 20.8% compared to participants from the control group 12%. The participants also reported using other strategies (planning, summarisation, revision and editing and the use of resources), yet these strategies were used by few students only. Nevertheless, we can notice from the table, that an important number of participants 33.3% from the experimental group and 48% from the control group did not provide any answer to this question. This can mean that these students were not self-regulated or they just did not want to share their writing habits. Given the total number of the participants, the percentages obtained cannot be considered significant which

reinforces our claim that the participants had poor self-regulation skills in EFL writing.

Table 15  
*Question 5: sources of students' writing difficulties*

Group	n	Source										No answer	
		Lack of reading		Lack of practice		Inability		Lack of time		Psychological factors			
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Experimental	24	6	25	5	20.83	5	20.83	0	0	0	0	6	25
Control	25	7	28	6	24	2	8	2	8	3	12	9	36

In an attempt to explore the main causes of students' difficulties in writing (question 5), we reported students' answers in Table 15. It can be seen from the table that the students attributed their difficulties to several factors. Some students, 25% from the experimental group and 28% from the control group, indicated that a lack of reading was one of the major causes of their low achievement in writing. The students admitted that reading has not gained their interest or attention; they rarely read books, novels, newspapers, or other materials in English. As this skill was not practised, it is evident that they faced difficulties in expressing their ideas and developing their texts. A lack of writing was also reported to be another major cause for students' low proficiency in writing. Twenty point eighty-three percent (20.83%) of participants from the experimental group and 24% from the control one indicated they did not practise this skill which has always been reduced to classroom practice. A number of participants from the experimental group (20.83 %) also related their problems in writing to the criterion of ability. According to them, their problems in writing were mainly attributed to their inborn limited capacity of learning. Other psychological factors (notably anxiety) were also listed, by the participants but they did not provide any explanation. A point not to neglect is that some participants (25% from the experimental group and 36% from the control group) did not answer this question. This may imply that they actually ignored the causes of

their problems or they were unwilling to discuss this issue.

Table 16

*Question 6: students' suggested solutions to writing difficulties*

Group	n	Suggested solution									
		Extensive writing		Reading		Collaborative writing		Seeking help		No answer	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Experimental	24	15	62.5	6	25	2	8.33	2	8.33	5	20.83
Control	25	17	68	13	52	0	0	0	0	3	12

Table 16 reports the students' suggestions to overcome their difficulties in EFL writing (question 6). The majority, 62.5% from the experimental group and 68% from the control one, suggested extensive writing as an effective strategy to improve their skill and eradicate their recurrent mistakes. This answer implies that the participants were aware of their prominent role in developing their own competence. Reading was also suggested by many participants, 25% from the experimental group and 52% from the control group as a very helpful technique to improve their performance. A couple of students from the experimental group representing 8.33% of the whole sample mentioned two other strategies: collaborative writing and seeking assistance. Overall, the solutions the majority of students provided in Table 16 were typical responses to the causes they attributed to their writing problems in Table 15. Again, some participants (20.83% from the experimental and 12% from the control group) refused to express their thoughts.

Table 17  
*Question 7: students' perception of teacher's role in developing their writing*

Group	n	Teacher task								No answer	
		Instruction		Feedback		Guidance		Encouragement			
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Experimental	24	7	29.16	7	29.16	9	37.5	0	0	7	29.16
Control	25	12	48	5	20	9	36	5	20	6	24

A statistical reading of Table 17 indicates the students' perceptions of the role of their teacher in developing the writing skill (question 7). Twenty-nine point sixteen percent (29.16%) of participants from the experimental group and 48% from the control group expressed their need for direct instruction on EFL writing. As feedback is a vital component of writing instruction, students from both groups (29.16% from the experimental group and 20% from the control one) stressed they needed to receive constructive feedback in order to understand their strengths and weaknesses. An important number of respondents (37.5% from the experimental group and 36% from the control one) perceived their teacher as a guide. These students explained that they expected from their teacher to facilitate the writing process by providing them with practical guidelines when they face difficulties. Some students (20%) from the control group added that they always wanted their teacher to encourage them and reward them for their progress. These expectations are quite logical taking into account the nature of the skill and the learning environment (EFL). It is worth mentioning that 29.16% of participants from the experimental group and 24% from the control group did not provide any answer to this question. In our view, the only reason that seems logical for this is their unwillingness to express their ideas and share their beliefs.

In a nutshell, the results obtained from this pilot phase go in the same direction with the assumptions made at the beginning of this study in that the students lacked self-regulation awareness and skills and that their writing skill was not developed which gave a solid starting

point to the experimental study we conducted. On the basis of these remarks and both the syllabus and our classroom observation, we were able to set a comprehensive plan that fulfilled both instructional and research aims.

## II. The Pre-scale

As explained in the previous chapter, prior to the self-assessment experiment, we administered a pre-scale to the participants which constitutes the data collection tool for the pre-study. Hence, the first set of data analysis of the main study concerns the results obtained in the pre-scale. We first present the results of the experimental group then those of the control group. Specifically, frequencies and percentages are used to report the students' level of self-regulation in the four sub-scales: self-efficacy, goal-setting, strategy use and self-assessment. Then, means and standard deviations are used to compare the results of the two groups, in addition to inferential statistics to check the significance of the findings.

### II.1. Descriptive Statistics of the Experimental Group

The tables below report the frequencies and percentages recorded for each individual item of the four sub-scales of the self-regulation pre-scale for the experimental group and subsequently followed by the overall means and standard deviations of each sub-scale and the pre-scale as a whole.

#### II.1.1. Self-efficacy

Table 18

*The Pre-scale frequencies and percentages of self-efficacy beliefs for the experimental group*

Item	Scale								No answer		Total	
	Always		Sometimes		Rarely		Never					
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Certainty	0	0	15	62.5	8	33.3	1	4.2	0	0	24	100
Expectations	3	12.5	12	50	7	29.2	1	4.2	1	4.2	23	95.8
Satisfactions	3	12.5	7	29.2	8	33.3	6	25	0	0	24	100

Table 18 reports the experimental group's frequencies and percentages obtained in the pre-scale regarding self-efficacy beliefs. It can be estimated from the table that the students had low self-efficacy beliefs towards their writing performance. Most of the participants (62.5 %) revealed they were not sure of the quality of their writing productions. Similar feelings were developed towards expectation; 50% of participants revealed they sometimes had good expectations to write well. Regarding satisfaction, 33.3 % were rarely satisfied with their productions and 29.2 % were sometimes satisfied. Actually, these statistics indicate that the students' showed feelings of doubt and uncertainty about their writing achievement.

### II.1.2. Goal-setting

Table 19

*The Pre-scale frequencies and percentages of goal-setting for the experimental group*

Item	Scale								Total	
	Always		Sometimes		Rarely		Never			
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Reflection	12	50	10	41.7	2	8.3	0	0	24	100
Brainstorming	1	4.2	2	8.3	6	25	15	62.5	24	100
Planning	5	20.8	9	37.5	4	16.7	6	25	24	100
Questioning	1	4.2	4	16.7	10	41.7	9	37.5	24	100

In Table 19, frequencies and percentages of the students' answers to the goal-setting sub-scale of the pre-scale are displayed. A statistical reading of the table shows that most of the students 50% took time to reflect on the topic before starting to write. This is normally a good sign of self-regulation. However, the students' answers to the following items indicate the opposite; these students were not skillful at self-regulating their writing. Most of them (62.5%) reported not using brainstorming strategies at all. Actually, these statistics are surprising when compared to students' answers in the pilot questionnaire (Table 14). In this table, brainstorming appeared to be the most prominent strategy used by the participants (41.6 %). These contradictory results rise doubts about the students' honesty in their answers and

also open the door to different interpretations. Concerning other strategies, 37.5% of participants indicated they sometimes planned for their writing, but 41.7% admitted they rarely asked questions to guide them in the process of writing. According to these frequencies, we are likely to argue that the students spent much time thinking about the topic because they did not know how to approach the writing task. As the students did not plan for their writing or use pre-writing strategies, they found difficulties in composing. These results demonstrate that the students were not competent in self-regulating their writing at the metacognitive level.

### II.1.3. Strategy use

Table 20

*The Pre-scale frequencies and percentages of strategy use for the experimental group*

Item	Scale								Total	
	Always		Sometimes		Rarely		Never			
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Note taking	6	25	10	41.7	4	16.7	4	16.7	24	100
Organisation	5	20.8	13	54.2	4	16.7	2	8.3	24	100
Summarisation	5	20.8	10	41.7	6	25	3	12.5	24	100
Elaboration	3	12.5	14	58.3	7	29.2	0	0	24	100
Self-challenging	9	37.5	8	33.3	5	20.8	2	8.3	24	100
persistence	12	50	8	33.3	3	12.5	1	4.2	24	100
Reminding	16	66.7	7	29.2	0	0	1	4.2	24	100
Anxiety	3	12.5	10	41.7	10	41.7	1	4.2	24	100
Help seeking	0	0	11	45.8	7	29.2	6	25	24	100

The data provided in Table 20 hints to the strategies used when drafting. The students' answers regarding note taking indicate that many of them (41.7%) tended sometimes to write down all their ideas on a paper. Concerning other cognitive strategies, most of the participants (54.2%, 41.7% and 58.3%) reported using some strategies mainly with reference to organisation, summarisation and elaboration respectively, but they reported too that they were not regular at doing so.

As far as affective strategies are concerned, the participants seem to manage their emotions when it comes to persistence and self-talk. They reported always challenging themselves, sustaining writing and constantly reminding themselves of the importance of writing with 37.5%, 50% and 66.7% of answers respectively. Yet, it appears that anxiety represented a serious handicap as the vast majority of participants (83.4%) reported failing to deal with their anxiety (41.7% answered by sometimes and 41.7% answered by rarely). When reference is made to social strategies, 45.8% of students reported they sometimes seek assistance from others. As we can notice, the students' level of self-regulation was not high but rather differed from one aspect of learning to another. Actually, the students tended to use strategies to regulate their emotions more than they did to regulate cognitive and social factors related to the writing skill. These results indicate that our participants were not good self-regulators.

#### II.1.4. Self-assessment

Table 21  
*The Pre-scale frequencies and percentages of self-assessment for the experimental group*

Item	Scale								Total	
	Always		Sometimes		Rarely		Never			
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Awareness	7	29.2	10	41.7	3	12.5	4	16.7	24	100
Self-detection	2	8.3	10	41.7	7	29.2	5	20.8	24	100
Self-correction	2	8.3	8	33.3	7	29.2	7	29.2	24	100
Multiple readings	6	25	12	50	6	25	0	0	24	100
Grammar editing	4	16.7	9	37.5	8	33.3	3	12.5	24	100
Spelling editing	4	16.7	10	41.7	9	37.5	1	4.2	24	100
Revision	8	33.3	10	41.7	5	20.8	1	4.2	24	100
Goal comparaison	5	20.8	10	41.7	7	29.2	2	8.3	24	100

Table 21 deals with the frequencies and percentages of the self-assessment sub-scale

obtained in the pre-scale. According to the results displayed in the table, it is clear that the students were not fully aware of their writing weaknesses as 41.7% of participants responded by sometimes to the questions concerning awareness and self-detection of mistakes. It is certain that students need to read their compositions several times to detect any anomalies; these represent important stages of the writing process. Nevertheless, this does not seem the case with our participants because half of them (50%) revealed doing it sometimes. Similar for self-correction of their mistakes, the vast majority of the students reported not always being able to correct their mistakes; specifically, 33.3% answered by sometimes and the same number of participants (29, 2%) reported by rarely and never. To get further clarifications, an important number of participants (37.5%, 41.7% and 41.7%) answered by sometimes to the questions regarding grammar editing, spelling editing and revision at the level of coherence respectively. At the end of the writing process, only 20.8% of the participants indicated they always compared their final draft with the goals set at the beginning; the other participants did it sometimes (41.7%) or rarely (29.2%). This may imply that they did not even set goals at the beginning of the process as reported in Table 19. These statistics together with our classroom observation put us in a position to claim that most of the students did not assess their writing.

### II.1.5. Overall Pre-scale

Table 22

The *pre-scale overall descriptive statistics for the experimental group*

Sub-scale	M	SD
Self-efficacy	2.43	.58
Goal-setting	2.66	.54
Strategy Use	2.13	.45
Self-assessment	2.31	.49
Overall	2.31	.24

*Note. n=24. 1=always. 2=sometimes. 3=rarely. 4=never*

Table 22 summarises the overall pre-scale results of the experimental group for all the

components of self-regulation measured in this research and which are self-efficacy, goal-setting, strategy use and self-assessment. As can be seen in the table, the computed means for the four sub-scales vary between 2.13 and 2.66 which means that the students' answers to the items ranged mostly between sometimes and rarely. Considering the overall mean score for the scale ( $M=2.31$ ,  $SD= .24$ ), we can estimate that the students' level of self-regulation was not satisfactory and their self-regulatory skills were not developed.

## II.2. Descriptive Statistics of the Control Group

The results of the control group in the pre-scale are reported following the same procedures as the experimental group, so descriptive statistics are provided in the tables below.

### II.2.1. Self-efficacy

Table 23

*The Pre-scale frequencies and percentages of self-efficacy beliefs for the control group*

Item	Scale								Total	
	Always		Sometimes		Rarely		Never			
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Certainty	0	0	16	64	9	36	0	0	25	100
Expectations	3	12	13	52	8	32	1	4	25	100
Satisfactions	2	8	14	56	6	24	3	12	25	100

Table 23 reports the results of the self-efficacy sub-scale for the pre-scale. The computed statistics indicate that the majority of the participants had low self-efficacy beliefs. The majority of the participants (64%) admitted their doubt about their capacities to write good compositions in English. Fifty-two percent (52%) of them reported they sometimes expected to perform well when writing, whereas 32% revealed they rarely did. As far as satisfaction is concerned, more than half of the participants (56%) reported they felt satisfied with their performance only at times. Consequently, these feelings of doubt and uncertainty

may have caused a challenge towards the development of the students' writing competence.

### II.2.2. Goal-setting

Table 24

*The Pre-scale frequencies and percentages of goal-setting for the control group*

Item	Scale								Total	
	Always		Sometimes		Rarely		Never			
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Reflection	12	48	10	40	3	12	0	0	25	100
Brainstorming	1	4	2	8	6	24	16	64	25	100
Planning	5	20	9	36	6	24	5	20	25	100
Questioning	3	12	6	24	11	44	5	20	25	100

As far as goal-setting is concerned, the frequencies and percentages of the students' answers in the pre-scale are summarised in Table 24. It can be estimated from these statistics that the participants were not metacognitively self-regulated. Although an important number of participants (48%) stated they always took time to think and reflect on the topic before starting to write, the results displayed in the table demonstrated a very limited use of metacognitive strategies. The majority of the students (64%) reported they did not use brainstorming strategies at all and 44% indicated they rarely asked questions to guide themselves during the reflection phase. Similar to the remark we made for the experimental group, these statistics contradicts those obtained in the pilot questionnaire (Table 14) as 32% of students reported using brainstorming strategies. In reference to planning, 36% of participants admitted they sometimes used planning strategies to structure their writing, whereas others did not plan for their writing. The students' answers regarding the strategies they used at the pre-writing stage demonstrate a lack of self-regulation.

### II.2.3. Strategy use

Table 25  
*The Pre-scale frequencies and percentages of strategy use for the control group*

Item	Scale										Total	
	Always		Sometimes		Rarely		Never		No answer			
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Note taking	11	44	7	28	7	28	0	0	0	0	25	100
Organisation	9	36	9	36	4	16	2	8	1	4	24	96
Summarisation	11	44	10	40	2	8	2	8	0	0	25	100
Elaboration	4	16	14	56	5	20	1	4	1	4	24	96
Self-challenging	8	32	10	40	5	20	2	8	0	0	25	100
Persistence	8	32	11	44	5	20	1	4	0	0	25	100
Reminding	16	64	5	20	2	8	1	4	1	4	24	96
Anxiety	4	16	14	56	5	20	2	8	0	0	25	100
Help seeking	4	16	5	20	10	40	6	24	0	0	25	100

Table 25 above summarises the frequencies and percentages of the students' answers regarding the use of cognitive, affective and social strategies. At first look, note taking seems to be frequently used by many students (44%). These students tended to write down all the main ideas they brainstormed on a rough paper before starting to draft their texts. In regard to other cognitive strategies, the table shows diversified answers with different frequencies. Thirty-six percent (36%) of participants reported they always attempted to organise their texts, yet a similar percentage of students (36%) answered they sometimes did. Almost similar results have been noticed for selection of main ideas and summarisation; 44% of participants reported they always did, whereas 40% did it at times only. Regarding elaboration, more than half of the respondents (56%) admitted they did not constantly develop their productions.

When it comes to affective strategies, it seems that motivation and anxiety represented a challenge for most of the students. Although the majority of the participants (64%) indicated

that they kept reminding themselves about the importance of EFL writing, an important number of participants with 40% and 44% of answers respectively revealed they challenged themselves and persisted when facing difficulties occasionally. Similar results were reported for anxiety as more than half of the participants (56%) reported they sometimes managed to control their feelings of anxiety and stress. Concerning social strategies, it appears that they were the least common strategies among the participants as 40% of participants reported they rarely asked for clarifications or sought help from their teacher or peers. From the statistics displayed in the table, it seems that the participants' skills in self-regulation were not developed.

#### II.2.4. Self-assessment

Table 26

*The Pre-scale frequencies and percentages of self-assessment for the control group*

Items	Scale										Total	
	Always		Sometimes		Rarely		Never		No answer			
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Awareness	4	16	12	48	6	24	2	8	1	4	24	96
Self-detection	0	0	12	48	7	28	5	20	1	4	24	96
Self-correction	0	0	11	44	7	28	4	16	3	12	22	88
Multiple readings	13	52	3	12	6	24	2	8	1	4	24	96
Grammar editing	4	16	8	32	12	48	0	0	1	4	24	96
Spelling editing	3	12	9	36	11	44	1	4	1	4	24	96
Revision	6	24	14	56	4	16	0	0	1	4	24	96
Goal comparaison	4	16	13	52	5	20	2	8	1	4	24	96

As regards the last section of the self-regulation scale, the results of the self-assessment sub-scale are presented in the Table 26. Although half of the participants (52%) claimed they always read their written works before submission, 48% were not fully aware of their mistakes and sometimes struggled to detect them. Besides, 44% of participants admitted they sometimes tended to self-correct their mistakes. In regard to cohesion, almost

half of the participants (48%) revealed they rarely correct their grammatical mistakes. Similarly, 44% of participants reported they rarely corrected spelling mistakes. Concerning coherence, more than half of participants (56%) indicated they sometimes revised anomalies related to coherence. Once they finish writing, 52% of participants reported they sometimes compared their productions with the goals set at the beginning. In general, these results permit us to assume that the control group participants were not competent at assessing their writing by themselves.

### II.2.5. Overall Pre-scale

Table 27

*The pre-scale overall descriptive statistics for the control group*

Sub-Scale	M	SD
Self-Efficacy	2.35	.47
Goal-Setting	2.57	.66
Strategy Use	2.00	.47
Self-assessment	2.18	.69
Overall	2.20	.34

*Note. n=25. 1=always. 2=Sometimes. 3=rarely. 4=never*

Table 27 displays the overall means of the four sub-scales that make up the self-regulation pre-scale for the control group: self-efficacy, goal-setting, strategy use and self-assessment. As we can see, the means displayed in the table vary between 2.00 and 2.57 which indicate that most of the students' answers to the items ranged between sometimes and rarely. From the overall mean of the self-regulation scale ( $M=2.20$ ,  $SD=.34$ ), we can estimate that the level of self-regulation for the control group at the beginning was not satisfactory; the students' skills in self-regulation were not developed as the participants did not constantly self-regulate their writing.

### II.3. Comparison of the results of the Experimental and Control Groups in the Pre-scale

In experimental studies, one critical condition to test a hypothesis and claim that any significant change in the dependent variable for the experimental group in the post-test was due to the manipulation of the independent variable during the experiment is to have equal means for the measurement of the dependent variable in the pre-test for both the experimental and control groups. Therefore, in our study, there is a necessity to compare the level of self-regulation among both groups in the pre-scale. Figure 12 shows the results of the comparison.

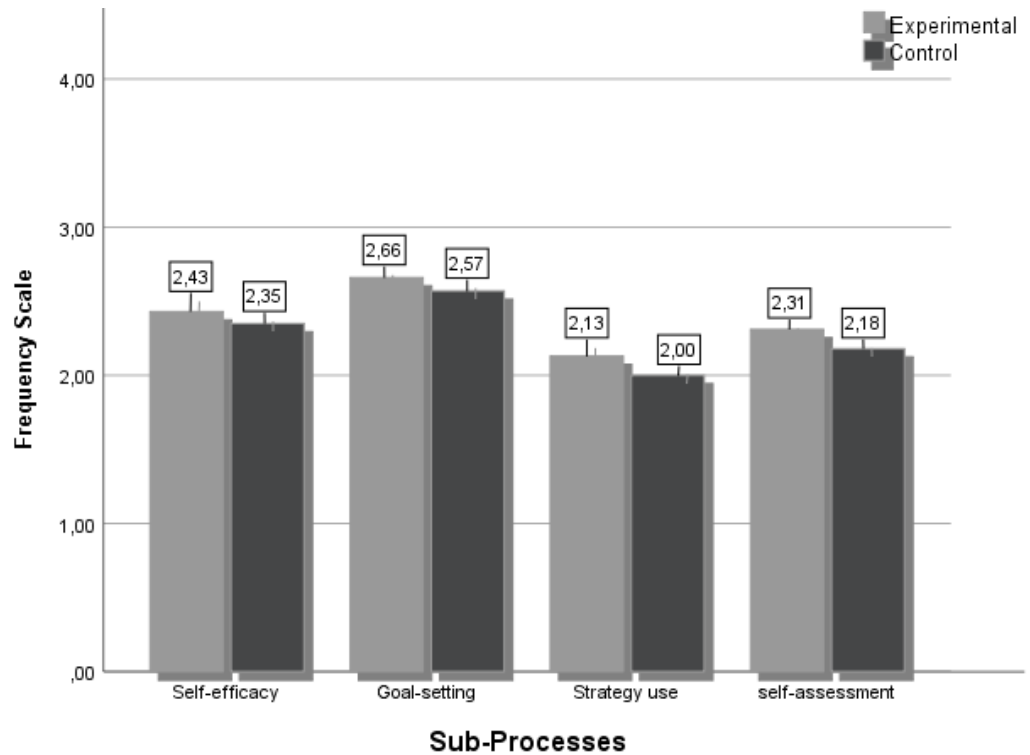


Figure 12. The pre-scale overall means for the experimental and control groups

Figure 12 displays the means of the four sub-scales of the self-regulation pre-scale for both the experimental and control groups. It seems clear from the figure that the means displayed are almost similar for the two groups for all the sub-scales. These results indicate that there was no difference in the level of self-regulation among the participants from the experimental and control groups; at the initial level, participants from both groups were not good self-regulators of their writing. Nevertheless, such general interpretation is not

sufficient; we need to test the significance of the results statistically. To demonstrate this, the appropriate testing and statistical procedure is the *t*-test which is considered to be the most suitable test to compare the mean scores of two groups. Given the fact that we were comparing two different samples, an independent samples *t*-test was carried out to assess whether the level of self-regulation among the participants of the two groups before introducing the self-assessment treatment was equal. Table 28 reports the results of the test.

Table 28  
*The pre-scale independent samples t-test*

		T-test for equality of means					
		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean difference	95% Confidence interval of the difference	
						Lower	Upper
Groups	Experimental control	1,41	43,07	,17	,12	-,052	,29

*Note.* n (experimental)= 24. n (control group)=25

The results of the independent *t*-test displayed in Table 28 make it clear that there was no significant difference in the computed means for the experimental group (M= 2.31, SD= 0.24) and the control group (M=2.20, SD= 0.34) before the treatment,  $t(43) = 1.40$ ,  $p = 0.17$ . This insignificant difference puts us in position to confirm that at the starting point, the level of self-regulation was almost the same for both groups. This signifies that any significant difference in the post-scale may be due to the experiment.

### III. The Post-scale

The results of the previous sections (pilot study and pre-scale) revealed almost the same findings; therefore, we can assume that the level of self-regulation among the participants from both groups was unsatisfactory and that the students had problems in writing both at the linguistic and discourse level. As a procedure of the experimental design, we administered, after the self-assessment treatment, the same scale used in the pre-study as a post-scale. Similar to the pre-scale, this section reports the results of the self-regulation post-

scale so as to determine the students' level of self-regulation but this time after the self-assessment treatment. Specifically, we look for significant improvement in students' self-self-regulation skills to confirm or reject the first null hypothesis regarding the effects of self-assessment on students' self-regulation in writing. The same procedures as in the analysis of the pre-scale are undertaken; descriptive and inferential statistics are reported for both groups.

### III.1.Descriptive Statistics of the Experimental Group

We start by presenting the results of the post-scale for the experimental group. Frequencies and percentages are reported for all individual items for each sub-scale and overall means and standard deviations are computed for each sub-scale then the whole post-scale.

#### III.1.1. Self-efficacy

Table 29

*The post-scale frequencies and percentages of self-efficacy beliefs for the experimental group*

Item	Scale								Total	
	Always		Sometimes		Rarely		Never			
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Certainty	0	0	20	90.9	2	9.1	0	0	22	100
Expectations	10	45.5	12	54.5	0	0	0	0	22	100
Satisfactions	6	27.3	11	50	5	22.7	0	0	22	100

Table 29 gives the frequencies and percentages of the self-efficacy sub-scale of the post-scale. The statistics provided in the table show that the participants' level of self-efficacy was fair. Almost all the participants (90.9%) highlighted they sometimes doubted their abilities to write accurately and fluently in English. The students' answers to the question about expectations varied between sometimes and always with 54.5% and 45.5% of answers respectively and this is encouraging. Similarly, when it comes to satisfaction, most of students' answers varied between sometimes (50%) and always (27.3%). Although these findings were not great, they show that the participants have managed to boost their self-

efficacy beliefs and trust their capacities.

### III.1.2. Goal-setting

Table 30

*The post-scale frequencies and percentages of goal-setting for the experimental group*

Item	Scale								No answer		Total	
	Always		Sometimes		Rarely		Never					
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Reflection	17	77.3	3	13.6	1	4.5	0	0	1	4.5	21	95.5
Brainstorming	1	4.5	6	27.3	9	40.9	6	27.3	0	0	22	100
Planning	7	31.8	8	36.4	5	22.7	2	9.1	0	0	22	100
Questioning	3	13.6	11	50	6	27.3	2	9.1	0	0	22	100

To measure the goal-setting influence, Table 30 displays the frequencies and percentages of the students' answers. As noticed from the statistics, more than three-quarter of the participants (77.3%) reported they always took much time to reflect on the topic before starting to draft. Concerning the use of pre-writing strategies, it seems that the participants managed to sometimes generate a plan during pre-writing (36.4%) and ask questions that helped them to generate information about the topic and guided the process of writing (50%). However, the majority of the participants found difficulties to use brainstorming techniques. Their answers varied between sometimes and never with similar percentages (27.3%) and rarely with 40.9% of answers. Overall, we can estimate that the students' capacity to brainstorm and plan for their writing remained unsatisfactory.

### III.1.3. Strategy use

Table 31

*The post-scale frequencies and percentages of strategy use for the experimental group*

Item	Scale										Total	
	Always		Sometimes		Rarely		Never		No answer			
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Note taking	10	45.5	9	40.9	2	9.1	1	4.5	0	0	22	100
Organisation	13	59.1	5	22.7	4	18.2	0	0	0	0	22	100
Summarisation	11	50	6	27.3	2	9.1	2	9.1	1	4.5	21	95.5
Elaboration	10	45.5	11	50	1	4.5	0	0	0	0	22	100
Self-challenging	13	59.1	6	27.3	3	13.6	0	0	0	0	22	100
Persistence	13	59.1	5	22.7	3	13.6	0	0	1	4.5	21	95.5
Reminding	16	72.7	3	13.6	2	9.1	1	4.5	0	0	22	100
Anxiety	3	13.6	15	68.2	4	18.2	0	0	0	0	22	100
Help seeking	3	13.6	8	36.4	6	27.3	5	22.7	0	0	22	100

Table 31 summarises the statistics computed for the strategy use sub-scale. Most of the answers displayed in the table demonstrate a fairly high use of self-regulated strategies. Many students reported they always used cognitive strategies when writing; 45.5% of answers for note taking, 59.1% for organisation, 50% for summarisation and 45.5 % for elaboration. The same remark can be made to the affective strategies; in this respect, the majority of the students reported they always managed to regulate their emotions. The same number of participants (59.1%) reported challenging themselves and persisting when facing difficulties. Besides, the vast majority of the students (72.7%) highlighted their commitment in keeping reminding themselves about the importance of EFL writing. Yet, 68.2% of respondents revealed they succeeded to regulate their anxiety only at times. As regards social strategies, some of the participants (36.4%) admitted they occasionally sought help and asked for clarification when needed. The statistics related to the use of cognitive and affective strategies are quite encouraging and we accordingly can assume that the students' level of

self-regulation was fairly high.

### III.1.4. Self-assessment

Table 32

*The post-scale frequencies and percentages of self-assessment for the experimental group*

Item	Scale								No answer		Total	
	Always		Sometimes		Rarely		Never					
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Awareness	11	50	10	45.5	1	4.5	0	0	0	0	22	100
Self-detection	2	9.1	14	63.6	5	22.7	1	4.5	0	0	22	100
Self-correction	2	9.1	7	31.8	7	31.8	1	4.5	5	22.7	17	77.3
Multiple readings	11	50	7	31.8	4	18.2	0	0	0	0	22	100
Grammar editing	8	36.4	8	36.4	6	27.3	0	0	0	0	22	100
Spelling editing	9	40.9	7	31.8	3	13.6	1	4.5	2	9.1	20	90.9
Revision	11	50	9	40.9	2	40.9	0	0	0	0	22	100
Goal comparison	11	50	8	36.4	2	9.1	1	4.5	0	0	22	100

The frequencies and the percentages of the last sub-sale, self-assessment, are reported in Table 32. As illustrated, the students' ability to self-assess their writing has sharply developed. The participants answered they always edited and revised their written compositions. However, it seems that their awareness of their mistakes and their ability to self-identify them all alone was not fully developed as 63.6% of participants revealed they sometimes succeeded to identify their mistakes and 31.8% highlighted they sometimes managed to self-correct them. Half of the participants indicated they always read and revise their works before submission. The participants further indicated that they always edited them with 36.4% of answers for grammar and 40.9% for spelling. Fifty percent of respondents (50%) also pointed out that, at the end, they always compared their compositions with the goals they set at the beginning. From the findings, it is crystal clear that these numerical data indicate the students' high level of self-assessment.

### III.1.5. Overall Post-scale

Table 33

*The post-scale overall descriptive statistics for the experimental group*

Sub-Scale	M	SD
Self-Efficacy	1.86	.39
Goal-Setting	2.13	.49
Strategy Use	1.74	.46
Self-assessment	1.77	.49
Overall mean	1.83	.38

*Note.* n= 22. 1=always. 2=Sometimes. 3=rarely. 4=never

Table 33 summarises the descriptive statistics of the four sub-scales of the self-regulation post-scale for the experimental group. The means range from 1.86 to 2.13 with an overall mean of 1.83 for the whole scale. The interpretation of these statistics suggests that the students' answers varied between always and sometimes which explains that the students' level of self-regulation was satisfactory. The highest frequency of use is marked for strategy use (M=1.74) which indicates the students' tendency to use various cognitive and affective strategies during the writing process.

### III.2.Descriptive Statistics of the Control Group

Following the same procedures as the experimental group, the results of the post-scale for the control group have been computed in terms of descriptive statistics for the four sub-scales. The results are reported in the tables that follow.

**III.2.1. Self-efficacy**

Table 34  
*The post-scale frequencies and percentages of self-efficacy beliefs for the control group*

Item	Scale								Total	
	Always		Sometimes		Rarely		Never			
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Certainty	1	4.3	18	78.3	4	17.4	0	0	23	100
Expectations	6	26.1	16	69.6	1	4.3	0	0	23	100
Satisfactions	1	4.3	12	52.2	4	17.4	6	26.1	23	100

Table 34 displays the statistics related to the level of self-efficacy of the control group in the post-scale. The vast majority of participants answered by sometimes to the three questions about self-efficacy beliefs: certainty, expectations and satisfaction, with 78.3%, 69.6% and 52.2% of answers respectively. It can be estimated from these percentages that the participants were not self-efficacious about their ability to perform well in EFL writing as feelings of uncertainty and unsatisfaction arose.

**III.2.2. Goal-setting**

Table 35  
*The post-scale frequencies and percentages of goal-setting for the control group*

Item	Scale								No answer		Total	
	Always		Sometimes		Rarely		Never					
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Reflection	13	56.5	7	30.4	2	8.7	1	4.3	0	0	23	100
Brainstorming	0	0	0	0	7	30.4	15	65.2	1	4.3	22	95.7
Planning	4	17.4	9	39.1	7	30.4	3	13	0	0	23	100
Questioning	0	0	3	13	11	47.8	8	34.8	1	4.3	22	95.7

As for the measure of goal-setting, Table 35 displays the frequencies and the percentages of the students' answers in the post-scale for the control group. These statistics

demonstrate the students' poor metacognitive self-regulation. Even though more than half of the students (56.5%) spent much time reflecting on the topic, they actually failed to regulate their writing because they did not use pre-writing strategies. It is apparent from the table that the majority of students did not employ brainstorming strategies to organise their writing as 65.2% revealed they never did. Likewise, the majority of participants indicated they did not develop a provisional plan for their compositions; specifically, 39.1% of participants answered by sometimes and 30.4% answered by rarely. Regarding questioning, the frequencies are smaller; 47.8% indicated they rarely asked questions to guide their writing and manage their time and 34.8% revealed they never did. These findings put us in a position to claim that these students were poor at self-regulating their writing during the pre-writing stage.

### III.2.3. Strategy use

Table 36

*The post-scale frequencies and percentages of strategy use for the control group*

Item	Scale								No answer		Total	
	Always		Sometimes		Rarely		Never					
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Note taking	8	34.8	8	34.8	7	30.4	0	0	0	0	23	100
Organisation	8	34.8	11	47.8	3	13	1	4.3	0	0	23	100
Summarisation	10	43.5	8	34.5	5	21.7	0	0	0	0	23	100
Elaboration	1	4.3	17	73.9	3	13	1	4.3	1	4.3	22	95.7
Self-challenging	7	30.4	14	60.9	1	4.3	1	4.3	0	0	23	100
Persistence	6	26.1	11	47.8	4	17.4	2	8.7	0	0	23	95.5
Reminding	10	43.5	12	52.2	1	4.3	0	0	0	0	23	100
Anxiety	6	26.1	8	34.8	4	17.4	5	21.7	0	0	23	100
Help seeking	3	13	6	26.1	10	43.5	4	17.4	0	0	23	100

Table 36 displays the frequencies and the percentages of the strategy use sub-scale of

the post-scale for the control group. It can be inferred from the table that the students' level of self-regulation was not satisfactory. Note taking and summarisation seem to be the most used strategies as reported by 34.8% and 43.5% of students respectively. Other strategies as we can see in the table were used only at times. The students indicated they sometimes organised and elaborated their ideas with 47.8% and 73.9% of answers respectively. Similarly, the statistics show low self-regulation in terms of affect. More than half of the participants answered that they did not manage their motivation and emotions regularly; this represents 60.9% of answers for self-challenging, 47.8% for persistence and 52.2% for reminding. In addition, only 34.8% of students reported they sometimes managed to control their anxiety. As regards social strategies, they seem to be completely ignored by the students as 43.5% revealed they rarely asked for help or clarification from the teacher.

### III.2.4. Self-assessment

Table 37

*The post-scale frequencies and percentages of self-assessment for the control group*

Item	Scale											
	Always		Sometimes		Rarely		Never		No answer		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Awareness	5	21.7	10	43.5	7	30.4	1	4.3	0	0	23	100
Self-detection	0	0	4	17.4	11	47.8	8	34.8	0	0	23	100
Self-correction	0	0	5	21.7	6	26.1	11	47.8	1	4.3	22	95.7
Multiple readings	9	39.1	8	34.8	6	26.1	0	0	0	0	23	100
Grammar editing	0	0	10	43.5	8	34.8	5	21.7	0	0	23	100
Spelling editing	2	8.7	12	52.2	6	26.1	3	13	0	9	23	90.9
Revision	6	26.1	14	60.9	2	8.7	0	0	1	4.3	22	95.7
Goal comparison	5	21.7	13	56.5	3	13	2	8.7	0	0	23	100

The control's group answers to the self-assessment sub-scale of the post-scale are summarised in Table 37. At first look, we can estimate that the students' level of self-

regulation was statistically low. In other words, the students were not competent self-assessors. Most of them seem to be unaware of their problems in writing as 43.5% answered by sometimes and 30.4% responded by rarely. Besides, 47.8% of students admitted they rarely detected their mistakes by themselves and they never corrected the mistakes they happened to identify. Even though the students' answers to the question about reading their works many times ranged between sometimes and always with 34.8% and 39.1% respectively, this does not seem to have a significant effect as most of the participants reported revising and editing occasionally. Forty-three point five percent (43.5%) and 52.2% of participants reported they sometimes managed to edit grammar and spelling, respectively. Likewise, the majority of the participants (60.9%) admitted they sometimes tended to correct coherence breaks. As regards the final step, once the written task was completed, the students do not seem to check and compare their compositions with the goals they set in the pre-writing stage; 56.5% of respondents answered by sometimes.

### III.2.5. Overall Post-scale

Table 38

*The post-scale overall descriptive statistics for the control group*

Sub-Scale	M	SD
Self-Efficacy	2.19	.44
Goal-Setting	2.65	.66
Strategy Use	2.03	.45
Self-assessment	2.43	.44
Overall	2.28	.38

*Note.* n= 23. 1=always. 2=Sometimes. 3=rarely. 4=never

Table 38 summarises the mean score of each self-regulation sub-scale of the post-scale for the control group. The means of the four components of self-regulation (self-efficacy, goal-setting, strategy use and self-assessment) range between 2.03 and 2.65 with an overall mean of 2.28 for the whole scale. This means that the students' answers varied mostly

between sometimes and rarely which indicates a low level of self-regulation at the four levels: metacognitive, cognitive, affective and social.

### III.3. Comparison of the Pre and Post Scales for the Experimental Group

The results recorded in both the pre-scale and the post-scale for the experimental group are compared in order to gauge the students' level of progress in the use of self-regulated strategies as a result of the self-assessment treatment. Our aim is to determine whether the students have become capable of self-regulating their writing and improving their performance. To this end, we draw, in the tables below, a comparison of the descriptive statistics obtained for the individual items within each sub-scale before and after the treatment then the overall means of the four sub-scales.

#### III.3.1. Self-efficacy

Table 39

*The pre-post scales descriptive statistics of self-efficacy beliefs for the experimental group*

Item	Pre-scale		Post-scale	
	M	SD	M	SD
Certainty	2,42	,58	2,09	,29
Expectation	2,17	,87	1,55	,51
Satisfaction	2,71	1.00	1,95	,72
Overall	2.43	.58	1.86	.39

*Note.* n (pre-scale)= 24. n (post-scale)= 22. 1=*always*. 2=*sometimes*. 3=*rarely*. 4=*never*

Table 39 shows the means and standard deviations of the self-efficacy sub-scale for the experimental group before and after the experiment. A comparison of the means shows an increase in the level of self-efficacy after the experiment. The means for the three items before the experiment vary between 2.17 and 2.71, whereas after the experiment they range between 1.55 and 2.09. Such results mean that the students developed feelings of trust and belief in their capacity to perform well in writing during the experiment.

### III.3.2. Goal-setting

Table 40

*The pre-post scales descriptive statistics of goal-setting for the experimental group*

Item	Pre-scale		Post-scale	
	M	SD	M	SD
Reflection	1.58	.65	1.18	.59
Brainstorming	3.46	.83	2.91	.87
Planning	2.46	1.10	2.09	.97
Questioning	3.13	.85	2.32	.84
Overall	2.66	.54	2.13	.49

*Note. 1=always. 2=Sometimes. 3=rarely. 4=never*

Table 40 displays the descriptive statistics of the experimental group before and after the treatment regarding the goal-setting sub-scale. A statistical reading of the table shows that the means of the sub-scale before the experiment range from 1.58 to 3.46, whereas after the experiment they vary between 1.24 and 2.91. We can notice from these findings that the students' use of goal setting strategies increased slightly after the treatment.

### III.3.3. Strategy use

Table 41

*The pre-post scales descriptive statistics of strategy use for the experimental group*

Item	Pre-scale		Post-scale	
	M	SD	M	SD
Note taking	2.25	1.03	1.73	.83
Organisation	2.12	.85	1.59	.80
Summarisation	2.29	.96	1.68	1.04
Elaboration	2.17	.64	1.59	.59
Self-challenging	2.00	.98	1.55	.74
Persistence	1.71	.86	1.45	.80
Reminding	1.42	.72	1.45	.86
Managing Anxiety	2.38	.77	2.05	.58
Seeking help	2.79	.83	2.59	1.00
Overall	2.13	.45	1.74	.46

In Table 41, the descriptive statistics of the strategy use sub-scale for the pre and the post scales are compared. The statistics demonstrates a significant difference in the means of the strategies before and after the treatment. Although the lowest recorded mean for the strategy use sub-scale before the treatment (1.42) and the highest mean (2.79) are almost similar to those of the post-scale (1.45 and 2.59 respectively), it should be noted that most of the means in the post-scale are inferior to 2 indicating a high level of self-regulation compared to the pre-scale in which most of the means are above 2. Therefore, we can assume that the students' level of self-regulation has moderately increased after the treatment.

### III.3.4. Self-assessment

Table 42

*The pre-post scales descriptive statistics of self-assessment for the experimental group*

Item	Pre-scale		Post-scale	
	M	SD	M	SD
Awareness	2.17	1.05	1.55	.60
Self-detection	2.63	.92	2.23	.69
Self-correction	2.79	.98	1.86	1.25
Revision	2.00	.72	1.68	.78
Grammar editing	2.42	.93	1.91	.81
Spelling editing	2.29	.81	1.65	1.02
Coherence	1.96	.86	1.59	.67
Goal comparison	2.25	.90	1.68	.84
Overall	2.31	.49	1.77	.49

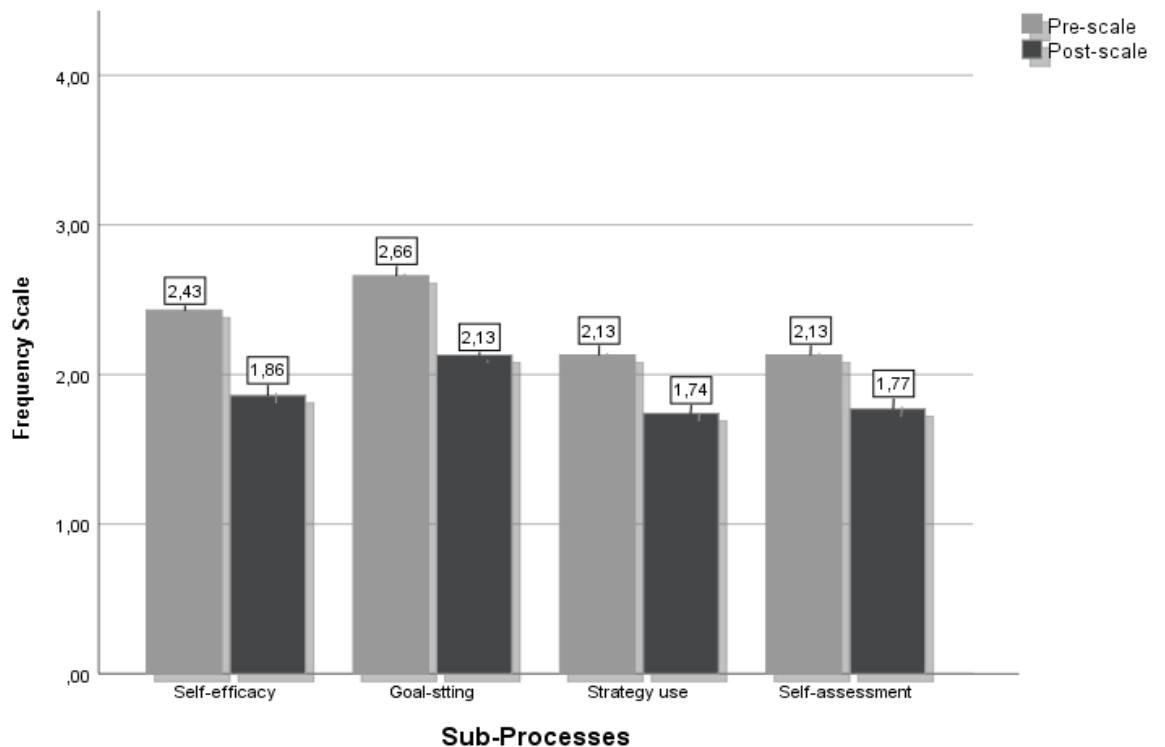
Table 42 displays the descriptive statistics of the self-assessment sub-scale for the experimental group in the pre and post scales. We can notice from the results a considerable increase in the level of self-assessment after the treatment. As illustrated, almost all the means of the items in the pre-scale are above 2 which indicate that the students' answers vary between sometimes and rarely. In contrast, the means in the post-scale are mostly below 2, signifying that the students' answers range between always and sometimes. From these differences, we can estimate that the students' capacity to self-assess their written works has improved after the treatment.

### III.3.5. Overall Pre-post Scales

Table 43

*The pre-post scales overall descriptive statistics for the experimental group*

Sub-Scale	Pre-scale		Post-scale	
	M	SD	M	SD
Self-efficacy	2.43	.58	1.86	.39
Goal-setting	2.66	.54	2.13	.49
Strategy use	2.13	.45	1.74	.46
Self-assessment	2.31	.49	1.77	.49
Overall	2.31	.24	1.83	.38



*Figure 13.* The pre-post sub-scales overall means for the experimental group

Table 43 shows the means and standard deviations of the four sub-scales of the experimental group in the pre and post scales. We can notice from the table that the means of all the sub-scales of the post-scale are lower than those of the pre-scale. In the pre-scale, the lowest mean is 2.13 and the highest mean is 2.66, so it means that the frequency of the use of self-regulation strategies during writing ranges between sometimes and rarely. Actually, this

demonstrates a low self-regulation. In contrast, the means in the post-scale vary between 1.74 and 2.13 with most of the means below 2 which reveals a frequency of use between always and sometimes. Clearly, the differences between the means of the two scales are observable in Figure 13 which represents the computed means of the two scales in a bar chart. The comparison of these means confirms the assumption made earlier about the increase in the students' level of self-regulation after the self-assessment treatment. Nevertheless, our inferences cannot be considered valid unless verified statistically. On this basis, we run a paired samples *t*-test to compare the means and check the significance of the results. Table 44 shows the results obtained after running the test using SPSS.

Table 44

*The pre-post scales paired sample t-test for the experimental group*

		Paired differences				t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		M	SD	95% Confidence interval of the difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Experimental group	Pre-scale	.48	.42	.32	.69	5.57	21	.00
	Post-scale							

*Note.* n (pre-scale)= 24. n (post-scale)=22

The statistics displayed in Table 44 demonstrate a significant difference in the means computed for the experimental group before ( $M=2.31$ ,  $SD=.24$ ) and after ( $M=1.83$ ,  $SD=.38$ ) the experiment,  $t(21) = 5.57$ ,  $p < 0.001$ . As we can see, the *p* value is much lower than .05. These results indicate that the difference between the means in the pre and post scales is statistically significant. That is, the level of self-regulation is significantly higher in the post-scale. In our view, this means that students' level of self-regulation has increased as a result of the self-assessment treatment integrated in the research. In actual fact, it seems early to draw a final conclusion. In order to validate our claim and demonstrate that the change in the self-regulation was exclusively due to the experiment, it is necessary to take into account the results of the control group and compare them to the ones of the experimental group.

**III.4. Comparison of the Pre and Post Scales for the Control Group**

A comparison of the descriptive statistics computed for the pre and post scales for the control group is drawn below. Table 45 reports the overall means and the standard deviations recorded in the four sub-scales in both scales then the means are displayed in Figure 14.

Table 45  
*The pre-post sub-scales overall descriptive statistics for the control group*

Sub-Scale	Pre-test		Post-test	
	M	SD	M	SD
Self-Efficacy	2.35	.47	2.19	.44
Goal-Setting	2.57	.66	2.65	.66
Strategy Use	2.00	.47	2.03	.45
Self-assessment	2.18	.69	2.43	.44
Overall	2.20	.34	2.28	.38

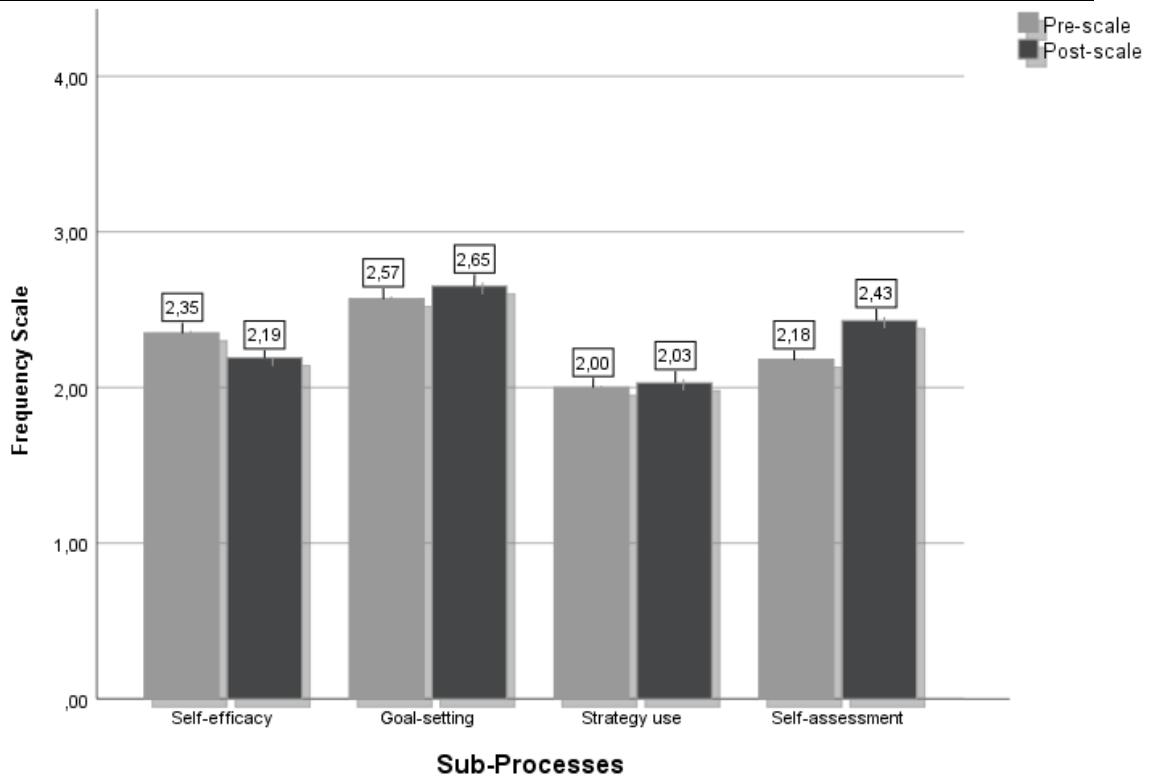


Figure 14. The pre-post sub-scales overall means for the control group

Table 45 shows the means and standard deviations of the four sub-scales of the pre and post scales for the control group. As shown, a comparison of the means yields

approximately similar results in both scales except for the last sub-scale, self-assessment. In the pre-scale, the means vary between 2 and 2.57; whereas in the post-scale, they range between 2.03 and 2.65, with an overall mean of 2.20 for the pre-scale and 2.28 for the post-scale. This signifies that the students' level of self-regulation remained the same. These similarities are best exhibited in Figure 14. Yet, an important finding to consider is the difference in the means of the self-assessment sub-scale; the overall mean in the post-scale (M=2.43) is much higher than the one computed in the pre-scale (M=2.18) which indicates that the students' tendency to self-assess their writing has decreased by the end of the year. To validate our assumption, we run a paired *t*-test to check the significance of the findings obtained. The results of the test are presented in Table 46.

Table 46

*The pre-post scales paired sample t-test for the control group*

		Paired differences				t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		M	SD	95% Confidence interval of the difference				
						Lower	Upper	
Control group	Pre-scale	-,08	,52	-,32	,13	-,85	22	,41
	Post-scale							

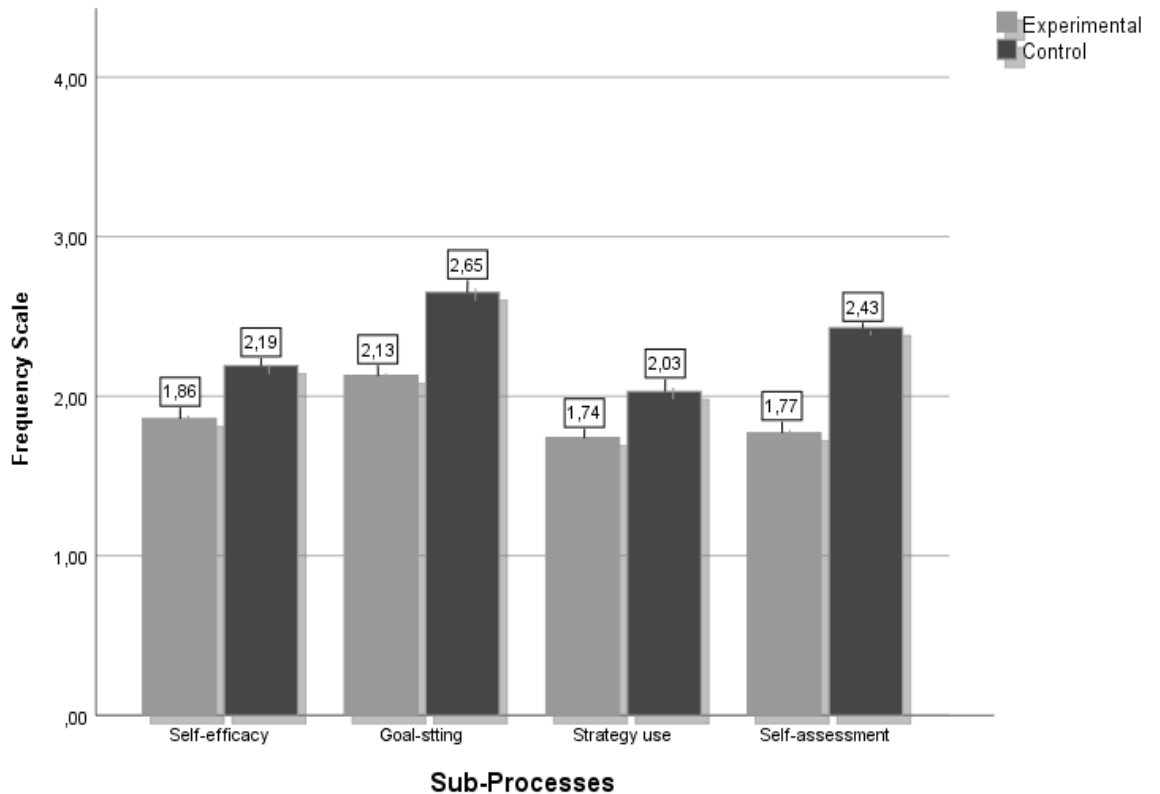
*Note.* n (pre-scale)= 25. n (post-scale)=23

The statistics displayed in Table 46 demonstrate an insignificant difference in the means computed for the control group before (M=2.20, SD=.34) and after (M=2.28, SD=.38) the experiment,  $t(22) = -.85, p = .41$ . As we can see, the *p* value of .41 is much higher than .05. Statistically, these results indicate that the difference between the means in the pre and post scales is insignificant. Clearly, the level of self-regulation is the same in the pre and post scales.

### III.5. Comparison of the Post-scale for the Experimental and Control Groups

The last statistical procedure concerns the comparison of the results of both the

experimental and control groups in the post-scale to permit us to test the efficiency of self-assessment in developing students' self-regulation skills and accordingly prove or refute the first hypothesis formulated in this research. Figure 15 compares the means of the four sub-scales of the post-scale for the experimental and control groups; then, the results of the *t*-test are displayed in Table 47.



*Figure 15.* The post-scale overall means for the experimental and control groups

Figure 15 compares the means of the four sub-scales of the post-scale for our sample. At first look, it is apparent that the mean scores of the control group are notably higher than those of the experimental group for all the sub-scales. The means computed for the experimental group vary between 1.74 and 2.13, whereas those of the control groups range from 2.03 to 2.65. The logical interpretation of these numerical data is that the level of self-regulation among the control group participants was lower than the one of the participants from the experimental group. In order to confirm whether these differences reflect exclusively the effect of the experiment conducted in our research, an independent samples *t*-test was

conducted to make inferences about the differences in the level of self-regulation for self-assessment and non-self-assessment conditions. The results of the *t*-test are reported in Table 47.

Table 47  
*The post-scale independent samples t-test*

		<i>T</i> -test for equality of means					
		<i>t</i>	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean difference	95% Confidence interval of the difference	
						Lower	Upper
Groups	Experimental Control	-4	42.86	.00	-.45	-.68	-.22

*Note.* n (experimental)= 22. n (control)=23

From the results of the *t*-test reported in Table 47, it is clear that there is a statistically significant difference in the means of the experimental group ( $M=1.83$ ,  $SD=.38$ ) and the control group ( $M=2.28$ ,  $SD=.38$ ) in the post-scale;  $t(42.86) = -4$ ,  $p < 0.001$  which means that the level of self-regulation of the experimental group is statistically higher than the one of the control group. These results confirm our assumption made earlier that the improvement in self-regulation was absolutely due to the experiment; that is, self-assessment did have an effect on the students' self-regulation skills. Therefore, we are likely to refute the first null hypothesis and confirm the alternative hypothesis that if students used self-assessment techniques in their academic writing, they would develop their self-regulated capacities.

#### **IV. Portfolio Assessment**

After having dealt with the descriptive and inferential statistics that permitted us to confirm the first hypothesis, we shall provide evidence obtained from the analysis of the students' written works for both the experimental and control groups. In addition to the students' achievement scores, it deemed important to assess the quality of the students'

writing in order to identify their strengths and weaknesses. In this section, we seek to investigate the students' common challenges in writing and the types of errors they made in order to answer the first research question stated in the general introduction: what are the most common errors that the students make in their writing?

As previously explained (chapter two, section one), academic writing involves many elements that represent as a whole the defining criteria of good writing performance. In our analysis, we attempted to analyse the students' writing at the communicative level by focusing on both the linguistic and discourse features of their texts. Specifically, error analysis and content analysis were conducted to analyse the students' portfolios. The students' texts were marked using the assessment grids in appendix F and analysed for all instances of errors in six categories: layout, structure, unity, content, coherence and language. It should be noted that the sample size is twenty-four (24) students in the experimental group and twenty-five (25) students in the control group, but as the coming tables show, some students did not complete all the assignments.

#### **IV.1.Pre-test results**

Prior to the experiment, the participants from both groups were asked, to write a paragraph (10 to 15 lines) about the internet after receiving instruction on paragraph writing. The paragraph was considered the first writing assignment (pre-test); the students' performance is reported in this section. The aim of the section was twofold. The first aim was to insert data at the starting point of the treatment to measure the students' level of achievement. A comparison of the paragraphs written by the participants allowed to determine whether they attained the criteria of acceptability of the English style; second, in turn, this would allow us to assess the students' progress before and after the self-assessment treatment to identify any change and effect of the treatment. In order to compare the students' writing performance at the starting point, we generated scores for the paragraphs and provided

a full description of their performance.

#### IV.1.1. Writing Scores of the Experimental and Control Groups

In Table 48, we report the scores attributed to the students' written works of both the experimental and control groups for the sake of comparing their performance in the pre-test.

Table 48

*The pre-test writing achievement of the experimental and control groups*

Participant	Score (out of 20)	
	Experimental group	Control group
	n=24	n=25
1	12.5	10.5
2	9.5	8.5
3	10	9
4	6.5	9.5
5	7	11.5
6	8.5	Ø
7	8.5	10
8	11.5	Ø
9	9	10
10	Ø	11
11	Ø	9.5
12	6	10
13	8.5	8.5
14	6	13
15	9.5	Ø
16	12.5	12
17	10.5	8.5
18	Ø	8.5
19	7	9
20	9.5	8
21	Ø	12
22	Ø	9
23	Ø	8.5
N° of works submitted	17	20
Mean	8.97	9.83

*Note.* Ø= no work submitted.

The first impression one gets from Table 48 is that the majority of the students did not attain the average score (10/20). The scores of the participants from the control group vary between eight (8) and thirteen (13) with an average score of (M= 9.83), whereas those of the

participants from the experimental group range from six (6) to twelve and a half (12.5) with (M=8.97). A comparison of the overall mean scores of both groups reveals that the control group recorded numerically a slightly higher than the experimental group, but this over scoring is not significant because, statistically, the overall mean scores for both groups are below the average which means that the students' writing proficiency can be rated as weak for both groups. Actually, such numerical data do not say much about the quality of the students' performance; it is insufficient to infer a fair judgement on their performance. It is important, therefore, to consider the quality of the works of both groups.

#### **IV.1.2. Error Analysis of the Pre-test**

In this section, we are dealing with the analysis of the linguistic features of the students' performance as found in their written texts. Specifically, there is a discussion of the types of errors the students committed in terms of grammatical and lexical deviations from the English language rules. The students' errors were collected, identified and described on the basis of Corder's (1981) linguistic theory of error analysis. Based on this theory, the errors were linguistically classified into four main categories: **omission, addition, selection** and **ordering**. Correctness and appropriateness were the two criteria applied to identify the existence of erroneous forms of language in the students' compositions. Nevertheless, it should be highlighted here that our analysis remains qualitative; it was restricted to the general classification and description of the students' common errors without any attempt to quantify the results.

Given our research and teaching context, these errors helped us to determine the participants' level of achievement at the start, which allowed for the comparison of their progress throughout the progress tests and the pot-test. The data obtained would certainly play a role in interpreting and discussing the findings of the present study.

**IV.1.2.a. Omission.** According to Corder (1981, p. 36), errors of omission refer to the omission of some grammatical element which should be present. In most of the students' written paragraphs, we have noticed the absence of some elements within the sentences.

### **Third person singular**

A typical example of errors in verb formation is the omission of the morpheme *s* for the third person singular as the marker of the present simple. Below are some illustrations from the students' works:

- First, it *influence* ...
- To conclude, Internet *facilitate* the human life and *satisfy* all their needs.
- It *create* ...
- Internet *give* us opportunities to make new relationships
- In nowadays' society, everybody *use* it for their needs
- Thanks to internet, the word *become* a small village.
- This technology *make* ...

As noticed from the reported sentences and many others, the *s* was left out. This type of errors was common among the majority of the participants. Some would say that this incorrect form of verb was due to lapses in memory, but the frequency of such forms within the same composition put us in a position to claim that the students were not aware of such grammatical deviation. In fact, this type of errors is also a subject-verb disagreement error. Fortunately such errors did not alter meaning.

### **Singular form instead of plural**

Another problem in the students' texts is related to the plural form. Most of the students forgot the *s* that indicates the plural form of nouns. To illustrate, the following sentences are extracted from the students' written compositions:

- Internet is a global system of interrelated *computer*
- It provide the opportunity to connect with many *person*
- ... you can communicate with other *person* from different *country* and to know a new friends.

- Let's say that all *human* now use internet for ...
- Internet allow to the people to acquire knowledge in different *field*
- ... all that is thank to the social *network* like google, Facebook, twitter ...
- Internet is one of the interesting and important *technology* for many reasons.

From these erroneous forms in number, we can say that the students had problems in the singular/plural forms; they did not know when to use the singular form and when to use the plural one. One possible reason for this failure to correctly apply the singular and plural rules may be related to the students' poor knowledge of noun types: countable and uncountable. They did not know if the nouns are countable or uncountable; therefore, they were not sure of the exact number form. In this case, the use of the singular form seemed simpler for the students.

### **Sentence structure: Fragments**

Surprisingly, one of the major problems in the students' written works is the omission of one of the vital elements of a complete sentence. We noticed in many sentences the missing of the subject or the main verb of the sentence which made of their compositions not more than a collection of fragments. Below are such instances:

- For instance, to harcele people on social media, to hacker others' account, people using pornographic sites (missing parts: internet/it, is used, or, )
- First help us to acquire knowledge in the different fields and known the news in the world, help to communicate between us (missing parts: internet/it, s, to, it, also, ).
- internet good and modern way of communication (missing parts: is, a)  
Advantages such as ... (missing parts: the, of the internet, include)

In the English grammar, a phrase cannot stand by itself as a sentence; a statement should generally have a subject and be followed by a predicate. However, the students' writings showed the missing of one element, either the subject or the main verb. Such type of problems is, in fact, related to problems in sentence construction. The students' tendency to write fragments reflects their failure to grasp and apply the basic rules of sentence construction in English. It should be noted that although an attempt was made to suggest the

missing parts in the preceding examples, some parts needed to be completely reformulated.

### **Connectors**

Another problem that appeared in the students' writing, in addition to spelling mistakes, is the lack or the total absence of connectors to link sentences within the paragraph. In many situations, the students did not provide conjunctions or transitional devices to express certain logical relations between ideas. Some examples are provided below:

- Advantages such as it helps us to do a research for any topic, it provide the ability connect with many person in the world. Internet is very important, it has many services like e-mails, facebook, skype. Internet is important in our life, it facilitate it. (missing connectors: also, in addition, in short)
- Internet is a very important means in our life. For exemple, in our studies and research, it can solve different problems, This new Technology make people to know each others and to communicate in any place and any time. It facilitate our work in few time. (missing connectors: Besides, also)
- First allow us to acquir knowledge in the different fields nd known the news in the world, help to communicat between us like using viber to communicat free to the other countries. known different traditions of and culture of the other countries ... (missing connectors: second, finally)
- Internet has many advantages but also some desadvantages. Internet lets people to communicate with eich other. Internet helps people to get informations about all what they want. It is a tool to spending a good time by playing games, listen to music, watch videos... (missing connectors: first, second, in addition)

The reported sentences are extracted from the students' paragraphs. We can notice from these very long sentences the lack of appropriate conjunctions to link them. Most of the sentences the students produced consisted of a collection of independent clauses leading to an undesirable impact on the quality of their writing, notably fluency. Such style of writing demonstrates the students' tendency to stuff the text with information with no regard to their particular function within the paragraph. The students wrote with little, if no, awareness of the power of connectors to show precise logical relations such as addition, adversity or alternatives.

In other situations, the students' inappropriate use of conjunctions was apparent. A look at the following sentences illustrates this problem:

- Internet has many advantages *and* also many inconvenions (appropriate connector: but).
- Second, it helps the student's and teacher's to make theme research and projects *such\_as: when* the student prepare theme memoire or theme stage (appropriate connector: for instance).
- As a conclusion, internet is the best way of communication *and* we can't leave with out it (appropriate connector: therefore/so).
- First, internet gives us the opportunity.....*Then*, it helps us in our research.... *After that*, the internet is a medium to have fun.....*At the end*, we should know how we use the internet (appropriate connector: first, second, in addition, to conclude).

The students sometimes tended to use a particular conjunction to construct inappropriate logical relations; that is, there was a mismatch between the conjunctions used by the student and the functions of the two sentences or the two clauses. This was the case in the sentences reported above. This indicates that the students were not aware of the appropriateness or function of the conjunctions they used when writing. Consequently, this affected the flow of the ideas. By way of illustration, in the last sentence, the unusual use of *then*, *after that* and *at the end* to list the advantages of internet is a manifestation of the students' limited knowledge on connectors. This kind of inappropriate use of connectors contradicts the coordination and subordination in joining two clauses.

Furthermore, in other few cases where the students did use connectives, they did not vary them. We found that some students used transitional links in their writing without really creating a coherent piece. The excessive use of some at the expense of others is the best example as shown below:

- Third, internet encourages trade and commerce, and helps people to find jobs through advertisements made by companies *and it is a big opportunity to find himself working in a big society* (the phrase should be deleted).
- I think that internet is very important in our in our life. Because without internet we can't make any progress *because* it bring us a lot of things (appropriate connector: as).

Clearly, the students used the conjunctions *and* and *because* more than other connectors to link clauses in the same sentence. In the first sentence, for instance, the student

coordinated a long list of clauses to one. This suggests that when they perceived the need to link clauses, the students generally tended to rely almost exclusively on the same connector all along the paragraph.

Given all the aforementioned cases, it would be reasonable to assume that at the sentence level, this cohesion break reflects the students' limited knowledge of the construction of complex and compound sentences that necessitate particular words and phrases to establish certain logical relations within a paragraph. At the discourse level, these students had coherence problems; they frequently shifted from one idea to another, thus breaking the chain.

### **Mechanics**

Concerning conventions of writing, punctuation appeared to represent a serious challenge for the majority of students. On the one hand, we noticed the miss use of punctuation marks in many paragraphs. This misuse was related basically to the comma, the semicolon and the full stop. In some paragraphs, the comma was the dominant punctuation mark, but it was generally misplaced before and after coordinating conjunctions, subordinating conjunctions or conjunctive adverbs. The inappropriate use of comma resulted in what we call comma splices. The following sentences illustrate this type of errors:

- Internet is a very important means in our life. For example, in our studies and research, it can solve different problems, this new Technology make people to know each others and communicate in any place and any time (appropriate punctuation: a full stop after problems)
- Internet is a new technology, some other define is as a miracle of 20<sup>th</sup> century, it's a mean that help us to solve many problems in our life, by making researches, and searching for solution for our troubles, thanks to motors like Wikipedia and google ... we can find all answers to our questions, add to this, that internet is a mean of communication .... (appropriate punctuation: a semi colon after technology/ a full stop after century, troubles and questions)
- The internet is an important technology That serves all the world. first, it helps to study and to get a lot of information in all The fields, Second, because of it the world become like a small village, for example, we communicate with our friends and family from here To Canada or another country, finally, The internet .... (appropriate punctuation: a full stop after fields, village and country/ a comma after

the subordinate clause *because of it*)

As we can see, most of the aforementioned sentences were joined with a comma instead of a semicolon or a full stop. A whole paragraph sometimes had only one full stop at the end. These erroneous examples show that the students did not know some of the basic punctuation conventions. Such inadequate use of punctuation may be caused by the interference of Arabic. This may explain their tendency to write very long sentences without appropriate punctuation marks. At this level of writing, this kind of inadequate use of punctuation marks contradicts the principles of sentence structures in a well built paragraph.

**IV.1.2.b. Addition.** Another category of errors that Corder (1981, p. 36) pointed out is *addition* which is explained by the insertion of unnecessary elements in a sentence. He particularly says that addition means “some element is present which should not be there”. In most of the paragraphs written by the students, we identified the addition of some parts of speech mainly pronouns and articles.

### **Insertion of pronouns**

Our observations about the prevalent error in the use of pronouns concerns mostly subject pronouns. Let us consider some erroneous forms extracted from the students’ paragraphs:

- Internet *it* is a new technology
- Internet *it* is the good way for communication with others
- Internet *it’s* the fast means ....
- There are many means of communication that we can find *it* in the world.
- This phenomena *it* has an important role in each field
- Internet *it’s* the best and easier way that we can not ignore *it*.

As we can see, the unnecessary insertion of the pronoun *it* was common among many students. Obviously, this contradicts the grammar of English. In the English sentence, the use of pronouns in a sentence has specific rules; a subject that is stated explicitly suffices itself

and is never used with a subject pronoun that refers to it. The occurrence of such errors in the students' writing indicates that the students ignored this rule.

### **Insertion of articles**

As for other parts of speech, the use of articles seemed to cause confusion to the students. This confusion concerns mainly the use of the definite article *the* and the indefinite articles *a* and *an*. The examples below illustrate this type of errors:

- Internet allow to *the* people to acquire knowledge
- What are its influences on *the* societies?
- It is used in every domain by all *the* individuals
- First, internet gives us *the* opportunities to communicate.

It is clear from the examples that the definite article *the* was employed randomly by the students. Grammatically speaking, the definite article cannot be used when we talk about things in general (e.g., people, societies, individuals). At this point, we can argue that the participants were not aware of its uses.

The same remarks can be made to the indefinite articles *a* and *an*. Let us take a look at some erroneous utterances found in the students' paragraphs:

- ... it has *a* good advantages
- It has *a* negative aspects
- ..... to know *a* new friends
- It cause *a* problems to our eyes
- It helps to do *a* research for any topic
- First, it is *an* essential in our studies

Most of the students used the indefinite article with plural nouns ignoring the rule that nouns in their plural form do not take an indefinite article. This information confirms our earlier observation about the incorrect use of plural forms. Besides, the students were not aware that we do not usually use the indefinite articles *a/an* with uncountable nouns like research or adjectives that are not followed by a noun. In short, the students' failure to

employ articles correctly is indicative of their limited knowledge of parts of speech.

**IV.1.2.c. Selection.** The third category of errors involves the use of an incorrect form in a sentence (Corder, 1981, p. 36). This was mainly manifested in subject-verb disagreement, inappropriate selection of verb tenses, problems in parallelism, the inappropriate use of demonstrative pronouns and prepositions as well as wrong word choice.

### **Subject-verb disagreement**

Among selection errors that we noticed in the students' written compositions was the mismatch between subjects and verbs in the sentence. Here are some examples of erroneous sentences:

- Each one *have* .....(appropriate verb: has)
- Internet is one of the new technologies that man *have* made (appropriate verb: has)
- Internet is an electronic communications network that have both negative and negative consequences (appropriate verb: has)
- All this *are* illegal (appropriate verb: is)

The analysis of the reported sentences reveals that most of the students had problems in selecting the correct verb form. We noticed that these errors were mostly linked to the verbs *to be* and *to have*. This is indicative of the students' incompetence in constructing grammatically correct sentences in which the form of the verb is determined by the subject. We suppose the students were not aware of the rules of verb forms. This type of errors is related to the students' gap in respecting noun number; this point has been explained earlier. The first type of omission errors (third person singular) is also considered an error of selection because the omission of the morpheme *s* demonstrates a mismatch between the subject and the verb of the sentence.

### **Verb Tenses**

Another problem we noticed concerns the formation of verb tenses as we can see in some of the students' generated sentences:

- It's *has* ability to do research (appropriate verb: it has)
- So, it's *depend* on our use (appropriate verb: it depends)
- Finally, it's *make* us develop our needs (appropriate verb: it makes)
- Internet *can affects* the user's health (appropriate verb: can affect)
- Internet *had* more advantages rather than inconvenient (appropriate verb: has)
- Internet as all the new technologies *had* its bad and goods effect (appropriate verb: has)
- The word today *could* never stand without Internet (appropriate verb: can stand)
- By internet we *can found* and get ... (appropriate verb: can find)
- Internet *can satisfied* all the human needs (appropriate verb: can satisfy)

The first four examples show the students' tendency to form verb tenses wrongly. We can notice that these students acknowledged the tense to be used (the present simple in this context), but they ignored the rules related to its formation. In the case of model verbs, for instance, the verb that follows should take the infinitive form.

In addition to the students' lack of knowledge of tense forms, tense usage appeared to be a problem too. In examples five, six and seven, the students did not select the appropriate tense for the verb. Such an error means that the students were not aware of the different rules for tense application. The students were asked to write about the internet, so they had to use the present simple or the present perfect to describe its advantages and disadvantages. The use of the past simple is considered incorrect in this context.

Concerning the last two examples, a close look at them may reveal different assumptions. In case the students wanted to use the past tense, we can argue that these errors are related to both tense usage and formation. The students who developed such erroneous utterances selected the wrong tense (past tense) and formed it incorrectly. That is, the past form of *can* is *could* and the verb that follows should take the infinitive form. In case the students had the intention to use the model verb *can*, in the simple present which is the appropriate tense, the error concerns then the form of the verb only, i.e. the verbs *found* and *satisfied*, which should be in the infinitive form.

Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning here that this kind of selection errors is also considered an error of addition because the students inserted unnecessary elements.

### **Parallelism**

Parallelism is related to sentence construction. In English, a sentence has specific rules in which each element has a specific role and a particular form in the sentence. Any change in the order of the constituents or their form within the sentence can be noticed easily. Examples of such errors are demonstrated in the sentences below:

- Internet is a tool to spend a good time by *play* games, *listen* to music, ...(correct forms: playing, listening)
- After that, internet is a medium to have fun, like playing games, *download* music, movies...(correct form: downloading)
- We spend our time in internet, *misleading* information, *friends*..., (the sentence should be reformulated)
- First, the positive of internet is that we can do our work, research using it and *it help us to communicate* with other persons in different countries (correct form: and communicate).
- ... so you can communicate with other person from different country and *to know* a new friends (correct form: and have).

From these examples, the students demonstrated problems in constructing correct sentences. In their texts, problems in parallelism were observed in the way the participants listed phrases or clauses that were not parallel in structure. As illustrated in the reported sentences, one of the common errors in the students' paragraphs was related to the use of the present participle.

### **Inappropriate use of Prepositions**

With regard to prepositions, the students demonstrated confusion and misuse of prepositions, notably *to* and *for*. The following examples illustrate the problem:

- Teachers use it to stay *on* contact with students (appropriate preposition: in)
- It help us *for* listening what pass in the world (appropriate preposition: to (listen))
- It is a tool *to* spending a good time (appropriate preposition: for)
- First internet it's the good way *for* communicate with others (appropriate

preposition: to)

- As conclusion, internet is the best way *of* communicate (appropriate preposition: to)
- At the end, I think it is good when we use it *in* good things (appropriate preposition: for)

It appears from the sentences that the students frequently got prepositions wrong because they employed them with no regard to their function: preposition of time, place and so on. They were not aware of the rules that govern the selection of the appropriate prepositions in English. Again, this demonstrates the students' inadequate knowledge of parts of speech.

### **Demonstrative pronouns**

Again with the problem of pronouns, the demonstrative pronouns *this* and *these* seemed to cause a big deal for the students. They were used incorrectly. To demonstrate this claim, some examples are presented below:

- *These* technology make easy the education to student (correct pronoun: this)
- *These* way of communication help us for doing a research work (correct pronoun: this)
- *This* advantages consist of ..... (correct pronoun: these)
- ... among *this* important changes (correct pronoun: these)

It is apparent from the examples that the students used demonstrative pronouns without paying attention to the words they referred to. In order to choose this or these, reference should be made to the noun number. Singular nouns take the pronoun *this*, whereas plural nouns require the use of the pronoun *these*. This type of errors goes back to the students' inadequate knowledge of singular and plural forms as already explained.

### **Wrong word choice**

Besides the grammatical errors, the students seemed to have serious problems in lexis. These problems were related to the students' shortage of vocabulary or its inappropriate use. The above examples illustrate this:

- Nowadays, people can use the internet for *a lot of things* (appropriate words: different purposes)
- I think it is good when we use it *in good things* (appropriate word: appropriately)
- It facilitate *things* for students ....it's a *way* which is used in our life (appropriate words: tasks, means)
- Internet is a *way* of communication (appropriate word: tool/means)
- Finally, it's a *way* which is used in our life (appropriate word: technology)
- It's an essential *way* for communicating with people (appropriate word: tool/means)
- The internet is a very important *machine* (appropriate word: computer network)

The sentences reported above are quite revealing; we can notice that the students' texts were limited to the use of general and over-simplified vocabulary. For instance, the word *way* could be replaced by a technological jargon like: means, medium and so on. This misuse of vocabulary consequently affected the quality of the students' writing which sounded non-native and redundant. It simply reflects the students' limited lexicon.

In addition to the use of general vocabulary, the inappropriate use of words was another problem. Let us take a look at the following sentences:

- It *lets* people communicate with each other (appropriate verb: allows)
- It *can do* much more tasks needed in people's daily lives (appropriate verb: helps to do).
- ... it *provide the ability* to connect (appropriate verb: allows/permits)
- ... it *provides the abilities of* e-mails (appropriate verb: allows/permits to send)
- We can find in the net all what our mind needs *to eat* (delete the verbal)
- Second, it help us *for listening* what *pass* in the world through news in the internet (appropriate verbs; to know, happens).

In the aforesaid examples, the verb *lets* was inappropriately employed with the pronoun *it* (internet) as the subject of the sentence. In this context, the use of verbs like *permits* or *allows* would sound more accurate. Similarly, the words *can do* and *ability* cannot be used with inanimate objects. A close analysis of the last two examples reveals the inappropriate use of the verbs *to eat* and *to pass* in the sentences. The use of these verbs in such context may, indeed, make sense in other languages like Arabic but not in English. In

this regard, we can claim that the students' use of vocabulary was affected by other languages they master (language interference). Other examples need consideration:

- Internet is a *social media* (appropriate words: computer network)
- Internet is *branch of social communication* (appropriate words: computer network/technological tool)
- Internet is a *mean* of communication (appropriate word: means)
- Internet is the most common *mean* of communication (appropriate word: means)
- Internet is the largest and fastest *mean* of communication (appropriate word: means)

The use of phrases such as *social media* and *branch of social communication* in the reported sentences demonstrates the students' tendency to employ words without understanding their meaning. Likewise, the use of *mean* instead of *means* in the third sentence was surprisingly a very common error; even the students who were regarded as the most competent tended to commit the same error. This hints to the students' ignorance of the difference between the two words. The students' inappropriate use of vocabulary is indicative of their poor command of English and more specifically their poor pragmatic competence; the students ignored the socio-cultural rules that determine the choice of words in particular contexts. This was a serious problem that affected the quality of their texts.

### Spelling

At the level of spelling, the frequent errors found in the same paragraphs cannot be ignored. Most of the students demonstrated their inadequate knowledge of how to spell English words correctly. A number of sentences are reported below to illustrate this issue:

- First, the internet simplified our life, *fore* example: *Iam hier* in Algeria I can *contec* my friends or family in *Franc* or in anywhere in the world... (correct spelling: for, here, connect, France)
- it facilitate the communication and *contect* between people in different places in the world (correct spelling: connect).
- *Finaly*, we use it to enjoy our time (correct spelling: finally).
- *Finaly*, internet gives us opportunities to make new relationships and friendships thanks to social networks, such as ... (correct spelling: finally)
- to stay in contact with our friends and *familly*, (correct spelling: family)

- we can communicate with our friends and *familly* from here to Canada or another country (correct spelling: family).
- It help us in our *reaserch* (correct spelling: research)
- ... then in *medecin reaserchers* use internet to do their *reasechs* (correct spelling: medicine, researchers, research)
- It has many *adventeges* (correct spelling: advantages)
- On other hand, it has *disadventeges* (correct spelling: disadvantages)
- Internet is a new *technologie* (correct spelling: technology)
- Internet is one of the new *technologie* that man have made (correct spelling: technology)
- For *exemple* in our research studies (correct spelling: example)
- For *exemple*, in our studies and research, it can solve different problems (correct spelling: example)

The most frequent errors of spelling were the words: contec(t), finaly, familly, reaserch, (dis)adventeges, technologie and exemple as shown in the reported sentences. Other idiosyncratic errors were also identified; many students misspelled different words, to cite: knowledg, espicially, negatif, diffirent and many others. These pertinent errors may signify that the students had little exposure to the native language which has affected their command over English spelling. Besides, words like: technologie, negatif, diffirent and exemple are in fact French words. So, the students were not aware of the correct spelling in English due to language interference.

**IV.1.2.d. Ordering.** The last classification of errors is related to the misplacement of some parts of a sentence. According to Corder (1981, p. 36), we talk about errors of ordering when an element in the sentence is correct but wrongly sequenced. Some sentences are reported to illustrate this type of errors:

- Of course we have to *well* use it (correct order: *well* at the end of the sentence)
- Internet *also* is used by administration (correct order: is also)
- *Maybe* internet has a bad impact *sometimes* (correct order: sometimes has)
- It is also bad *sometimes* in some case if people don't know how to use it (correct order: sometimes it is also/ *in some case* should be deleted)
- Now, most of the *population world* use social networks like Facebook and Tweeter

(correct order: world population)

- We can chat with him through Skype to know how *is he* and what is his news  
(correct order: he is/ his news is)

We can notice from the erroneous utterances the incorrect ordering of some elements within the sentence. This concerns mainly adverbs; the students did not know where to place the adverb. This is the case of the first four sentences. Besides, in the last sentence, we notice the inversion of the verb and the subject in the embedded question. This type of errors demonstrates the students' gap in sentence construction. That is, the incorrect structure of the sentences show that the students did not have the clear knowledge of the arrangement of the elements of the sentence and they were not capable of producing syntactically correct sentences. Although the erroneous utterances conveyed their meaning, they affected the flow of ideas because the reader may spend more time trying to figure out the intended meaning.

It is worth mentioning here that this type of errors was the least committed by the students compared to the three types mentioned earlier: omission, addition and selection. This is due to the fact that the students' texts were limited to the use of basic vocabulary and simple sentences; the students rarely wrote compound-complex sentences that needed careful consideration of the order of the elements. Besides, errors of omission, addition and ordering are also considered errors of selection because the students did not choose the correct form. It is also important to highlight that more than one type of errors can be noticed within the same sentences. To sum up, from the types of errors noticed in most of the written compositions of the participants, we can judge that the students' texts were not cohesive. This unsuccessful attempt to write a cohesive paragraph reflects the students' limited linguistic competence and poor command of English; most of the students did not master the rules of grammar, mechanics of writing and had a restricted vocabulary. This incompetency at the linguistic level made the students' writing sound non-native and awkward. As a result, the prevalent problems in terms of cohesion affected the quality of the students' writing (coherence). This

point is discussed in what follows.

### **IV.1.3. Content Analysis**

The previous section made it explicit that the students' texts lacked cohesion. Different errors at the level of grammar, mechanics and vocabulary were identified and explained. This gap in cohesion affected the quality of the students' writing. In addition to linguistic features, different organisation and development patterns in academic writing play absolutely a prominent role in successful written communication. These patterns are the focus of this section. To this end, a qualitative approach was adopted to describe the students' performance. Specifically, we carried out a content analysis based on Raimes' (1983) taxonomy of academic writing, Grice's maxims (1975) and Oshima and Hogue's (2006) theory of criteria for achieving coherence and Hasan and Halliday's (1976) theory of cohesion. The analysis focused on three main aspects: structure, content and coherence.

*IV.1.3.a. Structure.* The organisation of the students' works in the present study was analysed in terms of its fundamental structure as explained in the review of literature. Actually, a well-structured paragraph is a hierarchic system composed of a number of sentences that develop one main idea that is usually expressed in the topic sentence. Put simply, a topic sentence, supporting sentences and a concluding sentence represent the three building blocks of this system. In the majority of students' texts, this structure was not respected; one of the three parts was not well-expressed or was missing. Particularly, the topic sentence was too general. A topic sentence is crucial in paragraph writing; it states the main idea about the topic and sets up the rest of the paragraph for detail-oriented sentences. The corpus analysed revealed that the topic sentences the majority of students wrote were not well-stated. Let us consider some sentences extracted from the students' paragraphs:

- Internet is very useful in students' learning.
- Nowadays, internet becomes an indispensable thing in our life.
- Internet is the most common means of communication in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

- Internet is an important technology in our life.
- Nowadays, Internet becomes an important aspect of life, specially for the students who use it for their studies.

In academic writing, none of the reported sentences can stand as a topic sentence. The students started with a general statement that did not show any focus for what was coming next. The vital part missing in these sentences is *the controlling idea*. So, only the topic discussed, internet, was stated and this left the reader with unclear thoughts about the specific idea to be developed in the supporting sentences. When we consider the texts produced by most of the students, one important element of good paragraph writing was missing: a specific topic sentence. Despite the instructions provided in the first sessions on how to develop a good topic sentence and all the examples provided about topic sentence pitfalls, the students failed to write a suitable topic sentence for their paragraphs. Nevertheless, few students succeeded to write a good topic sentence as shown below:

- There are three reasons why internet is important in our daily life.
- There are three reasons why we use internet in our life.
- It has both advantages and disadvantages.

In the first two sentences, the topic sentence was clearly stated with a topic (the internet) and the controlling idea (the three reasons why internet is important). Similarly, in the third sentence, both the topic (internet) and the controlling idea (advantages and disadvantages) were explicitly expressed.

The second building block of a paragraph concerns the body or supporting sentences. In academic writing, the sentences of the body give the logical development and progression of the main idea expressed in the topic sentence. Nevertheless, when the topic sentence is not specific, the supporting sentences may not be well-organised. In fact, this was the case of the students' paragraphs. The supporting sentences were not put into a well-defined structure. Two examples are illustrated below:

### Example 1

First, the positive of internet are that we can discover and learn about places, know different culture, read books, shopping on line and also we can communicate with friends in different countries.

Second, the negative of internet are that we spend our time in internet misleadin information, friends are valued by facebook likes. It also causes problems for halth above all our eyes.

### Example 2

First of all, internet is needed by all the categories, either young or old people, they use it in studying or in work. Second, this stupefy phenomena it has an important role in each field , for example: in comerce biseness men use it to make deals with foreign companies. Moreover, teachers use it to stay on contact with students, then in medecin reaserchers use internet to do their reasechs.

It is apparent from the first example that the body was not well-organised. All the advantages were written in one sentence! The student did not organise the information according to a specific pattern in which she could state main advantages and then attempted to explain and illustrate them in separate sentences linked together. This was the case of many students; they produced too many details in one single sentence. Likewise, in the second example, instead of moving from a general introduction or description of the topic to specific information, the student mixed up the examples on the different uses of the internet. When reading both examples, the reader can immediately notice that there was no apparent organisation of content. He/she loses focus because at the starting point there was no controlling idea that would guide him/her then the supporting sentences were not logically connected. This is fully explained in the next points of analysis (coherence and content).

Concerning the last constituent of a paragraph, we can notice that some students did not end their paragraph with a concluding sentence or the sentences they wrote did not conform to the criteria expected. This latter point is clarified through the following sentences:

- Internet is good in our life to have what we search.
- To conclude people can not live without the Internet.
- As conclusion, internet is the best way of communicate and we can't leave with out it.

- Internet it's the best and easiest thing way that we can not ignore it.

In relation to the whole texts from which these concluding sentences are extracted, the sentences expressed a different point that was not discussed in the body (sentences one and two) or simply presented a subjective point of view (sentences three and four). This may be due to their incompetence in restating the topic sentence or summarising the most important points discussed in the body. Few others, we can assume, did write an acceptable concluding sentence.

An important distinctive feature of a paragraph is that it should be written as one block with indentation of the first line exclusively. Surprisingly, this format was a challenge for many students. Although the students were asked to write a paragraph, most of them wrote their composition in the form of an essay. In their scripts, there was a tendency to divide one paragraph into three or more sections or sub-paragraphs by indenting each supporting sentence. Although they have been provided with explicit instruction on how to organise their texts into one block with exclusively the first line indented; the students exhibited incompetence at applying this criterion to their writing.

**IV.1.3.b. Coherence.** Another problem worth mentioning here is related to text coherence. Coherence concerns the logical link between information and ideas. We have explained earlier that a text should follow a smooth flow of thoughts moving from general to specific, specific to general, spatial, hierarchical and so on. That is, each sentence is related to both previous and subsequent sentences. Taking into consideration all these characteristics, the analysis of the students' written paragraphs showed that the participants failed to bring coherence to their texts. In short, the reader can notice that the sentences did not hang together to form a unit of meaning.

The data gathered from all the students' written compositions revealed, on the one hand, that most of the students did not respect a certain pattern of development and, on the

other hand, that the sequencing of ideas did not seem appropriately or logically performed. We have noticed from our inquiry that the students mixed information together and wrote sentences one after the other without considering neither the order of importance nor the function of the sentences within the body. They had problems in deciding which idea should come first and which one should follow in the paragraph. Actually, there seemed to be an abrupt shift in ideas. Given the extracts provided above, the students were not aware of the logical relations holding between sentences and the paragraph development patterns that require logical sequencing of ideas.

This failure to achieve coherence can be attributed to problems in cohesion as discussed in the previous section (error analysis). According to Halliday and Hasan (1976), cohesion represents an important criterion to achieve coherence. First, the lack of transitional signals or their inappropriate use is considered a coherence break. This is quite evident as the use of connectors helps to build connexion within a text and show the sequencing of ideas. Nevertheless, this was not the case in the students' paragraphs. We have recorded many situations where the students did not use connectors to show the logical links between the pieces of information provided and keep the flow of ideas. Each idea was expressed in a separate sentence or many sentences were written together without transition and even punctuation forming a collection of unconnected statements. Therefore, instead of writing a coherent and coordinated text, the students' written works were in a note form. As a result, such type of writing leaves the reader with unclear thoughts. In addition, the grammatical and lexical errors affected the flow of ideas; we assume much effort is exerted by the reader to make a connection between ideas in order to understand the text as a whole.

**IV.1.3.c. Content.** In addition to the students' failure to respect the patterns of organisation, they also showed inadequacy in elaborating their main ideas. A careful analysis of all the students' written paragraphs revealed a lack of development. Only few students tended to be successful in developing a paragraph that had relatively a good organisation and an elaborated content. In the majority of the works, the supporting sentences lacked details and illustrations; the students did not back up the topic with sufficient information. A look at the following extracted passages from the students' original texts illustrates this point:

Example 1

First at all we'll speak about the positives ones. We can communicate with whom we want in the world. second it nearest the distances third it facilitate to see others by using skype. fourth it is the easiest way to find what we need in our studies...

Example 2

advantages such as it help us to do a research for any topic, it provide the ability toconnect with many person in the world. Internet is very important, it has many services like emails, facebook, skype...

Example 3

advantages such as, it provides the abilities of e-mails, information on almost every subject, powerful church engines, abilities to do research information at various levels of study, it discuss ideal message boards on any topic, it provide the ability of people to connect with other in the world.

The preceding examples show how the majority of students developed their topic. They tended to highlight a point then move to another without explaining it or supporting it with sufficient details or illustrations. This is why they wrote very short paragraphs with simple ideas. Regarding this context, writing about the advantages of the internet requires the students to provide information on the different uses of the internet by supplying appropriate clues from different fields like education, business, commerce and technology, whereas writing about its disadvantages requires pointing out the negative aspects that result from the abusive and negative use of this technological means. Nevertheless, the students did not respect this pattern of development. This inability to provide sufficient information represents

a violation of Grice's maxim of quantity. Their written compositions were not as informative as might be expected by the reader.

Moreover, the texts did not only lack sufficient information about the topic but adequate evidence as well. Here, the students broke another Gricean maxim, that of quality. Most of the ideas were too general and not supported by examples or supporting ideas. Consequently, this lack of backing information and adequate evidence weakened the communicative effectiveness of the students' compositions. In addition, we noticed a lack of novelty and originality in the students' writing. The students tended to develop the same idea all along the paragraph just by altering the vocabulary and paraphrasing. Even worse, most of them fell in the trap of repetition and complexity in the elaboration of their ideas. As a result, their writing sounded redundant and not original. In regard to the first example, almost the whole information the student provided in her paragraph was about communication. She developed one main idea throughout the paragraph which contradicts writing principles. If we relate this problem to Grice's theory, we can claim that the maxim of manner is what was violated here.

In fact, we also noticed in the students' paragraphs a lack in the use of synonyms and reference. Almost all the students were unable to cover this area. In our view, this was the reason behind the monotonous and inappropriate use of words in many paragraphs. This deficiency in lexis and lack of variety can be considered one of the causes of the lack of development in their writing and the redundant language that characterised their writing.

In a nutshell, the analysis of the students' written works in the pre-test demonstrated the students' poor proficiency in EFL writing. These findings provided in fact adequate evidence on the students' answers to the pilot questionnaire about their problems in writing. At the surface level, the students' works reflected their linguistic incompetence; pertinent errors were recorded in grammar, mechanics and vocabulary. At the discourse level, the

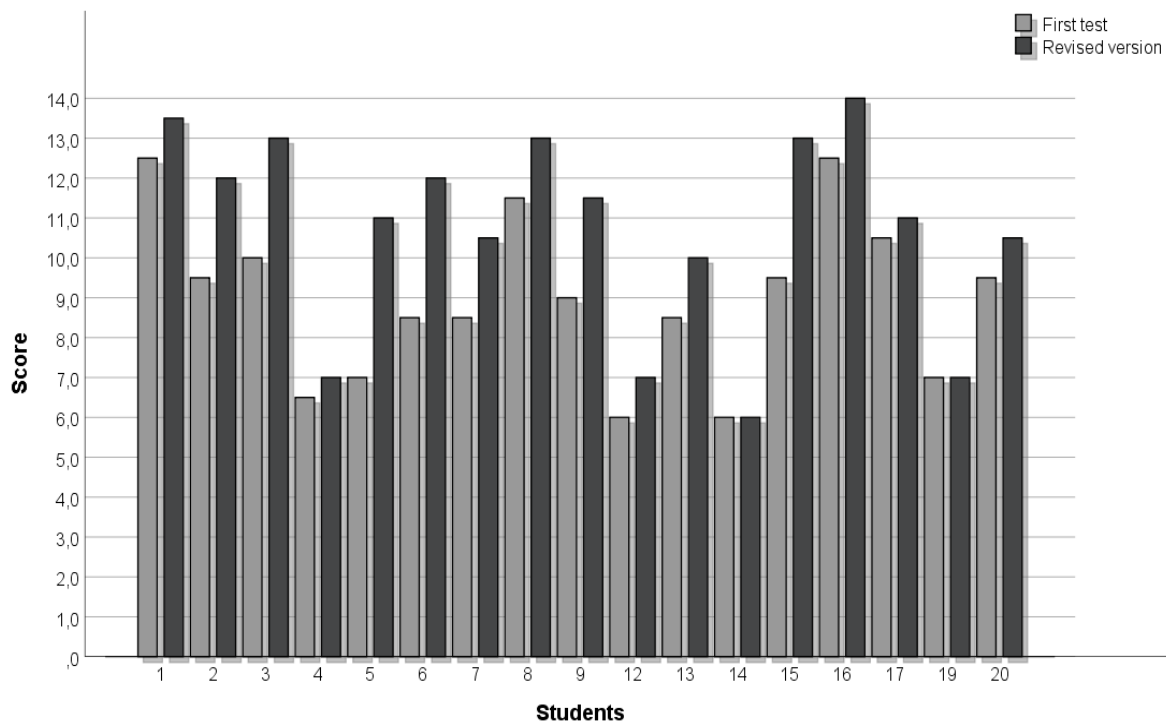
students' texts can be judged as incoherent and uncommunicative.

## **IV.2. Performance Comparison**

Just to remind the reader, the experimental group participated in a five (5) months research experimentation that involved the integration of self-assessment into EFL writing instruction. During the instructional phases, the students produced a piece of writing of a specific type of texts (descriptive, narrative, etc.). In the whole period of treatment, they were encouraged to make use of self-assessment tools to assess their performance and produce a final revised paper. The two texts produced for each assignment constituted the main data for content analysis making a total of eight (8) written compositions for each student. In contrast, the participants from the control group went through the same instructional phases only ending up with four (4) written productions for each student as no self-assessment was carried out. In what comes, we report the results of the portfolios assessment; both statistical and descriptive data are generated.

**IV.2.1. Experimental group performance.** In this sub-section, a comparison is made of the texts written by the students from the experimental group before the treatment and those written after the treatment. Through these comparisons, we look for significant differences in the use of the examined rhetorical patterns and conventional norms of the target language in the revised texts as compared to the students' first performance of the same type of texts in order to assess the effectiveness of self-assessment in helping the students enhance their discourse performance. For each assignment, the first text the students produced and the revised one are compared in order to identify areas of improvement

*IV.2.1.a. Pre-test comparison (paragraph 1).* The first comparison concerns the pre-test. Figure 16 displays the scores obtained by the participants before and after the self-assessment treatment.



*Figure 16.* The pre-test writing achievement of the experimental group before and after the self-assessment treatment.  $n=24$ . Works submitted=17.  $M$  (first text)= 8.97.  $M$  (revised version)= 10.70.

Figure 16 compares the results of the first paragraph students wrote about the internet before and after the self-assessment practice. The data show that the students' scores in the revised text were considerably higher than those obtained in the first performance. The participants' lowest score remained six (6) out of twenty, but the highest score reached fourteen (14) out of twenty. What is remarkable here is the effort made by the majority of the students to improve their written production. For instance, student two (2) improved her performance; she evolved from nine and a half (9.5) out of twenty in her first written paragraph to twelve (12) out of twenty in the revised version. Similarly, students three (3), six (6), seven (7), nine (9) and fifteen (15) exhibited similar degree of improvement. A marked progress was demonstrated by student five (5) who improved her text by getting four (4)

additional points in the revised text. Other students showed a slight improvement too. In our view, this progress was the result of the self-revision and self-editing processes the students undertook to improve their works. Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning here that a couple of students: fourteen (14) and nineteen (19) exhibited the same performance as in the pre-test. This was probably due to the fact that they did not revise their works. If we consider the overall means of the students' performance before ( $M=8.97$ ) and after ( $M= 10.70$ ) the self-assessment experience, the differences in scores are statistically significant and so is the progress. The pieces of work provided below provide more evidence on the quality of the students' performance in both versions:

#### Example 1

##### First text

Internet is one of the most important things in our daily life. It has become something obligatory in our life. Man can't live a second without it. because he uses it in diffirent fields.

He can use it in education, communicate, trade, research, fun and pleasure.

Internet has advantages as it has inconvenient from one side it helps people do their works easily, exchange information and facilitate business. from the other sides it contains negative contents , it has an effect on children and even old people.

People can't live without it.

##### Revised version

Internet is one of the most important things in our life, we use it in different fields.

first, we can use it in education. Students and teachers depend on the Internet when they make research and even when they find something difficult they can look for explanations and classifications on it. Second, Internet facilitate business. People use it in commerce and trade √they can buy, cell and exchange things easily which help them to save their money and time.

finally, the world became a small town thanks to the internet people can communicate with each others no matter where they are especially with the invention of social media (facebook, skype, Twitter, ect).

In conclusion, we are addicted to the internet. We can not live without it.

#### Example 2

##### First text

Internet is an important technology in ower life. first by the internet we can found and get all the kind of information that we need. Second the world become as a small

village. we can know and see new persons, new places that are far and different from us. finally the internet help us in studies.

As a result the internet can satisfied all the human needs.

#### Revised version

Internet is one of the interesting and important technology for many reasons. first, internet is a big world of information people can have or check any kind of information that they want and need in any time without changing a place or doing an effort. Second, the world became as a small village, people can communicate with other person discovered new things, many places know other and different cultures without travelling, finally internet help in studies and improve the knowledge.

As a result, internet is a necessary and an important technology, it can help people and satisfied their needs.

#### Example 3

##### First text

Nowday Internet becomes an indispensable thing in our life. First, it is an essential in our studies. It permits us to search for different information. Second, it gives us a great opportunity to communicate with people all over the world. finally, it is widely used by companies to facilitate their business. To conclude, people can not leave without the Internet.

#### Revised version

Internet has an important role and becomes indispensable in our life due to many reasons. First of all, it bridges the distances and provides larger international contact. For example, we can communicate with people all over the world by using for example facebook, skype, ... ect. Next, it provides unlimited access to educational information and makes learning more interesting and easier especially for the issues that are difficult to understand. Finally, it creates a lot of entertainment opportunities such as games, music and chat. To conclude, internet is widely used in contemporary societies and people can not live without it.

#### Example 4

##### First text

Internet is the most common mean of telecommunication in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It helps people to navigate, share, call, learn and teach. It can do much more tracks needed in people's daily lives. It is a system based on cables connected to each others relating the five continents together so that people can communicate in different parts of the world. Finally, and thanks to Internet, The world has become a small village.

#### Revised version

Internet is a huge system based on cables connected to each others relating the whole world parts. In fact, it is a mean of telecommunication known as the most common in the twenty first century. It helps people to navigate, share, call, learn and

teach. Then, another advantage is simplicity of using it. People from all ages can use it easily and without any complication. Moreover, Internet has one more bright side, its price. Nowadays, everybody can access to a huge amount of internet content using of the available items such as tablets, smartphones and computers. But when, speaking of the dark side of internet, disadvantages seem numerous. Dangerous content, computer games impact upon children and the loss of traditional skills like spelling.

A first look at example one shows a problem in the layout of the paragraph. The student did not respect the block format of a paragraph and rather wrote the text in an essay format. Regarding the topic sentence, Internet has advantages as it has inconvenient, it was written in the middle of the paragraph and in this context it was not well-placed. That is, the student wrote five sentences to introduce the topic then stated the topic sentence. This indirect style of writing is less appreciated in academic writing. The student ought to introduce the topic in one sentence and then write the topic sentence. This was the case of the revised text; the topic sentence was preceded by one introductory sentence. Nevertheless, the reader can notice that the word thing was inappropriate in this context. In fact, a similar remark should be made to the word inconvenient in the first topic sentence. As regards the supporting sentences, only one sentence was written for the advantages and one for the disadvantages. No explanation or details were provided and the information was not supported by adequate evidence. We can easily notice a lack of discourse markers; therefore, the sentences were not appropriately or logically arranged. In terms of conventions, the student did not use connectors to show links between the sentences except contradiction (from one side and from the other sides). We notice as well an absence of punctuation. The reader hardly distinguishes between main and supporting information. Additionally, the concluding sentence is too subjective and not related to the body. However, a remarkable improvement can be observed in the revised text. First, the topic sentence is specific despite the slight change in the controlling idea; the student changed the focus of the paragraph by eliminating the negative aspects. Second, the paragraph can be said to be well-organised. The student developed three main advantages of the internet, then details and examples were provided as a strategy to

elaborate the text and achieve coherence, adding to this the different discourse markers used to show the logical link between ideas and to make reading smooth. The concluding sentence was introduced by a transitional phrase but still remained a subjective judgement. Similar to the first draft, punctuation and capitalisation seem to be a challenge for the student; she did not respect the rules of their use. Besides, she did not respect the block format required for the paragraph. Overall, the student improved her text in terms of organisation and content.

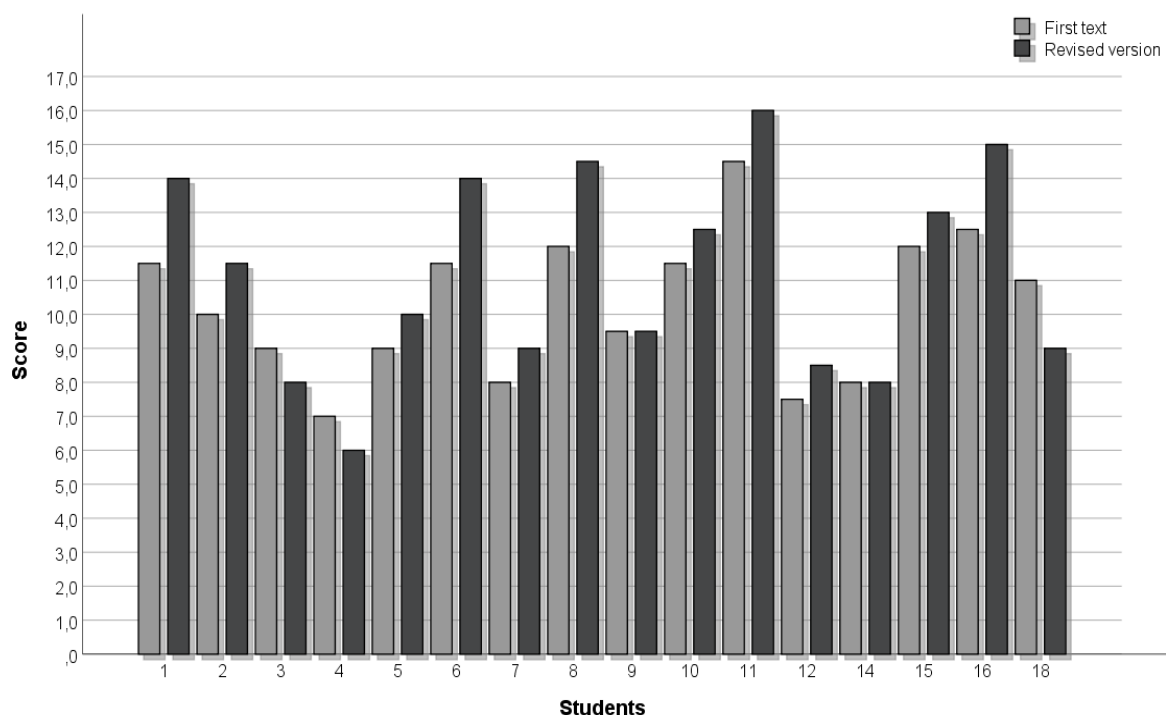
In the second example, the first perceptible remark is that the student did not respect the block format of a paragraph in the first draft. Second, the topic sentence was too general; only the topic (internet) was stated. The sentence did not clarify what would be discussed in the sentences that follow. Regarding the supporting sentences, we can notice that ideas were too general and the information provided was common and not supported by evidence. Clearly, the student did not provide details or illustrations on the different uses of internet. For this type of paragraphs, the concluding sentence seemed appropriate, yet the student did not employ the relevant transitional marker. In terms of writing conventions, we can assume that the student had little command over the English language. Different errors were recorded and mechanics of writing were not respected throughout the paragraph. In the revised text, however, it appears that the student managed to make the topic sentence specific by stating the controlling idea (for many reasons). Then, compared to the first text, she could develop more her supporting sentences mainly the first and second ones. The concluding sentence was also appropriate and much better. Yet, some linguistic problems were detected. For the format, we can see that the student could not respect the layout of a paragraph in the revised text too.

Similar remarks were made to the revised texts in example three and four. The students managed to elaborate the first draft; they provided details and examples. They also demonstrated a better organisation pattern using linking words; this was apparent in the

structure of the information: main supporting sentences and details. In terms of vocabulary, the students managed to vary the lexis by making reference to technological jargon. Yet, in the fourth example, there was neither a topic nor a concluding sentence in the revised text. The student also made changes at the level of content by adding some disadvantages of internet.

In fact, one remark that was made to almost all the paragraphs is that the students did not respect the number of lines they were asked to write (10 to 15). The majority of the participants wrote very short paragraphs (less than 10 lines).

***IV.2.1.b. Progress-test 1 (paragraph 2).*** As a second assignment, the students from both groups were asked to write another paragraph on a topic they chose. The aim of this assignment was to write a well-developed paragraph following the five stages of the writing process. Prior to the task, we provided students with direct instruction and modelling on the writing process and assisted them on the use of the appropriate writing strategies during the composing process. The students produced two paragraphs, one before and the other after the self-assessment practice. In what follows, the scores and the content analysis of the students' performance are reported.



*Figure 17.* The progress test 1 writing achievement of the experimental group before and after the self-assessment treatment.  $n = 24$ . Works submitted=16.  $M$  (first text)= 10.28.  $M$  (revised version)=11.16

As regards students' achievement in the first progress test, the scores the students obtained before and after conducting self-assessment are set out in Figure 17. The overall mean score obtained in the first text increased from ( $M=10.28$ ) to achieve ( $M=11.16$ ) in the revised version, so it can be assumed that many students improved their performance. To illustrate, students one (1) and six (6) got the same scores eleven and a half (11.5) and fourteen (14) out of twenty before and after the experiment respectively. This can be considered a sign of improvement. Likewise, two and a half (2.5) extra points were recorded for students eight (8) and sixteen (16). Students two (2), five (5), ten (10) and fifteen (15) also overscored in the revised texts, but the change might not be sharp. These students managed to perform better by reconsidering their texts and bringing about the necessary changes.

As for the rest of the students, they did not improve their texts and could not reach the average at least. This was quite evident for students nine (9) and fourteen (14) because they did not participate in the self-assessment session. Unexpectedly, students three (3), four (4)

and eighteen (18) demonstrated a slight regression in the revised text.

If we consider the portfolio assessment, we can notice different areas of improvement.

Let us consider some examples from the students' sample texts:

#### Example 1

##### First text

Writing process is very helpful in writing paragraph. First, it helps you to limit the topic and the main ideas that you will discuss in your paragraph. Second, writing process is useful in developing easily your supporting sentences during writing because you have already limited them. Third thing which is very important is that you can share your paragraph ones you have finished writing. In this way, you will have different point of view about your writing which will help you to correct your mistakes and develop more your ideas. If you use writing process before any written paragraph, it will be very easier to write down well-paragraphs.

##### Revised version

The writing process helps students to write easily their paragraphs. First, it helps students to limit the topic and the main ideas that they might discuss in their paragraphs. For example, they can ask questions, mind up, or having diagrams which facilitate the selection of the topic sentence and its surrounding ideas. Second, the writing process is useful in developing with ease their supporting sentences during writing because they have already limited them, that is to say, the supporting sentences are ready to be used in their paragraphs, and all what they have to do is develop them more. The third thing, which is very important in the writing process, is that students can share their paragraphs between them once they have finished writing. In this way, they will exchange different points of view about their writing which can help them correct their mistakes and develop more their ideas. If students use the writing process before any written paragraph; it will be very easier for them to write down well-paragraphs.

Compared to the first text the student produced, in the revised version, the student improved the supporting sentences by providing explanation and illustrations of the main ideas. Throughout the details she provided, the student made her arguments clearer to the reader. There, we can notice that ideas flow directly from the beginning to the end. The student also changed the reference used; she specifically addressed students instead of the pronoun you used in the first draft which was less expressive. Yet, the topic sentences written in the two versions were both too general. In addition, we could still notice some grammatical mistakes.

## Example 2

### First text

There are three reasons why sport is very important for us. First, practicing sport will help to avoid a lot of illnesses such as obesity and lung's problems. Second, sport plays an important role in the stimulation of blood circle. Finally, it helps to have a good morphology and a nice body. To conclude sport is a good way to reach the well-being.

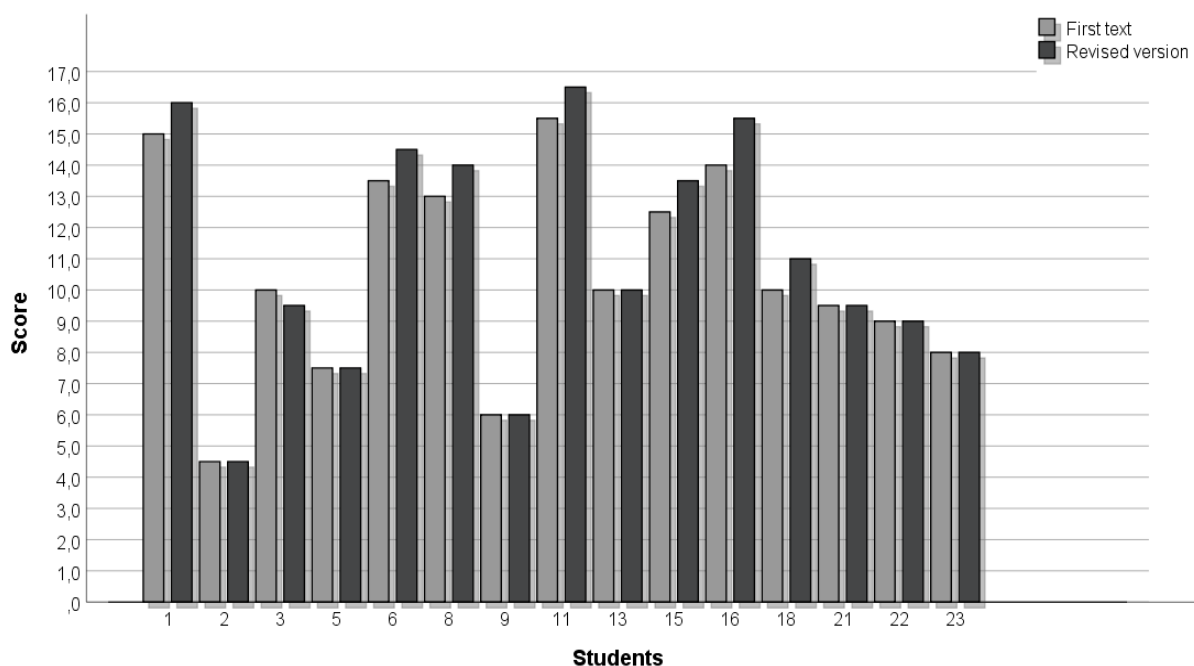
### Revised version

Sport is an import part of a healthy and comfortable lifestyle. First, it offers many health benefits. Persons who practice sport have a lower chance to be affected by a lot of illnesses such obesity, diabetes, cancer, hypertension... etc. It also helps to stimulate the blood stream. Second, sport has a therapeutic role. It is a natural way to loosen up stress and relax. Finally, it helps us to improve fitness and loose weight in order to have a good morphology and a nice body. To conclude, sport is a good way to reach the well-being because it is beneficial to the body, mind and spirit.

A comparison of the two paragraphs produced by the student made it clear that the student improved fairly the first draft after self-assessment. The first draft had a specific topic sentence, three supporting sentences and a concluding sentence. Clearly, the structure of a paragraph was respected. Nevertheless, we can notice a lack of details; the student did not back up the main ideas with sufficient evidence. She developed only three supporting sentences. Besides, the analysis of the vocabulary exhibited the student's tendency to use simple and general vocabulary. The best example was the repetitive use of the adjectives *good* and *important*; she could use synonyms to avoid monotony. In addition, we noticed the inappropriate use of the words *circle* and *reach*. The appropriate words in this context would be *circulation/stream* and *ensure/promote/create a sense of*. In the revised text, however, some changes were introduced, notably to the body and conclusion. The three main arguments were explained or supported with details. The student provided examples of some illnesses. She also refined the concluding sentence by summarising the three benefits of sport developed in the body. Nevertheless, we remarked that the changes introduced to the topic sentence were not relevant; the sentence turned out to be general. In terms of language, the student employed

new and varied vocabulary mainly the words therapeutic, natural, fitness and beneficial. She also managed to edit the few errors in grammar.

**IV.2.1.c. Progress-test 2 (descriptive essay).** In regard to the third assignment, the participants from both groups wrote a 5-paragraphs essay in which they described a particular person. Figure 18 displays the scores the participants from the experimental group obtained in both the first text and the revised version.



*Figure 18.* The progress test 2 writing achievement of the experimental group before and after the self-assessment treatment.  $n = 24$ . Works submitted=15.  $M$  (first text)= 10.53.  $M$  (revised version)= 11.

Statistically, the overall means reported in the second progress test before ( $M=10.53$ ) and after ( $M=11$ ) the self-assessment treatment did not hint at a considerable increase. However, at the individual level, Figure 18 shows that more than half of the participants succeeded to get an average score for their essay and some of them even scored very high. For some of these participants, students one (1), six (6), eight (8), eleven (11), fifteen (15) and sixteen (16), their performance in the revised text can be ranked from very satisfactory to very good as their scores ranged between thirteen and a half (13.5) and sixteen and a half (16.5) out of twenty. If we compare their scores in the revised text to the first text they wrote, we can

notice a slight improvement which explains their tendency to edit and revise their compositions. It is worth mentioning here that the change was not remarkable because initially most of the participants wrote good essays with few errors (the first text); that is, they performed well in the first produced text, so their compositions required relatively slight changes. In fact, this is quite revealing. The students' tendency to perform well in the first text indicates that they managed to learn from previous errors and succeeded to take control over their writing performance. This is a good sign of the development of self-regulation in their writing. Linguistically, the very significant improvement that was observed was the result of the students' high tendency to manipulate different aspects of writing related to both language and discourse. Nevertheless, this was not the case for all the participants as six students performed poorly and failed to attain an average score. Their scores, as shown in Figure 18, ranged between four and a half (4.5) and nine and a half (9.5) out of twenty.

In regard to the improvement recorded, the content analysis of the texts revealed that the students had control over the language variety by relying on the five senses when describing the persons. Eventually, they succeeded to provide a vivid image of the persons described by using different adjectives and adverbs that best described the appearance, behaviour or personality of the subjects. Moreover, the organisation and development of their texts into five (5) paragraphs respecting the pattern of a descriptive essay was successful. In addition, the students demonstrated command over the linguistic patterns of their texts; they developed some control over grammar and mechanics. What was clearly evident in the students' texts was their varying level of control over spelling. In most of the texts, the students made few spelling errors. The extracted passages from the students' original texts illustrate these points:

## Example 1 (body paragraph 1)

## First text

My mother when she was twenty years old, she was still young and more beautiful than time before, she got noisy eyes with long straight hair, she always put her gold glasses that reflects a crystal spark in her eye, every day she wakes up at 7 o'clock in the morning to practice some yoga and irobic exercises to get well shaped and sculptered body.

## Revised version

My mother is about fifty years, she is still young and more beautiful than time before. She got noisy eyes with long straight hair, she always put her gold glasses that reflect a crystal spark in her eyes. Every day she wakes up at 7 o'clock in the morning to practice some yoga and physical exercises to get well shaped and sculptered body.

In the first draft, we noticed that the paragraph was a set of comma splices; punctuation and capitalisation were not respected. Besides, the student did not use any subordinate conjunction or connector in the whole body paragraph and no reference other than the pronoun *she*. We also noticed two words that were misspelled (*ironic* and *sculptured*) in addition to a lack of articles, notably in the last sentence. What seemed puzzling in the paragraph is why the student described her mother in her twenties; the purpose was not clear, so the whole sentence seemed ambiguous especially with the use of the words *still* and *before*. In addition, the use of two different tenses (present and past) made it hard to understand whether the student kept describing her mother in her twenties or she meant at that current time. Nevertheless, in regard to discourse, the description of the mother seemed fairly appealing as the student used different adjectives that provided a vivid image of the person described. The student managed to describe different aspects of the mother's appearance. A comparison of the revised text to the first text the student wrote revealed some changes in content and language. The student edited some run-on sentences and used the appropriate punctuation and capitalisation. In addition, the misspelled word *irobic* was replaced by the word *physical*. One important point is that the student revised the paragraph's meaning and reconsidered the first sentence by describing the mother at her current age instead of twenties.

However, some linguistic anomalies remained uncorrected.

Example 2 (introduction and body paragraph 1)

First text

People can say that real friendship does not exist, but personally I do not believe in that. Everything in my best friend shows that it exists. My friend is called Oussama, he is 23 Years old, he was born in Biskra. He has a unique appearance, particular personality and simple interests.

The way that my friend looks like is unique. He is tall and thin, he always has his hair cut short, and he is brown haired. He has an overall face with strongly marked features. Through his eyeglasses you can detect all his dark brown steady eyes which reflect his state of mind. He dresses all kinds of clothes; dark, clear, cheap, expensive, formal; informal, sportive. All his clothes are different, but the most important is that they fit well with the way he looks. All these features make him simply unique.

The way he acts is an important part of his personality. He is a funny and sympathetic guy, he always tries to create a good atmosphere .....

Revised version

People can say that real friendship does not exist, but personally I do not believe in that. Everything in my best friend shows that it exists. My friend is called Oussama, he is 23 Years old. He was born in Biskra. He has a unique appearance, particular personality and simple interests.

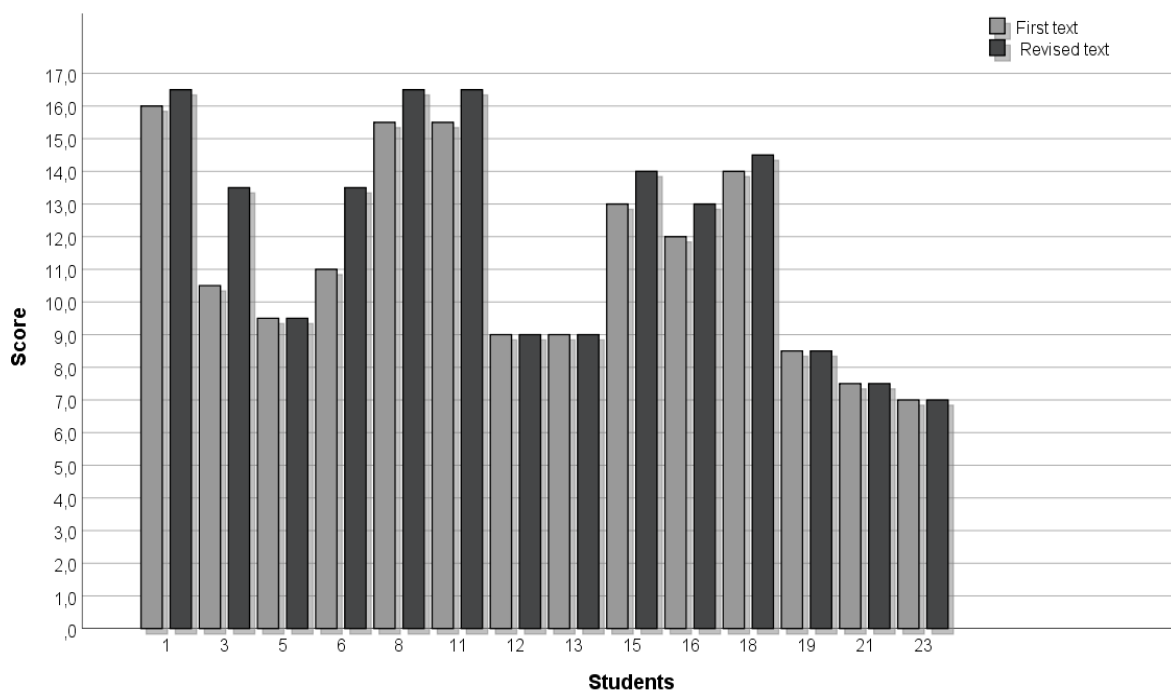
The way that my friend looks like is unique. He is tall and thin. He is brown-haired and he always has his hair cut short. He has an overall face with strongly marked features. Through his eyeglasses you can detect all his dark brown steady eyes which reflect his state of mind. He dresses all kinds of clothes; dark, clear, cheap, expensive, formal; informal. All his clothes are different, but the most important is that they fit well with the way he looks. All these features make him simply unique.

The way Oussama acts is an important part of his personality. He is a funny and sympathetic guy. He always tries to create a good atmosphere .....

A comparison of the two texts the student wrote demonstrated almost the same performance; the student managed to edit few grammatical errors in the revised text. This is mainly due to the fact that the student initially developed a good descriptive essay which did not necessitate much revision. The essay was well-organised and structured into five paragraphs. The student exhibited fair control over the language by relying on the five senses when describing her friend. Eventually, she managed to provide a vivid image of the guy described by using different adjectives and adverbs that best described his appearance,

behaviour and personality, though she did not use an evolved language. Moreover, she demonstrated command over the grammatical patterns as only few errors in punctuation were detected.

*IV.2.1.d. Post-test (narrative essay).* This last assignment was the post-test the students took. Specifically, the participants had to write a narrative essay in which they narrated a story that they created themselves, but by respecting some guidelines. We, the teacher and the students in both groups, had a classroom discussion through which the students agreed on specific elements (see appendix M) that had to be present in all the stories of the students, but of course the plot was personal. These included the character, the setting and three to four objects. The goal of this task was twofold. It aimed first at triggering the students' creativity to create a completely personal story and second to make the students aware how their writing strategies, potential and motivation could make a difference in their writing although they were given the same conditions. Again, it should be noted that the procedure was the same as the previous tests; both groups were concerned with writing the story, but only the participants from the experimental group went further to complete the self-assessment phase. The scores assigned to the students from the experimental group are displayed in Figure 19 then followed by a content analysis of the narrative essays.



*Figure 19.* The post-test writing achievement of the experimental group before and after the self-assessment treatment.  $n=24$ . Works submitted=14.  $M$  (first text)= 11.29.  $M$  (revised version)= 12.04

Figure 19 shows the scores of the experimental group obtained before and after undertaking the self-assessment of the post-test. It appears from the figure that the students' scores were fairly higher in the revised version ( $M=12.04$ ) compared to the first text ( $M=11.29$ ). More than half of the participants, students one (1), three (3), six (6), eight (8), eleven (11), fifteen (15), sixteen (16) and eighteen (18), obtained good scores. Their scores ranged from ten and a half (10.5) out of twenty to sixteen (16) as the best score for the first text and varied between thirteen (13) and sixteen and a half (16.5) out of twenty for the revised text. These results are encouraging; the participants performed well in the first text and then improved their performance through self-assessment to perform very well. This improvement demonstrates their tendency to revise and refine their texts. Similar to the previous assignments, we report, again, some cases of the participants whose scores were not satisfactory. Students five (5), twelve (12), thirteen (13), nineteen (19), twenty-one (21) and twenty-three (23) failed to get an average score. This is indicative of their poor performance.

Overall, most of the students performed well. What was remarkable in the students' narrative essays is their creativity and personal touch. Despite the fact that all the texts had to include the same elements of the story (character, setting and objects), the students succeeded to develop very different but interesting stories. Most of the essays were structured into five (5) paragraphs as required. In these essays, the students demonstrated ability to connect the reader to events throughout the plot of the story. Events and ideas were well-organised and the students incorporated a range of time order signals to achieve coherence and mark the passage of time. A further area of differentiation is vocabulary; surprisingly, there appeared new words and expressions often met in the writing of native speakers. Clearly linked to the students' control over text form is their control over grammar. They demonstrated a grasp of the basic writing conventions.

To illustrate these points of improvement, some extracts are reported from the students' sample texts:

#### Example 1 (introductory paragraph)

##### First text

October 21, 2013, was a sunnyday, and in a small house, Alicia, a young and beautiful girl lived there with her grandmother and it was the day that Alicia will never forget because in that day she experienced the feeling of being losted and she knew the importance of listening to the advice of her grandmother.

##### Revised version

October 21, 2013, was a sunnyday. In a small house in the countryside lived Alicia, a young and a beautiful girl of 20 old year with her grandmother, it was a day that Alicia will never forget because in that day she experienced the feeling of being lost, and she knew the importance of listening to the advice of her grandmother.

At the linguistic level, we noticed, in the first text, the overuse of the coordinating conjunction *and* in this introductory paragraph and no full stop was used except the one at the end of the paragraph. The whole paragraph was a set of comma splices. Yet, the paragraph seemed to be fairly appealing to the reader as the student provided a clear background of the

story; she set the time and place of the story and introduced the characters. More importantly, she stated the moral. In the revised version, the student added the missing information about the main character (age). She also omitted the unnecessary conjunction *and*, rearranged some elements in the first two sentences and corrected the form of the verb *to lose* in the past.

#### Example 2 (body paragraphs)

##### First text

On the morning of April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2005, I was ready to go to my new home. It was my wedding. I was so happy and excited; I was as beautiful as a princess in my white brightening dress which had a long train. And children were running around me like angels. There were a lot of guests; some of them were relatives, others were our friends. And the farm seemed to be a paradise on earth because all things, the house and even the animals that were in there were all decorated with flowers and balloons of different colour which were in harmony with nature.

In the afternoon, the procession was coming to the farm. After a moment, I heard my nephew calling me and saying: "Aunt, the procession has arrived". My heart started to beat faster when I heard the drivers hooted. And I was so curious that I looked through the window. It was a very long line of cars. But my husband's car was not there. I became so anxious and nervous that I came out of the house to look for him. Meanwhile, I heard a horse neighing from elsewhere. Suddenly, the horse appeared from behind the house and the groom was on the horseback.

Afterward, unexpected event took place. Someone was calling me. It was my mother voice telling: "Alicia, Alicia wake up, you have to go to school". It is my wedding today." I responded sleepy. "What? your wedding! you have just seen a good dream darling" said my mother and laughed at me. In fact I was just dreaming, but, indeed my dream comes true. After ten Years, I realized my dream and got my wedding at my grandparents' farm.

##### Revised version

On the morning of April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2005, I was ready to go to my new home. It was my wedding. I was so happy and excited; I was as beautiful as a princess in my white brightening dress which had a long train. And children were running around me like angels. There were a lot of guests; some were relatives, others were our friends. The farm seemed to be a paradise on earth because all things, the house and even the animals that were in there were all decorated with flowers and balloons of different colours which were in harmony with nature.

In the afternoon, the procession was coming to the farm. After a moment, I heard my nephew calling me and saying: "Aunt, the procession has arrived". My heart started to beat faster when I heard the drivers hooted. And I was so curious that I looked through the window. It was a very long line of cars. But my husband's car was not there. I became so anxious and nervous that I came out of the house to look for him. Meanwhile, I heard a horse neighing from elsewhere. Suddenly, the horse appeared from behind the house and the groom was on the horseback.

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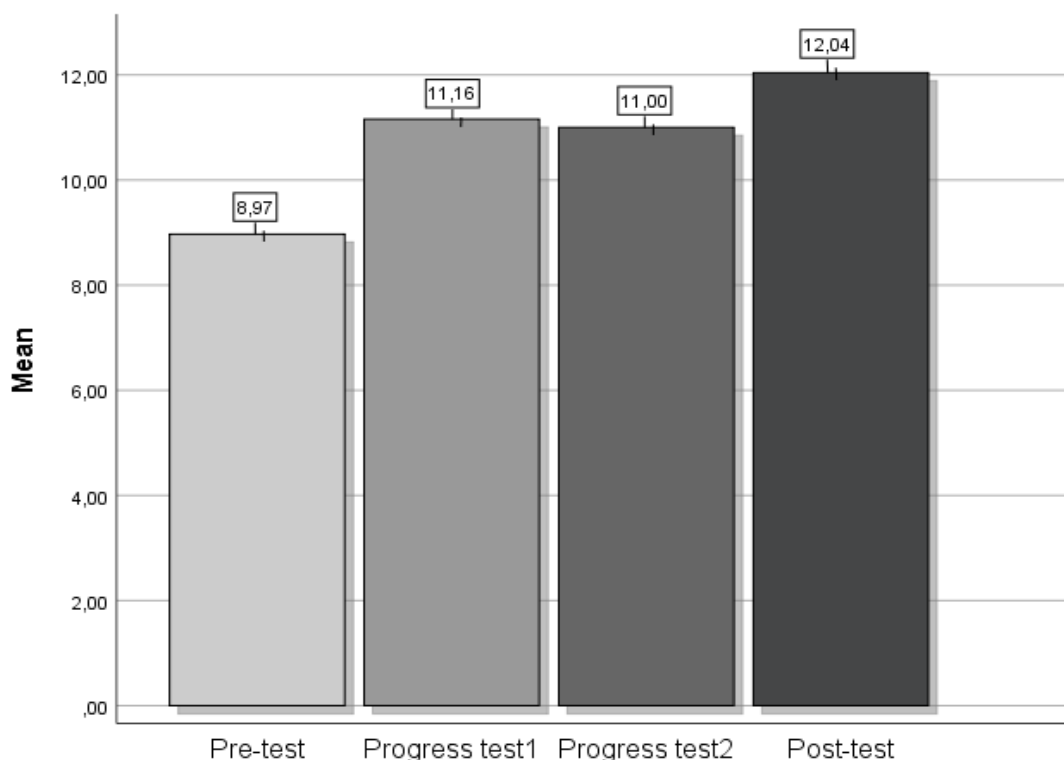
The three body paragraphs written in the first text reflect the student's mastery of language and high creativity given the way she connected the vents and developed the story. Interestingly, the reader can picture the events and experience the story when reading the essay. The points of strength are that events were well-selected and organised in a chronological order of occurrence and ideas were expressed explicitly and smoothly. Moreover, the student used adjectives and selected language that described the setting as in Disney stories. In addition, the use of varied time signals contributed in building coherence within and across the paragraphs. The sentences were also globally well-constructed and mechanics were appropriately used. What seemed a challenge to the student, however, is cohesion. It was apparent from the whole essay that the student overused the conjunction *and* which resulted to some extent in redundancy in the first body paragraph. We also remarked a lack of some cohesive devices in the second paragraph. As the first text was well-developed and organised, we noticed that in the revised version, the student had just to edit the text for correct grammar, mainly omission of the conjunction *and*, though she did not correct all errors.

**IV.2.1.e. *Experimental group overall achievement.*** In this section, the achievement of the students from the experimental group in the four tests is reported and compared. Particularly, Table 49 discloses the students' individual scores in each test and Figure 20 displays the overall means of the tests.

Table 49  
*The experimental group writing achievement in the four tests*

Participant	Assignment			
	Pre-test	Progress-test1	Progress-test 2	Post-test
1	12.5	14	16	16.5
2	9.5	11.5	4.5	Ø
3	10	8	9.5	13.5
4	6.5	6	Ø	Ø
5	7	10	7.5	9.5
6	8.5	14	14.5	13.5
7	8.5	9	Ø	Ø
8	11.5	14.5	14	16.5
9	9	9.5	6	Ø
10	Ø	12.5	Ø	Ø
11	Ø	16	16.5	16.5
12	6	8.5	Ø	9
13	8.5	Ø	10	9
14	6	8	Ø	Ø
15	9.5	13	13.5	14
16	12.5	15	15.5	13
17	10.5	Ø	Ø	Ø
18	Ø	9	11	14.5
19	7	Ø	Ø	8.5
20	9.5	Ø	Ø	Ø
21	Ø	Ø	9.5	7.5
22	Ø	Ø	9	Ø
23	Ø	Ø	8	7
N° of works submitted	17	16	15	14
Mean	8.97	11.16	11	12.04

*Note.* Ø= no work submitted. n=24



*Figure 20.* The experimental group overall mean scores in the four tests

Table 49 tracks the students' continuous progress during and after the treatment; specifically, the scores obtained in the revised texts for each student are reported. Besides, Figure 20 summarises the overall mean scores of each assignment. A comparison of the scores of the four assignments displayed in the table shows satisfactory results. Statistically, it has become clear that most of the participants succeeded to perform well. The table unveils that the best achievement was recorded for students one (1), eight (8), eleven (11), fifteen (15) and eighteen (18) who demonstrated a marked improvement throughout the four written assignments. Other students like student six (6) and sixteen (16) performed well in all the assignments as well, but demonstrated a slight regression in the last assignment; this can be due to the nature of the task (narrative essay) which required high level thinking and efforts. It is worth mentioning here that these students were present during all writing classroom instructional sessions and participated in all the experimental sessions.

Nevertheless, we have also deduced from the table that some students did not improve

their performance and even failed to get an average score. A look at students ten (10), seventeen (17) and twenty (20) makes it clear that these students did submit only one work. Another possible reason is fossilisation. This may be the case of students five (5), nine (9), twelve (12), thirteen (13), twenty-two (22) and twenty-three (23) who failed to improve their writing as they kept making the same types of errors and even with the teacher feedback they were unable to revise or edit them.

A look at the results of Figure 20 indicates that the participants improved their performance in the last assignment; a mean score of ( $M=12, 04$ ) in the post-test compared to a mean score of ( $M=8.97$ ) in the pre-test is a sign of improvement. To validate our assumption, we run a paired sample *t*-test to check the significance of the differences in the means. The results of the test are presented in Table 50.

Table 50

The pre-post tests paired samples *t*-test for the experimental group

		Paired differences				t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		M	SD	95% Confidence interval of the difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Experimental group	Pre-test	-3.07	4.48	-5.66	6.49	-2.57	13	.02
	Post-test							

*Note.* n=24

The statistics displayed in Table 50 demonstrate a significant difference in the means for the experimental group before ( $M=8.97$ ,  $SD= 2.06$ ) and after ( $M=12.04$ ,  $SD=3, 49$ ) the self-assessment experiment,  $t(13) = -2.57$ ,  $p = 0.02$ . As we can see, the *p* value is .02 which is lower than .05. These results indicate that the difference between the means in the pre and post tests is significant. Statistically speaking, the mean scores of the participants were significantly higher in the post-test. This implies that the students' writing performance improved as a result of the self-assessment treatment.

This progress can be further discussed with reference to the students' written compositions. In addition to the statistics presented, the analysis of the students' works, in its turn, unveiled significant improvement. Most of the participants succeeded in minimising their errors and enhanced the quality of their productions. At the linguistic level, the points of strength noticed in their compositions are related to a mastery of grammar and a varying level of control over mechanics of writing. The shift in the use of vocabulary was also apparent. At the discourse level, the participants' texts exhibited an adequate organisation and development of ideas. Although this was not applicable to all the students, the participants respected the structure and the rhetorical patterns of the type of the discourse required; thus, coherence was achieved in many works.

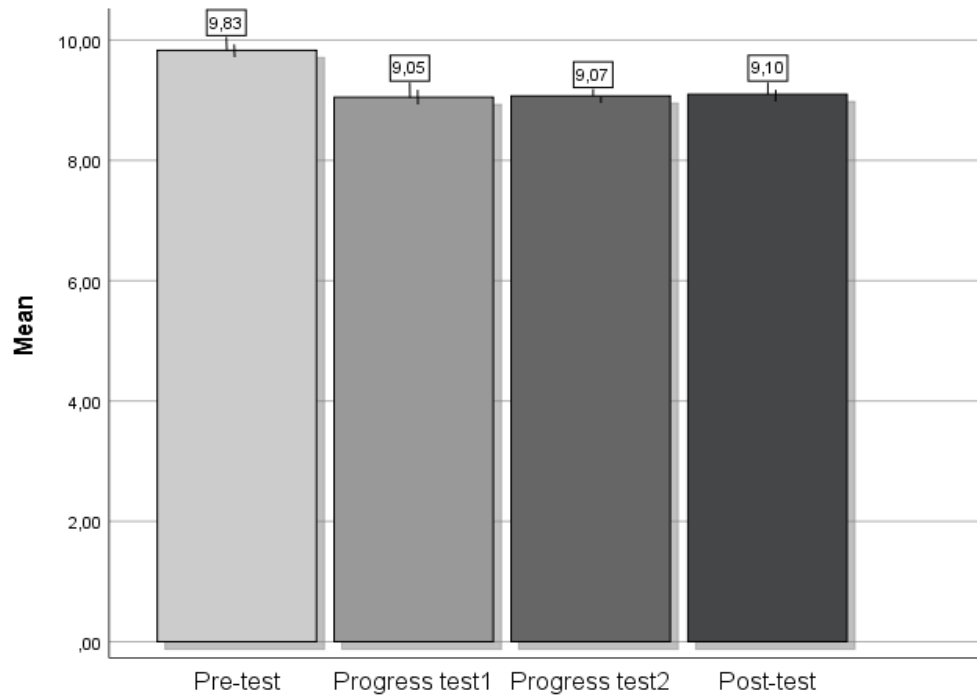
Again, in order to demonstrate that the improvement in the students' performance was exclusively due to the experiment, it had to take into account the results of the control group and compare them to the ones of the experimental group.

**IV.2.2. Control group overall achievement.** The analysis of the pre-test of the control group which was considered a diagnostic test to identify the students' strengths and diagnose their writing difficulties revealed that, similar to the experimental group, the students' writing was both incohesive and incoherent. Different problems were detected as shown in the error and content analyses. During the instructional phase, the teacher's role was to provide the students with feedback and raise their awareness of their poor performance in the first written paragraph, but no self-assessment treatment was provided. In this section, we consider the students' performance in the rest of the writing assignments. The four texts produced by the students were analysed, scored and compared to determine whether their academic writing was said to improve or remain indistinguishable. The students' individual achievement in all the tests is summarised in Table 51 then the overall achievement of the whole group in each test is displayed in Figure 21.

Table 51  
*The control group writing achievement in the four tests*

Participant	Assignment			
	Pre-test	Progress test1	Progress test 2	Post-test
1	10.5	11.5	9	13.5
2	8.5	Ø	7	Ø
3	9	9	8.5	10
4	9.5	9.5	12	8.5
5	11.5	13	12.5	11.5
6	Ø	7.5	4.5	4
7	10	10.5	11	9.5
8	Ø	10.5	8.5	Ø
9	10	8	11.5	Ø
10	11	11	11.5	9.5
11	9.5	8	Ø	Ø
12	10	8.5	10.5	Ø
13	8.5	7	6.5	8
14	13	10.5	12.5	11
15	Ø	7.5	Ø	Ø
16	12	4	12	11
17	8.5	11	11	Ø
18	8.5	9	6	Ø
19	9	7	10	7
20	8	7.5	6.5	6
21	12	12.5	7	Ø
22	9	9	8	8.5
23	8.5	7	9.5	7.5
24	Ø	Ø	6.5	11
25	Ø	Ø	6.5	Ø
N° of works submitted	20	22	23	15
Mean	9.83	9.05	9.07	9.10

Note. Ø= no work submitted. n=25



*Figure 21.* The control group overall mean scores in the four tests

Table 51 summarises the individual mean scores in the four assignments the students from the control group completed. A comparison of the scores obtained in all the assignments for each student shows almost the same results for the majority of participants. The students' scores were obviously far from being satisfactory as most of the participants did not reach the expected average ten over twenty (10/20). Only four students demonstrated a slight overscoring. For instance, student one (1) showed a remarked improvement in the last performance by obtaining thirteen and a half (13.5) over twenty. Student nine (9) also showed a slight improvement by obtaining eleven and a half (11.5) out of twenty in the last essay. Likewise, an overscoring was recorded for student seventeen (17) who succeeded to obtain an average score (11) in both the second and the third assignments. A great difference was also noticed regarding the scores of student twenty-four (24) who progressed from six (6) over twenty in the written paragraph to eleven (11) over twenty in the descriptive essay. For these students, the results may be considered satisfactory, but when considering the whole class, such scores are certainly not significant as the majority of the students performed similarly

and poorly in the four assignments. Overall, the data presented in Table 51 indicate that there was no improvement in the students' performance throughout the four assignments. Even worse, many of them demonstrated a regression mainly in the two last assignments. This is quite evident; the students failed to write one short cohesive and coherent paragraph, so it was more difficult to write an essay with five paragraphs. The students' low scores are indicative of their incompetence in producing an acceptable piece of writing in which they express their ideas and organise their texts in a cohesive and coherent manner. A look at the means of the four assignments displayed in figure 21 indicates that the participants did not improve their performance; the means of the four tests are below average.

The content analysis of these works which involved the consideration of the different criteria of good writing already explained revealed that the students had problems in almost all areas of writing. In terms of grammar, the students demonstrated no control over parts of a sentence. The same repertoire of vocabulary was demonstrated throughout the assignments. The texts were limited to the use of simple and familiar language; the students could not move beyond their everyday and common vocabulary to include words and expressions particular to the topics discussed (mainly description and narration). Another area of analysis concerns mechanics of writing. The students demonstrated a limited competence in the use of punctuation marks. They tended to use them inappropriately. Most notable in the majority of the texts was the lack of an adequate organisation and development. Ideas seemed to be developed in an indirect, general and sometimes long-winded style which resulted in redundancy and ambiguity. As a result, the compositions lacked focus. In short, the students failed to communicate their ideas through written texts.

By way of illustration, let us consider some reported texts:

Example 1 (pre-test: paragraph writing)

Facebook is a social network that provides us to communicate between people from different country.

Facebook makes our life easily and gain time to communicate from far to far, It also helps us to find and have friends all around the world and make relationships, It permits to share ideas and pages. Facebook gets also people mostly addicted It is waisting time and money because sometimes you speak with anonymous persons and make a broken relationship

Facebook has a negative aspects But we must to know how to manage our time correctly.

At first look, the text has the format of an essay not a paragraph. Then the reader can notice a collection of sentences. It was not written as a unified paragraph but rather as ideas developed in a note form. In terms of structure, the paragraph did not have a topic sentence that specified the main idea discussed in the body. Moreover, there was no apparent organisation of content. Clearly, there was an abrupt shift in ideas; the student moved from the advantages of facebook to the negative consequences without discourse markers. Besides, the same idea (communication) was repeated in the supporting sentences just by altering the vocabulary. Moreover, the student employed words inappropriately, notably the verbs: provides, gain, gets, waisting, make. Regarding grammar and mechanics, different errors were identified.

#### Example 2 (progress test1: paragraph writing)

Social problem are the difficulties that people experienced or faced in society. This problem is known in every part of the world. So, what are the causes of social problem?

First, it may be that the lack of education that is the best thing that any parent should give it to their children from their early childhood. Second theft which is spread in our society especially with the young because there is no job offered to them. In addition to that consuming alcohol and even drugs is also another problem which take people to put an end to their life by making accidents and health problem for example cancer.

Finaly, counterfeit and bribe are another problem that society suffered from them, because most of people use it today for their needs especially we find it in business.

To solve this problem, we have to try our possibilities and put hand in hand because when there is a will there is way.

Similar to our first remark for the previous paragraph, this text was not written in a paragraph format but rather an essay format. As this was the case of many paragraphs, it may

signify that the participants did not grasp the difference between paragraph and essay writing. In terms of organisation, based on the topic sentence developed by the student, the text had no adequate structure. First of all, the student did not specify which social problems she meant and which society she was describing. Actually, her ideas sounded too vague and even ambiguous. In the topic sentence, the reader may expect the student to develop the causes of social problems in the supporting sentences, but it was not the case. The impression one gets when reading the supporting sentences (except the first one) is that the social problems themselves that were explained not the causes. Besides, the conclusion did not make much sense to the reader; because of her limited linguistic competence, the student failed to convey her thought clearly. In fact, her limited linguistic competence was manifested throughout the whole text; errors in grammar and mechanics were prevalent. In this text, coherence was not achieved. One point worth mentioning is that the student had certainly interesting ideas on the topic, but she failed to express them and convey meaning precisely and concisely.

#### Example 3 (progress test1: descriptive essay)

My sister, makes our family even more special and unique, she is always there when we need her, she is so beautiful, with great personality, and she has specific interests.

My sister is splendid girl with a round face, blue eyes which reflect the color of the blue sky, with white hair which shines like the sun, she is tall and slim, she has only 19 years old but when you talk her you will feel happy

She makes the person in safe, when you look at her face which describe her honesty with her smile which make her gardious.

My sister is verry open-minded she is always near us when we need her , she tries to help us when we face problems even she is not older enough but she behaves like wise person, she is so kindness, she is calm like ocean during the summer, when she faces problems, she tries to solves it with passion and verry self-control, she is cool and sympathetique.

My sister has specific interests, she tends to realize her dreams. She likes travels and taking photos , in holidays, she likes her studies and she wanted to succeed, her dream is to makes my parents happy and proud of her , she loves playing holly ball and specially football even she was a girl but she has no complex.

My sister Hana is the most lovely girl in the world She is so cool and confident persson, our family are verry proud of her, God bless her.

As a starting point, the format of the essay was respected. The student wrote five (5)

paragraphs with almost the same length. A similar remark was made about the structure of the whole essay; each paragraph had a specific role and ideas were unified. However, this was not the case when we analysed the development of the five paragraphs. In the introductory paragraph, the topic or subject described was not well-introduced. The student could be more creative. What was good is that the thesis statement was specific, yet in terms of its linguistic structure, it was not well-stated. If we consider the three body paragraphs, well, they did support the thesis statement and each paragraph discussed one characteristic, but the organisation of each paragraph was poor. The student did not respect a logical pattern of description. Actually, the student included too many details in the same sentence. There were no order of importance or any objective behind the description. In addition, we could not distinguish between the main supporting sentences and the details because of the lack of punctuation; there was no full stop except at the end of each paragraph. We also noticed serious problems in grammar. The sentences were too long and most of them showed structures were grammatically incorrect. In short, different errors at different levels were identified and the inappropriate use of words could not be denied. Besides, the absence of discourse markers had a direct impact on the flow of ideas. Consequently, the reader cannot visualise the image the student attempted to create about her sister.

#### Example 4 (post-test: narrative essay)

Sunday morning at 7:30 a.m in the begining of winter, exactely in snowing day. Sara that has only twenty years when she lost her parents in a tragic accident, that happened on a crosse road on their own countryside. Sara lived in small house of wood with their parents and her brother. This house located on the middl in the forest.

When Sara arrived from her school. she fined a grouping of people bihind her small house, and begain to spoke about this accident, Sara fel that there was something happened with her family. Sara screamed dad, Mum, John, .. No one come out, after few minutes Sara entered to hous, she saw her brother cry; Sara why you crying and why this grouping of people and where our parents? the cousin of Sara came hier my pretty she told her now you should ne courageous , your parents were death in terrible accident

Sara Still crying and asked him self what and how she lives after this terrible accident, she loocked to his brother, and said to him, I am hier don't worry, evrything

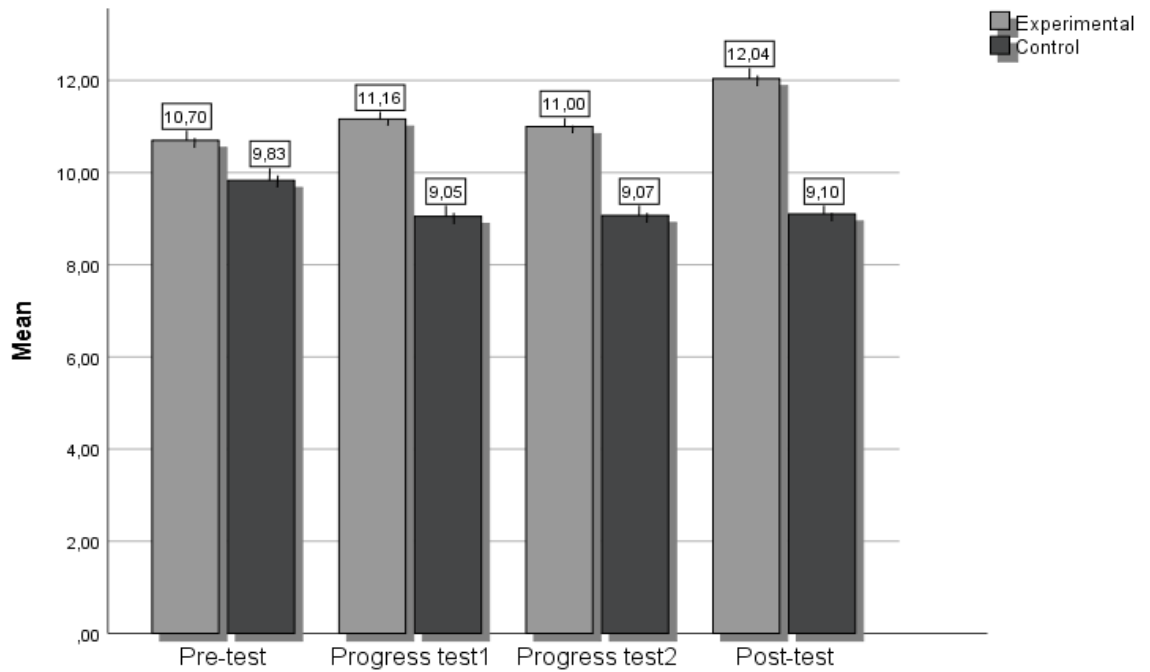
will be good I never let you, now you are my responsibility...

Regarding the layout, the student respected the structure of a 5-paragraphs essay (see appendices). Nevertheless, the whole essay made it clear that the student failed to respect both the linguistic and discourse patterns of a narrative essay. At the linguistic level, there were numberless errors in grammar and mechanics, namely run-on sentences, the misuse of pronouns, the incorrect use of prepositions and punctuation and the lack of articles, in addition to spelling mistakes which appeared in the words: begining, exactly, crosse, middl, hier, loocked, fined, bihind and so on. In terms of the discourse function, the student failed to construct an introductory paragraph appealing to the reader. Although she attempted to set the background of the story, the order of information was one of the weaknesses of the paragraph; the student mixed up events which resulted in list of information rather than a chain of events or description of the setting and characters. Regarding the body, despite the fact that the events were narrated in a chronological order, the student failed to give the events a well-organised structure. Specifically, the student violated Grice's maxim of quantity as she provided much information without coherence. Consequently, her writing seemed verbose.

In sum, the vast majority of the other samples of the students' texts demonstrated almost the same level of achievement; only a couple of students managed to present a fairly acceptable piece of writing. At this point, we are likely to conclude that despite receiving formal instruction on the features of academic writing and receiving constructive feedback on each performance, the students failed to improve their performance.

#### **IV.2.3. Comparison of the students' overall achievement: Experimental and**

**control groups.** It is necessary to remind the reader that we gathered all the students' written works for both groups and created a portfolio for their writing performance. A continuous comparison of the works enabled us to make inferences about the students' achievement and determine areas of improvement. The comparison is displayed in Figure 22.



*Figure 22.* The overall mean scores of the students' writing performance for the experimental and control groups

As Figure 22 shows, the mean scores obtained by the participants of the experimental group were numerically higher than the ones obtained by the control group participants in all the assignments. This unveils a significant difference in performance; in other words, the participants from the experimental group fairly outperformed their peers in the control group. Statistically, the experimental group exceeded the average, whereas the control group could not go beyond their initial level of achievement. In addition to these statistics obtained, the closer look at all the students' written productions and the comparison of the performance of the two groups revealed differences in terms of the quality of the texts produced. In the pre-test, the students from both groups exhibited almost a similar level of achievement. They scored poorly and their works revealed several areas of weakness at the linguistic and discourse level. As a means to test out new methods through which the students can manage to improve their writing, self-assessment was integrated into our writing instruction. Throughout the progress tests and in the post-test, the participants who experienced the self-assessment treatment demonstrated a fairly significant progress. Errors were corrected and the

students demonstrated command over the English language and the writing conventions. They also demonstrated control over the rhetorical patterns of written texts. In contrast, the participants from the control group did not make proof of any improvement; their level of proficiency in writing remained low. Unexpectedly, throughout the four assignments, the students failed to produce a short cohesive and coherent text. What was striking is that the same types of errors were repeated and coherence breaks affected the quality of their works. The students demonstrated an inadequate knowledge of grammar and no control over writing conventions. Even worse, they failed to respect the patterns of organisation mainly in the descriptive and narrative essays. In order to confirm whether these differences are significant, we opted for an independent samples *t*-test. The results of the test are presented in Table 52.

Table 52  
*The post-test independent samples t-test*

		T-test for equality of means					
		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean difference	95% Confidence interval of the difference	
						Lower	Upper
Groups	Experimental control	-2.62	22.96	.015	-2.94	-5.26	-.62

The statistics displayed in Table 52 demonstrate a significant difference in the means for the experimental group ( $M=12.04$ ,  $SD=3$ , 49) and the control group ( $M=9.10$ ,  $SD=2.41$ ) in the post-test,  $t(27) = -2.65$ ,  $p = 0.015$ . As we can see, the  $p$  value is lower than .05. These results indicate that the difference between the means of the two groups is statistically significant. This means that the students in the experimental group performed better than those in the control group in the post-test which in turn implies that the writing performance of the experimental group has improved as a result of the self-assessment treatment. Accordingly, we are likely to reject the second null hypothesis and confirm the alternative hypothesis stating that if third year students used the self-assessment techniques accurately in

their academic writing, this latter would be enhanced.

## **V. Students' Writing Logs**

This section is devoted to the analysis of the students' writing logs. The main objective of this qualitative method, as already explained, was to explore the experience of the participants after completing the self-assessment tasks to help the researcher build awareness on their attitudes towards the process and its effectiveness in building self-regulation and improving their EFL writing. As a research tool, writing logs have the potential to support our experimental study and inform classroom teaching. Several aspects can be captured in the content analysis of the students' scripts. These aspects are related to their viewpoints, motives and personal experience with regard to the self-assessment they undertook. By using writing logs as a reflective tool, the participants from the experimental group were asked to record their thoughts, feelings and any concerns arising during the self-assessment experience. They were provided with free space to express their personal evaluation of the self-assessment process and inform the researcher about any points of weakness or challenge and accordingly suggest possible ways of improvement. Evidence gained from the writing logs served as answers to the research questions stated in the general introduction. The insights from different students may also lead to better tailoring the teaching of self-assessment strategies to meet the students' needs.

It is noteworthy to mention that the participants were encouraged to reflect on the self-assessment experience and express explicitly their viewpoints and feelings in free writing. This had the aim of gathering the maximum of writings and having rich data as the students were not restricted by the writing conventions. This also made the students comfortable and less anxious.

It should also be noted that only twelve (12) students handed their writing logs at the end of the self-assessment experience. All the logs were read and the scripts were analysed

and five different themes emerged from the data. The major extracted themes are: 1) writing difficulties, 2) attitudes, 3) challenges, 4) needs and expectations and 5) willingness to use self-assessment again.

### **V.1. Writing Difficulties**

The first theme that emerged from the scripts concerns the students' major problems in writing at the beginning of the year, i.e. before engaging in self-assessment. The content analysis of the writing logs revealed common problems among almost all the students. The participants pointed out many shortcomings related to their writing competence. According to their view, their problems in writing concerned both product and process. Regarding form, grammar and vocabulary seemed to be a prevalent problem that affected the quality of their writing. The vast majority of the students revealed they had a poor linguistic competence; they admitted they had a very limited knowledge in grammar and were unaware of most of the English writing conventions. They also pointed out their poor repertoire of vocabulary.

The following reported sentences summarise how the students conceived their linguistic competence:

Student 6: "I have problems in grammar"

Student 7: "The difficulties that I face are most of the time in the vocabulary, even I have ideas I can not express them because of the lack of vocabulary. Then come other problems..."

Student 8: "I had problems in structure, the organisation of my ideas and grammar"

Student 9: "my writing difficulties were to find the appropriate ideas and words (vocabulary)"

Regarding the process, text organisation turned out to be a major concern for almost all the participants. Basically, the students explained that they had enormous difficulties in structuring their texts according to the three parts: introduction, body and conclusion. The following excerpts illustrate this claim:

Student 1: "At the beginning of the year, I didn't even know what an essay was, I didn't know the different forms, styles and types of essay writing, I didn't know how to develop and organize my ideas, but now I do know ...."

Student 2: “Sometimes really I do not know what are the words should be use, how to organize my ideas from the least important to the most important, what should I say in Introduction, and what to say in the body and conclusion.”

Student 11: “I used to face difficulties in the way of developing my ideas and how to move smoothly from one idea to another.”

The problems the students pointed out are related to the structure of a written text and the organisation and elaboration of the content. It is crystal clear that the participants did not know neither how to organise their ideas into a well-structured paragraph or essay nor how to elaborate the main ideas by providing enough details and illustrations that support the developed topic. The major problem here in developing their ideas is, in fact, related to a lack of coherence. The coherence breaks we identified in the students’ texts in the pre-test explain well this issue. As regards structure, this problem has been noticed in the pre-test as many students failed to respect the format and structure of a paragraph. Some students wrote essays instead and others provided information in a note form.

If we are to discuss the reasons for the students’ failure to organise and develop their texts, one important cause that can be evoked is related to the writing process. It is likely that problems in organising and developing their texts go back to the students’ tendency not to plan for their writing. We have noticed that most of the participants claimed to have problems in planning for their written compositions. They explained that they did not set any preliminary plan for their writing but they rather tended to start drafting directly. Remarkably, this was typically observed during the classroom sessions. The sentences quoted below show what the participants reported:

Student 2: “the difficulties I have in the beginning is in pre-writing, I can’t choose the topic, I can’t think and reflect about it and I can’t make a plan”

Student 11: “I used to face difficulties in the theoretical part of my paragraphs and I was not able to define and set a suitable plan which I would develop in my writing.”

In short, the students’ awareness of their strengths and weaknesses in writing are apparently quite accurate matching up consistently with the erroneous patterns found in their

diagnostic test explained in the previous section (pre-test).

## **V.2. Attitudes towards Self-assessment and Benefits gained**

The students' attitudes are considered an important condition for the development of self-assessment. In our research, the content analysis of the writing logs permitted us to get insight into the participants' viewpoints and feelings during the self-assessment process. When we first introduced the participants to the method, we observed their reluctance and weak involvement. The students, in their writing logs, commented on this and confirmed our observation. With regard to their responses, the students' attitudes towards self-assessment at the beginning were not encouraging; all the participants expressed their negative attitudes towards the process. Some of them revealed that at the beginning the method was strange to them. A couple of students even felt it was boring. The students' comments are illustrated below:

Student 4: "To be honest with you, your teaching and evaluating method seemed very strange to me, at the beginning of the year."

Student 9: "At the beginning, I think my writing was bad and this method of self-assessment was boring."

According to the students' comments, most of them seemed not so passionate about the idea of checking and reviewing their performance themselves. These feelings and attitudes were quite perceivable because they were unfamiliar with the process; they were introduced to such method for the first time. At this point, their ignorance and initial misconceptions were probably the cause that triggered some feelings of fear and doubt. We could deduce from their scripts that they were regarding self-assessment as a difficult task. In the following reported sentences, the students commented on this:

Student 3: "your method seemed difficult at the beginning."

Student 4: "It was so complicated"

One possible explanation for the students' negative attitudes is that the idea of

assessing their performance by themselves was novel and therefore they felt incapable of doing it effectively. This was perceptible in the students' comments. For instance, participant 11 stated: "At the beginning, I found it a bit strange to evaluate my writing by myself. How I am going to criticize a paragraph/ idea that I have written myself." The participant further justified her attitude by claiming: "this is the first time I learn writing with this method". Similarly, student 4 reported, "I have mostly noticed that when I write a title for my essay, when I revise my writing ... Things I didn't use to do before."

The analysis of these lines and similar others led us as a teacher and a researcher to affirm that third year students were exposed to this method for the first time.

Interestingly, the participants admitted that with continuous practice, their initial conceptions changed and they eventually developed a strong interest and motivation towards the new method as they got used to it. The following reported sentences demonstrate this change:

Student 3: "Your method seemed difficult at the beginning then I started to find it easy, helpful and effective."

Student 4: "I really enjoyed the experience."

Student 5: "The teaching method during the [w]hol[e] of the year was the best method of writing expression during all my studies in university....I think that the method of the teacher this year is the best method to teach writing expression because it is not just the teacher can evaluate the students but also the students can evaluate themselves."

Student 8: "I really recommend that method to all the teachers of writing expression"

Based on their comments, the participants seemed to place high value on this formative assessment. They have developed positive attitudes towards self-assessment and recognised the usefulness of being engaged in this personal process. Some of the perceived benefits of this process were identified. The first benefit perceived by the students is the awareness developed through the process of self-detection and self-correction of their mistakes. Most of the students reported developing the ability to identify their strengths and weaknesses and being aware of their achievement in writing. In the following excerpts, the

students commented on the significance of self-assessment:

Student 1: “I really like that method, it helps to recognize our mistakes and correct them. The self-assessment offers us an opportunity to review and reflect upon the development of our writing, editing and critical thinking skills. It allows us to review our strengths and weaknesses as a writer and to see how we can continue to grow.”

Student 7: “it is really useful, It helped us so much and thanks to it we know what are our difficulties and what are the things we master”

Unexpectedly, student 1 listed a myriad of benefits of self-assessment which have all been discussed in the literature. This participant demonstrated a full understanding of the process. Among the benefits detailed in the literature, two were discussed by the majority of the participants: reflection and critical thinking. These represent the ultimate goal of self-assessment. Through the process of self-assessment, the students believed that self-assessment made them think more and learn more and eventually identify their strengths and weaknesses; so they were likely to memorise their mistakes and avoid them in future performances.

A third perceived benefit of self-assessment is responsibility. The students recognised the value of self-assessment in empowering them with independent learning and self-regulatory skills. In this concern, many argued that they exerted control over their writing and felt responsible as well as trusted. The following sentences serve as evidence:

Student 4: “I have noticed that it was based on the student himself. He is the one to check and correct his mistakes.”

Student 9: “It pushes students to make research”

Student 11: “We have the chance to correct our mistakes by ourselves”

It is clear that these students recognised their role in the writing process and were aware of the importance of being in control of their performance. In addition to the role of self-assessment in developing the students’ metacognitive and cognitive capacities, its positive effect on their writing performance was also noticed by many participants. From the students’ standpoint, the reflection and self-awareness experienced in the process of self-assessment were a key to improve their writing. Some sentences are reported to support this:

Student 5: “I notice that in my writing there are many changes, I can not say that now I write a perfect paragraph or essay but my writing now is better than the beginning of the year.”

Student 7: “Now, for the first time I am able to write 5 paragraphs, the thing that I could not do before.”

Student 8: “this method is a good method because it can help students to evolve their writing.... it permits to the students to develop their capacities in writing.”

Student 9: “I progressed a lot in grammar, developing my ideas, structure as well as vocabulary.”

In the aforementioned comments, the students indicated that their writing performance improved as a result of the self-assessment process and showed their satisfaction. Yet, what student 5 revealed about her achievement is of great significance. She admitted that her current performance is not perfect which demonstrates her realistic vision and fair assessment of her abilities.

The students also highlighted other advantages of this method. For instance, one student liked the formative nature of self-assessment. In her words: “I like when we write an essay and the teacher gives us remarks to correct them not a mark for the essay.” Other advantages like increased motivation and self-confidence were also mentioned in the scripts. The freedom and decision making the participants have experienced boosted their motivation and involvement in writing classes; something that was not the case in their previous writing classes. A few comments serve to illustrate this:

Student 8: “At the beginning I was not really satisfied but now [w] I am more self-confident”

Student 10: I used to dislike written module but this year is not the case.... Last year, I didn't have that feeling to be excited to write my thoughts or feelings, I even do not finish a paragraph but now [I] can deal with 5 paragraphs or more.”

Student 11: “I am now able to say that yes I can write any type of paragraph and essay at any time.”

In their notes, the participants expressed that they have become motivated and self-efficacious and consequently trusted their capacities to perform well in EFL writing.

### V.3. Challenges of Self-assessment

It is worth mentioning that despite the positive attitudes towards self-assessment, the students were also aware of the fact that this process is challenging. In discussing the benefits of this formative process, they voiced certain concerns regarding its implementation in their EFL writing classroom. The major limitations pointed out by most of the students are associated with time constraints, students' unfamiliarity with the process and their low language proficiency. The following comments from the students' scripts need special attention:

Student 4: "It was so complicated and a bit time consuming"

Student 11: "This teaching method takes a lot of time and sometimes the students do not respect the date of submissions."

Self-assessment was considered time consuming because the students had to write one piece of writing for each assignment, then revise the work to bring about the necessary changes and finally produce a revised text after editing and revising the first draft. In reporting her experience, student 8 claimed, "the only thing was the fact of re-writing all an essay from the beginning to the end but it was an experience that enriched my knowledge." Students' unfamiliarity with the process was also one of the reasons why the process was challenging. The participants needed much time to understand how to assess their works accurately.

In addition to time constraints, the students' limited linguistic competence was one of the problems that affected the implementation of self-assessment as well. A few students admitted that their writing did not improve due to their linguistic incompetence. Despite their positive attitudes towards self-assessment, these students admitted the truth and made it explicit in their comments:

Student 8: "Now, It is more clear, I know how to develop my ideas and organize them but I still have problems in grammar."

Student 9: "The problem with self-assessment, sometimes we do not understand our

errors and we do not know how to correct them in the classroom.”

Student 12: “Personally I don’t think that there is a big change because of my grammatical mistakes. I wished I could erased the mistakes that I did in my writing.”

This aspect was perceptible in their portfolios as discussed in the previous section.

#### **V.4. Needs and Expectations**

Another theme that emerged from the data concerns the students’ needs and expectations. Understanding students’ needs is an important step in the implementation of a new teaching method or the evaluation and development of any educational program. It was clear from the students’ scripts that what they needed most was more practice. For instance, student 8 made it explicit that she needed more time and practice. Similarly, student 9 wrote: “I wish we could do more practice.”

#### **V.5. Willingness to Transfer their Self-assessment Skills**

Based on what the participants reported in their writing logs, all of them had positive attitudes towards self-assessment and considered it as a new and beneficial experience. Most importantly, they seemed to be interested in using self-assessment again. A look at the following reported comments reveals what the participants think and feel:

Student 7: “for sure I am using it and I will use it in the future”

Student 8: “I really recommend this method to all teachers of writing... if I will have the opportunity to teach one day, I will use the self-assessment method”

Student 9: “I want to use self-assessment again”

Student 11: “I [am] keen to use this self-assessment method in my every future writings to check my mistakes and enhance my language skills in general and my writing in particular.”

Student 12: “In my future projects I would like to be able to use self-assessment in order to give a good analysis to my works”

In these comments, the participants expressed their strong desire to use self-assessment in future opportunities either as learners or as teachers. Student 7 and few others even reported that had they already transferred their knowledge to other learning experiences by using their self-assessment skills.

In a nutshell, the students' writing logs provided evidence that self-assessment contributed to the development of their self-regulation knowledge and skills and the improvement in their writing performance. Therefore, with reference to our observation and the results of the portfolio analysis and the self-regulation scales, it is fair to say that the data generated from these writing logs go in the same direction.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter, we have reported all the results obtained in the present study. Several important findings can be enumerated. First, at the start, the students' writing was judged as incohesive and incoherent. The students from both groups exhibited poor mastery of grammar, inadequate knowledge of writing mechanics, failure to convey clear ideas and a limited command over discourse features of written language. Second, the self-regulation pre-scale demonstrated that the students' level of self-regulation was not satisfactory. By the end of the experimental study, self-assessment was reported to have potential effects on the students' from the experimental group. The self-regulation post-scale showed that the students' self-regulation skills enhanced as a result of an increased metacognitive awareness and enhanced self-efficacy beliefs. In addition, the portfolio assessment revealed a considerable improvement in the students' writing performance. The analysis of the students' writing logs added, in their turn, a considerable insight into our quantitative results. They helped us build awareness of the students' beliefs and attitudes towards the self-assessment process and its effectiveness in developing their writing. The students managed to identify their weaknesses in writing, they recognised the value and the benefits of self-assessment and seemed keen on replicating this experience in future learning experiences. These results provided strong empirical evidence to confirm the two research hypotheses set in this study and conclude that self-assessment had positive effects on the students' self-regulation capacities and their writing performance.

## **Chapter Five: Discussion of the Findings**

The present study used both quantitative and qualitative data to throw light on the process of implementing students' self-assessment in a third year university course. In the previous chapter, we have reported the results of the experiment including the scales and the portfolio analysis then followed by the writing logs. This chapter critically discusses the results obtained. Its aim is to explain the significance of what has been found so far and offer a comprehensible and valuable interpretation to the findings in order to draw a clear picture of the process of self-assessment in an Algerian context, the University of Bejaia, and therefore contribute to the existing literature. The discussion was undertaken by addressing the six research questions and the two hypotheses set in the introductory chapter.

### **I. Students' Writing Proficiency**

The results that emerged from the pre-test assessment, in combination with the descriptive data obtained from the pilot questionnaire and the writing logs, gave a clear idea of the students' writing difficulties, their writing approach and their perceptions as well. As shown through the achievement scores and extracts from the students' texts, the students' overall writing proficiency was not satisfactory. In fact, this is applicable to both the experimental and control groups who demonstrated a relatively similar writing performance, given the pre-test mean scores of both groups ( $M=8.97$  and  $M=9.83$ ) respectively. Noticeably, the deficits were related to linguistic and discourse features of written language as well as text organisation. The participants showed a clear weakness in assuring both cohesion and coherence; the majority failed to produce a short organised and thought-out piece of writing respecting the rhetorics of the English language. Previous research conducted on EFL Algerian students (e.g. Metatha & Nedjai, 2015; Ghaouar, 2017) has also reported students' low proficiency in writing.

At the linguistic level, the portfolio assessment unveiled that the students did not

develop an adequate understanding of the target language conventions. What was surprising is that the students had no control over parts of a sentence. They also ignored the rule restrictions, as they still clung to the processes of simplification, overgeneralisation and inappropriate language use. This was perceptible in the excessive number of grammatical errors, namely tense usage, inflection, problems in conjunctions, misuse of punctuation marks, inappropriate use of pronouns and idiosyncratic errors related to word choice and sentence structure. This finding is consistent with that of Amara (2015, 2018) and Hamlaoui and Fellahi (2017) who recorded the same types of errors in Algerian EFL students' writing. In addition, the students' texts were limited to simple and familiar language; no attempt was noticed to move beyond their everyday and common vocabulary to include words and expressions particular to the topic discussed (internet). Baiche (2015) also believes that students' problems in writing are related to their limited vocabulary. This issue was discussed by the teachers in charge of the writing course in the informal interview. Most of them voiced that students' low language proficiency has always represented a serious challenge for both students and teachers. When considering the students' linguistic errors, their tendency to write ungrammatical sentences and their inappropriate use of words affected the flow of ideas. Due to such errors, we assume much effort is exerted by the reader to understand the text as a whole; the reader may be forced to stop to determine how words and sentences relate to each others in order to make connection between ideas. One important finding that is worth discussing here is that in relation to the results of the pilot questionnaire (see Table 13, p.145), the participants' answers to question three (3) regarding their problems in writing revealed that the participants from the experimental group were more aware of their language deficiencies. The participants from the control group, surprisingly, reported less difficulty in grammar; only three (3) students admitted their grammatical incompetence. Actually, the assessment of their works contradicted their assertion. As reported earlier, most of them had

serious problems in grammar, with all its aspects (tense use, subject-verb agreement, punctuation, capitalisation, fragments, etc.). This unawareness had considerable effects on the students' achievement as we shall see later.

At the discourse level, the students' compositions reflected their poor communicative competence. What was apparent in their productions was their tendency to pay much attention to the linguistic and the structural patterns of their texts ignoring discourse components. Noticeably, the students' productions could be described as a list of topic-related ideas rather than coherent, well-developed texts. The students showed failure to respect the patterns of organisation and an insufficient elaboration of their ideas and coherence breaks as well. Moreover, the lack of evidence and inadequate development of the content weakened the communicative effectiveness of their productions. These results match those obtained by Mohamed and Zouaoui (2014).

The students' low writing proficiency can be attributed to many factors related to both the students and their teachers. Although it is beyond our research objective, investigating the sources of the students' pertinent problems can shed light on the results of our experiment. First, the students' poor performance in the writing pre-test mirrors their limited linguistic and communicative competences, which in turn, hint at the failure of the writing approach adopted by their teachers. Arguably, the teacher's role in developing students' writing skill cannot be disclaimed. Evidence gained from the pilot questionnaire and the writing logs suggests that a lack of clear instruction, feedback and support may have made it difficult for the students to achieve an acceptable writing proficiency. We believe the students' errors may occur as a result of a lack of feedback, which should normally be an integral component of teachers' instructional plans. To illustrate this point, one of the best students stated,

Because my faults and mistakes (grammar, vocabulary, spelling) were not corrected I was not motivated to write. I used to say why should I make effort to write a paragraph since from the beginning I know that I would not be provided by the teacher's feedback.

Drawing on most of the students' commentaries which gave prominence to the fact that the students rarely received constructive feedback on their written performance, providing then no opportunity for them to review their works and correct their mistakes, it becomes crystal clear that they had no room for revision and their errors became unconsciously deep-rooted in their writing which may likely lead to a state of fossilisation, as noted by Odlin (1994). Nouioua (2018) described the Algerian educational system as an exam-oriented pedagogy; that is, the focus is more on scores and little feedback is provided on students' progress. Scores, as highlighted by Oscarson (2009) appear to be relatively a poor indicator of achievement as they deprive students' from the opportunity to get information on their actual strengths and limitations. Further adding to the picture, teachers seem to focus their instruction on the linguistic and the structural features of texts instead of promoting the view of writing as the interaction of communicative, cognitive and social components. That was reflected in the students' lack of knowledge of the discourse features of written language. In this case, we can claim that these students were not quite informed and well-trained on the concept of academic writing. These findings support previous research investigating pragmatic failure (Bardovi-Harlig & Dörnyei, 1998). As regards the Algerian context, Bouhitem (2013) and Mohamed and Zouaoui (2014) also claimed teaching deficiency to be a major reason for students' problems in writing; the researchers emphasise the need for instruction and feedback in EFL writing.

Another finding to take into account is that we have noted through the classroom discussion established with the participants during the pilot study, that they had different teachers in their two previous years at university and received different kinds of instruction on EFL writing because they were in different classes. This means that there was no common syllabus for EFL writing in the department. In fact, taking into account our learning experience at the University of Bejaia (2009-2014), we are likely to confirm the students'

claim given the fact that we experienced the same situation. The interviews with the teachers in their turn, confirmed this claim. When we inquired about the syllabus of the writing module for third year, we have noticed that each teacher was teaching differently, focusing on different aspects but mainly the linguistic and organisational patterns of texts at the expense of the process. As such, it may be fair to claim that the product approach to writing is the dominant approach in the department of English which actually does not account for the communicative aspect of writing. In this line of research, Kadri and Amziane (2017) came to the same conclusion when they explored the teaching of writing in the same research setting as ours.

Second, the students also share part of the responsibility in their writing deficiency. A possible explanation lies in the lack of autonomy which is reflected mainly in a lack of practice and a lack of reading. This view is shared by all teachers of EFL writing at the University of Bejaia as reported by Kadri and Amziane (2017). Likewise, research done in Algeria (Ghiat, 2013; Idri, 2012; Ait Eljoudi, 2018) drew attention to the fact that Algerian students are still passive recipients of information and exert little effort to learn independently. Data generated before the experiment revealed that the students did not have enough practice to develop sophisticated skills in writing; they generally showed reluctance to write in the classroom and to practice the skill outside. In his study, Bouhitem (2013) also found that students' writing problems were the result of a lack of practice both inside and outside the classroom. As explained in the literature review, writing is a productive skill learnt through instruction and both intensive and extensive practice. So, we cannot expect students to be competent in writing if they do not apply their knowledge of writing conventions and the rhetorical patterns of English in free written tasks.

Besides, the lack of reading also accounts for the participants' deficiency in writing. Based on the portfolio assessment and the students' reported answers in the pilot

questionnaire, it became crystal clear that the students had little exposure to the native language which certainly affected their command over writing conventions. In their studies, Baiche (2013) and Mohamed and Zouaoui (2014 (2014) found that the lack of reading is a major cause of Algerian students' poor writing competence. Other researchers also support the connection between writing and reading (Fitzgerald and Shanahan, 2000; Brown, 2001; Hyland, 2003). This is because through reading, students get acquainted with the necessary language constructs such as grammatical structures and discourse rules of writing and learn new vocabulary. In line with this finding, we believe that the insufficient development and lack of evidence in the students' writing can be attributed to a lack of information on the topic itself which can be further attributed to the fact that the students are not used to read or do enough research; this may explain why they missed much information on the topic. In addition, the students' shortage of vocabulary may also be due to a lack of exposure to reading material. Nevertheless, this is still unexpected as the topic they wrote about (internet) is from our era and is playing a major part in our social life; being so, it provides enough motivation for much reading or research. Taken from this angle, the students' lack of information backing in this specific field remains quite surprising.

It is noteworthy here that the findings of tables 15 and 16 (see pp.147-148) demonstrated the students' awareness of how personal efforts shape the development of EFL writing. These students were quite cognizant of the notable effects of practice and reading on writing, but questions raise about what prevented them from taking action so far.

In short, this section provides evidence on the students' poor communicative competence in writing which stands as an answer to the first research question set concerning the participants' problems in EFL writing. Inevitably, the students' deficiency in both language and discourse resulted in ungrammaticality, incoherence and awkwardness. Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning here that we are fully aware of the fact that errors are

natural and inevitable in learning and students are expected to commit errors because English is learnt, in Algeria, as a foreign language; but the message we intend to convey is that when these errors are pertinent and weaken the communicative aspect of students' writing, they should be addressed so as to prevent fossilisation. Given our context, the participants were preparing for a B.A. degree in EFL which signifies that, by the end of the year, the graduated students would qualify as teachers, so if as learners they demonstrated a poor writing proficiency, how could they demonstrate a good teaching performance? In this regard, the study suggests the need for attention on the sources of students' deficiencies and ways to assist students in overcoming them; both teachers and students should consider their role in this matter.

## **II. Students' Level of Self-regulation**

The results of the pre-scale demonstrated the students' poor self-regulatory skills. The overall mean scores of ( $M=2.31$ ) and ( $M=2.20$ ) computed for the experimental and control groups before the treatment respectively indicated that the participants from both groups were not good self-regulators; they were passive in their approach to writing. These findings provided an answer to our second research question concerning the participants' level of self-regulation. As regards other Algerian EFL contexts, our findings corroborate those obtained by Tebib (2018) who found, in the pre-test, that students at the University of Constantine were not autonomous, but rather passive learners and those of Bouhitem (2013) who reported that students at the University of Biskra do not use writing strategies in EFL writing. The major findings that stemmed from the analysis is that the students' perceived efficacy of writing achievement was low ( $M=2.43$  for the experimental and  $M=2.19$  for the control group) and their major challenges in self-regulation were found to be related to goal-setting, self-assessment and social strategies, in addition to anxiety.

The students were sceptical of their success; they believed they were not competent in

writing and had low expectations. The students' feelings of doubt and low expectations may be related to many factors such as the nature and complexity of the topic, their attitudes towards writing, their low language proficiency and others. Consequently, the students' low self-efficacy beliefs affected negatively the development of their writing at the beginning of the research treatment. This was, in fact, perceptible in their lack of engagement in the classroom. According to Bandura (1991, p.257), students' beliefs about their capacities in EFL learning, play a role of self-aiding or self-hindering. Along the same line, Schunk and Zimmerman (2007, p.9) explain that students with low self-efficacy beliefs participate less readily in tasks, do not persist when facing difficulties and achieve at lower levels compared to students who are self-efficacious.

Moreover, the highest mean scores reported for goal-setting for both the experimental (M=2.66) and the control (M=2.57) groups indicated that the students had considerable difficulties in the pre-writing stage and in metacognitive self-regulation which can be considered the most important strategies in self-regulated learning. The deficits included metacognitive knowledge related to pre-writing strategies, namely brainstorming and questioning and the ability to monitor their performance. In addition to the statistics generated from the scale, the students also reported few writing strategies in the pilot questionnaire (see table 14, p. 146). Nevertheless, one contradictory finding worth mentioning is that 41.6% of participants from the experimental group and 32% from the control group reported to use brainstorming strategies in the pilot questionnaire, but in the self-regulation pre-scale, 62.5% of participants from the experimental group reported they never brainstormed and 40.9% from the control group admitted they rarely did it. One possible explanation for this contradiction is that the students did not know what brainstorming means and had limited, if no knowledge, on goal-setting strategies. In addition, given the fact that the majority of the students (48% from the experimental group and 77.3% from the control

group) indicated that they always reflected on the topic before starting to write, we think that they actually took much time trying to figure out how to approach the written task, but they did not use strategies to facilitate the process. Clearly, this was observed during the first weeks of our classroom observation. During writing assignments, we could not record any use of writing strategies. What was observed, rather, was the students' tendency to start drafting without setting a goal for their texts or developing a preliminary plan. When we investigated the reasons, the participants claimed a lack of time and knowledge of the writing process and writing strategies.

We have explained in the literature review that the five stages of the writing process are cyclical and each stage is as much important as the previous and the following one. Therefore, the negative consequences of skipping the pre-writing stage are likely to be experienced during the next stages when the students have problems in organising and revising their texts, an issue that was voiced by the students in the writing logs. In fact, in relation to the results of the writing pre-test, it can be inferred that the students' unsuccessful attempt to elaborate and organise their text into a well-structured paragraph is indicative of the reality that they spent less if no time in planning and brainstorming before drafting.

Regarding the other aspects of self-regulation, social strategies were the least employed by the participants from both groups ( $M=2.79$  for the experimental and  $M=2.72$  for the control) compared to cognitive and affective strategies which means that they did not use to ask for help or clarification from the teachers and peers. This finding is consistent with data obtained by Nouioua (2018). The researcher found that social strategies were the least used by EFL students in EFL writing classrooms at Constantine University. This could be related to the students' unwillingness to seek assistance (personality trait) or to the learning environment which was not supportive. Likewise, Nouioua (2018) raised questions about the effectiveness of social interaction in the Algerian University. Given the results of the pilot

questionnaire (see table 17, p.149), the participants' answers to the last question, in which they expressed their need for teacher guidance and encouragement, may support our claim. This, in turn, demonstrates the importance of the social learning setting in the development of EFL writing. As put forward by Elbow (2000), as foreign language writing is a difficult and time consuming process, students need to be encouraged to self-regulate their writing by creating an engaging and a supportive classroom atmosphere.

The second important finding is that, although the statistics showed that the participants managed to control their affect (persistence and self-talk), anxiety seemed to be a real challenge for almost all the participants. This is obviously not a surprise in the sense that, if students have low self-efficacy beliefs and do not seek assistance, they are likely to feel apprehensive. Consequently, this writing anxiety may have considerable effects on the process of writing as a whole. According to Erkan and Saban (2011), students experiencing anxiety find difficulties to express themselves, avoid writing and find writing classes unfavourable. Another finding if not a contradiction is that, despite the fact that the numerical data showed a moderate level in the use of cognitive and affective strategies, empirical evidence gained from the classroom observation indicated that the participants from both groups were not regular at using those strategies; the students did not follow any process of writing and only few of them were recorded to use writing strategies in the classroom. The major reason is that they did not have sufficient knowledge of the different strategies, an aspect that was noticed from the pilot questionnaire and the writing logs as well.

As far as self-assessment is concerned, the statistics computed for both the experimental ( $M= 2.31$ ) and control ( $M=2.18$ ) groups revealed that, on the one hand, the students were unable to identify their errors, and on the other hand, they devoted little time and effort to revise and edit their written compositions. In addition, evidence gathered from the students' writing logs confirmed the statistical data. As indicated by the students, self-

assessment was not part of their writing habits as they developed only one draft. This was typically observed in the classroom. We observed that many students did not use a rough paper to draft the first text; they rather produced only one piece of writing and submitted it at the end. Besides, the papers the students handed as a pre-test showed clearly that the concept of multiple drafts was out of their habits. These findings imply that the students probably lacked awareness of the benefits of revising and editing their writing and knowledge and skills in doing so. As a consequence, such low self-regulation may probably be one reason for the students' low achievement in writing. This might be justified in Ferris' (2002) words, "many students have little interest in and pay limited attention to editing their work. They find editing tedious or unimportant or they have become overly dependent on teachers or tutors to correct their work for them." (p.329)

Overall, these statistics comply with those obtained by Kadri and Idri (2016) in their study conducted on third year undergraduate students at the University of Bejaia. The researchers reported a low self-regulation and a high level of procrastination among the participants in EFL writing.

Arguably, the participants' low self-regulation can be the result of multiple factors. One major reason is the lack of awareness and knowledge due to a lack of instruction. Cohen (2003) claims that a lot of research reveals students lack awareness of language learning strategies. The participants' reported answers exhibit two major factors: one, their teachers of the writing subject (in the previous years) did not draw their attention to the writing process; two, students did not receive prior instruction or training on the use of writing strategies. That is, the students seemed not to get the requisite orientation in reflecting on what they write or how they write it. Notably, they were introduced to the theories of text presentation and not to the theories of planning and generating meaning. According to Zimmerman and Risemberg (1997, p. 73) writing "involves not only knowledge about grammar and vocabulary but rather

it depends on high levels of personal regulation because writing is a self-planned, self-initiated and self-sustained activity” Drawing on the previous discussion on the students’ writing proficiency, the findings related to this section emphasise our earlier assumption made about the dominance of the product approach to writing. In such a learning context, the students cannot be assured to develop both their self-regulated skills and their communicative competence in EFL writing.

A second possible reason for the students’ low self-regulation is probably their attitudes towards writing. First, evidence gathered from the pilot questionnaire and the writing logs showed that the students viewed writing as a difficult and challenging process and these beliefs can be the cause of their low self-efficacy beliefs. These attitudes are indeed logical and common among EFL students taking into account the type and the nature of the skill, but it is worth noting that they had an effect on the students’ performance in writing and that is why it was not possible to predict the students’ reaction to our treatment since they had already these conceptions of difficulty in mind. In more explicit terms, if students perceive writing tasks as difficult and think they are unable to perform well, their motivation and commitment to invest time or effort to improve their writing decrease, so they simply do not attempt them. Second, what seemed apparent from their comments was that the students’ perspective to EFL writing was limited to the product; they regarded writing as an independent skill and therefore attached meaning to accuracy and correctness. The students’ comments further indicated that they overemphasised the linguistic and structural patterns of a text. The students’ passivity and lack of knowledge on the writing process reinforce our claim. Again, such conceptualisation may have originally derived from the product approach adopted in EFL writing classrooms in Bejaia University.

Closely linked to writing instruction, another factor, we believe to be a cause for the students’ low self-regulation and poor writing proficiency, is deficiency in the assessment

modes adopted in the department of English. The data from the writing logs led us to confirm that teacher assessment is the dominant mode of assessment in the department of English in Bejaia University. The students reported that it was the first time they were involved in the process of self-assessment. They further complained, during the classroom discussion, that their teachers rely mostly on summative assessment by assigning scores to their written production. Paris and Ayres (1994, p. 7) made it clear, "Students need to be active participants in assessment of their own learning rather than passive respondents to a series of tests." This provides evidence that the students' lack of skills in self-assessment is basically due to the fact that they were not encouraged and supported to review and assess their works. Most of the teachers interviewed during the pilot study made it explicit they did not use alternative assessment in their writing classes and they even seemed to lack knowledge on self-assessment and self-regulation. These results are in line with the findings of Benettayeb-Ouahiani (2016), Nasraoui and Ben Zeroual (2016), Ghaouar (2017) and Kadri and Amziane (2017) who all concluded in their research that Algerian university teachers are resistant to change and still rely on traditional assessment methods in their EFL classrooms. An important factor that may have a direct link to the absence of self-assessment in EFL classrooms is teachers' motivation and willingness. As a matter of fact, not all teachers are willing to introduce change and use innovative teaching methods. Some, as argued by Gardner (2000) and Black et al. (2004), prefer to stick to tradition assessment as a way to hold control and power in the classroom. As reflected in the students' writing, traditional assessment approaches deprived them of the opportunity to make meaning of their own writing and take responsibility for their learning.

Nevertheless, the teacher is certainly not the only one to blame; different factors contribute to the present situation of the higher education system, making it difficult to achieve the reform's objectives under the current conditions. The first obstacle is classroom

size. As a matter of fact, most of the classrooms in Algerian universities are large classes which represent a challenge for teachers who find enormous difficulties to adopt innovative teaching and manage their classrooms. This issue has been addressed in the literature (Meziane & Mahi, 2009; Idri, 2012; Maacha, 2012; Rabehi, 2013). It is also possible to claim that the lack of teacher training and development on assessment can be one of the major factors responsible for teachers' reliance on summative assessment. In regards to previous research (e.g. Idri, 2012; Sarnou et al., 2012; Boudersa, 2016), it becomes clear that, although formative assessment is a major aspect of the LMD reform, no training has been offered to improve teachers' assessment practices. It follows that teachers themselves lack knowledge and skills required to adopt self-assessment. More recently, Kadri and Benmouhoub (2018) explored Algerian teachers' experiences in teaching at university and found that 84.21% of teachers expressed their need for teacher training not only in assessment but in other aspects of classroom practice as well. Therefore, if teachers who are supposed to bring about change have not been well informed and trained, very little improvement can be expected. According to Richards and Farrell (2005, p3), it is the responsibility of the Ministry of Higher Education to offer pre-service trainings and professional development opportunities and encourage teachers to participate in them.

### **III. Effects of Self-assessment of Self-regulation**

The previous chapter which was directed to gauging the effects of self-assessment on self-regulated learning disclosed important findings. The results of the post-scale demonstrated a considerable increase in the level of self-regulation among participants from the experimental group as compared to the control group; most of the students reported more use of self-regulated strategies. Taking into consideration the results of both the dependent and independent *t*-tests ( $p < 0.05$ ), the increase in self-regulation among the experimental group participants was mainly due to the self-assessment intervention. That is, the students'

self-regulation skills developed as the participants took their responsibility to regulate their writing and actively engaged in a constant self-assessment of their performance. In contrast, the results of the *t*-test of the control group indicated a relatively low level of self-regulation at the four levels: metacognitive, cognitive, affective and social. The students even reported a decrease in the use of self-assessment strategies compared to the pre-scale. At this point, we can claim that after one academic year the students demonstrated no enhanced ability to regulate their writing. Yet, it should be reminded that the control group was not involved in the self-assessment treatment. Accordingly, the improvement within the experimental group demonstrates the potential benefits of self-assessment in facilitating the development of students' self-regulation skills necessary to assess their texts and regulate the writing process. Therefore, we confirm the first research hypothesis that when students use self-assessment accurately, they develop their self-regulation skills. Regarding prior studies, there is compelling research on the impact of self-assessment training on self-regulation, to which the present study adds more evidence (Kitsantas et al., 2004; Kostons, Gog & Paas, 2012; Andrade, 2010; Panadero & Romeo, 2014; Mak & Wong, 2017).

Interestingly, the findings showed that self-assessment had a positive effect on all the aspects of self-regulation with the most significant finding being related to self-efficacy and metacognitive self-regulation. The comparison of the mean scores before ( $M=2.43$ ) and after ( $M=1.86$ ) the experiment revealed that self-assessment had a powerful effect on students' beliefs about their capabilities; the students gained confidence and trust in their writing potential. The students' comments in the writing logs added strong evidence to the statistics obtained. Particularly interesting were the sentences that were found in almost all the logs that express ability and satisfaction like: "I am now able to", "now I can" and "I am satisfied with my writings". This implies that self-assessment provided a sort of emotional support and encouraged students to believe they were truly capable of improving their writing. One way

in which the self-assessment may have influenced the students' self-efficacy beliefs was through the assessment criteria which clarified performance and made expectations transparent, which was not as such before. The increase in the students' self-efficacy and motivation was actually apparent in the classroom as the students were gradually getting involved in the writing sessions. This seems to provide support for the assumption that self-assessment helps in building a motivating and trustful learning environment that increases students' perceived writing efficacy and expectations. These results support much of previous research that demonstrated the powerful effects of self-assessment on students' self-efficacy (Olina & Sulliva, 2004; Andrade et al., 2009; Baleghizadeh & Masoun, 2014; Panadero, Jonsson & Botella, 2017). Evidence from the different studies has demonstrated that self-efficacy beliefs influence students' choices and decisions regarding the amount of time and effort to invest in a task. Given these findings, we advocate teachers to design self-assessment tasks as a way to engage students in their writing classes and boost their self-efficacy beliefs.

Another significant finding is that, although the overall means reported for the four sub-scales showed that goal-setting strategies were the least improved ( $M=2.13$ ) among the four self-regulation processes, self-assessment resulted in a remarkable increase in brainstorming and questioning, given the individual means for each item before ( $M=3.46$ ,  $M=3.13$ ) and after ( $M=2.91$ ,  $M=2.32$ ) the treatment respectively. One might argue that the progress was not substantial, but if we consider the fact that the intervention did not focus on self-regulation instruction; i.e., the students did not receive specific training on the use of different writing strategies, the results are quite logical. Therefore, as our experiment focused on self-assessment techniques, the recorded improvement was mainly the result of the efforts the students expended to learn to use goal-setting strategies and the teacher's assistance to use the strategies. Given the importance of goal-setting in the writing process, researchers maintain that goals have significant effects on students' achievement by helping them focus

on the task and select appropriate strategies and motivating them to persist in the face of difficulties (Latham & Lock, 1991; Pintrich, 2000; Schunk, 2001, Kitsantas, Robert & Doster, 2004).

Furthermore, data indicated a significant increase in the use of cognitive strategies compared to affective strategies. This was basically because affective self-regulation (except anxiety) was reported, in the pre-scale, to be the least challenging for the participants. Specifically, the post-scale results showed that the students used organisation (M= 1.59) and elaboration (M=1.59) more. This implies that they directed their efforts to improving the discourse aspects of their texts by organising and elaborating their texts. This point is discussed in the section related to the post-test analysis with illustration from the students' portfolios; the students produced organised and well-elaborated compositions. What is of great interest, though not as much as expected, is the decrease in the students' anxiety which manifested their efforts to overcome their fear and stress compared to their initial state. One logical explanation might be that self-assessment has helped in building a non-threatening and supportive learning environment which encouraged the students to be self-efficacious and therefore less anxious. Our findings are congruent with Moussaoui's (2012) research findings which demonstrated the role of social skills in decreasing students' writing anxiety and increasing their self-efficacy. Here, we come back, again, to the importance of the social learning environment in promoting self-regulated learning. It can also be linked to their increased awareness of the assessment criteria which made expectations clear to them. However, what was surprising is the insignificant increase in the use of social strategies after the treatment (M= 2.59). What was in fact observable during the writing sessions was that most of the students were asking a lot of questions when they assessed their works and asked for clarification of the teacher feedback when they felt puzzled. We were assured that the self-assessment gave them the opportunity to discuss their progress and empowered them to seek

explanation and assistance. Further adding to the picture, among the four self-assessment techniques used (conferences, rubrics, checklists and scripts), the conferences appeared to be the most influential in supporting the students' social self-regulation as the participants had a unique opportunity to discuss their strengths and weaknesses with their peers and then share the results with the teacher for further discussion. This is in line with Hamlaoui and Fellahi's (2017) conclusion that teacher-student conferencing helps improving students' writing.

Regarding the last sub-scale, self-assessment, the mean scores computed before ( $M=2.31$ ) and after ( $M=1.77$ ) the treatment indicated a significant improvement in the students' ability to assess their performance. This evidence exhibits the students' considerable efforts to revise and edit their writing. An important point to note is that the students' awareness ( $M=1.55$ ) was reported to be the most developed aspect of self-assessment, whereas grammar self-editing ( $M=1.91$ ) appeared to remain a challenge for the students. In fact, this is not surprising taking into consideration the students' low language proficiency; that is, the students were expected to encounter difficulties to recognise and correct their errors alone. In addition, no instruction or intervention was provided on grammar and writing mechanics.

Based on these findings, it can be concluded that self-assessment had a positive effect on the students' self-regulation as regards academic writing. The emerging picture is that the students held positive judgements about their capabilities to write well, they worked harder, persisted longer and sought help in order to complete their writing assignments. Therefore, the results provided evidence that students can acquire skills in self-assessment which play a pivotal role in self-regulated learning. Such conclusion represents an answer to the third research question about how self-assessment promotes self-regulated learning. In this regard, EFL teachers can take advantage of self-assessment as a means for scaffolding self-regulated learning among their students.

#### **IV. Effects of Self-assessment on Students' Writing Performance**

In addition to enhanced self-regulation, the second invaluable contribution of the self-assessment treatment is the improvement in the student' writing performance. Notably, data from the writing tests (see Figure 20, p.225) coupled with the *t*-tests (see Tables 50-51, pp.226/232) results unveiled a significant improvement in the quality of the students' writing, noticeable in the decrease in the errors made by the experimental group as opposed to the control group. Many researchers (Black & William, 1998; Gardner, 2000; Andrade & Boulay, 2003; McDonald & Boud, 2003, Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006; Boud & Falchikov, 2007; Andrade & Valtcheva, 2009) provided strong evidence on the significant effects of self-assessment on different aspects of students' learning.

The improvement in the four tests, namely the post-test, is an indicator of the students' efforts to check out and edit their written compositions. Compared to the control group, the participants from the experimental group have certainly gained benefit from the self-assessment tools which helped them manage the writing process, control the writing conventions and regulate their performance. This is a clear indication of the significant effects of self-assessment on the students' writing. Therefore, these findings bring the present study in line with prior research conducted in different countries (Hafner & Hafner, 2003; Sadler & Good, 2006; Andrade & Due, 2007, Andrade et al., 2008; Oscarson, 2009; Chelli, 2013; Metatha & Nedjai, 2015). Accordingly, the second research hypothesis that states, if students use self-assessment techniques in their writing, this latter would improve, can be maintained. This research outcome is potentially important as it supports the notion that under appropriate conditions, students can deploy their judgement skills to improve their academic performance, which provides impetus for teachers to use the process in their EFL writing classrooms.

Self-assessment has provided students with space to review their texts and bring the necessary changes and eventually improve their performance. Three important factors can be

said to contribute to the improvement: the assessment criteria, the teacher feedback and the students' revision. Criteria serve as points of comparison which, based on Orsmond et al., (2000, p. 24), ensure accuracy and objectivity in students' judgements, enhancing therefore the quality of their compositions. Elaborating more on the issue, McMillan and Hearn (2008, P.45) explain, "by providing criteria through rubrics, models, or anonymous exemplars, students concretely understand outcomes and expectations and then begin to understand and internalize the steps necessary to meet the goals." The inclusion of different standards for different kinds of texts may have helped our participants to gain insight into what constitutes quality writing and therefore attributed fair judgements on their work. More importantly, the criteria promoted the view of writing as a goal-oriented process. The students may have realised that all writing has a purpose. Teacher feedback may also have contributed as it focused on written commentaries and correction codes that students could draw upon to bring about the necessary changes to improve their performance rather than marks. One of the participants in our study expressed explicitly her strong appreciation of this formative aspect of the self-assessment treatment in the writing logs: "I like when we write an essay and the teacher gives us remarks to correct them not a mark for the essay". In addition, drawing on Taras' (2003, p.562) claim, the teacher feedback may have helped the students overcome their unrealistic expectations and become aware of the weaknesses they did not notice. Researchers investigating feedback in EFL writing demonstrated its positive effects on both student self-assessment (e.g., Taras, 2003; Oscarson, 2009; Boud, Lawson & Thompson, 2013) and self-regulated learning (Labuhn et al., 2010). Another element that contributed to the improvement is probably the revision process which encouraged the students to undergo multiple editing and revising operations and take the necessary correctives in order to reach the final stage. Comparison of our findings with those of other studies (Hamlaoui & Fellahi, 2017; Tebib, 2018) confirms the importance of the revision and editing processes in the self-assessment

process. Taken all together, through these elements, self-assessment empowered students with criteria of assessment that defined the quality of good writing, encouraged the students to see their works in progress and therefore promoted the view of writing as a cyclical and controllable process. These three elements have been explained in chapter two as crucial conditions for effective self-assessment (Goodrich, 1996). The self-assessment process as a whole helped the students in organising and elaborating their ideas and thereupon contributed in enhancing the quality of their productions. These findings provided further evidence on the statistical findings discussed previously regarding the progress made in terms of the use of organisation and elaboration strategies.

Interestingly, the most effective effects reported were related to the narrative essays in which the students demonstrated a high level of creativity, though 43% of students did not succeed in doing so. Surprisingly, their narrative texts reflected their internal potential and showed originality as they put a personal touch which a reader can feel and therefore get a faithful picture of the stories. The students exhibited high tendency to pay attention to grammar and mechanics and they managed to take control over the discourse features of narration. More importantly, they demonstrated high imagination when narrating their stories. From the same elements of the story (character, setting and objects), the students succeeded to create their own story and develop it personally. Contrary to the image the students gave in the pre-test, these findings provided evidence that allow us to believe that what students may lack is not competence but someone to stir up their potential and internal resources and assist them in making sense of them through writing.

What seems important to note, however, is that the self-assessment did not result in greater improvement in the linguistic aspect of the students' texts compared to the discourse aspect. That is, grammar and mechanics improved but not to a remarkable extent. Although the students received feedback from the instructor, some students were unsuccessful at

bringing about the necessary change in terms of linguistic structures. The portfolio assessment showed that about 43% of participants did not improve their performance and some students even exhibited regression in some tests. This is because the students developed inaccurate self-assessments and subsequently did not respect the feedback received from the teacher. This also accords with earlier research (Qinghua, 2010), which demonstrated that grammar did not improve significantly. The researcher explained that the participants focused more on content and organisation. This finding is quite obvious taking into consideration our participants' limited linguistic competence and the pertinent problems in grammar and writing conventions reported in the pre-test. Yet, it should also be noted that these findings concern under-achieving students because the competent ones managed to correct most of their errors. This seems to lend some support for the assumption that less proficient students are unable to accurately self-assess because they lack knowledge of the target language and understanding of assessment criteria. This finding is in agreement with Kuncel et al.'s (2005) and Colthart et al.'s (2008) conclusion that the least competent students are the least able to self-assess accurately. Besides, being the teacher of these students, we could relate this to the absences they accumulated during writing classes. These students missed some of the writing and self-assessment sessions; as a result, they failed to improve their performance.

In sum, although the differences before and after the treatment were not major for all the participants from the experimental group, one clear point is that we are assured that students can improve their writing as a result of self-assessment instruction. Self-assessment strategies like comparing, editing, revising and others proved invaluable in EFL writing.

## **V. Attitudes towards Self-assessment and Potential Benefits**

With regard to attitudes, the writing logs coupled with our classroom observation unveiled different but quite interesting data. Initially, it was clear that the majority of the participants, if not to say all, were very negative about the notion of self-assessment. These

preliminary conceptions are actually quite obvious and expected taking into consideration the newness of the process. Indeed, these negative attitudes did not exist in a vacuum, but they were accumulated as a result of the learning environment and the students' previous experiences. The students' comments imply that their initial reactions may be explained in terms of their lack of knowledge and experience with self-assessment. It was crystal clear that none of the participants had experienced formal classroom self-assessment in any of their courses during the previous years at university and that the mode of assessment used by most of the teachers was the traditional one (teacher-based assessment). In consequence, the participants found the process difficult and challenging and thereupon placed low value in themselves as a source of feedback on their academic writing. As noted previously, it is noteworthy that the experimental class we worked with was composed of students taught by different teachers in their first and second years. So, the students' experiences and attitudes concern different teachers of EFL writing at the department of English. These results are relatively unsurprising given earlier research (McMillan, 2006; Andrade & du 2007; Butler & Lee, 2010). Drawing on other researchers' claim (e.g., Taras, 2001, Falchikov, 2003; M'zad-Mertani, 2016), the students' beliefs that assessment is the teacher's mere responsibility and teachers being the only competent assessor may also have had an effect on their initial conceptualisations and involvement. A Similar attitude was revealed in Sert's study (2006) among Turkish students who claimed that the person who should undertake the evaluation was the teacher. Furthermore, it is possible to assume that the students' poor self-regulation skills and low writing proficiency played a major role in their negative attitudes as well. Put all together, because of their writing difficulties, the students may have felt unable to attribute a fair judgement on their performance; thus, they found the process difficult and obviously embodied a kind of fear and reluctance over the unfamiliar process. Inevitably, the students' negative attitudes made the process challenging for us as they did not engage in at the

beginning; this is legitimate because attitudes are proven to be predictive of students' behaviour (Oscarson, 2009; Brown & Harris, 2012). In this context, these results are important because teachers should be sensitive to these attitudes and bear in mind that at the beginning, the results of implementing self-assessment or any other innovative teaching method may not be encouraging.

Eventually, the participants reported a substantial change in their attitudes as a result of extended practice. After five (5) months of instruction, feedback and guided practice, the participants gained an understanding of the process and increased their motivation and self-regulation capacities. Ultimately, they developed positive attitudes towards the process. These findings go hand in hand with those of Hanrahan and Isaacs (2001), Khodadady and Khodabakhshzade (2012) and Chelli (2013) who looked at students' attitudes towards self-assessment and came up with the same results. Andrade and Du (2007) also reported a change in students' attitudes after practice.

Evidence from the writing logs indicated that the students placed high value on self-assessment; they recognised how important, necessary and helpful the process is in developing their self-regulation skills and academic performance in EFL writing. Evidence further unveiled that the students experienced multiple benefits from the practice of self-assessment. The particularly interesting benefit was critical self-awareness linked to increased effectiveness in identifying areas of strength and weakness. Similar to what Oscarson (2009) found, self-assessment appeared to have developed our participants' metacognitive awareness and empowered them to develop as reflective writers. This may be due to the fact that the self-assessment forms provided opportunities for students to go over their productions and compare their texts against the self-assessment criteria and eventually take action to close the gap. In the same line, these qualitative data collected directly from the writing logs confirmed the significance of the statistics obtained in the self-regulation post-scale. In discussing the

benefits gained from the process, the participants pointed out that the assessment tools raised their awareness of the value of self-regulation and self-assessment and allowed them to compare and identify discrepancies between their first draft and the desired performance as stated in the assessment forms and accordingly reflect on how to improve on the final texts. Likewise, Mok et al. (2006) and Andrade and Due (2007) reported similar findings. Examples from the writing logs that illustrate this point include: “I am more aware about my strengths and weaknesses”, “The self-assessment offers us an opportunity to review and reflect upon the development of our writing, editing and critical thinking skills.” and “We have the chance to correct our mistakes by ourselves”. This suggests that the students have become aware of their role in the writing process and have gained insight into their own understanding and performance. As a result of this increased metacognitive awareness and change in attitudes towards writing, the students gained confidence and felt more efficacious.

Moreover, one of the motivating factors for the students in carrying out the self-assessment may be the fact that they were being invited to deploy their skills of creativity. This was perceptible in the last narrative essays the students produced; they could exhibit high creativity and originality. Two participants expressed this issue explicitly “It enables me to express myself freely”; “the total freedom to write, to express myself ...”. The participants thereupon developed a real sense of being responsible for their own writing. Self-assessment allowed them to monitor their performance and exert control over the writing process; they had to rely on their potential and decision making skills. Said differently, when engaged in the process of self-reflection, self-detection and self-correction, the participants generated immediate personalised feedback about the quality of their works and the efficiency of their plans and their self-regulation strategies and identified what was successfully accomplished and what needed improvement. By doing so, the students learnt how to think for themselves rather than depend solely on the teacher feedback. Put simply, self-assessment promoted

students' ownership and learning independency. These results match those observed in Khodadady and Khodabakhshzade (2012) and Tebib (2018)'s studies.

In accordance with Oscarson (2009), what is also of great significance to this research is that some students reported that they even transferred the self-assessment knowledge to other classes. This is indeed a powerful outcome. The willingness and the ability to transfer the self-assessment knowledge to subsequent learning experiences and other courses promote lifelong learning, one of the ultimate goals of education.

As a final thought stated in all the writing logs, the participants expressed an appreciation of the process as it targeted critical aspects of their learning and eventually gratitude to the researcher for introducing such a new paradigm to EFL writing. Comments such as: "Thank you for teaching me something I may keep in mind for life", "Thanks to you I got new methods to check myself" and "It's really amazing. Thank you...for all these things you taught me this year" illustrate this. The participants also voiced their willingness to make use of the knowledge they gained and their skills in the future, notably as teachers. This change in attitudes is advantageous in this study because it provides a sound rationale for maintaining and expanding the practice of self-assessment in EFL writing classrooms.

In sum, the positive attitudes developed towards self-assessment are linked to increased metacognitive and cognitive self-regulation, increased motivation and improved writing. These findings provide an answer to the third and fourth research questions about the effects of self-assessment on students' self-regulation skills and performance in writing and subsequently to the fifth question regarding students' attitudes towards the process.

## **VI. Self-assessment Concerns**

In spite of the significant results about the powerful effects of self-assessment on students' self-regulatory skills and writing performance, an important finding the study surfaced was that self-assessment is a complex and highly challenging process. This

conclusion is consistent with previous studies that highlighted difficulties in implementing and conducting self-assessment (e.g. Taras, 2015; 142244). The limitations linked to the implementation of the process can be summarised as follows: *no prior experience on self-assessment, time constraint, students' poor language proficiency and students' procrastination and absenteeism*. This finding produces adequate evidence to the last question raised in this research concerning the challenges encountered during the self-assessment process.

As listed above, the first issue which seemed to have made the process of self-assessment difficult was the students' unfamiliarity with the process. It became clear that the students had neither knowledge nor prior experience with self-assessment. The students' comments illustrate this claim: "this is the first time I learn writing with this method"; "I have mostly noticed that when I write a title for my essay, when I revise my writing ....Things I didn't use to do before". In such a situation, it is evident that awareness and training, which are considered the first two crucial conditions for successful implementation of self-assessment, are missing. In accordance with these research findings, Taras (2001) reported that it was the lack of experience which represented a major challenge for students. Therefore, it is unrealistic to expect to use self-assessment in EFL writing effectively only in a short period of time.

In this regard, one possible explanation might be that a major part of the problem is that the students were not clear as to what was expected from them since they were not used to self-assess their performance. They seemed to lack insight into the standards of academic writing. This finding highlights the need for self-assessment training and classroom practice, two pre-requisite conditions for the development of fair and effective self-assessment.

As expected, another major limitation was the lack of time. Empirical evidence gathered from the classroom observation and the students' writing logs made it clear that the

self-assessment process is time demanding. The students needed much time to grasp the principles of self-assessment and to apply the assessment criteria accurately to their own writing so as to get used to it. They expressed explicitly their wish to have had more opportunities for self-assessment practice, the thing that was problematic since self-assessment was integrated into EFL writing instruction which is in itself time demanding as well. The time assigned for the course of academic writing for third year B.A. is ninety (90) minutes per week. This is certainly not sufficient for both instruction and formative assessment. Likewise, the implementation of self-assessment was challenging to us as well given the fact that we had to design writing lessons, develop self-assessment forms for each text, assess students' productions and provide them with feedback and then reassess the final versions. Arguably, the issue of time has always been an issue as reported by many researchers (Black et al., 2004; McMillan, 2006; Mok et al., 2006) who came up with the same conclusion as ours. In demonstrating the powerful effects of time on the development of self-assessment, Andrade and Boulay (2003), for instance, reported in their study that because of the insufficient time devoted to the self-assessment treatment, there was no effect on students' essay writing. Practically, it takes time and effort to change attitudes and habits and introduce change.

Furthermore, the students' poor linguistic competence can be assumed to be the main problem for many students. Because of their inadequate knowledge of the English language (grammar, vocabulary and mechanics), some students demonstrated no significant improvement in the quality of their productions. This does make sense as they were unable to identify their errors and correct them. The following reported sentence from the students' writing logs makes the picture clear, "I wished I could erased the mistakes that I did in my writing". In fact, what the students reported in their writing logs was typically what we noted when assessing their portfolios. Some students could not eradicate their erroneous utterances

and consequently did not improve very much. The results of the post-scale also demonstrated this as grammar self-editing was the least developed aspect of self-assessment. This is quite obvious; if the students cannot understand the type of errors they commit, they are likely to perform similarly in all the assignments. This can also be related to time; due to time constraints, we could not discuss the students' language proficiency or provide more explanation on the feedback comments. In addition, no instruction was given on the linguistic features of the English language as this aspect was supposed to be fully covered during first and second years. This issue has also been pointed out by Andrade and Due (2007) who referred to this case as the problem of the same performance. It should be noted that the students' linguistic incompetence is one of the reasons why many teachers do not engage students in the process of assessment. They think that the students are unable to identify their errors, so they are likely to generate inaccurate judgements. Kadri and Amziane (2017) pointed out this issue in their study. Given the importance of knowledge of the target language in the self-assessment process, our findings highlight the necessity to address the kind of interventions needed for low achieving students.

Finally, students' procrastination appeared to be another problem that made it hard for the researcher to follow the research and instructional plans. Some students tended not to respect the deadline of submission which caused delay of the sessions of self-assessment and sometimes the procrastinators missed the self-assessment session. Our claim conforms to the results obtained by Kadri and Idri (2016) who reported a high procrastination among students at the University of Bejaia. One probable reason for the students' tendency to procrastinate was their lack of autonomy. The students' procrastination during and outside classroom sessions could be attributed to their tendency to remain passive recipients of information (lack of autonomy) or to their beliefs that assessment is the teacher's mere responsibility.

Closely linked to students' procrastination was the phenomenon of absenteeism. There

were students who did not attend the writing classes regularly, so they missed some self-assessment sessions as well. We believe this to be one of the reasons why these students did not improve their writing.

### **Conclusion**

Throughout this chapter, the findings of the study are interpreted and discussed in line with previous research. Regarding the first major finding, the comparison of the pre and post scales for both the experimental and control groups demonstrated a statistically significant increase in the students' use of self-regulated strategies which corroborates the first research hypothesis stating that if students used self-assessment techniques in their academic writing, they would develop their self-regulated capacities. As for the second major finding, the comparison of the writing tests before, during and after the self-assessment treatment showed an improvement in the students' writing performance which provides evidence to confirm the second research hypothesis claiming that if these students used the self-assessment techniques accurately, their writing competence would be enhanced. Furthermore, the students reported positive attitudes towards self-assessment and recognised its significance in improving different aspects of their self-regulation and writing. The major effects are related to increased metacognitive awareness, enhanced self-efficacy beliefs, positive attitudes and improved writing performance. In sum, although self-assessment has been found to be a complex and a challenging process, the study suggests that students can acquire skills in self-assessment which plays a pivotal role in the effectiveness of self-regulated writing.

## **Chapter Six: Research Strengths and Limitations, Pedagogical Implications and Suggestions for Future Work**

The primary aim of this study was to investigate whether the use of self-assessment in an EFL classroom could help reach high self-regulation skills and further the development of the students' writing competence. Results obtained were reported and discussed in the previous chapters. Essentially, self-assessment has been proved to have a powerful effect on the students' self-regulation skills and their writing. In this last chapter, three important elements are considered. First, we provide an account of the main strengths and limitations associated with our investigation. Second, an attempt is made to enumerate a number of pedagogical implications for EFL classrooms reached as a result of this study. Finally, the topics and research aspects that we believe are worth investigating in future studies are suggested.

### **I. Strengths and Limitations**

Throughout the investigation, we have reached important findings. The main strength of this research work is the topic itself which emphasises two important aspects of students' learning: self-regulation and self-assessment. We believe this study is one of the first attempts to approach this topic in Algeria. Moreover, its originality lies in the subject participants, third year students, and the diversity of research tools used, namely the self-regulation scale, self-assessment forms, portfolios and writing logs, which taken together, contributed to gaining insight, both quantitatively and qualitatively. Another positive point is the diverse aspects of the research variables tackled throughout the research process (writing performance, self-regulated strategies, self-assessment skills, attitudes and challenges). These are more likely to maximise the efficiency of self-assessment for teachers who are willing to make use of the results of this study and for other researchers working in the same research direction as well. The last but not least contribution of this study is the major conclusion drawn from it; that is,

the results demonstrated the positive effects of self-assessment on the development of students' self-regulation skills and improvement in their writing performance.

However, the study is subject to certain potential caveats. Both conceptual and methodological limitations should be addressed.

The first research caveat is related to the nature of the variables under investigation. Dealing with self-regulation and self-assessment as both psychological concepts involving students' cognitive and affective processes is in itself a limitation. On the one hand, it was difficult to define the concepts precisely. On the other hand, it was hard for the researcher to eliminate intervening variables. Moreover, despite their growing popularity in EFL contexts, we seem to know little about self-assessment and self-regulated learning in the Algerian context. That is, a lack of compelling research was another potential limitation; consequently, the lack of theoretical and empirical evidence made it difficult for us to situate our research within the Algerian context.

Second, the nature of the research (action research) raised many issues. One arguable weakness which may bring into question the generalisability of the results is the limited sample size. Although evidence has been gathered from different sources both qualitative and quantitative, the sample size used for the data collection was limited to forty-nine (49) participants, so the data obtained from this small sample may not be representative of the larger population. Another methodological weakness which could have affected the measurement of self-regulation was the reliance on the scale and questionnaire as the primary research tools to measure students' level of self-regulation; this may not be a true indicator of what the participants actually do or think because, as one drawback, the authenticity of the responses might be problematic. Besides, some of the disciplinary related terms (self-regulation, strategies and assessment) were roughly defined to the participants and this may have caused ambiguity or misunderstanding to some. Even though the participants were given

opportunities to ask questions related to the items, they may have felt reluctant or shy to do so.

Additionally, during the early phases of implementation of self-assessment, we encountered a number of obstacles which we could not escape, notably students' lack of awareness and autonomy, procrastination, students' low language proficiency and absenteeism. Such hindering factors made it difficult for us to respect our research plans and caused delay in the self-assessment sessions. Fortunately, the negative effects of these factors could be minimised, but students' poor attendance and procrastination remained a challenge throughout the year. Some of the participants from the experimental group did not regularly attend the writing classes and tended to submit their revised texts after the deadline. We believe this has probably affected the results of the portfolio assessment. In other words, these participants missed some self-assessment sessions; consequently, they missed the opportunity to assess and revise their works in the classroom. In relation to that, it should be noted that as a result of this absenteeism, the sample size in both groups was reduced from twenty-four (24) and twenty-five (25) participants in the pre-study to twenty-two (22) and twenty-three (23) in the post-study for the experimental and control group respectively; this is because two students from each group stopped attending the writing class.

Finally, time was also a major limitation as in almost all research done on self-assessment. As students lack awareness and prior training on self-assessment, the short period of time (5 months) devoted to the experiment was not enough to elicit the full effects of self-assessment on both the students' self-regulation and their writing. The limited time devoted to the self-assessment sessions within writing instruction could also be another limitation as the allocated time for writing as a subject for third year students (one hour and a half per week) was not sufficient to implement both instructional and research plans. In fact, priority was given to the writing instruction given the fact that we were assigned the writing module as a

teacher before being a researcher. Therefore, we felt the responsibility to fulfil the writing syllabus first while trying to achieve our research objectives. Consequently, the students could barely practise the skill (four written tasks). This is indeed the major challenge of integrating self-assessment into writing instruction.

## **II. Pedagogical Implications**

As already discussed, the findings of this study provided empirical evidence that self-assessment is feasible and has potential benefits on different aspects of the students' writing. Nevertheless, one important conclusion is that it is not an easy task to successfully implement self-assessment and ensure students' objectivity and fair judgements. The process remains challenging considering the Algerian context. In the present section, we highlight that the LMD reform should be reconsidered and giant steps need to be taken to reach its objectives. In light of the results of the present study and those of previous research, we advance a set of recommendations by highlighting the changes in classroom practice and decision making that are required to make it possible for self-assessment to be an integral part of the teaching/learning process.

### **II.1. A Shift in Classroom Practice**

The first preliminary condition for the reform to be successful and classroom assessment to be effective is changing the practices of both teachers and students. Essentially, the EFL classroom should shift focus and practice so as to become on-going, student-centred and teacher-guided. Moreover, they should aim at developing: (1) students' ability to communicate effectively with the target language, (2) their understanding of their learning process, (3) their problem solving skills, (4) their ability to establish links with the external world and eventually (5) the ability to transfer their knowledge and skills to different contexts. To this end, as one important step towards a culture shift is raising awareness of roles and duties in the classroom and changing attitudes towards learning and teaching. This inevitably

concerns both students and teachers. Students have to understand that they are responsible for their own learning; they have to be active learners and take control of the different aspects related to their learning. Similarly, teachers should understand their role as guides and facilitators. As a second step, reflection and critical thinking should be the central goal of classrooms. Drawing on the social cognitive theory, the social learning environment plays a pivotal role in the development of students' learning. As one important implication to support students' learning, we insist on the importance of building a motivating and supportive EFL classroom environment that spur students' eagerness to explore both the language and the self in their learning process and particularly a context in which learning goals are emphasised over scores. More importantly, students should be encouraged to and given opportunity to take control of their own learning and learn to make their own decisions regarding their learning and progress. Implementing self-assessment and self-regulated learning are the two important points this research puts emphasis on. However, the act of changing beliefs and practices is not as simple as theory suggests, but high demands are placed on both teachers and students who should work together for the same goal: promoting effective and lifelong learning.

## **II.2. Integrating Self-assessment in to Classroom Instruction**

Another important point towards a culture shift is involving students in the assessment process and changing attitudes towards assessment. Teachers and students should see the interplay between instruction, assessment and learning. As Shepard (2000, p.10) asserts, "our aim should be to change our cultural practices so that students and teachers look at assessment as a source of insight and help instead of an occasion for meeting out rewards and punishments." That is, assessment should be regarded both as a learning tool and an assessment device that promotes reflection, improves learning and informs teaching rather than as an occasion to exert power and control or a reward-punishment tool. Specifically,

assessment practices should incorporate a range of techniques that assess different aspects of the language and learning process. More importantly, teachers should establish pre-determined criteria of assessment and negotiate them with students so as to guide the assessment process and make expectations explicit. Accordingly, we recommend teachers to integrate self-assessment into their instructional plans by scheduling time for students' reflection and also making time to review students' works and respond to their assessments. On the one hand, teachers need to view assessment as an on-going process rather than an end-separate product and be aware of the importance of letting students' voices become part of EFL assessment practices. This has potential effects on both teaching and learning. On the other hand, students should understand that developing skills in self-assessment is vital for their learning.

As far as EFL writing is concerned, students need to develop self-awareness to recognise their strengths and weaknesses and understand their cognitive and affective functioning. Teachers, in their turn, have a role in introducing self-assessment to students and providing them with constant feedback and opportunities for practice. In this regard, we highly recommend the use of assessment forms that state explicit criteria for good performance such as rubrics, checklists, scripts and conferences. We also recommend teaching students how to assess their learning. Based on Pierce's (1999, p.133) review of the literature, teachers can teach self-assessment in five stages: direct instruction, generation and discussion of criteria, modelling and demonstration, guided practice and finally independent practice.

### **II.3. Adapting a Unified Process Genre Approach**

Drawing on the findings of this study, this research urges teachers to start reconsidering their role in developing students' writing abilities. The primary role of teachers in charge of the writing module is not to introduce students solely to the theories of text

presentation but to the process of writing as well.

In alignment with current teaching/learning approaches to EFL writing, we believe that the Algerian universities, notably Bejaia University, need a reformed version of the curriculum. For the LMD reform to be successful, there is a necessity to establish a national framework for EFL learning in general and writing in particular that defines the objectives, knowledge, skills and competencies required for effective writing. The implications of the results of this study for the teaching and learning of EFL writing speak of an adaptation of the process genre approach in which the three writing components: product, process and context are all given equal importance with sufficient practice.

A typical writing syllabus should focus on both linguistic and discourse features of written communication. Considering students' poor linguistic background, a product orientation to writing instruction remains essential to make students familiar with the English conventions and writing mechanics and grammar should be taught in context not as isolated elements. Moreover, there is a need for interventions required for low achieving students to overcome their language incompetence. At the same time, a process-genre approach seems the most appropriate for developing students' cognitive and communicative competences in EFL writing. Writing should be linked to current social issues and students' personal experiences so as to help students enjoy writing and set clear purposes for what they write. In this vein, exposure to authentic teaching material deems crucial. Model texts, for instance, have been argued to be very useful in developing knowledge of the different writing genres. More importantly, the writing process should be part of the syllabus to promote the view of the writing skill as a thinking, a social and a communicative act and the process of writing as a set of stages that involve reflecting, planning, drafting, revising and editing. As a matter of fact, first and second graduate students have roughly sufficient time to receive instruction and modelling on all these aspects.

#### **II.4. Self-regulated Learning Instruction**

Boekaert and Corno (2005, p.200) argue, “the capacity to self-regulate is central to our assumptions about learning, decision making, problem solving, and resource management in education”. In this regard, students need to learn how to learn rather than what to learn. As students are reported to lack the knowledge and the skills necessary to regulate their writing, it deems necessary for teachers to take appropriate actions to help scaffolding these skills. The implications of the results of this study for the teaching/learning of EFL writing suggest integrating self-regulated learning strategies into writing instruction. Students should be empowered to be proactive and reflective learners. Particularly, they need direct instruction and modelling on how to use different writing strategies effectively to monitor their writing and overcome their difficulties. Such instruction is effective to raise students’ awareness on the importance of taking control of their own writing through the provision of knowledge and direction on the different self-regulatory processes and strategies for particular types of writing and for the writing process in general. Basically, there are various models of self-regulated learning instruction in the literature that teachers can draw on. For instance, we highly recommend the Self-regulation Strategy Development (SRSD) model developed by Harris et al, (2013). This model among others is discussed in details in chapter one.

#### **II.5. Teacher Training**

In accordance with other research (e.g., Ross et al., 1999; AlFallay, 2004; Mok et al, 2006), the present study stresses the definite need for teacher training and development for Algerian university teachers. A common argument shared by all experts in assessment is that self-assessment does not develop automatically; students and teachers need to be trained on how to develop fair judgements on different types and genres of writing. Before implementing self-assessment, teachers should first be introduced to the principles of this process (goals, criteria, feedback, etc.) in order to understand the nature of this process then trained on how to

transfer this knowledge and skills and subsequently their expertise to students to help them develop accurate judgements. Faculty training and development opportunities are essential to ensure objectivity and achieve consistency in assessment practices. In relation to this, training courses, workshops and seminars should be offered to assist teachers in developing essential techniques (portfolios, checklists, rubrics, conferences, etc.) in self-assessment and support them in using them. Therefore, we recommend that the Ministry of Higher Education devotes sufficient time and effort to design training programs and courses on assessment that target the needs of EFL Algerian students and teachers and the field they are involved in and funds such projects by collaborating with English native experts.

### **II.6. Teacher Collaboration**

A further recommendation to achieve cultural change is encouraging a culture of collaborative assessment practices among EFL teachers. That is, teachers need to work together and create a unified system of assessment. They need to negotiate assessment criteria and share examples of efficient feedback strategies that support students' progress. As a suggestion, teachers can adopt different assessment methods and tools, then share and discuss the outcomes. Obviously, mutual observation and sharing of knowledge, viewpoints and experiences about innovative assessment methods and techniques help to achieve better assessment practices; as teachers help and learn from each others' experiences and expertise, they get to approach classroom issues from different perspectives. In addition, teachers need to consider remedy solutions to help low proficient students improve their performance. It is through discussion and collaboration that teachers find solutions to assessment issues and learning problems.

Another point we believe worth mentioning, as suggested by Corno and Randi (2000), is collaboration between teachers and researchers who can discuss classroom issues and share research results that can inform classroom practice and subsequently improve learning.

In a nutshell, collaboration deems a necessity to reach more objective and fairer assessments in EFL classrooms.

### **II.7. Constant Practice and Feedback**

In this research, we support the view that two of the conditions of self-assessment reported by Goodrich (1996) are constant practice and feedback. Clearly, the ability to self-assess and self-regulate one's writing does not develop automatically. First, it is the teacher's role to create opportunities in the classroom that engage students in the process of assessment. Second, responding to students' learning through the provision of feedback and the discussion of students' achievement deems a necessity to help students develop awareness of their strengths and weaknesses. Teachers should provide information which students can draw upon to bring about the necessary changes to improve current performance and inform subsequent learning experiences. In this regard, Ghaouar (2017) made it explicit in her research that targeted Algerian university teachers that all teachers should develop awareness, understanding and skills in the field of error correction. Drawing on Hattie and Timperley (2007, p.87), we believe that teachers in charge of writing should, through feedback, address and help students seek answers to three questions: where am I going? How am I going? and where to next?

### **II.8. Integrating Reading into Writing Instruction**

An important implication that stems from the findings of the study is that one way to develop students' composing skills is through reading. We believe that reading and writing should be equally emphasised in the curriculum and, as Fitzgerald and Shanahan (2000, p.40) argue, some pedagogical combination is useful in making learning more efficient. By drawing on Hyland (2003), we suggest to syllabus designers and educators to employ the content-oriented approach to encourage reading in EFL classrooms and emphasise its role in developing students' writing knowledge and skills.

In fact, it is part of the teacher's responsibility to motivate students to read by first making them aware that they need to build knowledge from reading through recognition of the linguistic structures and discourse features of different types of texts which facilitate the process of writing. Texts students read serve as input that help them to learn how to spell words, use proper punctuation, structure sentences and paragraphs and organise their own texts. They also help them to distinguish between the different genres of writing and the purposes they serve. Moreover, reading opens up students to new experiences and broadens their knowledge, attitudes and thinking. Teachers can also suggest reading material (books, journals, magazines, etc) as students may lack awareness of what is most appropriate to read for academic writing. Based on this, reading activities such as answering text comprehension questions and summarising texts can be very helpful in writing instruction. Likewise, we advocate Bazerman's (1980, p.659) suggestion of marginal comments and thoughtful reactions. These activities require students to record their thoughts about a text they read in immediate marginal notes then react to those notes in an essay by reflecting on and referring to previously held observations, viewpoints, experiences or other readings. In fact, this suggestion can be considered a writing activity and an assessment task in itself. That is, students are encouraged to simultaneously read, reflect, assess and write.

As a final thought, there are various models of reading-writing suggested in the literature which can assist teachers in this issue. A model to consider for example is the one suggested by Randi and Corno (2000) as narratives, discussed in chapter one.

### **II.9. Establishing an Evaluation Board**

As a final suggestion, we recommend establishing a local evaluation board or a pedagogical committee for each Algerian university, and why not at a wider national level, which follows up teachers' classroom practices to ensure sufficient supervision by field related experts and evaluates the instructional and training programs as well. This has the aim

of creating a unified system of evaluation within Algerian universities and across higher education as a whole. The first major change to introduce is promoting the view of assessment being a formative and systematic process and assuring that assessment criteria are common among all teachers teaching the same course so as to achieve credible results.

### **III. Future Work**

Although the present study has yielded important results that provided answers to the research questions and confirmed the hypotheses set at the beginning, as in all research, it has thrown up many questions in need for further investigation. Moreover, as regards the Algerian context, self-regulated learning is not receiving due interest despite its growing popularity in EFL writing classrooms; accordingly, it is high time to start exploring the concept and seek to find measures to empower students to develop as self-regulated learners. As a suggestion, future research on self-assessment and self-regulation can be carried out by addressing the limitations of this study.

First, this study can be replicated in more in-depth by implementing self-assessment at early stages of writing instruction (i.e., first year) over a long period of time as the allocated time for the writing subject is four hours and a half per week which suggests that a researcher has roughly sufficient time for both teaching instruction and research. In the same direction, the variables of this study can be investigated through other research tools such as interviews and think aloud protocols to get deeply into students' cognitive processes and motivational beliefs.

Moreover, it is interesting to extend the representative sample to many classes and ideally to other universities so as to increase the validity and reliability of the findings and therefore be able to generalise the results across the Algerian higher education. In the same manner, it would also be compelling to involve teachers of writing in the study. As self-assessment has been investigated from a students' perspective, it is vital to further explore the

process from teachers' point of view; their experiences and beliefs will certainly shed particular light on the process.

Future research is needed to account for the influence of culture on the development of self-assessment and self-regulated learning within the Algerian context as culture has always been a critical issue in the study of a foreign language. Students' writing could also be examined within this research scope. Particularly, we suggest exploring the sources of students' errors as a trial to find ways to help students overcome their difficulties.

Given the importance of feedback in EFL writing, it is recommended that future research be undertaken to examine its role in the self-assessment and the self-regulated learning processes. The significant role of feedback on the development of both concepts has been the focus of research, so here we need, again, to address this issue within the Algerian context.

Finally, topics for future research may include the association of personal factors such as motivation and attitudes in self-assessment and self-regulated learning.

## **Conclusion**

We have discussed in this chapter the strengths and limitations of this study, a number of suggested implications for classroom practice and the recommendations for future research. The conclusion that can be drawn is that the development of self-assessment and self-regulation in EFL writing should be a shared duty between the teacher and the students equally. Besides, we believe that if the implications are given sufficient consideration and the research speculations are demonstrated empirically in future research studies, teachers may presumably be able to implement self-assessment as an efficient means for scaffolding self-regulated learning and ultimately developing students' writing abilities.

### **General Conclusion**

This research has investigated the effectiveness of student self-assessment in scaffolding self-regulation among EFL students at the department of English at the University of Bejaia. The major aim of the study was to develop the self-regulation skills of students in EFL writing and therefore gain improvement in their performance. Two hypotheses have been developed. The first hypothesis claimed that the development of self-regulation within EFL writing can be fostered by engaging students in constant self-assessment of the writing process in the classroom. The second research hypothesis stated that if students use self-assessment techniques such as rubrics, checklists, scripts and conferences to assess their writing, their performance would enhance.

Prior to data collection, we provided an overview of the available literature on the variables of the study. In the first chapter of the review of literature, we presented the Algerian educational system (LMD) and various issues related to self-regulated learning in EFL writing classrooms. Throughout the chapter, we have shown that numerous research works which addressed self-regulation highlight its powerful role in EFL learning in general and in writing in particular. From a social cognitive perspective, self-regulated learning represents a self-generated and self-directed process whereby students take full responsibility and control of their own learning by setting specific and attainable goals, then monitoring their time, efforts and resources to improve their performance and progress in their learning. Besides, we have seen that self-regulation is manifested through different processes; of all the processes implied, a crucial one is self-assessment. In the second chapter, we have explored self-assessment and its related aspects. Specifically, the review of literature identified the different self-assessment techniques useful in EFL writing, the requisite conditions for effective implementation of the process in EFL writing classrooms, its powerful effects on students' learning as well as the challenges inherent in the process. One of the important

assumptions we have tried to demonstrate throughout the work is the relationship between self-assessment and self-regulated learning. Research on both constructs has produced interesting body of knowledge; it has suggested that self-regulation and self-assessment can be key vital elements for a successful learner-centred classroom and lifelong learning.

In nature, the present research is an action research based on a 5-months experiment (in addition to the three weeks of the pre-study) in which self-assessment was integrated into third year undergraduate EFL writing course as a type of alternative assessment to support students to develop effective self-regulation strategies in writing and improve their performance. Specifically, two groups of students from the University of Bejaia participated in the study (n=49). Participants from the experimental group (n=24) were actively involved in the process of self-assessment in a process-genre approach to writing. The participants used different self-assessment techniques (checklists, rubrics, writing scripts and conferences) to reflect, edit and revise their works. Participants from the control group (n=25) were taught by means of the same approach to writing but without self-assessment. In seeking answers to the research hypotheses and research questions, evidence was gained from five main sources: a questionnaire, a self-regulation scale, a classroom observation, writing portfolios and writing logs. By doing so, the statistical data obtained have been accompanied by a qualitative profile of students' achievement and a record of their attitudes and experiences, therefore reporting self-assessment results in both quantitative and qualitative terms. The triangulated data allowed framing self-assessment from the students' perspective and accordingly advance our understanding of the process which was introduced to EFL writing instruction with third year students at the department of English for the first time.

In line with the first hypothesis, the results from the self-regulation scale provided strong evidence to support the assertion that self-assessment can facilitate self-regulated learning. Self-assessment helped the students gain control over their writing and increase their

use of self-regulated strategies. This suggests the need to shift instruction to self-regulation construction in writing. Regarding the second hypothesis, although both groups exhibited a low writing proficiency in the pre-test, the progress of the experimental group in the subsequent tests proved the effectiveness of the process in developing their writing performance. That is, when students were provided with the self-assessment forms their writing performance improved suggesting that the criteria were helpful for editing and revising their productions.

Drawing on the results of the classroom observation and the writing logs, we could get insight into how the self-assessment experience benefited the participants. Data revealed that self-assessment had positive effects on the students' writing experience in four ways. First, it had a powerful effect on the students' metacognition. The study showed that engaging the students in constant assessment of their own writing developed in them an awareness of their writing achievement and their role in the writing process. In other words, self-assessment helped the students reflect on their writing by identifying areas of strength and weakness and therefore think of ways to improve. Second, self-assessment played a significant role in boosting the students' self-efficacy beliefs. At the beginning, the students performed poorly and had low self-efficacy beliefs, but when engaged in the process of reflecting, editing and revising their productions, they recognised that their low writing achievement was attributed to a lack of control and strategy use rather than to a limited potential or incompetence. Eventually, they became more self-efficacious and learnt to trust their abilities to perform well. Third, as a result of the metacognitive awareness and the increased self-efficacy, the participants worked harder and enhanced their use of self-regulation strategies which predicted subsequent improvement in their writing performance. The last point to emphasise is that after extended practice, the participants were positive about self-assessment and expressed their willingness to transfer their skills to other learning experiences.

However, it should be noted that although the study yielded positive outcomes, the research process and writing instruction revealed that integrating self-assessment into writing instruction is a complex and multifaceted process which is affected by various personal and environmental factors. This shows how difficult it is to introduce innovative methods and change classroom practice. The main constraints we encountered were related to the students' low language proficiency, the lack of prior experience on self-assessment, time constraints, procrastination and absenteeism. Taken all together, the study underlines the need for explicit training on self-assessment and self-regulation and the necessity to address students' linguistic incompetence.

In a nutshell, the most important of all the messages emerging from this study is that thoughtfully designed self-assessment procedures can empower students to develop as reflective and self-regulated writers. Yet, both students and teachers have a crucial role in the development of self-assessment; thus, this thesis calls for deep changes in the students' and teachers' perceptions of their roles in the EFL classroom. As such, four key points are reemphasised:

1. Teachers should be aware of the value of self-assessment and self-regulation in EFL learning and their role in developing these skills in students. Therefore, they should focus in classroom instruction on how to promote strategic and lifelong learning.
2. Students should be aware that their low proficiency in writing or learning failure in general is not due to incompetence but rather to self-regulation deficiency. Thus, the first emphasis in EFL classrooms is to increase students' awareness of and beliefs that they can succeed if they invest in time and efforts.
3. Assessment should be viewed as an integral part of classroom instruction rather than a separate end of it. Researchers and educators in Algeria need to investigate

ways to adopt a pedagogy which integrates alternative assessment into classroom practice.

4. Self-assessment should be integrated into classroom assessment in order for students to develop as reflective learners and become masters of their own learning, an ultimate goal of the LMD reform. Students need to assess their learning process, their approaches to tasks and their problem solving skills and most importantly seek ways for improvement.

As a final thought, it should be noted that the present investigation is a first trial to understand the concepts of self-regulated learning and self-assessment in Algeria. This means that these are new findings which are not yet generalisable. Therefore, we conclude with two important questions that, if investigated in future research, they will certainly add to the present thesis:

1. To what extent are students' self-generated assessments accurate?
2. What is the role of teacher feedback in student self-assessment?

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APPENDIX A

**Classroom Observation Form**

<b>Class :</b>	<b>n =</b>	<b>Date :</b>
<b>Session :</b>	<b>N° of attendees =</b>	<b>Time :</b>
<b>Observer :</b>		

**Teaching/Research Instruction**

For each classroom aspect, the observer writes down the observation (yes/no, or the answer to the question the item elicits). The observer also comments on the observed aspects and records any unexpected event.

Classroom aspect	Observation note
<b>Reaction</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do students' show interest to the Instruction?</li> </ul>	
<b>Interaction</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is there a reciprocal interaction between the instructor and students?</li> </ul>	
<b>Engagement</b> The number of intervening students in the session. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Asking questions</li> <li>Answering questions</li> </ul>	
<b>Students' behaviour</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Listening to the instructor</li> <li>Taking notes</li> <li>Talking with classmates</li> </ul>	
<b>Teacher Talk</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comprehensible</li> <li>Incomprehensible</li> </ul>	
<b>Writing assignments</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students' process and techniques</li> </ul>	
<b>Content</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understood</li> <li>Not understood</li> </ul>	
<b>Session objectives</b> Have I reached my objectives? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Instructional</li> <li>Experimental</li> </ul>	

APPENDIX B

Pilot Questionnaire

University of Bejaia

Third Year Students

Department of English

Group:

Dear student,

In this research work, we are investigating the effects of students' self-assessment in promoting self-regulation in academic writing. This questionnaire is designed to ask you about your study habits, skills and motivation for EFL writing. This is not a test and there are no right or wrong answers, so we would like you to respond to this questionnaire as accurately as possible reflecting your own attitudes and behaviour. This will be helpful for your writing and it is part of our research study.

Please be assured that your answers are kept anonymous.

Section One: Background Information

Could you please indicate:

- Your Age:
- Your gender:

Section Two: Students' Metacognitive Awareness and Attitudes

Please answer the following questions:

1. Do you *like* EFLwriting?  YES  NO

Why?.....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

2. How do you *perceive* writing?  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

3. What are the *difficulties* you get when writing a paragraph or an essay?  
 .....  
 .....

.....  
.....  
.....  
4. What are *the strategies* (actions, tactics, tools, etc.) you use when writing in the classroom?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
5. What are *the causes* of your difficulties in writing?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
6. What should you *do* to develop your writing competence?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
7. What should your *teacher* do to help you develop your writing competence?

**Thank you for your collaboration**

APPENDIX C  
**Research Time Table**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Focus</b>
27/10/2015	Teachers interview
10/11/2015	Paragraph writing (review) Analysis of a model text
17/11/2015	Pilot questionnaire The Pre-test (paragraph on the internet). Criteria of good writing
24/11/2015	Analysis of a model text The pre-scale Self-assessment of the pre-test
01/12/2015	The writing Process Writing strategies
08/12/2015	Progress test 1 (paragraph on a free topic) Self-assessment of the progress test 1
<b>17/12/2015- 03/01/2016</b>	<b>Winter holiday</b>
15/12/2015	Essay Writing organisation Thesis statement Pitfalls
05/01/2016	Essay Writing (concluding paragraph) Comparison of paragraph and essay writing
12/01/2016	Descriptive Essay organisation Analysis of a descriptive essay model
<b>19/01/2016- 11/02/2016</b>	<b>Exams Period</b>
16/02/2016	Progress test 2 (descriptive essay) Self-assessment of the progress test 2
23/02/2016	Narrative Essay organisation
01/03/2016	Analysis of a Narrative Essay Model
15/03/2016	The Post-test (narrative essay)
05/04/2016	Self-assessment of the post-test Argumentative Essay organisation
12/04/2016	Analysis of an argumentative essay model Home work (write an argumentative essay on a free topic).

19/04/2016	Self-assessment of the argumentative essay Comparative and Contrastive Essay Organisation The post-scale
26/04/2016	Analysis of a comparative/ contrastive essay model
26/05/2016	Collection of the students' writing logs

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## APPENDIX D

### Writing Syllabus of Third year

#### Course Objectives

The objectives of third year program are concentrated on the essay writing.

#### Course content

##### Semester One

1. Review of the paragraph (structure and types)
2. The writing process
3. Introduction to essay writing
  - a. Structure
  - b. Thesis statement pitfalls
4. Structure of an essay
  - a. The introductory paragraph
  - b. The thesis statement
  - c. The body paragraphs
  - d. The concluding paragraph
  - e. Transition
5. Practice

##### Semester Two

1. Instruction and modelling on the different types of essays:
  - a. Descriptive
  - b. Narrative
  - c. Argumentative
  - d. Comparison/contrast
2. Practice

APPENDIX E  
Correction Codes

APPENDIX

B

Correction Symbols

Symbol	Meaning	Example of Error	Corrected Sentence
p	punctuation	I live <sup>p</sup> and go to school here <sup>p</sup>	I live and go to school here.
^	missing word	I <sup>am</sup> working in a restaurant. <sup>^</sup>	I am working in a restaurant.
cap	capitalization	It is located at <sup>cap</sup> main and <sup>cap</sup> baker <sup>cap</sup> streets in the <sup>cap</sup> City.	It is located at Main and Baker Streets in the city.
vt	verb tense	I never <sup>vt</sup> work as a cashier until I <sup>vt</sup> get a job there.	I had never worked as a cashier until I got a job there.
s/v agr	subject-verb agreement	The manager <sup>s/v agr</sup> work hard. There <sup>s/v agr</sup> is five employees.	The manager works hard. There are five employees.
pron agr	pronoun agreement	Everyone works hard at <sup>pron agr</sup> their jobs.	All the employees work hard at their jobs.
( )	connect to make one sentence	We work together. <sup>( )</sup> So we have become friends.	We work together, so we have become friends.
sp	spelling	The <sup>sp</sup> maneger is a woman.	The manager is a woman.
sing/pl	singular or plural	She treats her <sup>sing/pl</sup> employees like <u>slave</u> .	She treats her employees like slaves.
X	unnecessary word	My boss <del>she</del> watches everyone all the time.	My boss watches everyone all the time.
wf	wrong word form	Her voice is <sup>wf</sup> irritated.	Her voice is irritating.

Symbol	Meaning	Example of Error	Corrected Sentence
ww	wrong word	The food is delicious. Besides <sup>ww</sup> , the restaurant is always crowded.	The food is delicious. Therefore, the restaurant is always crowded.
ref	pronoun reference error	The restaurant's specialty is fish. <u>They</u> <sup>ref</sup> are always fresh.	The restaurant's specialty is fish. It is always fresh.
		The food is delicious. Therefore, <u>it</u> <sup>ref</sup> is always crowded.	The food is delicious. Therefore, the restaurant is always crowded.
wo OR ~	wrong word order	Friday/always is our busiest night.	Friday is always our busiest night.
ro	run-on sentence	[Lily was fired she <sup>ro</sup> is upset.]	Lily was fired, so she is upset.
cs	comma splice	[Lily was fired, she <sup>cs</sup> is upset.]	
frag	fragment	She was fired. <u>[Because she was</u> <sup>frag</sup> always late.]	She was fired because she was always late.
		[Is open from 6:00 p.m. <sup>frag</sup> until the last customer leaves.]	The restaurant is open from 6:00 p.m. until the last customer leaves.
		[The employees on <sup>frag</sup> time and work hard.]	The employees are on time and work hard.
not //	not parallel	Most of our regular customers are <u>friendly</u> <sup>not //</sup> <u>and generous</u> tippers.	Most of our regular customers are friendly and tip generously.

## 186 Appendix B | Correction Symbols

Symbol	Meaning	Example of Error	Corrected Sentence
prep	preposition	We start serving prep dinner 6:00 p.m. ^	We start serving dinner at 6:00 p.m.
conj	conjunction	Garlic shrimp, fried conj clams, broiled lobster ^ are the most popular dishes.	Garlic shrimp, fried clams, and broiled lobster are the most popular dishes.
art	article	Diners in the United States expect art glass ^ of water when they first sit down.	Diners in the United States expect a glass of water when they first sit down.
Ⓣ	add a transition	The new employee was careless. She frequently spilled coffee on the table.	The new employee was careless. For example, she frequently spilled coffee on the table.
¶	start a new paragraph		
nfs/nmp	needs further support/needs more proof. You need to add some specific details (examples, facts, quotations) to support your points.		

APPENDIX F

Assessment Grids

*Assessment Grid for Paragraphs*

---

Student name:

Text:

Criteria		Grading scale (out of 20)			
		Excellent 1	Good 0.75	Fair 0.5	Poor 0.25
Layout	One block §				
	Indentation				
Structure	Topic sentence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• topic</li> <li>• controlling idea</li> </ul>				
	Supporting sentences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• main points</li> <li>• details</li> </ul>				
	Concluding sentence				
Unity					
Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development</li> <li>• Evidence</li> </ul>				
	Originality and Creativity				
Coherence	Smoothness				
	Transition				
	Reference				
Language	Vocabulary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriateness</li> <li>• variation</li> </ul>				
	Grammar <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tenses (consistency and agreement)</li> <li>• Mechanics (punctuation and capitalisation)</li> <li>• Pronouns</li> </ul>				
	Spelling				

## Assessment Grid for Essays

---

Student name:

Text:

Criteria		Grading scale (out of 20)			
		Excellent 1	Good 0.75	Fair 0.5	Poor 0.25
Layout	5 §s				
	Indentation				
Structure	Introductory § <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General statements</li> <li>• Thesis Statement</li> </ul>				
	Body §s <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• T.S</li> <li>• Supporting Sentences</li> </ul>				
	Concluding §				
Unity					
Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development</li> <li>• Evidence</li> </ul>				
	Originality and Creativity				
Coherence	Smoothness				
	Transition				
	Reference				
Language	Vocabulary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriateness</li> <li>• variation</li> </ul>				
	Grammar <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tenses (consistency and agreement)</li> <li>• Mechanics (punctuation and capitalisation)</li> <li>• Pronouns</li> </ul>				
	Spelling				

## APPENDIX G

## Self-regulation Scale

University of Bejaia

Third Year Students

Department of English

Group

Dear student,

Please indicate how often you experience the following situations when engaged in a writing task:

**Perceived Self-efficacy**

	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
1. I am <i>certain</i> I can write a good text.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. I <i>expect</i> to do <i>well</i> in my writing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I am <i>satisfied</i> with my written compositions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Goal-setting**

	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
4. I take time to <i>reflect</i> on the topic before I start writing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. I make <i>charts, tables and mind maps</i> to help me brainstorm information.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. I set a <i>goal</i> and make a <i>plan</i> as a guide while I am writing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. I prepare <i>questions</i> on the topic to guide my writing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Strategy Use**

	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
8. I take <i>notes</i> before I start drafting.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. I <i>group</i> my ideas to help me organise my thoughts.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. I <i>highlight</i> and <i>summarise</i> the most important information to write.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

11. I <i>elaborate</i> my text through details and Examples.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. I <i>challenge</i> myself to complete my text.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. I persist when facing difficulty until I finish.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. I keep <i>reminding</i> myself that writing is important.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. I manage to <i>control</i> my <i>anxiety</i> .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. I seek <i>assistance</i> from the teacher when I find difficulty.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Self- assessment

	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
17. I am <i>aware</i> of my weaknesses in writing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. I <i>identify</i> my mistakes alone.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. I <i>correct</i> my mistakes alone.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20. I <i>read</i> my essay several times.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21. I <i>edit</i> my grammatical mistakes.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
22. I <i>edit</i> my spelling mistakes.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
23. I <i>revise</i> my text for meaning.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
24. When I finish writing, I go over my composition to <i>compare</i> it to the goal I set at the beginning.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Thank you for your collaboration**

APPENDIX H  
Writing Checklists

**Paragraph Checklist**

---

Name:

Date:

Assignment:

Purpose:.....  
.....  
.....

**Layout**

- |                                     |     |                          |    |                          |
|-------------------------------------|-----|--------------------------|----|--------------------------|
| My paragraph (§) has a title.       | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| The first line of my § is indented. | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| My § is written as one block.       | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
- 

**Structure & Content**

- |  |     |                          |    |                          |
|--|-----|--------------------------|----|--------------------------|
| My § fits the assignment.                                | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| My § has a topic sentence (T.S.).                        | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| The T.S. contains both a topic and a controlling idea.   | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| The controlling idea is specific.                        | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| The body § is related to the T.S.                        | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| My body provides enough and strong supporting sentences. | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| My § ends with an appropriate concluding sentence.       | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
- 

**Coherence & Cohesion**

- |  |     |                          |    |                          |
|--|-----|--------------------------|----|--------------------------|
| My § is unified.   | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| My § flows smoothly from beginning to end.                                     | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I repeated key words when necessary.   | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I used pronouns consistently.  | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I used some transitional words/phrases.  | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| My ideas are developed in a logical order.                                     | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| My § has correct spelling with punctuation marks and<br>all words capitalised. | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |

## Writing Process Checklist

---

Name:

Date:

Assignment: .....

Purpose:.....  
.....  
.....

### Layout

- My paragraph (§) has a title. Yes  No
- The first line of my § is indented. Yes  No
- My § is written as one block. Yes  No
- 

### The Pre-writing Stage

- I took time to select a topic. Yes  No
- I defined the goal of my text. Yes  No
- I took enough time to reflect on the topic.
- I used a table. Yes  No
- I used a mind map. Yes  No
- I used a word list. Yes  No
- I set a detailed plan for my paragraph. Yes  No
- 

### The Drafting stage

- My § is divided into three parts. Yes  No
- I organised my ideas following my plan. Yes  No
- I elaborated my plan through details and examples. Yes  No
- I focused mostly on content. Yes  No
- 

### The Revision stage

- I read my paragraph several times. Yes  No

    How many times? .....

I checked if:

My T.S. is specific.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
All my supporting sentences are related to the T.S.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
I repeated key words when necessary.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
I used enough transitional devices.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
I used appropriate vocabulary.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
I added missing information.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
I deleted unnecessary or irrelevant details.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

---

### **The Editing stage**

I read my § several times Yes  No

How many times? .....

I checked if:

My § has correct spelling Yes  No

I used pronouns consistently. Yes  No

I used different types of sentences (simple, compound, complex, ...). Yes  No

I used verb tenses consistently. Yes  No

All verbs agree with their subjects. Yes  No

All words necessary words are capitalised. Yes  No

I used punctuation marks appropriately. Yes  No

I developed a final draft of my §. Yes  No

---

### **The Sharing Stage**

I handed the final version of my §. Yes  No

I Submitted my § on time. Yes  No

# Descriptive Essay Checklist

---

Name:

Date:

Assignment:

Purpose:.....  
.....  
.....

## Layout

- My essay has a title. Yes  No
- My essay has five §s. Yes  No
- Each paragraph indented. Yes  No
- 

## Structure & Content

The introductory §

- The introductory sentences capture the reader's attention. Yes  No
- The thesis statement has both a topic and a controlling idea. Yes  No
- The controlling idea is specific and states the three main characteristics of my topic. Yes  No

The body §s

- The body is related to the thesis statement. Yes  No
- Each body § explains one characteristic . Yes  No
- Each § has a T.S. Yes  No
- I used my five senses to describe my subject Yes  No
- I used different adjectives and adverbs. Yes  No

My essay ends with appropriate concluding sentences. Yes  No

Summary  Restatement  Final Judgement

---

## Coherence & Cohesion

My essay is unified (all §s are about the topic). Yes  No

My essay flows smoothly from beginning to end. Yes  No

My ideas are developed in some kind of logical/spacial order. Yes  No

I repeated key words when necessary. Yes  No

I used pronouns consistently. Yes  No

I used appropriate and varied transitional devices. Yes  No

My essay has correct spelling with punctuation marks and Yes  No

all words are capitalised.

## Narrative Essay Checklist

---

Name:

Date:

Assignment:

Purpose:.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

### Layout

- My essay (§) has a title Yes  No
- My essay has five §§ Yes  No
- Each § is indented Yes  No
- 

### Structure & Content

The introductory §

- My story has an attractive and engaging hook. Yes  No
- The introduction provides sufficient background information on the story. Yes  No
- The *who, when, where and what* questions are addressed. Yes  No

The body §§

- My Story has a personalised plot. Yes  No
- The body §§ follow the plot of the story. Yes  No
- Events are well explained in the body §§. Yes  No
- Each § develops a specific event. Yes  No
- The passage of time is clear. Yes  No

The Concluding §

- My essay has an end. Yes  No
- The concluding § is well-developed. Yes  No
- 

### Coherence & Cohesion

- My essay is unified. Yes  No
- Ideas are developed in specific order (flash-forward or flashback). Yes  No
- My essay flows smoothly from beginning to end. Yes  No

- |  |                              |                             |
|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| I used time signals to tie my events together.     | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Sentences are complete and clear.                  | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I used pronouns consistently.                      | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Each verb agrees with its subject.                 | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| All word are spelled correctly.                    | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Each sentence has an appropriate punctuation mark. | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| All words are capitalized when necessary.          | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |

APPENDIX I  
**Writing Rubrics**

**Paragraph Rubric**

---

Name:

Date:

Assignment:

Purpose:.....  
 .....  
 .....

Rating	Criteria
<b>Excellent</b>  <input type="checkbox"/>	I have developed a single § with a clear topic sentence, fully elaborated ideas and a conclusion. I have selected the appropriate verb tenses and a variety of grammatical and syntactical structures with smooth transitions. I have used varied and appropriate vocabulary There are occasional errors in mechanics (spelling, punctuation and capitalisation).
<b>Good</b>  <input type="checkbox"/>	I have Written a single § with a clear topic sentence and supporting details. I have resented ideas logically though some parts are not fully developed. I have written a conclusion. I have used appropriate verb tenses and a variety of grammatical and syntactical structures with some transitions. I have used appropriate vocabulary. There are few errors in mechanics which do not detract from meaning.
<b>Fair</b>  <input type="checkbox"/>	I have written sentences with a general topic sentence. Supporting sentences are not well-developed; lack of details. Tenses are used inconsistently, the use of some complex and compound sentences but with problems in subject-verb agreement. I have used high frequency words; some words are not appropriate. Mechanics are not always respected. Errors sometimes interfere with meaning.
<b>Poor</b>  <input type="checkbox"/>	I have written a § with no topic sentence. There is a lack of supporting sentences and no details. I have written basic sentences; problems in verb tense; subject-verb disagreement. I have used limited and repetitious vocabulary, often inappropriate. There are numerous spelling mistakes, no punctuation and no capitalisation. Errors often interfere with meaning .

## Writing Process Rubric

Name:

Date:

Assignment:

Purpose:.....  
 .....  
 .....

The Stage	Rating			
	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Pre-writing	<input type="checkbox"/> Detailed evidence shows time spent brainstorming (mind map, table, etc.) and prewriting ideas for this §. The goal is clear and an elaborated plan has been developed.	<input type="checkbox"/> Enough evidence shows the use of brainstorming and prewriting ideas for this §. The goal is defined and a plan has been developed.	<input type="checkbox"/> Some evidence shows time spent brainstorming and prewriting ideas for this §. The goal is not clear and only a sketchy plan has been developed.	<input type="checkbox"/> Little to no time has been spent brainstorming and prewriting ideas for this §.  Neither a goal nor a plan has been developed.
Drafting	<input type="checkbox"/> Rough draft clearly includes ideas from brainstorming and prewriting. Evidence shows clear organisation in writing.	<input type="checkbox"/> Rough draft includes ideas from brainstorming and prewriting. Evidence shows that the information in the prewriting has been organised to write the rough draft.	<input type="checkbox"/> Rough draft includes limited ideas from brainstorming and prewriting. An attempt has been made to include the information from prewriting stage in the rough draft.	<input type="checkbox"/> Rough draft includes little to no ideas from brainstorming and prewriting.
Revision	<input type="checkbox"/> Numerous changes have been made to writing, changing details to make writing more attractive to the reader.	<input type="checkbox"/> Revision shows adequate changes made to content and ideas in writing. The three parts of the § are related. Details were added to enhance writing.	<input type="checkbox"/> There is attempt to make changes to the text; however, the changes are minimal. There are some supporting ideas but they are not strong enough.	<input type="checkbox"/> Little to no time is spent revising. Little to no changes have been made to the §. Ideas are not clear and failure to link the three parts of the §. There is a lack of supporting sentences.

Editing	<input type="checkbox"/> Much time has been spent in checking the linguistic patterns of the §. Occasional errors in grammar and conventions can be noticed.	<input type="checkbox"/> Enough time has been spent in checking the language and conventions. Few errors are made in grammar and conventions.	<input type="checkbox"/> Some time has been spent trying to edit the §. Frequent errors are made in grammar and conventions.	<input type="checkbox"/> Little to no time has been spent editing. Numerous errors in grammar and conventions make it hard to understand the composition.
Sharing	<input type="checkbox"/> Final draft is complete. The § is well-developed and has a clear beginning, middle and ending.  The § is submitted on time.	<input type="checkbox"/> Final draft is complete and there is evidence that adequate effort has been made to develop the §. The § is submitted on time.	<input type="checkbox"/> Final draft is incomplete and has very little idea development. the § could be submitted on time.	<input type="checkbox"/> No final draft was written; the § has little idea development.  The § is not completed on time.

## Descriptive Essay Rubric

Name:

Date:

Assignment:

Purpose:.....  
 .....  
 .....

Criteria	Rating scale			
	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Layout	<input type="checkbox"/> The Essay contains five paragraphs with the same length. Each § is indented.	<input type="checkbox"/> The Essay contains five paragraphs with approximately the same length. Each § is indented.	<input type="checkbox"/> The Essay contains five paragraphs, but there is no balance in length. Not all §s are indented.	<input type="checkbox"/> The Essay contains less than five paragraphs which are different in length. There is no indentation.
Introductory Paragraph	<input type="checkbox"/> The introductory § clearly states the subject described and directly captures the reader's attention.  The thesis statement is specific and well-written.	<input type="checkbox"/> The introductory paragraph states adequately the subject described and captures the reader's attention.  The thesis statement is specific.	<input type="checkbox"/> The introductory paragraph attempts to state the subject described but does not particularly capture the reader's attention.  The thesis statement is general.	<input type="checkbox"/> There is no clear introduction of the subject described. So, the § is not appealing to the reader.  There is no thesis statement.
Body Paragraphs	<input type="checkbox"/> All body paragraphs are precisely related to the thesis statement. Each § has a T.S. and explains only one characteristic. Several relevant and quality details provide important information that allows the reader to picture, smell, feel, hear or	<input type="checkbox"/> All body paragraphs are related to the thesis statement. Each § has a T.S. and explains only one characteristic. Supporting details and information are relevant. There are adequate vivid details in the essay.	<input type="checkbox"/> Some body paragraphs are not related to the thesis statement or do not have a T.S. Supporting details and information are relevant, but several key issues are unsupported. There are details but they do not help the reader picture the description.	<input type="checkbox"/> Body paragraphs are not adequately related to the thesis statement. The §s do not have a T.S. Supporting details and information are typically unclear or not related to the topic. There are no or barely any vivid details in the essay.

	imagine the subject described.			
Concluding Paragraph	<input type="checkbox"/> The conclusion is strong and leaves the reader with a feeling that he/she knows the subject described.	<input type="checkbox"/> The conclusion is recognisable and ties up almost all the loose ends.	<input type="checkbox"/> The conclusion is recognisable, but does not tie up several loose ends.	<input type="checkbox"/> There is no clear conclusion, the paper just ends.
Word Choice	<input type="checkbox"/> The use of varied words (verbs, adjectives and adverbs) and phrases that draw a vivid picture in the reader's mind and the choice and placement of the words is perfectly accurate, natural and original.	<input type="checkbox"/> The use of different vivid words (verbs, adjectives and adverbs) and phrases that draw pictures in the reader's mind, but occasionally the words are used inaccurately or seem repeated.	<input type="checkbox"/> The use of words that communicate hardly; the essay lacks variety and originality.	<input type="checkbox"/> The use of limited vocabulary that does not communicate or capture the reader's interest. Vocabulary is simple, repetitious and often inappropriate.
Grammar Mechanics	<input type="checkbox"/> All sentences are well-constructed with varied structures. There are no errors in grammar, spelling, capitalisation, or punctuation.	<input type="checkbox"/> Most sentences are well-constructed with varied structures. There are few errors and these errors do not distract the reader.	<input type="checkbox"/> Not all sentences are well-constructed and they all have a similar structure. There are considerable errors that sometimes distract the reader.	<input type="checkbox"/> Sentences lack structure and appear incomplete or rambling. There are serious errors that interfere with the reader's understanding of the essay.

# Narrative Essay Rubric

Name:

Date:

Assignment:

Purpose:.....  
 .....  
 .....

Criteria	Rating Scale			
	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Layout	<input type="checkbox"/> The essay contains five paragraphs with the same length. Each § is indented.	<input type="checkbox"/> The essay contains five paragraphs with approximately the same length. Each § is indented.	<input type="checkbox"/> The essay contains five paragraphs, but there is no balance in length. Not all §s are indented.	<input type="checkbox"/> The essay contains less than five paragraphs which are different in length. There is no indentation.
Introductory Paragraph	<input type="checkbox"/> The introductory § has an engaging hook, clearly sets the scene (what/who/where/when) and directly captures the reader's attention.  The thesis statement is specific and well-written.	<input type="checkbox"/> The introductory § has an interesting hook, states adequately the background of the story (what/who/where/when) and captures the reader's attention.  The thesis statement is specific.	<input type="checkbox"/> The introductory § partially explains the background of the story and lacks details. The thesis statement is not well-stated.	<input type="checkbox"/> Background details are a random collection of information, unclear or not related to the story. The thesis statement is unclear or not stated at all.
Body Paragraphs	<input type="checkbox"/> The events are developed with a consistent and effective order, showing the story in details. There is a logical progression of ideas with a clear structure that enhances the thesis. Transitions are mature and graceful.	<input type="checkbox"/> The events are developed with consistent order using adequate details. There is a logical progression of ideas. Transitions are present equally throughout the essay.	<input type="checkbox"/> The body shows the events, but lacks details. Some key issues are unsupported. Organisation is fairly clear. Some transitions are present.	<input type="checkbox"/> The story is undeveloped and tells rather than shows. No discernable organisation. Transitions are not present.
Concluding	<input type="checkbox"/> The conclusion is strong and leaves	<input type="checkbox"/> The conclusion is recognisable. The	<input type="checkbox"/> The conclusion is fairly	<input type="checkbox"/> There is no clear conclusion,

Paragraph	the reader with a feeling that he/she really understands the whole story.	reader can picture the whole story.	recognisable.	the paper just ends.
Coherence & Cohesion	<input type="checkbox"/> Writing is smooth, skillful and coherent. Sentences are strong and expressive with varied structures.  Time order signals are well-chosen; they perfectly connect all the events.  The story exhibits high level creativity.	<input type="checkbox"/> Writing is clear and sentences have varied structures.  The use of various time order signals.  The story is original.	<input type="checkbox"/> Writing is clear, but sentences may lack variety. Time order signals seldom connect the events.  Lack of originality and creativity.	<input type="checkbox"/> Writing is confusing and hard to follow. It contains fragments and/or run-on sentences. Time order signals are not used.  The story is not original.
Language	<input type="checkbox"/> Punctuation, spelling and capitalisation are appropriately used, with no errors.	<input type="checkbox"/> Punctuation, spelling and capitalisation are appropriately used, with few errors.	<input type="checkbox"/> Many errors in punctuation, spelling and capitalisation are detectable.	<input type="checkbox"/> Distracting errors in punctuation, spelling and capitalisation.

## APPENDIX J

### Writing Scripts

#### **The Writing Process SCRIPT**

---

##### **1. Pre-writing: time to think**

I have to decide on the purpose (reason) of my writing: what am I going to write?

I have to brainstorm ideas about my topic.

I need to write the main ideas and key words related to my topic.

I can use tables, mind maps, charts, etc.

I have to set a plan to structure my thoughts and organise information.

##### **2. Drafting: time to write**

I need to translate my thoughts into words.

I have to put the ideas I gathered into meaningful sentences.

I should focus on meaning, not structure.

##### **3. Revising: time to make my text better**

I have to read my text several times.

I have to rearrange words and sentences.

I have to omit unnecessary information and add more details when needed.

##### **4. Editing: time to correct it**

I have to check if all sentences are complete and grammatically correct.

I need to make sure I have a variety of sentences (complex, compound, ...).

I have to correct grammatical, spelling and punctuation mistakes.

##### **5. Sharing: time to share my final draft**

Time is over; I have to hand my paragraph to the teacher.

# Descriptive essay SCRIPT

---

Name:

Date:

Assignment:

Purpose:.....  
.....  
.....

## DO NOT TELL, SHOW!

### 1. Introductory §

I have to decide on the purpose of my writing: what am I going to write?

.....  
.....

I have to choose a topic  a person,  an animal,  
 an object  a place

I have to brainstorm ideas about my topic: what are my subject's characteristics?

How/what the subject looks/ behaves/does: what do I see?

How the subject feels/thinks: what do I feel?

How the subject smells: What do I smell?

How the subject sounds: what do I hear?

How the subject tastes: what do I taste?

I have to introduce my topic clearly (at least three introductory sentences).

I have to write a clear and specific thesis statement (topic + controlling idea)

### 2. Body §§

I have to develop my thesis statement in three body §§.

I have to write a topic sentence for each §.

I have to explain each main characteristic in one § with details and examples.

I need to use different verbs, adjectives and adverbs.

I have to use coordination and transitional devices to link my ideas and §§.

### 3. Concluding §

I have to signal the end of my essay with an appropriate transitional device.

I have to write different concluding sentences (at least three).

Summary  Restatement  Final Judgement

### 4. Coherence & Cohesion

I have to ensure that my writing is smooth and coherent.

I have to check if all sentences are complete and grammatically correct.

I need to make sure I have a variety of sentences (complex, compound, ...).

I have to use different coordinative/subordinate conjunctions.

I have to put the appropriate punctuation marks and capitalise where necessary.

# Narrative Essay SCRIPT

---

Name:

Date:

Assignment:

Purpose:.....  
.....  
.....

## 1. Pre-writing

What is my story about (topic)? .....

I have to decide on the purpose of my writing: what am I going to narrate?  
.....  
.....

I have to set a clear plot for my story.

I have to brainstorm ideas about the main events.

## 2. Introductory §

I have to begin my § with an appealing hook that catches the reader's attention (a question, a relevant quotation, a fact, etc.).

I need to introduce the story clearly and set the scene.

I have to provide the background of the story: what, who, when, where and how.

I have to develop a clear and specific thesis statement (what to narrate, how the story is significant or what lesson I learnt).

## 3. Body §§: *do not tell, show*

I have to develop my story in three body §§.

I have to write a topic sentence for each § (the main event).

I need to use the five senses to describe and provide details about what I heard, saw, and felt during the events.

I have to report the events using time chronologically (either flash-forward or flashback).

I have to use transitional devices to clearly indicate to the reader what happened first, next and last.

## 4. Concluding §

I have to signal the end of my story with an appropriate transitional word/phrase.

The concluding § includes the closing action of the events, some reflection or analysis of the significance of the events to me (the lesson I learnt or how the story has affected my life).

## **5. Coherence & Cohesion**

I have to check if my ideas are complete and meaningful.

I have to check if there is a smooth transition between ideas.

I need to use different verbs, adjectives and adverbs.

I have to check if all sentences are complete and grammatically correct.

I need to make sure I have a variety of sentences (complex, compound, ...).

I have to use different coordinative/subordinative conjunctions.

I have to put the appropriate punctuation marks and capitalise where necessary.

APPENDIX K  
Writing Conference Form

**Conference Form**

---

Name:

Date:

Assignment: .....

Purpose:.....

.....

.....

What do I like most about this piece of writing?

My written composition

My classmate's written composition

What needs to be improved?

My written composition

My classmate's written composition

## APPENDIX L

### A sample of Students' Writing Logs

#### My Feedback



What do I think about it?

At the beginning of this year, my writing skill was not really enhanced because of, I think, my last year experience. Last year we have not done big things during our module of written expression even though we used to have it and study it for 15 times per week. I was really disappointed because by the end of the year my writing was not yet developed as I wished to. I used to face difficulties in the theoretical part of my paragraphs and I was not able to define and set a suitable plan which I would develop in my writing. Because my faults and mistakes (grammar, vocabulary, spelling) were not corrected I was not motivated to write. I used to say why should I make great effort to write a paragraph since from the beginning I know that I would not be provided by the teacher's feedback. I used to face difficulties in the way of developing my ideas and how to move smoothly from one idea to another. However now, after having experienced this brand new method (the first time I learn writing with this method) I do believe that my writing skill has really been developed and improved. Now, many of my spelling and vocabulary mistakes are no more done. My grammatical knowledge has also improved. I noticed from comparing some of my previous paragraphs and those of this year that I become able to minimize my mistakes in grammar. Personally, during these sessions of self-assessment I noticed that this teaching method takes a lot of time and sometimes the students do not respect the date of submissions. Sometimes I used to feel that they do not like the method but when speaking with some of them I find that I thought wrong.

## My Feedback



What do I think about it?

What I like more about this method is that it enhanced both my theoretical and practical competences of my writing. At the beginning I found it a bit strange to evaluate my writing by myself. How am I going to criticize a paragraph / idea that I have written by myself. But, through time I become able to benefit of this since I become more attentive while writing.

The thing I like most and which I find very important is that in this teaching method, we as students always have back the teacher's feedback. We have the chance to correct our mistakes by ourselves either those related to the writings' cohesion or coherence.

Sincerely, I've really enjoyed this experience of self-assessment because I'm no more afraid of making mistakes and I'm able to say that yes I can write any type of paragraph and essay at any time. It enables me to express myself freely. Therefore, in view of all what I have benefit gotten from this experience I keen to use this self-assessment method in every my every future writings to check my mistakes and enhance my language skills in general and my writing in particular.

At the end let me thank you my teacher for all the efforts you have done to teach us effectively. I do thank you so much and congratulations you because you have succeeded in your lessons to transmit to us the knowledge you have acquired through your studies. I swear that I was lucky because I had the chance to be one of your students. You helped me and encouraged me to keep myself motivated and do all my best as a reward to your considerable effort. Thank you so much I will always remember you and your great work.

## My Feedback



What do I think about it?

- At the beginning of the year, I didn't even know what an essay was, I didn't know the different forms, styles and types of essay writing, I didn't know how to develop and organize my ideas, but now, I do know what an essay is, how to write it and how to develop my ideas, I can write 5 paragraphs easily, thanks to this method of "self-assessment", I really like that method, it helps us to recognize our mistakes and correct them. The self-assessment offers us an opportunity to review and reflect upon the development of our writing and communication skills and identify goals and strategies to further their development.

It is an important method because it can improve our writing, editing and critical thinking skills. It allows us to review our strengths and weaknesses as a writer to see how we can continue to grow. It can also develop stronger (hab) writing habits that can improve our work.

personally, I really enjoyed the experience of self-assessment when I correct my mistakes, I remember them, so I can not make the same mistakes again.

"The only thing I didn't like is when you give us an essay to write, and the person who is absent has not the right to write one 😞".

- By the way, I do love you my teacher, you are such a lovely person. I like your method of teaching and everything you do, I really improved my writing skill thanks to you. Thank you.

## My Feedback



What do I think about it?

In the beginning of the year it was very difficult for me to write a paragraph or an essay because I don't know how really to write, what are the steps that I should follow to get a good writing. Sometimes really I don't know what are the words should be use, how to organize my ideas from the important to the most important, what should I say in Introduction and what to say in the Body and conclusion. Now I'm in the end of the year and I notice that in my writing there are many changes, I can not say that now I write a perfect paragraph or essay but my writing now is better than the beginning of the year, now I know how to organize my ideas, how I can developed them to become a paragraph or essay.

The teaching method during the end of the year was the best method of writing expression during all my studies in university. It permits me to know what are my mistakes, what are my weaknesses in writing and how to correct this mistakes and get a good writing, now I have a confidence in my writing.

I think that the method of the teacher this year is the best method to teach writing expression because it is not just that the teacher can evaluate the students but also the students can evaluate them selves.

## My Feedback



What do I think about it?

This is for the first time that I study written with this method, we used to write paragraphs but not essays. I used to dislike written module but this year is not the case. I like written because I am satisfied with my writings, my errors even if I get many notes from my teacher, this remarks helped me to ameliorate my writings and to make my ~~brain~~ brain think and imagine. It is a new thing for me especially that I didn't use to write. I learnt new things such as how to write an descriptive, narrative and argumentative. The methods that I've learnt from written module, I try to apply it on others, I succeed on it. I like when we write an essay and the teacher gives us remarks to correct them and not a mark for the essay this helped me to avoid spelling mistakes and to use wrong words in the wrong place. Writing affect me now I try to write my diaries - etc. to have this habit to write because I was a lazy person who hate to write. Last year I didn't love that feeling to be excited to write my thoughts or feelings, ~~but now~~ I even<sup>do</sup> not finish a paragraph but now I can deal with 5 paragraphs or more.

My writing difficulties at the beginning of the year were the plan and the steps to follow to do my works and my writings and the grammatical mistakes, and now it's more easy to me to write and organize my writings. Sometimes I have difficulties to follow the methods of the teacher, because at the beginning we are asked to do essays and sometimes I didn't do them because the program was loaded and we didn't have much time to concentrate. My personal difficulties were the writings it's self i haven't the habit to write too much and the spelling errors were the major problem. I liked the methods of my teacher I found it very effective. I can say that I learned several things which concern the methods and how to well write and organize my essays. Personally I don't think that there is a big change because of my grammatical mistakes and I always forget the steps to follow to do a good work. I wished if I could erase the mistakes that I did in my writings, and try to do better and even consider it as an important factor to have a good average. I liked and enjoyed the experience of self assessment because it allows us to evaluate our works. In my future projects I would like to be able to use self assessment in order to give a good analysis to my works.

APPENDIX M

**Narrative essay: elements of the story**

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<b>Element</b>	<b>Experimental group</b>	<b>Control group</b>
Main Character	Alicia	Sara
Age	20	20
Setting	Countryside, during the day	Countryside, in winter
Objects	Animal car house	Snow Fireplace Trees forest

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## Résumé

La présente recherche a pour but d'examiner les effets de l'auto-évaluation sur le développement de l'apprentissage autorégulé et de la performance des étudiants d'Anglais comme langue étrangère dans l'écrit académique. Des recherches ont montré que la capacité d'examiner et de réfléchir sur sa propre écriture peut améliorer à la fois les compétences en matière d'autorégulation et de rendement académique. Cependant, peu d'études ont exploré cette relation entre apprenants Algériens. Pour étudier cet effet dans l'enseignement supérieur Algérien, quarante-neuf étudiants de troisième année au département d'anglais de l'Université de Bejaia ont participé à notre étude. La recherche comportait une étude expérimentale avant-après avec un groupe expérimental (n = 24) et un groupe témoin (n = 25). Les participants du groupe expérimental ont activement participé à une intervention en classe pour cinq mois au cours de laquelle ils ont utilisé différentes techniques d'auto-évaluation (check-lists, rubriques d'analyse, scripts et conférences) pour réviser et éditer leurs productions écrites. Pour collecter des données, des méthodes qualitatives et quantitatives ont été utilisées. L'autorégulation a été mesurée avant et après l'intervention à l'aide d'une échelle d'autorégulation et une analyse du portfolio (en attribuant des notes) a été réalisée pour évaluer les productions écrites des étudiants. De plus, nous avons utilisé les journaux de bord comme outil de recherche pour mieux comprendre les attitudes et les besoins des étudiants. Les données ont été complétées par les données recueillies à partir de l'observation en classe. Les résultats ont révélé des effets significatifs de l'auto-évaluation sur l'autorégulation et la performance en écriture des participants du groupe expérimentale. Les principales influences de l'auto-évaluation sur les participants étaient : l'augmentation de la conscience métacognitive, l'amélioration de l'auto-efficacité et les attitudes positives des étudiants envers l'auto-évaluation. Néanmoins, les résultats ont également fait ressortir certaines préoccupations concernant la mise en œuvre du processus de l'auto évaluation dans l'enseignement de l'anglais comme une langue étrangère, notamment le manque d'expérience des étudiants à l'égard de l'auto-évaluation, les contraintes de temps, l'incompétence linguistique, la procrastination et l'absentéisme. Enfin, l'étude a souligné la nécessité pour les enseignants d'inciter les étudiants à auto-évaluer leurs apprentissages et à développer leurs compétences dans l'apprentissage autorégulé dans les classes d'Anglais. La thèse est conclue avec un nombre d'implications pédagogiques.

## ملخص

هدفت الدراسة الحالية إلى استقصاء آثار التقييم الذاتي على ممارسات التنظيم الذاتي لطلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية وأداءهم في الكتابة الأكاديمية. لقد أظهرت الأبحاث السابقة أن قدرة الطالب على مراجعة ما يقوم بكتابته والتفكير فيه يمكن أن تعزز كلاً من مهارات التنظيم الذاتي والتحصيل المدرسي. ومع ذلك لم ينل الموضوع اهتماماً كافياً في الجزائر. للتحقيق في هذا التأثير على مستوى التعليم العالي الجزائري، اعتمدت مجموعة تتكون من تسعة وأربعين طالباً وطالبة في السنة الثالثة من قسم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية بجامعة بجاية. وبصورة أكثر دقة، اعتمدت الدراسة اختباراً قليلاً وبعدياً على مجموعة تجريبية (ع = 24) ومجموعة مرجعية (ع = 25) شارك المشاركون من المجموعة التجريبية بفاعلية في تجربة مدتها 5 أشهر استخدموا فيها أساليب مختلفة للتقييم الذاتي (قوائم مرجعية ونماذج التقييم، مخطوطات ومؤتمرات) لمراجعة كتاباتهم والتأمل فيها. لجمع البيانات، تم استخدام كل من المنهج النوعي والمنهج الكمي. تم قياس مستوى التنظيم الذاتي قبل وبعد تجربة التقييم الذاتي باستخدام مقياس التنظيم الذاتي. بعد ذلك، تم إجراء تحليل حافظة الأوراق لتقييم ما يكتبه الطلاب. إضافة إلى ذلك، استخدمنا سجلات الكتابة كأداة بحثية للتعرف على موقف الطلاب واحتياجاتهم وتوقعاتهم. تم استكمال النتائج بالبيانات التي تم جمعها من الملاحظة الصفية. أثبتت التجربة فعالية التقييم الذاتي في زيادة استخدام استراتيجيات التنظيم الذاتي وتحسين أداء الطلاب في الكتابة، جوهرياً، كانت زيادة الوعي فوق المعرفي، الكفاءة الذاتية المعززة والمواقف الإيجابية للطلاب من بين التأثيرات الرئيسية للتقييم الذاتي على المشاركين. ومع ذلك، فقد أعربت النتائج أيضاً عن بعض المعوقات المتعلقة بدمج العملية في تعليم الكتابة باللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، لا سيما قلة خبرة الطلاب في التقييم الذاتي، ضيق الوقت، الكفاءة اللغوية الضعيفة للطلاب، والتسويق والتغيب. تؤكد الدراسة على ضرورة قيام المعلمين بإشراك الطلاب في التقييم الذاتي باستمرار لتعلمهم وكذا معالجة مهارات التنظيم الذاتي في فصول اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. في الختام، تم التأكيد على عدد من التوصيات التربوية.