

臺灣大學生對於寫作課程使用策略教學之看法

Taiwanese College Students' Perspectives on the Effectiveness of Strategy-based Instruction in a Writing Course

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摘 要

寫作是一個複雜的過程，大多數的學習者都認為寫作是一項艱鉅的任務。先前的研究指出，第二語言學習者需要得到明確的指導和培訓，以制定適當的寫作策略。因此，本研究旨在了解策略教學在英文寫作課程中如何影響臺灣大學生的寫作表現。本研究中的策略教學包括五個步驟：熱身討論、展示和建模、小組和個人練習機會、分配的寫作任務評估和一對一會議，以及新任務的策略轉移。20 名大學生參加了這項個案研究。收集資料包括研究人員的現場筆記、個人訪談和學生反思，並使用三角測量法來分析出現的關注點。研究結果表明，基於策略的教學有可能幫助學習者提高英文寫作能力，透過課堂互動討論培養學生們的批判性思維能力，以及提高他們在語言學習中的自主性。

關鍵字：策略教學、英文寫作、學生觀點

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Abstract

Writing in a foreign language can be an especially complex process and is felt by most learners to be a difficult task. Previous research pointed out that L2 learners need to be explicitly instructed and trained to develop appropriate strategies for writing. Thus, this study intended to examine how writing instruction focused explicitly on writing strategies impacted Taiwanese college students' writing performance in an EFL context. The strategies involved five steps, which included warm-up discussions, presenting and modeling, both group and individual practice opportunities, one-on-one conferences focused on evaluating assigned writing tasks, and transfer of strategies to new tasks. Twenty EFL undergraduate students participated in this case study. Data sources, including the researcher's field notes, individual interviews, and students' final reflections, were collected, and triangulation was used to analyze the emergent themes and concerns. The results revealed that these EFL college students' writing performance improved when they fully understood how to practice the strategies effectively and transfer new writing skills from one task to another. The qualitative data collected in this study reflected students' critical engagement with the strategies that were being taught and suggest that strategy-based instruction assists learners to improve English writing competence, to foster their critical thinking skills, and to enhance their autonomy in language learning.

Key words: Strategy-based instruction, English language writing, Students' perspectives

1. Introduction

Writing is a complex process, and is felt by most learners to be a difficult task. Writing in a second language (L2) further complicates the process, and L2 learners often find writing to be the most difficult task (Chamot, 2005; Lan, Huang, & Hsu, 2011). They often suffer considerably from writing anxiety, and do not like writing courses (Wu & Lin, 2016). Research has shown that writing strategies are important in helping L2 learners succeed in writing (Raoofti, Chan, Mukundan & Rashid, 2014), and that writing strategies have the potential to be used effectively (Gu, 2007).

Effective use of writing strategies can help learners gain confidence (Cohen, 2000) and lead to better writing competence (Bai, Hu, & Gu, 2014). However, learners may not always be aware of their strategies use, and thus may not be able to use writing strategies efficiently and effectively (Chamot, Barnhardt, El-Dinary & Robin, 1999; Lei, 2008; Rahimi & Norooziasiam, 2013). In addition, less effective language learners know how to use only a few strategies, and often do not choose appropriate strategies for the task (Chamot & Kupper, 1989). This suggests that L2 learners, especially less capable learners, need help in appropriate strategy use to better facilitate their learning and writing.

Research has indicated that explicit instruction and training could help learners develop appropriate strategies (Bedir, 2010; Chamot, 2005; Cohen, 2000; De Silva, 2015; Raoofti, Chan, Mukundan & Rashid, 2014). Raoofti et al., (2014) stated that L2 learners needed to be explicitly instructed and trained to develop appropriate strategies for writing, and suggested that L2 writing teachers should provide adequate strategy instruction to lead to better writing performances. However, few studies have focused on EFL learners' perspectives when it comes to integrating various strategies of English language learning, especially English writing courses. Thus, this study intended to listen to learners' voices regarding the effectiveness of using SBI in a university-level elective intermediate English writing course.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Language Learning Strategies

Language learning strategies could be described as purposeful and conscious mental actions that learners apply to regulate their second or foreign language learning in order to meet learning goals (Oxford, 1990). Various taxonomies of generic L2 language learning strategies have been proposed, with a focus mainly on successful learners (Hussein, 2015; Raoofti et al., 2014).

Research has shown that successful language learners used higher levels and a wider range of strategies than those with lower proficiency (Maftoon & Seyyedrezaei, 2012; Raoofi et al., 2014). This may be because strategic learners had the ability to orchestrate the strategies that best provide positive support to their learning and task demands (Chamot, 2004).

Although some strategies are important to all language tasks, studies have found that different types of skill-specific language tasks can elicit different strategy applications or generate different forms of strategy use (Chamot & Kupper, 1989). Accordingly, research efforts have been made to identify strategies that link to skill-specific tasks. This applies to strategies in L2 writing, i.e. the particular actions that L2 writers apply to the act of writing (Manchón, 2001), and which improve the success of their writing (Hussein, 2015). Therefore, language learners not only needed to be aware of language learning strategies in broad terms, but also strategies that could be applied to skill-specific language tasks in order to meet the demands for a given task and improve their performance.

Extensive research has documented the effectiveness of instances when teachers help (less-able) learners to better select appropriate language learning strategies (for a given task) and thereby assist learners to become better, more independent language learners. Strategy-based instruction is an attempt to systematize this approach in order for it to be replicable in the classroom (Maftoon & Seyyedrezaei, 2012).

2.2 Strategy-based Instruction

Strategy-based instruction (SBI) refers to explicit strategy-learning instruction which aims to enable learners to take an active role in the process by helping them become more aware of the ways in which they learn most effectively. SBI teaches learners to monitor and evaluate the way they learn and become more responsible for their learning efforts (Cohen, Weaver & Li, 1996; Sarafianou & Gavriilidou, 2015). SBI involves teachers and learners who work together to integrate strategies into regular language curriculum (Gu, 2007). A number of SBI models has been developed and, as Chamot (2004) maintains, recent models all share many features, including

- Teachers explicitly demonstrate and model potentially useful strategies which can be explicitly or implicitly embedded into the language tasks;
- Students practice multiple times with new strategies;
- Students self-evaluate the strategies used;
- Students are made to practice transferring strategies to new tasks.

Various SBI models have been used in multiple lines of research enquiries and to different

schooling levels. For example, one line of research has examined the effect of SBI on the type and frequency of the use of the language learning strategies (Cohen, Weaver & Li, 1996; Kürüm, 2012; Sarafianou & Gavriilidou, 2015). Other lines of research have examined the effect of SBI on the four language skills, i.e. Speaking (Cohen, Weaver & Li, 1998), Listening (Graham & Macaro, 2008; Kalantarian, 2016; Thompson & Rubin, 1996; Vandergrift & Tafaghodtari, 2010), Reading (Pei, 2014; Takallou, 2011), and Writing (Hussein, 2015; McMulle, 2009).

Though numerous studies have been conducted to examine the effects of SBI in broad terms and on specific-skill tasks, Negari (2011) argued that in the field of teaching a second or foreign language writing, SBI practice was still developing, and it required many more studies on different grounds to discover how to apply theories in writing practices. Besides, it is noted that language curriculum for EFL learners focus more on structure and forms, and are more product-oriented than process-oriented (Mohseniasl, 2014; Negari, 2011; Tsai & Lin, 2012). Therefore, more research was needed to understand the application of empirical SBI practice in writing, and how it could best provide positive support to the students in their attempt to write in an L2, especially in the EFL context. Accordingly, this study focused particularly on SBI in writing for EFL learners.

2.2.1 Strategy-based instruction research in writing

Many studies have been conducted to examine the effect of SBI on students' writing performance and quality from various angles. For example, some studies (e.g. Hussein, 2015; McMulle, 2009) examined the effect of SBI on students' overall writing abilities. Other studies (e.g. Kao & Reynolds, 2017; Lee, 2013; Mohseniasl, 2014; Negari, 2011; Thayniath, 2015) focused on the effects of SBI on specific stages of the writing process, e.g. preparation stage. The other studies focused on the effects of specific strategies on student's writing performance, e.g. brainstorming strategy (Amoush, 2015); monitoring strategy (Tsai & Lin, 2012); revision strategy (Sengupta, 2000); and metacognitive strategy (Pei, 2014; Wei, Chen & Adawu, 2014). There are also studies focused on the effect of SBI on writing in specific rhetorical modes, e.g. persuasive (Baghbadorani & Roohani, 2014); argumentative (Al-Shaer, 2014; Sasaki, 2000); summarization (Friend, 2001; Hosseinpur, 2015). All these studies showed a significant improvement of students' writing scores after receiving SBI.

Apart from just examining the effects of SBI on students' writing performance and quality, some studies also report the positive effect of SBI on affective aspects. For example, Mohseniasl's (2014) study showed that there was a statistically significant improvement of students' motivation who received SBI for prewriting and reading comprehension strategies. Similarly, Lan, Hung,

and Hus's (2011) study showed that SBI with multimedia learning materials significantly enhance students' positive attitudes with regard to writing, especially in terms of enhancing motivation and enjoyment, and reducing anxiety. The findings of these studies demonstrated that SBI brought about positive effects on students' learning.

As Cohen, Weaver, and Li, (1996) argued, "a strategy is considered to be effective if it provides support to the students in their attempts to learn or use the foreign language" (p. 1). SBI appears to be an effective approach in not only improving students' L2 English writing performance, but also bringing about a positive effect towards L2 English writing. SBI may also have the potential for developing learner autonomy for their language learning improvement and success (Nguyen & Gu, 2013).

Many studies have been conducted to explore the effectiveness of SBI in writing, and the majority of the above-mentioned studies examined that effectiveness by mainly collecting pre- and post-tests scores of students' writing performance (Al-Shaer, 2014; Amoush, 2015; Baghbadorani & Roohani, 2014; Friend, 2001; Hosseinpur, 2015; Hussein, 2015; Lee, 2013; McMullen, 2009; Mohseniasl, 2014; Negari, 2011; Sengupta, 2000; Thayniath, 2015; Tsai & Lin, 2012); however, only a few qualitative studies have been carried out to understand students' perspectives of SBI in writing. Nonetheless, the importance of the voices of the students has been noted when it came to course design and development, and classroom practice (Hongboontri, 2014; Kane & Chimwayange, 2013).

When examining students' perspectives of SBI in writing, previous studies focused on students' development of the use of strategies (Bai, 2015; De Silva & Graham, 2015), or how students experienced and responded to a specific strategy in SBI, for example, Dinkins (2014) and Sengupta (2000) on revision, and Abbuhl (2011) on modeling. The results of the above-mentioned studies showed that SBI has positive effects on student's writing in terms of helping them to notice, understand, and develop a better awareness of writing strategies, and orchestrate their own use of strategies more effectively. The qualitative results of those studies provide further evidence of the effectiveness of SBI, yet little is known about students' perspectives on how SBI contributes to their learning experience. As Dinkins' (2014) study revealed, students differ in the ways they value writing strategies, and it is important for teachers to understand students' thoughts and feelings about different aspects of their writing process. Therefore, the current research aimed to address this gap by examining students' perceptions and experience of their SBI course. The implementation of SBI was mainly based on Chamot's (2004) shared features of recent models mentioned earlier, and with reference to De Silva's (2015) and Gu's (2007) models (see Table 1 for the SBI cycle and associated features).

Table 1: The SBI cycle and associated features

Features	Cycle stages
Preparation and planning	Warm-up discussion
Useful strategies demonstration and explanation, modelling of strategies, and monitoring (e.g. problem identification)	Modeling and monitoring
New strategies practice	Group and individual practices
Strategies evaluation and conference	Reflection
Strategy transfer to new tasks	Reflection and transfer skills

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Design

This research was a case study which was exploratory in nature with an attempt to understand the learners' perspectives on the effectiveness of SBI. The author functioned as an instructor of this elective intermediate-level English writing course for non-English major students in a Taiwanese national university. As a prerequisite, students were required to pass an elective beginner-level English writing course which focused on paragraph-writing. Twenty EFL undergraduate students (two sophomores, 13 juniors, and five senior-year students) participated in this case study. Because of the prerequisite course, they arrived with a good understanding of writing a complete paragraph in English and above-average communication competence in English. English was the main language used in this course, and the instructor and the participants met for 100 minutes every week.

3.2 Procedures

In this study, the strategy-based instruction which was adopted and modified from Chamot et al. (1999), De Silva's (2015), and Gu's (2007) models involved five steps, which included (a) warm-up discussions, (b) presenting and modeling (c) both group and individual practice opportunities, (d) one-on-one conferences focused on evaluating assigned writing tasks, and (e) reflection and transfer of strategies to the new task (see figure 1).

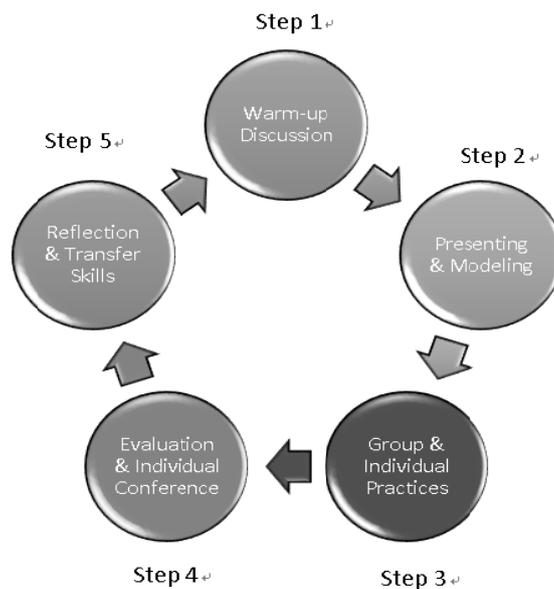


Figure 1. The cycle of the strategy-based instruction

While working on Step 1, the students were given opportunities to build up their background knowledge, share their experiences with teammates, as well as brainstorm ideas for writing topics.

Next, in the step of Presenting and Modeling, the instructor explained the learning goals, objectives and rhetorical patterns first, and then demonstrated and discussed the learning points with the students. Also, in this step, students were given various reading materials which were related to the rhetorical patterns. The short reading passages were given in class while some longer academic reading passages were required to be read at home. Once students had completed the assigned readings, they discussed the assigned tasks in class with teammates.

In Step 3, the students worked together with their teammates in class to complete the assigned tasks, which were related to the assigned rhetorical patterns. After that, each student wrote his/her essay at home individually. They were expected to follow the instructions and the attached rubrics, and to submit the writing to the instructor within a week. The instructor then evaluated each student's writing by using track changes and comments in MS Word. This process allowed the instructor to give detailed feedback, and it had the added benefit of making the subsequent one-on-one conferences more efficient. Before conducting the in-person conferences, students received feedback and scored rubrics from the instructor. Meanwhile, students had to bring at least three questions related to the comments to discuss with the instructor during the individual conferences. Each conference took approximately 30 minutes, and students were required to revise the writing within two weeks after the meeting.

Finally, when students came back to the class after Step 4, they worked on the reflection

process first. They spent approximately 20 minutes sharing with their teammates what they had learned from the comments and individual meetings; they also shared with each other how they would make differences on the new writing task. That is to say, it was assumed that instructed strategies and skills would be transferred from the teacher to the learners, as well as among the learners themselves, and from previous tasks to new tasks. As a result, in the long term, students would build skills to independently develop and apply effective strategies in their English academic writings.

In this study, three rhetorical patterns were focused on during the semester: summary-response, comparison and contrast, and problem-solution. Based on the rhetorical modes, students learned and wrote three to six paragraphs in an academic writing format (introduction, body paragraphs, conclusion, and references). Overall, each rhetorical pattern took approximately four to five weeks to complete the cycle of the strategy-based instruction.

The following contains example materials for the five-step strategy-based instruction taken from the unit of comparison and contrast, including instructions, model paragraphs, rubrics, and one student's written reflection.

Step 1: Warm-up Discussion

At the beginning of the class, the instructor gave the class a warm-up writing activity which is related to the topic of comparison and contrast essay. The students had 15 minutes to respond to the writing prompt (see below). After that, the instructor gave the class 10 minutes to share their responses to each other, and asked volunteers to share their partners' answers.

Warm-up Writing

• *Directions:* Take 15 minutes to complete this writing activity. Think about what you have been eating lately. Write a short paragraph to respond to the following questions:

- (A) What is your favorite food/meal/dining out experience? Why do you like this food/meal/experience?
- (B) What is your least favorite food/terrible dining out experience? Why?
- (C) Are there any connections between the food/meal and your mood/day?

Step 2: Presenting and Modeling

First of all, the instructor introduced the rhetorical pattern of comparison and contrast. Then, in order to introduce two styles (point-by-point and block methods) of comparison and contrast essay, the instructor first used two writing samples for the students to identify the differences of the organization (see below).

Writing Sample 1

Students who have Mr. Jones and Mr. Smith are immediately aware of the difference in the lecturing manner of each teacher. Mr. Jones has a pleasant voice, which helps hold the interest of the students. Mr. Smith, however, has a booming voice, which commands rather than teaches. Mr. Jones pronounces clearly in a rhythmic pattern emphasizing key words. On the other hand, Mr. Smith mumbles, running his words together. The moderate tone and inflected words of Mr. Jones make his lectures more interesting than those of Mr. Smith, who speaks in a boring monotone. Mr. Jones also adds humor to the subject, whereas Mr. Smith is always serious about each lesson. Mr. Jones welcomes questions from students who don't understand the material, as compared to Mr. Smith who hates to be interrupted. Mr. Jones takes his time and explains slowly, whereas Mr. Smith rushes through each lesson. Mr. Jones is very enthusiastic.

Writing Sample 2

Students who have Mr. Jones and Mr. Smith are immediately aware of the difference in the lecturing manner of each teacher. Mr. Jones has a pleasant voice, which helps hold the interest of the students. He pronounces clearly in a rhythmic pattern emphasizing key words. His moderate tone and inflected words make his lectures interesting. Mr. Jones also adds humor to his subject, and he welcomes questions from students who don't understand the material. He takes his time and explains slowly. He tries to make sure that his students understand a concept before he moves on to something new, and he is very enthusiastic about his subject. Mr. Smith, on the other hand, has a different tone, pronunciation, expression and attitude from Mr. Jones. He has a booming voice, which commands rather than teaches, and sometimes it is hard to understand because he runs his words together. His lectures are not as interesting as those of Mr. Jones, either, because Mr. Smith speaks in a boring monotone. He also hates to be interrupted; feeling that he must cover everything. Mr. Smith teaches every class in a serious, determined mood. Thus, as the above points illustrate, the lectures of Mr. Jones and Mr. Smith are quite different.

After discussing the differences between two styles, the instructor led students to read the academic passage, titled *The Cost of A Global Food Chain* (p. 116-117) from the textbook (Final Draft 4). Also, the class completed the outline of the article while analyzing the writing skills related to comparison and contrast essay.

Then, the instructor assigned the students to read the student model (p. 118-120) and completed the essay outline (p. 121-122) by the next class.

Step 3: Group and Individual Practices

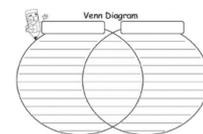
In this step, the students worked in pairs to discuss the prompts and completed the assigned task. After the discussion, each group shared the responses with the class. Meanwhile, the students had the opportunities to learn from each other as well as to plan how they would like to write their own paper. Later, each student followed the writing instruction to complete his/her own task individually.

Your Turn!

- **Directions:** Two people in a group. Choose one of the prompts and complete the following tasks with your partner.
- **Prompts:**
- (A) Compare holiday practices and traditions related to food and eating in two cultures (e.g., Thanksgiving vs. Chinese New Year). What do these traditions tell us about the cultures and they come from?
- (B) How do eating habits today differ from eating habits 50 years ago? How do these changes reflect general cultural changes?

Your Turn!

- You and your partner have 15 minutes to complete your tasks:
- Think about your prompt. Decide what you will focus on in your paper.
- Complete the Venn diagram. think of everything you know about both subjects.



Your turn to write the CC essay

- **Directions:** You will write your own comparison and contrast essay. Here are a few things to help you complete the writing task:
 - use the Venn diagram to record your ideas
 - decide the organization of the essay (point-by-point vs. block)
 - use the ideas on Venn diagram to make an outline for each paragraph
 - write each paragraph:
 - Introduction paragraph: hook, background information, thesis statement
 - Body paragraphs: a topic sentence, examples, transitional words
 - Conclusion paragraph: re-state the thesis statement, summarize the key points in the essay, and make a recommendation in support of your choice.

Step 4: Evaluation and Individual Conferences

Since the format and style of English composition is different from Chinese writing, each student may also interpret the writing points differently. Individual face-to-face meetings provide the positive opportunities for both students and the instructor to share and discuss personal needs. Thus, after the students submitted the writing assignments to the instructor, the instructor used track changes to show the comments, markups, and changes for students to review and revise their papers. Each student received the feedback and rubric regarding the writing paper first. Then, the students scheduled a 30-minute individual conference with the instructor. While coming to the face-to-face conference, the student had to bring at least 3 questions from the comments and/or rubric to discuss with the instructor. Below is feedback and rubric students received from the instructor.

Comparison & Contrast Rubric

Category	10-8 points	7-5 points	4-2 points	1-0 point
Purpose & Supporting Details	The paper compares and/or contrasts items clearly. The paper points to specific examples to illustrate the comparison/contrast. The paper includes only the information relevant to the topic.	The paper compares and/or contrast items clearly, but the supporting information is general or vague. The paper includes only information relevant to the topic. Review *1 (6 points)	The paper compares and/or contrasts items, but the supporting information is unorganized/incomplete/missing. The paper may include information that is NOT relevant to the topic.	The paper compares and/or contrasts, but the supporting details are incomplete.
Organization & Structure	The paper breaks the information into point-by-point OR block method structure. It follows a consistent order when discussing the points. (10 points)	The paper breaks the information into point-by-point OR block method structure, but does NOT follow a consistent order when discussing the points.	The paper breaks the information into point-by-point OR block method structure, but some information is in the wrong section. Some details are NOT in a logical or expected order, and this distracts the reader.	Many details are NOT in a logical or expected order. There is little sense that the writing is organized. The points of comparison in the body paragraphs are different.
Transitions	The paper moves smoothly from one idea to the next. The paper uses comparison and contrast transition words to express relationships between ideas clearly. This paper uses a variety of sentence structure and transitions. Review *2 (8 points)	The paper moves from one idea to the next, but there is little variety on transition words and sentence structures to show relationships between ideas.	Some transitions work well; but connections between other ideas are fuzzy.	The transitions between ideas are unclear or nonexistent.
Grammar & Spelling	This paper includes less than 3 errors in grammar and 0 misspelling. Review *3 (8 points)	This paper includes less than 6 errors in grammar and a few spelling mistakes.	This paper includes less than 8 errors in grammar and some spelling mistakes. These errors may distract the reader from the content.	This paper includes a lot of grammar mistakes that distract the reader from the content.

Points: 32/40	<p>*1. The second paragraph seems a little be weak. Also, you need to revise the concluding sentence in para. 3. It's be nice to include a few specific examples in the body paragraphs, especially para. 4.</p> <p>*2. Read the comments carefully. There are a few inappropriate transitional words in the essay.</p> <p>*3. There are some plural noun mistakes and you may what to change "eating outside" like "dine out".</p>
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Step 5: Reflection and Transfer Skills

After discussing the writing assignment with the instructor, the students wrote a reflection paper about what they had learned in the process of completing this assignment. In this paragraph, the students reflected on not only the mistakes they made in their paper, but also how and what they would do to improve in the next assignment. That is to say, the purpose of writing the reflection paper is to guide the students to transfer new writing skills and strategies they have learned in one task to the next task.

It was not until the first meeting did I further realized the structure of compare and contrast essay. Previously, I didn't add a clear thesis statement on the introductory paragraph and that would confuse readers to catch my point. In addition, the three points were also unclear in the body paragraphs. However, I have reorganized my essay by clearly illustrated the three main points with a thesis statement afterwards. Accomplishing this essay, I became more interested in the history of romantic music and I was eager to study it some day in the future. For my next and final essay, I hope my grammar mistakes could be narrowed down to less than three errors and with more abundant content.

3.3 Data collection and analysis

The approach used in this study was a qualitative approach. The researchers (Guest et al., 2013; Lazaraton, 2003; Richards, 2009) stated that qualitative data analysis involves working with data, organizing it, breaking it into manageable units, synthesizing it, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned, and deciding what you will tell others. Thus, qualitative data are usually text-based outcomes of interviews, observations, field notes or documents, and the data from activities (Mertens, 2010; Yin, 2009). That is, this study aimed to understand the impacts of strategy-based instruction on EFL students' perspectives and their writing proficiency. The main instruments used in this study included researcher's field notes, individual interviews, and students' reflection papers.

I. researcher's field notes: Keeping field notes has been a central component of qualitative research since the early 1990s (Emerson, Fretz & Shaw, 2011; Ottenberg, 1990), so the researcher observed and recorded the thoughts, ideas, and queries regarding the in-class discussion activities, after-class self-reflections, as well as individual interviews. That is, these field notes were considered as the valuable contextual data in this study.

II. individual interviews: The researcher who invited the voluntary participants to sign up for the individual interview told them the interviews would remain confidential and their comments and feedback would be used for this study only. There were ten interviewees who met with the researcher individually for approximately 20 minutes to talk about their perspectives, feedback and suggestions on the strategies which they had practiced in class and used in their writing assignments. Moreover, they also shared with the researcher how the strategy-based

instruction had assisted them to strengthen their self-autonomy while they were working on the writing tasks independently.

III. students' reflection papers: Participants were asked to write a reflection paper about what they had learned in the process of completing the rhetorical pattern. In this paper, the students reflected on not only the mistakes they made in their paper, but also how and what they would do to improve in the next assignment. In addition, they were required to include the end of semester reflection which responses did not affect the students' final grade in the final portfolio. There were four open-end questions at the end of semester reflection including (1) Read again the 3 reflection papers written after the individual conference meetings and the papers you wrote in this semester. Thoughts about what you had learned in this writing course. What would you do differently on an English writing essay now? (2) What did you think was helpful to you personally about using the strategies in writing? (3) What was the most challenging part of this course, and (4) What did you least like about this class?

In order to convey the meaning and understanding from the qualitative data, there are four levels of coding in qualitative data analysis (see Figure 2). Therefore, to conduct the data analysis based on the four levels of coding (Hahn, 2008), the researcher-instructor first listened to each interview, transcribed the audio-taped interviews, and confirmed the field notes. As the interview transcriptions were completed, the researcher-instructor compared and contrasted the written texts from each participant and categorized the data depending on the participants' communications. Next, the researcher-instructor reviewed the responses from the students' reflections papers, individual interviews, and synthesized the researcher's field notes from all the activities. Therefore, themes and concerns were developed from the synthesis of the three data sources, using triangulation.

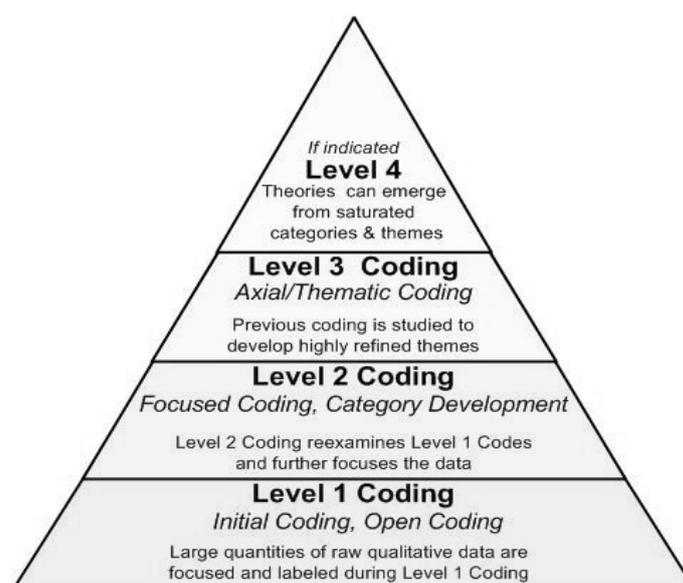


Figure 2. Qualitative coding levels (Hahn, 2008)

According to Denzin (1984), there were four types of triangulation including (a) data source triangulation, (b) investigator triangulation, (c) theory triangulation, and (d) methodological triangulation. As a result, multiple data sources were collected and analyzed by using triangulation research strategy (Patton, 2002) to identify comprehensive understanding themes in this study. These data sources include the researcher's field notes, individual interview transcripts, and students' reflection papers (see Figures 3).

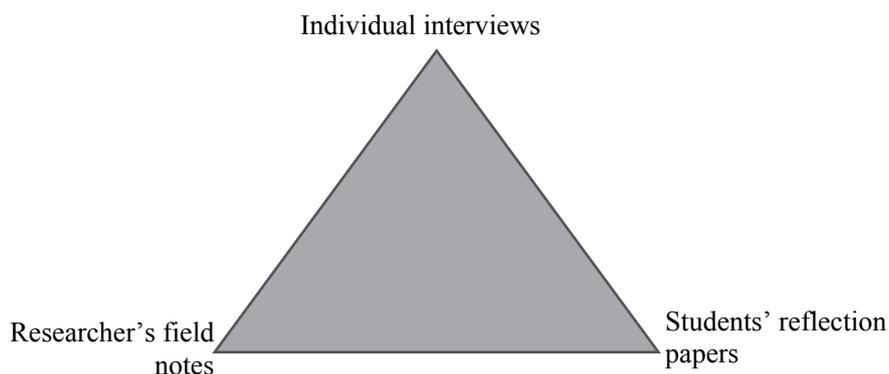


Figure 3.Triangulation analysis of the data

In addition, in order to establish inter-rater reliability on the themes of the study, three out of 10 individual interview transcripts and five out of 20 students' reflection papers were randomly picked to be analyzed by another instructor. The second instructor imported the transcripts into an Excel spreadsheet first and used the Find feature to track the similar phrases from the texts to get the common codes for the themes. Later, the instructor-researcher and the second instructor met to discuss the results. Three out of four themes were matched by both researchers. Thus, interrater reliability was found to be 75%, indicating that the rates were in positive agreement.

4. Results

This case study aimed to understand the learners' perspectives on the effectiveness of SBI in English writing performance. According to the researcher's field notes, individual interviews and reflection papers, the participants' responses mainly focused on how different steps of strategies (such as warm-up discussions, group and individual practices, evaluation and individual conferences, and reflection) had guided them to prepare for their writing. There were four primary themes that emerged from the study. The exemplar quotes are listed below based on student-participants' representativeness of the themes. A1 to A10 represented the participants who attended the individual face-to-face interviews, and A11 to A20 were remaining

participants, who didn't join the interviews.

It's important to recognize that these findings represent the experiences and perspectives of the student-participants, not the instructor-researcher.

Theme 1: Transferring various skills to other tasks

Several interviewees mentioned that the use of Step 2: Presenting and Modeling helped them get clear mental pictures about how to complete the writing assignments by modeling the assigned articles. One of the participants said, *“the way that the teacher led us to think about and analyze the structure of the article which made me understand the meaning and the main idea of the article. What is more, by understanding the structure of the article it helped me get a clear idea about what I am going to write in my writing assignment”* (A2). In addition, the researcher's field notes also recorded that the participants not only learned the importance of having accurate writing format and style, such as APA style, but also applied the format of in-text citations and references in their papers from the step of Presenting and Modeling. This is what another participant said: *“I had no idea about writing style or format. Yet, from reading articles and handouts the teacher gave us in class, I understand the rules of APA style”* (A10). Another said, *“From the reading materials, I can see various examples of in-text citations and the list of references, which I used as examples while I was writing my papers and reports. I thought it's useful to learn to cite the sources and format the references, so I could avoid plagiarism in my papers”* (A3).

In addition, the participants also shared that besides English writing techniques, throughout Step 3: Group and Individual Practices, they learned to enhance self-autonomy as well as improved other skills such as

(a) oral/communication skills:

- *I'm now trying to learn more synonyms, vocabulary words, and read more articles online or foreign news. Also, I learned to use academic words* (A1).
- *In this class, I not only learned writing skills, but also practiced my speaking skills while discussing the prompts with my teammates* (A4).

(b) critical thinking skills:

- *I learned to answer the “why-question” and use the strategies we practiced in class to draft my paper and brainstorm the ideas* (A6).
- *I used the rubric to examine my writing before submitting it or sharing it with my partner in class. I read each criteria carefully and use each one to challenge and analyze my own writing first* (A8).

- *The assigned writing tasks and discussion prompts made me think closely and critically while answering each question. Also, I push myself to read more relevant articles in order to collect the evidence to support my points in the papers (A9).*

Regarding Step 5: Reflection and Transfer Skills, below are some responses that the participants wrote on their reflections papers. They shared that they learned to include the thesis statement in the introductory paragraph, used specific examples in the body paragraphs, deleted the repetitive parts in the body paragraph, constructed the conclusion paragraph, paraphrased the words and sentences, and developed an outline of the essay for the further writing tasks.

- *I revised my essays by deleting the repeating parts but added the points to the conclusion paragraph. I'd like to keep improving my writing skills on how to design a clear structure and let readers understand my writing easily (A5).*
- *I should practice describing what I want to write with more specific examples, especially in the body paragraphs (A7).*
- *Now I know I need to have a clear thesis statement on the introductory paragraph and only focus on a clear point in each body paragraph (A13).*
- *I use an outline to develop my essay. The outline helped to hold good coherency between one another paragraph; it's easier to stay on the right track by mentioning only the important key points; all the sources were listed in the outline, so using an outline saved lots of time writing the essay with all the resources needed (A17).*
- *For the next writing task, I'd like to strengthen my article by learning to paraphrase more words and fix grammatical problems (A19).*

Tables 2 through 4 are the examples to illustrate how the participants transferred new writing skills from one task (comparison and contrast essay) to another (problem-solution essay). In Table 2, the participant (A7) pointed out in the individual conference and reflection paper that he didn't have a clear thesis statement in the introductory paragraph of the comparison and contrast essay. However, he revised this paragraph with a clear thesis statement, and he also remembered to write a clear thesis statement in his next essay, problem-solution.

Table 2: A7's writing performance (transfer new writing skill, having a clear thesis statement, from one task to another)

<p>2nd Essay: Comparison and Contrast Essay Topic: Classical music and romantic music 1st draft (Introduction paragraph) <i>Music is not restricted to people or a specific place. Among all types of music genres, classical music and romantic music are the two major forms of music which are distinguished to people all around the world. Romantic music, which approximately begins from the mid nineteenth century, is the subsequent development of classical music. Though both type of music <u>seem</u> to be similar, people usually consider that romantic music is more touching and pathetic.</i></p> <p>Revision <i>Music is one essential part of human soul, like water to all organisms, and it is not restricted to a certain group of people or a specific place. Among all types of music genres, classical music and romantic music are the two major forms of music which are distinguished to people all around the world. Romantic music, which approximately began from mid nineteenth century, is the subsequent development of classical music. Though both types of music seem to be similar, people usually consider that romantic music is more touching and pathetic. In general, they differ from their histories, characteristics, and the majority group of their audience.</i></p> <p>3rd Essay: Problem-solution Essay Topic: How Can We Keep Food Scandals from Happening? 1st draft (Introduction paragraph) <i>If you are Taiwanese, you may say that Taiwan is famous for its delicious food. People in Taiwan make a big profit on selling bubble tea. However, there was a period of time this product facing a great blow because of food safety problem. But there are many food scandals uncovering in recent years. The main reason why these food scandals showed up is that businessmen wanted to make as much profits as possible, so they started to use illegal and cheap ingredients which contain toxic starch. The best way to solve the problem is revising the law properly to keep people from trying to sell toxic food to harm human's health.</i></p>
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A9 mentioned two writing problems in the individual conference and reflection paper: (a) missed writing a topic sentence at the beginning of the body paragraph and (b) wrote long sentences that include too much information. She learned from her experiences with the comparison and contrast essay and managed her sentences much better in the problem-solution essay (Table 3).

Table 3: A9's writing performance (transfer new writing skill, avoid writing long sentences, from one task to another)

<p>2nd Essay: Comparison and Contrast Essay Topic: GMO Foods vs. Organic Foods 1st draft (body paragraph 1)</p> <p>The technique of gene modifications is a novel technique developed only in a few decades, which is a way to modify genes artificially so as to increase the <u>amount</u> of crops when harvested, by either making crops secrete some proteins to prevent being eaten by predators, or encoding genes that enable crops to survive from extreme weathers. In our daily lives nowadays, almost every crops people take in are GMO foods. Nonetheless, there are some people opposing GMO foods, censuring that the modified genes may merge with human gene and cause cancer. But the fact is, natural crops genes also may merge with human gene after being consumed. Besides, merged genes get corrected by cells naturally. In addition, some extrapolate that since proteins GMO foods secrete prevent them from being eaten by predators, the proteins aren't edible for humans as well. Yet, in truth, natural foods also secrete proteins to protect themselves, it's just that the protein secreted isn't enough or is innocuous to the predators after natural selection. What predators don't eat does not insinuate that it also devastates the human body.</p> <p>Revision</p> <p>Gene modification is a novel technique developed only in recent few decades, which is a way to modify genes artificially so as to increase the <u>amount</u> of crops when harvested. Scientist either make crops secrete some proteins to prevent being eaten by <u>predators, or</u> encode genes that enable crops to survive from extreme weathers. Nowadays, almost every crop people take in is gene modified. Nonetheless, there are some people opposing GMO foods, censuring that the modified genes may merge with human gene and cause cancer. But the reported announced on Jan. 9, 2014 that natural crops genes also may merge with bacteria's gene to alter human body after being consumed. Besides, merged genes get corrected by cells naturally. In addition, some extrapolate that since proteins GMO foods secrete prevent them from being eaten by predators, the proteins aren't edible for humans as well. Yet, in truth, natural foods also secrete proteins to protect themselves. It's just that the protein secreted isn't enough or is innocuous to the predators after natural select. Thus, the foods that predators don't eat may also harm human's body.</p> <p>3rd Essay: Problem-solution Essay Topic: Comate Change 1st draft (body paragraph 1)</p> <p>The problem of climate change has been constantly brought up in the social media due to the rising frequency of natural disasters. Through decades, human has been constantly using resources from mother nature, as well as producing more wastes, regardless of the vicious effect towards our environment. Many people took the resources for granted and deemed the nature as a forever lasting paradise. Not until drastic changes of our environment appeared <u>did</u> we stop neglecting how human has been destroying the environment. Climate change not only damaged the quality of our lives, but also marred habitats of creatures around the word. Many creatures may die from the unadaptable environment caused by climate change. Nonetheless, many people still don't understand how their behaviors cause climate <u>change, and</u> keep polluting the environment.</p>

Another participant, A1, added new ideas in her conclusion paragraph of the comparison and contrast essay. After the discussion in the individual conferences, she wrote her mistake on the reflection paper. She was awarded her mistake while working on the problem-solution essay in the first draft.

Table 4: A1's writing performance (transfer writing skill, not including new idea in the conclusion paragraph, from one task to another)

<p>2nd Essay: Comparison and Contrast Essay Topic: Hand puppet shows: <u>Pi-Li</u> vs. <u>Jin-Guang</u>. 1st draft (Conclusion paragraph) <i>In conclusion, hand puppet shows have been a precious culture in Taiwan. This paper illustrates some features, including the characters, the marking strategy, and the revolution, of the two most popular hand puppet show companies in Taiwan. They both have their own strengths and weaknesses, as well as their own fans. It's not important to judge which one is superior. Both fans are sincerely love this hand puppet culture because hand puppet shows enrich their lives in greatly. All in all, everyone should respect and work together to preserve such traditional Taiwanese culture.</i></p> <p>/</p> <p>Revision <i>In conclusion, this paper contrasted the features: characters, the marking strategies, and the revolution of hand puppet show between two hand <u>puppet</u> show companies (<u>Pi-Li</u> and <u>Jin-Guang</u>). In my opinion, hand puppet show is a precious culture in Taiwan, so each company has its own strengths and weaknesses. It's not important to judge which one is the superior. It's more necessary for us to respect and work together to preserve such traditional Taiwanese culture.</i></p> <p>3rd Essay: Problem-solution Essay Topic: Do Humans Need Death Penalty in The Society? 1st draft (Conclusion paragraph) <i>In conclusion, abolition of the death penalty is the recommended solution because the death penalty indeed can't reduce the crime rate. The death penalty has been carried out for a long time, and it's time for humans to stop doing the same thing over and over again. Administering death penalty won't bring to different results. I believe that everyone should enhance concepts of laws and orders, as well as understand the true purpose of criminal laws.</i></p>

Theme 2: Receiving benefits from individual conferences

According to the researcher's field notes, interviews and students' reflection papers, the participants indicated that they appreciated that the instructor held the individual conference meetings with them after each writing assignment. One of the participants said "*I loved the atmosphere while discussing the topics and ideas with teammates and the meeting time I had with my teacher. I think individual conferences help me to find the problems and understand how to improve my writing most*" (A4). Also, they commented that the individual conferences had made several positive differences on their writing, such as avoiding translating from Chinese to English, reducing grammar mistakes, sentence fragments and run-ons. Here was some feedback quoted from the participants:

- *With the three meetings, I fully understood the reasons for the sentences which were modified by the teacher (A1).*
- *From the individual meetings, I learned to fix the weak arguments in my essays (A2).*
- *In the meetings, I can discuss my questions with the teacher, such as: my unclear argument points, the use of vocabulary words, and grammar (A3).*
- *I think I often write some ambiguous sentences for readers to figure out the meaning by themselves. However, from the individual meetings with the instructor, my teacher guided me to explain more to the readers and help me avoid writing unclear sentences (A8).*
- *In each meeting, I practiced answering the teacher's questions in English immediately. As a result, I felt like I learned to avoid translating what I want to say from Chinese to English. I thought having an individual conference with my teacher was a good way to train myself to think in English quickly (A10).*

Theme 3: Cooperating with partners in class

Another interesting finding was that working in a group seems like an efficient learning approach for the participants. Here are the responses from the interviewees and students' writing reflections:

- *During the discussion activities, I learned the values about learning together; my partner and I shared different opinions and we learned to communicate with each other and persuade each other (A5).*
- *From the team discussion, it was easier to come up with a useful solution to the problem (A6).*
- *While working in a group with my teammates, I felt that I could learn better in class. I didn't nod off, but focused on the teacher and the discussion topics (A7).*
- *It's helpful to work with my team, so I can revise my writing and learned which parts I needed to revise/improve from my partners' comments (A11).*
- *I enjoy the teacher's teaching style. Having group discussions first helps me to work on my own writing. In the discussion and team work, I made some new friends from this class (A15).*
- *While searching for the appropriate article to respond to, my partner and I learned to analyze the context and content of the readings. We read the articles and wrote down the points which we agreed with or against, and then we searched for more academic information to support our points of view (A20).*

Theme 4: Learning new knowledge from the readings

In Step 2: Presenting and Modeling, the participants were required to read several passages

for each rhetorical pattern. There are two reading models in the textbook (Final Draft 4): the first model shows students how the rhetorical mode is applied in a real-world setting, and the second model shows a typical assignment from a college writing course. Additionally, the students were required to use at least three academic sources to support their arguments while working on both a comparison and contrast essay and problem-solution essay. That is, the students read several academic passages for the topics they chose in both rhetorical patterns. The participants also pointed out that they gained new knowledge about different topics including self-driving cars, the approaches of online learning, food security issues, child marriage, death penalty, and income inequality from the reading articles which they used to complete their writing assignments in this course. One of the participants noted that “*I learned some issues about aging problems in different countries*” (A5). Furthermore, intensive reading in this class seemed to develop the participants’ reading habits. On this subject, a student said, “*Reading articles in different topics before writing my essays inspired me to learn more every week*” (A9).

5. Discussion of the Study

The current study aimed to understand the EFL college students’ perspectives on the effectiveness of using SBI in an elective intermediate English writing course. The SBI model applied in this study was adopted and modified from previous studies (Chamot et al., 2004; De Silva, 2015; Gu, 2007). While reviewing the steps of the SBI model in this study, there are some similar findings from previous studies (Amoush, 2015; Bai & Gu, 2014; Kao & Reynolds, 2017; Sengupta, 2000; Tsai & Lin, 2012) about the steps of warm-up discussion, modeling and monitoring, and revision. That is, the results of this study also showed that employing planning, brainstorming, modeling, and revising activities would be effective strategies for improving English learners’ writing performance.

In addition, the instructor-researcher added individual conferences to this SBI model (Step 4), which allowed the instructor and the participants to share their concerns, discuss their questions and review their writing. This step can not only provide support to those struggling writers who tend to lack the skills needed to evaluate texts and make strategic changes (Dinkins, 2014), and also share the authority and discuss the decision making process with learners (Thambirajah & Nordin, 2014). Moreover, the instructor-researcher found that having individual conference meetings with the instructor helped students to overcome challenges in English writing, a finding which supported existing studies related to writing conferences (Alfalagg, 2020; Bai, 2015; Thambirajah & Nordin, 2014). Alfalagg (2020) showed that oral feedback in writing conferences resulted in a large statistical impact on learners’ writing performance (Cohen’s

d=2.19), especially on the use of first- and second-person pronouns, the definite article ‘the’, and the use of conjunctions. In addition, Thambirajah and Nordin (2014) mentioned that in a student-centered writing conference, instructors listen carefully and pay attention on students’ questions, concerns and responses; at the same time, students are seen as active participants and are offered opportunities to share their thoughts as well as to recognize their learning progress in writing. It is interesting to note that, in this study, the participants also shared that they understood more about how to avoid translating from L1 to L2, reducing grammar mistakes, sentence fragments and run-on sentences after meeting with the instructor individually. The instructor-researcher believes this is due, at least in part, to the opportunity for the instructor to model and explain these skills in an individual, face-to-face environment, and to do so verbally as well as in writing. In this study, the students’ reflections and interviews also expressed that the interactive discussions between them and the instructor-research helped the learners to become more aware of their own writing processes and to realize their potential. That is, the individual conferences can encourage students not only to become active learners, but also to acquire knowledge related to content matter.

Another important step of the SBI used in this study was having the learners reflect on their writing process in order to improve their writing performance. In this study, the participants observed their thoughts with regard to the writing process, grammatical accuracy and the organization of the texts they were writing. This process gave them practice developing their critical thinking skills and facilitated the process of transferring new skills from one task to another. Chamot (2005) likewise described how learners wrote personal observations about their own learning experiences, and the way they attempted to solve language problems.

The participants in this study also revealed that working together was an effective learning approach, especially in the planning process as they shared and brainstormed new ideas, as well as in the revising stages of their essays. This may be because students are given an opportunity and time to think, discuss, and generate ideas, and also be supported by peers, which in turn encourage the use of cognitive/preparation strategies that allow them to produce much better quality writing than working on their own (Kao & Reynolds, 2017).

6. Implications of the Study and Conclusion

The themes of this study revealed four major implications; first, writing a reflection paragraph/paper gave the learners a chance to think closely about the process of writing, reevaluate their thinking, and analyze their lessons and experiences upon completing the writing tasks. Next, offering reading samples which were related to the rhetorical patterns for the EFL

learners improved not only reading comprehension but also their understanding of English writing structure. That is, EFL students were given more inputs to absorb before demonstrating their output. Also, planning appropriate time for the EFL learners to discuss their writing with their teammates was an effective way to develop their critical thinking and communication skills. Fourth, and what the researcher felt to be most important, holding individual conferences with each student not only allowed the instructor to meet the learners' individual needs, but the conferences also supported the ongoing learning progress of the learners.

It is important here to consider a few limitations to this study. First is that the participants' English proficiency was, with only two or three exceptions, at an advanced level. These advanced students all had a clear understanding of paragraph writing and the rules of English grammar. That is to say, this SBI model may have different outcomes when applied to lower proficiency levels of EFL learners. In addition, this method depends on students having relatively high levels of motivation. For example, individual conferences played a necessary role in this study, but once a learner isn't willing to share his or her ideas and challenges, it would be hard for the instructor to provide more instructions. Next, the study's small number of participants (20 students) enabled the researcher-instructor to devote a lot of time to evaluating and giving feedback on students' writing. Larger classes would require several creative adjustments which would surely impact the learning outcomes. Finally, the ability to conference individually with students, which the students and researcher alike felt to be so beneficial, was possible because of the relative freedom and flexibility that the researcher-instructor was allowed. Many institutions might find individual conferences to be too disruptive of normal class proceedings, and too-great of a sacrifice of face-to-face learning time.

Another limitation of this study is regarding data analysis. The researcher believes that the positive interrater reliability rate of 75% could have been improved by allocating more time for the review process. In this study, the second instructor reviewed approximately 30% of the qualitative data, including the interview transcripts and students' reflection papers. In the future, the researcher suggests the following ways to improve the interrater reliability rate. First, the researcher should start recruiting a data reviewer team earlier so that more of the data could be reviewed. Next, the researcher could organize a meeting for the data reviewer team, so everyone could share an understanding of key phrases and concepts which will help to identify the common themes from these qualitative data. Also, the researcher and the data reviewer team should meet in person to discuss the results.

While writing in an L2 can be a difficult task for students, with appropriate teaching methods to guide students in their writing and learning process, teachers can help and support students along the way. SBI shows a statistically significant positive relationship with students'

self-rated writing ability (Mohsenials, 2014; Tsai & Lin, 2012) and writing difficulty (Kao & Reynolds, 2017). This study qualitatively demonstrated that SBI could be one of the effective teaching methods that teachers can employ in their writing classes to encourage, help and support their students to improve both their writing performance and confidence. Based on the findings of this study, it was suggested that EFL writing teachers introduce writing strategies to students and guide them to be aware of and apply appropriate strategies during the various stages of their writing process. The cycle of SBI introduced in this study can serve as a basis of teaching procedures which, despite the aforementioned limitations, teachers can adopt and modify to suit their own classes.

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