

## Teacher's Instructions and Students' Critical Thinking Teaching Writing as a Case Study



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**ABSTRACT:** Exposure to theory in writing skill does not necessarily tell how effective a teacher and their instructions are in generating students' critical thinking. This study investigates the extent to which teachers take into consideration their instructions and work on them to guide and develop their students' critical thinking abilities. Writing can be perceived and gradually mastered if instructors reduce uninteresting prompts and dry topics as well as facing students with more critical thinking variables. Class observation and interviewing teachers are the variables used along with analysing samples of students' productions to approach this study qualitatively. The finding of this study revolves around students' proficiency and how to ameliorate it along with the use of advanced thinking modes and how to generate it. Mechanics and awareness of the topic are some of the pillars that fosters involving students more effectively into the task of writing focusing by so on coming up with new ideas to the topic by activating their critical thinking and using their visions to the topic presented.

**KEYWORDS:** Critical thinking, Teacher's instructions, writing skills, High school students.

### INTRODUCTION

*"Too often children are given answers to remember rather than problems to solve."*

-Robert Lewis

#### Introduction

Solving a problem is a process human brain goes through in order to achieve an assigned stimulus. Teaching is a means that generates and promotes thinking abilities in order to reach a level of proficiency and bring about ready processors that will go sufficiently through thinking processes. Instructing students in a class shows to what extent the level used to converse mentally with students. Through my paper I will tackle different instructions in approaching writing skill used by theoreticians as well as experienced teachers reflecting meanwhile on novice teachers' attempts in their classes.

#### Statement of the problem

Writing as almost teachers claim is a difficult skill to be academically and successfully taught beside others. Amongst the difficulties listed is that of instructing students to accomplish the task of writing. This task sounds difficult when a teacher is asked not only to come up together with his students with samples of writing, but the task also lies on whether the teacher's instructions generate and guide students to fulfil thinking tasks at different levels. Thus, do instructors reveal and come up with tasks that require deep thinking and problem-solving processes or do they only 'teach' traditionally?

#### Purpose of the research

The aim behind this study is to investigate to what extent teachers take into consideration their instructions and work on them to guide and develop their students' critical thinking abilities. It is also meant to pave way to revisit teachers' own vision towards the process of writing so as to ameliorate not only students' achievements, but also to reevaluate and reestablish the teachers' own standing points vis-à-vis writing skill. Thus, this study tries to investigate the following enquiries:

1. Do teachers prepare meaningful and critical prompts for their classes' instructions?
2. Do they seek establishing their students as critical thinkers towards the task given or just knowing all students who would answer any question?
3. Do they differentiate between a question and an instruction?

#### Research Rationale

What drew my attention towards this topic was the fact that all teachers consider writing as one of the difficulties students should cope with regardless of the inconveniences in terms of strategies and processes they go through that is transmitted through the teacher's instructions. Many studies have been done on the process of writing as well as on giving instructions. One of the enquiries this paper tackles is the inapplicability of the theoretical outcomes that approach the classes superficially. Giving instructions or

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receiving them in a course of writing was also of great relevance to trigger my attention investigating this topic to reflect on the difficulties teachers encounter either in giving instructions of their students' reaction towards them.

### Significance of the research

The nature of the research suggests many ways of going through and exploring it, but I opted for informal interviewing as well as observing classes of writing emphasizing on the instructions given by teachers when their students are on the verge of producing a piece of writing. I opted for the two since it reflects the exact situation writing skill is conducted and taught. I also opted for such tools in order not to get lost when it comes to collecting data from questionnaires that might be time consuming and might not bring about feedback as valid as those aforementioned instruments to collect them from.

### Scope of the research

The main part in my research is to investigate the use of instructions in writing and to what extent those instructions can generate critical thinking. It will revolve around the instructions and a deep observation towards writing samples comparing the production to the instructions used.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESES:

### A. Research questions:

1. Are instructors aware of the effectiveness of their instructions towards generating critical thinking in students?
2. As educators, are we enhancing students' critical capabilities or are we just storing ineffectively information into their 'empty heads'?

### B. Research hypotheses:

1. Writing can be perceived and gradually mastered if instructors reduce uninteresting prompts and dry topics.
2. Students can create and develop critical thinking capabilities if they were instructed and treated taking advantage of their estimated thinking abilities and interests.

## REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

### 1. The Emergence of Critical Thinking Fashion

#### 1.1. The shift towards the new perspective:

The educational sphere has recently shifted its focus from an all-knowing figure that symbolized the fact of the teacher-centeredness towards student-centered classroom situations. The sooner the shift occurred on the mode of teaching as well as the overall perception of the curricula, the faster the hierarchical ranking mode collapsed. With the emergence of communicative approaches, teaching theoreticians and practitioners have used different strategies and methods to colour the presentational and practical part of teaching curricula. Malderez and Medgyes quoted Claxton (1989) who indicated that to what extent this fact of such eagerness for such a radical transformation is needed and what educators are intending from it:

"The vigorous transformation of secondary education is of immediate and profound importance for the future of young people and our society.... Today we need to educate minds that are ... practiced in finding and using information in the solution of real problems". (viii)

The shift suggests and recommends overemphasizing triggering students' minds rather than limiting their attention around the content. Therefore, the cognitive part of a student becomes the point of convergence to educators and each treatment the student receives should be revised beforehand in order to come up with the task recommended results. However, the claim of generating critical thinking via changing the strategies and methods of approaching students has not been encountered with a swift and effective transformation. It has been objected by traditional practitioners as well as students claiming that allowing new strategies in might only disorganize their already acquired content. They also state that there is no safety in applying thinking strategies as a process apart from instructing students in how to think. Suffice to mention as a proof to the latter claim, the use of the textbook and how unaccepted it is not to use one and relying on it to set up a course. It sounds even weird when there is a discipline that promotes and urges thinking abilities but they object it while they target the skills leading to them. This goes without saying that even the curricula makers treat critical thinking with a kind of preservation believing that content can be of greater help to a learner than supporting her/him with tools than can last more than the content itself.

#### 1.2. The critical thinking relevance in educational sphere:

Regardless of the short period I have spent in teaching sector, I always find it illuminating when any student asks me a question that goes sometimes beyond my thinking capabilities and away from the way they were instructed. If educators are faced with questions that trigger critical thinking in us by our students, would it be relevant instructing the same students traditionally avoiding their capabilities and eagerness to draw their attention by problem-solving questions? Theoreticians of the field as well as practitioners start taking into consideration that students prefer classes and issues that draw their attentions and sound problematic to their thinking level. They have even gone beyond the latter claiming that students understand and remember better tasks that are not based on remembering information, but those activate their use of higher thinking skills. As France Anatole mentioned in his *Educational*

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*Vision* "The whole art of teaching is only the art of awakening the natural curiosity of young minds for the purpose of satisfying it afterwards" (248). Teaching as France suggested is never a content based one, but it revolves around the notion and intention of creating curious minds and opening horizons towards effectiveness of the content in terms of generating thinking skills and future significant use of the grasped content. Barell (2003) stated that:

(...) Offering students opportunities to pose their own meaningful questions to search them in ways that are fun and involve transferable skills, and to wrap all their knowledge up in an authentic task as culminating experience, we offer students experiences that can help them learn as their personal life. (p.149)

Thus, learning cannot reach its ultimate goal if it does not correspond to the intended objectives of a learning item. Since learning takes place according to educators through doing and involving, students are motivated enough when they know about the aftermath usefulness of a learnt item in the real world instead of shelving it in these minds with no relevance to the actions they might take afterwards. According to Jensen (1998), he thinks that there is a need to differentiate between two main variables upon which critical thinking can be generated in students thinking processes. He labeled them as 'challenge' and 'feedback' that are totally different amongst students. He thinks that what sounds challenging for student A might not be accurately challenging for student B and vice versa and the way student C reacts to a given feedback can never reflect student D manners towards the exact same comment or instruction (39). To elaborate more on Jensen's standing point, we can shed light on the importance of offering optional grounds to students to realize whether they opt for their choices or give more credit to the choices others might make for them beforehand. Such an outcome can never be realized as far as we, as educators, approach students as the empty vessels thirsty for all-knowing teacher's background knowledge. Barell John extended this idea and compares it to that of Wolfe and Brandt (1998) who claimed that human's "... brain is essentially curious, and it must be to survive. It constantly seeks connections between the new and the known" (11). Following both Wolfe and Brandt's realm of thinking, we can suggest that human brain is prompted effectively as far as there are stimuli that touches upon the exact part an instructor intends to activate in a student's mind. Sooner students realize their capabilities in how to use their critical minds and enquire about at hand's task, the more effective and autonomous they become with a sense of critical thinking they have generated in the process of illuminating them into the matters. Thus, if students feel control over their learning process and realize the shared responsibility between them and their teachers and curricula, they tend to effectively react the other way round to give their process of developing thinking capabilities more credit and recognition. When students' level ascends to the latter claim, educators have to revisit their approaches and try to come up with strategies that would follow up with their students' improvement. It is mandatory for educators to reformulate their instructions and adopt those trigger students' curious minds.

### 2. The use of instructions in generating critical thinking:

#### 2.1. Hints towards differentiating a question from an instruction:

Before tackling the issue there was a comment from one of the distinct instructors that shifted my interests and guided more effectively my scope of investigation into the topic. The idea was kind of a question revolved around the distinction between a question and an instruction. As soon as I took the issue into deep consideration, I found it misleading to use the two terms interchangeably when they are of total interests as well as total relevance towards the feedback it might be used for. Each utterance is used for a specific purpose and it functions for typical pre-established goals. Weber (1993) differentiated between two main parts of a question-like utterance classifying them as "Interrogative" and "non-interrogative" questioning. In exploring how these non-interrogative forms interacted with intonation and sequential position to realize question functions, Weber concludes with "It (non-interrogative question) is not a single factor, in itself, which determines question function; rather, the interpretation of question function is sensitive to the interaction of morpho-syntactic form, intonation, sequential position and information accessibility" (212). Whereas interrogative ones can take different functions among which we can mention the evaluative, referential or display ones. Interrogative, though, sounds too little to cover the notion of questioning giving the variables the latter designates. All in all, each of which targets a specific element in one's answer. In other words, a question, be it an interrogative or a non-interrogative one, tends always to receive an answer or feedback. The questions, we can raise now are, whether instruction differs from the question and what are the characteristics of an instruction to sound totally different from the above-mentioned notion, question in its both dimensions.

An 'instruction framework' is defined according to *Longman* dictionary:

**Instructional framework:** The overall conceptual plan and organization used to design a lesson or a unit of instructional materials or to analyse teaching.

Following the notion as suggested in the definition, we can assume that 'instruction' is a way of guiding a teaching process through stages that cannot be done upside down or in an abrupt way. Giving instructions at the beginning of a class should sound vertically complex at the level of each student. Then, it has to shift to more difficult tasks that will be developed and extended according to students' realization of the one preceding it. The coming stage tends to sound more complex in a horizontal manner uprising with so the depth of the subject and the mental activity a student has to accomplish. Richards and Schmidt tackled this stance by labelling them as behavioural or performance objectives of an instruction, they define them as the following:

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**Behavioural objective or performance objective:** A statement of what a learner is expected to know or be able to do after completing all or part of an educational programme. A behavioural objective has three characteristics:

**A:** It clearly describes the goals of learning in terms of observable behaviour

**B:** It describes the conditions under which the behaviour will be expected to occur

**C:** It states an acceptable standard of performance (the criterion).

The performance objective of an instruction has points of convergence to questioning when it comes to ask questions not for the sake of receiving an answer rather for directing a conversation into what the interviewer has used the question; that is, to reach a preestablished end instead of being in await to the answerer's utterance. Discussing doctor-patient interactions specifically Drew and Heritage (1992, 49) note that questioning sequences that differentiate most such interactions not only allow doctors to gather information from the patients but can also result in doctor directing and controlling the talk: introducing topics, changing topics and selectively formulating and reformulating the terms in which problems can be expressed. John Heritage went beyond the above description to identify the basic dimensions of question form or design that are relevant to his discussion of questioning in doctor-patient interactions:

- Questions set agendas in terms of the kind of action required of an answerer and relevant topical domain of an action.
- Questions embody presuppositions
- Questions can "prefer" certain responses, that is, questions can be designed to favor a certain kind of response over another. (427-46).

The latter description to a question goes hand in hand with the core use of instructions; that is, to guide a certain response towards a pre-established goal. Instructing, thus, revolves around generating a typical ending through which the instructor embeds and generates the capabilities used in it towards an ultimate end.

### 2.2. The use of instructions in generating critical thinking:

All instructors have one main reason towards coming to a class and enlightening their students on the tools to use and the knowledge to rely on to reach certain established endings. Remembering a given topic or understanding it cannot be easily done if the instructor has not set a plan to go through the process of transferring her or his knowledge to the pupil's mindset let alone if the process of enlightening them goes beyond remembering and understanding of the topic at hand. Amongst the strategies used by instructors while teaching effectively is that of learning by doing and problem-solving tasks that students find more attractive than instructing via teaching irrelevant abstract topics they cannot manage or actively go through. Barell (2003) approaches the notion of problem and relates it to life experiences of students stating:

"A problem is anything that involves doubt, uncertainty, or difficult. We encounter problems of all kinds, from personal to professional, from spiritual to practical. What these situations have in common is that they often cause us to question, to wonder how to solve then, and how to resolve the issue." (pp.133-4)

When students are instructed following the problem-solving criteria, they tend to relate it to their lives and try to apply them and learn them more effectively since they are part of the learning process they are going through. When it comes to building up their courses believing that they are part and parcel of that learning task they will go through, students would sound a bit different in creating and giving much emphasis on bringing about more effective interests. Addressing students' meta-cognitive reflections and enquiries bear more responsibility and control over them other than their instructors. Moreover, in achieving such a result, it is then compulsory for teachers to create modes through which students would go beyond their regularly used processes towards deeper ones. Establishing difficult situations that should sound more engaging to students and give them space where they can apply their already known knowledge and that they are establishing through the act of thinking over the task. Also, the task assigned should be productive in order to be treated more seriously by students trying by so to train them to bear responsibility for their outcomes. It is worth noting that the assigned tasks should be challenging to the students' capabilities and that instructors should know about in order to go in parallel with their students' mental progression. The knowing how in instructing students reflects the production they might give by the end of a task. Writing as a skill is problematic for both teachers and students. Instruction in writing is the issue that needs ample reading and investigation we will tackle in the immediate subsection.

### 3. Applying the mode of generating critical thinking using writing instructions:

#### 3.1. Targeted thinking processes in giving instructions:

Boredom can find its way into one's class as long as s/he feels a kind of neutrality of students towards the act of thinking and interacting with the assigned topic using a set of specific tools towards it. However, when one's students are integrated more into the subject as well as taking a great deal of responsibility towards the act of choosing their tasks and the mode it will be tackled in, the teacher finds them more interactive and they tend to be involved in the process of setting up the lesson. Ornstein (1977) recommends six strategies to use with middle schoolers:

Allow the child opportunities for holistic impressions; encourage inquiry, ask divergent questions, encourage rejection of simplistic solutions; broaden category widths; use listening for other purposes; encourage hypothesizing. (pp.45-8)

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As Ornstein pointed at, students are in need to be guided by their instructors towards actions to be taken where they can bear the full responsibility basing their stances on what they have been equipped with from their instructors. He suggests that we teach people how to think for themselves by providing an environment for learning partly by their activities and partly by ours but that the learning situations and tasks must be at a level at which the children can operate cognitively. Cheatham goes hand in hand with what Ornstein suggested proclaiming that a student "needs framework which will guide him until it can gradually be moved" (pp.14-17). Cheatham carried out his observations to writing assignments basing his standards on those of Piaget's notions: process, interaction, participation, modification, assimilation, evaluation, and internalization stage. Her classification of Piaget's notions can correspond to those used by Bloom's Taxonomy reflecting by so the extent to which teachers might rely on the two to draw their students to more critical thinking mind sets towards the task given. In a writing given topic, students have to be faced by lesser degree of problematic issues to tackle and process in parallel to their mental development. In a later stage, instructors have to exploit the level their students are in and try more difficult issues without giving a clue to more complex issues and processes. In other words, students along with their teachers can move or shift successively and recursively from one mode of thinking into another; from convergent thinking processes where they can use the stored information to divergent thinking processes where they generate novelones.

### 3.2. Giving writing instructions: The process and the product:

The mode of thinking, students are required to act within, is all about going through a process that leads to a single and ultimate goal mentioned earlier, that of engaging them into critical thinking. Tasks students do in writing or the instructions they receive before embarking on any task requires a great deal of attention in order to investigate the extent to which the process between an instruction and a production can work in generating critical thinking. Working in an academic sphere requires students to come up with productions that reflect their status and meet the requirements of the curriculum and the methodology used by their instructors. However, if educators opted for such one-way strategy in approaching their students along with the task they have to accomplish, it sounds a bit undemocratic since there will be no usefulness or effectiveness of the student in building up a piece of course. The need that revolves around generating critical thinking starts with the act of choosing and deciding on the track one can go through with mandatory presence of the teacher acting only as a guide. Ozarska went on the same way of thinking to state that:

"If writing focuses solely on producing a product by strictly following models and relying on teacher-centered instruction on technique, there is a tendency to neglect the development of essential writing skills that students will need for the long-term. Nevertheless, the final product is always a main concern because being able to produce one is mandatory if trainees are to obtain their teacher's qualification and their prospective students are to succeed in college. (pp. 30-31)

There is no clear cut between the space a teacher might possess and where they can withdraw as far as the student's writing progression is rolling. Thus, the question that keeps posing itself is whether to allow total freedom for students to embark into their writing action or to guide it touching upon their freedom and encouragement to achieve critical thinking. Since the objective beyond writing process goes around generating and preparing students to more independent learners, guidance as well as prompting should always be about only when students are in dire need of it. Barell (2003) mentions in his *Developing More Curious Minds* that "When students are not as comprehensive in their inquiries, we need to supplement their curiosities with our own curricular objectives in the form of questions. We are after all, still in charge of the process." (pp.139-40)

Barell's point of view proves the teacher's intervention as far as it serves the learner's process but it negates any involvement of them when they sound interruptive to the process. However, a teacher has got different strategies that can be applied as instructions while writing such as: focusing more on the writing production regardless of the deficits that might occur on the production, enhancing professional development in writing instructions both for teachers in order to train them on how to give instructions and to students to differentiate between sets of instructions they might be exposed to. Moreover, there should be ample treatment of the act of writing in the curriculum of English to equip students and familiarize them with sufficient experiences in writing.

Teachers have to pre-teach their students strategies and show them to what extent a prompt is much more important to pave the way to generating a decent piece of writing that reflects the successful act of thinking over any given task. Writing is a matter of process not at the end of a day's production. This can only be achieved when not only the process and the product are treated and fixed but through sufficient treatment of all the variables. In other others, a part of the solution to generate student thinkers rather than passive information consumers is through training the teachers first to use this strategy.

Teachers' concentration over students' production goes beyond the act of the process or shaping their trajectory in bringing about a reflective piece of writing to assessing requirements following ready samples that need to be approximately reflected in the production. The issue of assessment does not only shorten the teachers' scope of reflection over students' production, it also stops students' creativity believing that a piece of writing should be the exact replica of the model suggested. Fisher and Frey (2003a) treated this issue and tried to draw teacher's attention to the risky tendency to stop creativity and criticism in students' mental processes and writing production performance. They stated:

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Too often teachers assign and evaluate, rather than teach students to share their thinking through meanings they create. Novice writers need teachers who understand the various processes that writers use to learn and use the craft of writing. In addition, their teachers need to know how to scaffold instruction to ensure that students learn to write. (pp. 396-405)

To conclude, giving instructions in a writing class is one of the manners through which a teacher can draw as well as generate his/her students' attention seeking an ultimate goal; that is, guiding them to develop more critical minds. It is, thus, a must over each teacher to revisit their writing instructions and ameliorate them to fit the overall objective of a student in a school, creating more independent and lifelong learners. There should be a reform to any item in a curriculum that resists the shift towards new strategies in approaching the students' role in a class. Next part will be devoted to more practical matters shedding light on the fact of using prompts by teachers and to what extent it shows the relevance of addressing students in a more critical mode other than the regular approaches to writing.

### **CHAPTER III**

#### **Methodology**

##### **1. The Methodology**

###### **1.1. Research hypotheses**

- Writing can be perceived and gradually mastered if instructors reduce uninteresting prompts and dry topics.
- Students can create and develop critical thinking capabilities if they were instructed and treated taking advantage of their estimated thinking abilities and interests.

###### **1.2. Research Design**

This study investigates giving instructions writing as a skill and the extent to which it might help students to embark in developing mental processes. It tends to study closely how students perceive the instructions and the extent to which perception works in the development of their mental process. In other words, it employs the case study norms to investigate the phenomenon holistically and to try to bring about principles that tend to reshape the way of using instructions in writing skill.

###### **1.3. Data collection**

The nature of the paper paved the way to use observation of some classes and interviews with teachers that appropriately fits and fastens the way to come up with clear cut results. Both teachers and students participated in the accomplishment of the work at hand. Class observation was the first strategy to start with to see how teachers give instructions and assign writing activities. The interviews conducted are all about approaching teachers' vision towards their skills in teaching writing skill and the extent to which they try different variables to reach their present goals that are sometimes based on ministerial ones.

Afterwards, some of the students' productions were collected to be checked out in an attempt to match between the instructions and the extent to which students responded to the task.

###### **1.4. Data analysis:**

Observing one of the experienced teachers at Houmane El Fetouaki high school while she was teaching writing to her second-year baccalaureate class allowed me to approach the way teachers teach writing as well as the manner students respond to different strategies used by their teachers. She started with a riddle to be solved as a first attempt at involving her students. Introducing students to the topic to be tackled that day was through mentioning the term "illiteracy". Students along with their teacher tried to fill in a vocabulary map drawn by the teacher to elicit and brainstorm students' background knowledge of the topic. While students were trying their hands with giving chunks of the language and some other times giving well-structured sentences, the teacher was creating the need to bring about all of what her students provided her with. The sooner the teacher finished with the ideas that revolve around the topic, she turned into a quick review of linking words through which she classified the piece of writing her students are going to come up with. Afterwards, the teacher drew her students' attention to the layout of the essay and how it should look like. She anticipated the problems that might occur in students writing like spelling, lack of vocabulary and lack of knowledge about the topic. When the scene was set, the teacher assigned the writing activity using the following prompt: "write an essay about the causes and effects of illiteracy. Then suggest some solutions." She added comments on the prompt like as decide on the genre of your piece of writing; essay and the mode; cause and effect.

Accumulating years and years of experience generates different outcomes as well as different manners in approaching a subject as well as a situation that underscores it. Experiences which differ along with the great differences that occur within any given class tend mostly to reshape one's strategy and track to teaching students pointing out at the skill to be taught. In another teacher's class norms and stages sounded different, but the goal to come up with a piece of writing was the same. The second observation started with the teacher arousing the question between the genres of the essays waiting for students to give him its meaning. Later on, they moved to establishing the norms under which an essay's layout must respect. As he stated in a private conversation, keep thinking about the questions you want your students to answer while they are writing their piece of work and insist on repeating the instructions about the structure so as to catch them before going astray the straight process. The teacher created the need of exploiting the topic before revealing the main issue. He did so by touching upon all the elements of an essay and

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how it should go. He mentioned in our discussion that the topic should be a surprise to students and very illuminating and targeting their attention. He started by eliciting ideas from students that go hand in hand with the today's topic by listing them in a form or separated sentences. As soon as everything was set, the teacher asked his students to write down everything that comes to their minds and never to worry about the mistakes of language or function at that period. As he, himself, summarized it; students have to think, exploit and do.

Writing skill can be practiced not only in writing class per se; it can also be integrated in different forms of language that strengthens importance of integrating skills in teaching. In teaching a given language function, a teacher asked her students to use the learnt elements and apply them in a dialogue to show to the extent to which they understood the target function. The prompt sounded like "write a short dialogue between you and your partner where you express certainty and uncertainty". The instructor went beyond giving the instruction to explain it and modelling it to make sure that the prompt was clearly grasped. She added that the choice of the topic is whatever interests them. She limited the duration of the task in five minutes.

Different views revolve around the use of techniques and stages a procedural writing has to go through. The question that faces teachers is whether they have to teach writing as a process or as a final product. If some of them commonly agreed that the product is the ultimate goal of any teaching process basing their stance on the fact that there should always be a neat and clear piece of writing, others, however, think in other terms basing their belief on process to be more important and stressed more than the final product. Those who advocate the product view base their claims on the importance of preparing students for the formal tests they will take by the end of year. On the other hand, the claim that process is more effective in the students learning process goes hand in hand with their future objective that can be summarized as students should be autonomous and build their personal techniques in writing skill.

Moreover, reflecting on one's choice over the use of the mode of approaching student there resides many contradictories. Some teachers tend to preach their techniques through claiming adherence to new strategies while they find it difficult to come up with a clear division between what they do and what they believe they are doing. Teaching writing through process tends to be the common concern technique that proves usefulness. The very initial moments a teacher speaks about the applicability of the method, they switch unconsciously into the productive ending they prioritize over any other method. Some of the teachers' comments provided while they were interviewed were those of their interestedness in their students' development in reaching a certain level of mastery of the writing skill.

However, to be aware of all their flaws and missed parts of their procedural development needs ample interest from the teachers' part that cannot afford giving the situation they are going through and the huge classes they have to cover and supervise.

Furthermore, when the teachers were asked whether they consciously address their students giving the fact they are thinking orderly following their maturity of thinking and their previous applied activity, some of them expressed the extent to which being aware of their students' thinking abilities can never be limited or targeted basing their assumptions on the different developments they have gone through. They went beyond expressing the different methods applied by each teacher that makes the assumption they believe in more grounded.

On the other hand, some other teachers' claim that following with students thinking abilities during a year within which they are assigned to instruct them is sufficient to apply gradual thinking process student has to go through to achieve an ultimate goal. Being aware of one's students' abilities and thinking development fosters the act of building up upon the preestablished background skills and achievements to reach a better outcome instead of starting everything from the very beginning as if the previous stage was in vain.

### 2. Presentation of the Results:

Under this section, the paper introduces some students' productions (see Appendices for entire writing productions) that came out of their teachers' instructions to writing different genres of writing and different processes they went through. Going through some of the students' productions in the first observed aforementioned class where the teacher assigned her students to write a cause-and-effect essay about illiteracy, I get a hold of different conclusions that reflect the extent to which students reacted to the prompts given. The choice of the topic revolves around one of the major components, the 2<sup>nd</sup> year baccalaureate students know about and enrich their background knowledge with. It is obvious that students were interacting with an issue they are sufficiently knowledgeable about. It reflects the real life of students' lives. It looks familiar to them not only because it is lived but the unit also promotes and provides insights about it in order to lead students to produce a suitable and sufficient piece of production. The latter assumption was reflected at two different levels; students' interaction as a reflection to the brainstorming technique where they brought about ideas related to the topic, it was mainly in spoken mode. Students were given time to express their ideas about the topic using sometimes their own words, prompts from their teacher or new perspectives from their teacher. Using the blackboard to jot down the ideas provided for future usage was one of the techniques the teacher used. The teachers included in the bottom of the list rules that students have to respect while writing their production. Thus, students tried mostly to copy the provided ideas and sometimes insert them in the mid of their production without adaptations in order to suit the cohesion and the coherence of their work.

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Students used the provided chunks to avoid shortage in ideas, but they fell into mismatches in the style and language the provided idea summons and the one they realize. They opted for the provided well-structured sentences and fail in forthcoming approximations to the ones suggested while they were producing theirs. The following comparison shows the extent to which a copying and failing in creating alike sentences can harm the overall production:

Moroccan woman suffer from illiteracy more than men, because woman in thepast didn't have the same chance to education as men and due to poverty manyfamilies can't offer sending their children to school.

To:

The second cause of the phenomen I have the poverty of the families and alsoilliterate parents are don't take their boys to educate since think the education is not important and third cause when the school is far and lack of mean of transport, student lose hope.

### Figure 1

Such an outcome can be of negative results on students ongoing process if they keep copying down provided sentences negating by so their capacity in bringing about original ones. However, the same strategy can be useful for them since they may interact with and try their hands in providing something approximating it.

Moreover, in parallel to providing background knowledge within the studied unit and preparing students for the production stage, the target language item is another component that helps in generating and providing a room to students to provide sufficient corresponding productions. In comparing the core of a unit's topic to the language item it targets, there resides a sense of coordination between the two that reflects the overall objective of a unit. For example, introducing students to "passive and active voice" language item in "Women and Power" unit reflects the strong match that interrelates both the components to play the role of corresponding variables. Therefore, the correspondence leaves room for students to practice and produce items learnt and recycle the target language item more freely. However, through the productions studied, most students used few language items and fewer recently studied ones. Students tend to sound more communicative overlooking variety in the language of their production. The following suggests a comparison between two different productions of another in class assigned topic.

In my opinion I think that using internet is useful and also useless, because using it can behelpful in lookin for informations or communicate with new people or create programmes. ... It can also makes the person addicted, and having a lot of technophobes, and also using computer can makes us losing contact with family....

### Figure 2

I am with using all phone for communication because with it's easy to text or call our friends and we can do emergency calls, also we can ask for our family news....

### Figure 3

It is obvious that the production in *figure 2* looks more reflective and successfully interacting than production in *figure 3* that used pre-established language variables. The core of the assigned writing was not sufficiently reflected in *figure 3*. Students' awareness to the usage of language components in different contexts reflects the extent to which they grasped the notion and that they can bring forth new applications that tell all about their creativity in relating and generating newness into their productions.

Going through students' productions taking into consideration their teacher's helpful parts of the production or basing on their learnt items to create novel outcomes, it seems that students rarely use their imaginations or creativity in creating new items; rather, they build on their teacher's prompts to surface approximations to the intended objectives. Thus, students either opt for creating new elements out of the suggested prompts basing their process on their imaginations and unchaining themselves from the limitedness of their teacher's prompts. Responding to "write an essay about illiteracy" relating it to the paving of the ground's process the teacher went through, students produced diverse productions that ranges from the strictly created to the truly copied ones of the teacher's suggestions. Contrasting both *figures 4 to 5* gives a down-to-earth example of the differences students scratched.

Day after, the number of illiteracy is increasing in our society because these causes, the first one is poverty the majority of family are poor. As a result, they cannot pay the many. For educate there childrens is far. So it can't go to school. As well as the third cause is some parents are afraid of their children's when the school is far.

### Figure 4

To:

One of the major causes of illiteracy is poverty and the subsequent lack of access to reading and writing. Realistically students who would have gone on to continue their education past 5th year sometimes quit school in order to work. Also if a family is poor, food and the basic necessities of life take prudence before books can be purchased.

### Figure 5



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Detaching from the suggested one-way production differs hugely from relying on the prompts and leaves room for a student to create new elements. The sooner teachers realize the impact of allowing free productions of their students based mainly in providing them with more involving and motivating prompts, the better their students will act and bring about changes and development to their productions. Such an outcome cannot be achieved unless the mode of approaching writing skill is re-visited by teachers inside their classes. Opting for production as the ultimate and unique goal of writing skill fails as it is compared to the outcomes students bring about under the process mode of writing. Asking students to write or reflect on a given topic cannot be realized unless students go through detailed processes and become more knowledgeable of the steps they go through to come up with a decent production. There is no chance to create a writing block relying only on students' awareness of neither the topic nor their language competency alone. Students react more effectively when they realize where they are and what they are doing. For example, in a class where students are exposed to establishing the scene, knowing what mode of writing they are about, and the steps to follow, they are asked to write only the introduction giving them the exact components of that part. While they were creating it, there was a sense of relief and interaction towards the task given. If the piece of writing to be produced should be sufficient enough, the process should be clear and supportive to students' understanding of the mental process they will go through. Therefore, instead of targeting the recycling of the ideas or arranging them according to the suggested ones, going through the process writing generates students' sense of creativity that leads them into autonomous reliability. Furthermore, encouraging students' creativity goes beyond being knowledgeable of the processes to reach mental processes that teachers' prompts have to activate. For example, setting the scene of a topic to be dealt with and practicing all sorts of preparation to create a good piece of writing is not everything a student needs taking into consideration his level and his proficiency in the language. There has to be ample thoughtfulness on the topics to be used that should go hand in hand with the intensity of thinking a student belongs to.

### 3. DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

Uttering a prompt for students can be the point of departure not only to the writing task specifically, but it can also be a point of divergent from where students can start embarking into new thinking modes and interacting with the exposed prompt more effectively or less provocatively. Wondering whether the instructors are aware of their utterances and their implications at the level of their students' cognition, it is noteworthy for teachers to reconsider their prompts and realize their students' thinking level in order to bob up suitable prompts that will be reflected in students' performances either in their productions or their thinking capabilities. If students were approached more critically and guided into establishing norms that go hand in hand with what is intended from them to do with the learnt items instead of what they know about the item, they might make use of their stored information to pave the way towards generating more personal and critical views for the life long process.

Thus, it is teachers' role to know more about their students and build their instructions as well as preparing illuminating prompts that helps students create and invest much more effort into the work to be done. As suggested in both versions of Bloom's Taxonomy, thinking capabilities cannot be developed unless it has gone through a process during which students go through each stage and understand their capacities while using their thinking abilities.

{The} evidence {*Loosening of the Bloom's Taxonomy after the 2001 revision*} tends to weaken Bloom's base notion that one type of thinking is dependent on the prior activation of lower thinking. But cognitive psychologists have long suspected that thinking skills at the upper levels were a lot more fluid than Bloom's rigid hierarchy suggested. Nonetheless, the experimental findings support the notion that there are different types of thinking which the revised taxonomy accurately describes.

Following the suggested process of creating critical thinking in students, it can lead to two different sets of thinking processes. The first one concentrates on using the stored information through actions like remembering, understanding, and applying. In other words, it is about using the convergent thinking processes that leave students with only the stored elements to make use of them for further purposes. The second set is about generating new forms of knowledge through analysing, evaluating, and creating. Its main objective is to use what the

Learner perceived as knowledge to produce and elaborate on new forms of it. Regardless of the teachers' awareness or ignorance of the Bloom's Taxonomy, there is a strong proof in applying it within classroom situations. Being fully or partially aware of it shows the extent to which applying the stance of the updated theory can be of some relevance to teaching process and come up with clear cut outcomes.

Working at the level of thinking with students requires ample attention from teachers to address the exact processes in their students thinking progression. It is not enough to provide them with knowledge of the subject matter, the teachers' role goes beyond to reach being interested in what tools to provide their students with in order to lead them into relevant and the correct thinking process that they have to apply in a given task. Students should be critical to what they normally read or write in the language. In addition to criticizing the situations, events and materials they come across. Thus, it is teachers' role to provide students with critical thinking techniques to come up with arguments to both their teachers and peers. There is no room to invite students to think critically when they are exposed to prompts that require simple thinking actions and negate all the developed thinking ones that lead students to react to what they are about to do at the level of their thinking procedure. Within the educational system's framework, thinking capacities or strategies sound hard to be reached or accumulated for a learner and more demanding for a teacher to instruct their

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students to reach that level though thinking capabilities are not strange to any learner regardless of their level. Regardless of students' familiarity with thinking processes, they tend to perceive it as a challenging activity when it comes to activating it in a class or as a reaction to a given prompt to be realized. Thus, it is advisable to acquaint students with prompts that have already interacted with and they can bring about it new elements using their standing points and their way of reasoning.

Contrasting the following prompts used by two different teachers using different approaches in teaching writing, it obviously represents the extent to which a prompt can relate to the approach used to foster students' interaction in their writing task. The first prompt is suggested by Alter and Adkins (2001: 498) stating:

Think about the discussion on your small group as well as that in the large group, select 3 or 4 typical social work methods of intervention that you would use in the case of 12 year-old Angel. From these 3 or 4 methods, select one as the best and defend your decision logically. Or, select a social work method which you was not discussed and defend your idea logically.

The suggested prompt involves the students in the task not only as a writing activity but as a real-life activity where they have to come up with vivid solutions to the problem they encounter. Basing their prompt on the content-based approach, the instruction involves students into the task they might find the same in their everyday situations that they have to react over and provide a clear idea and effective application to the solution to be suggested. What might keep the student on-task is the act of defending his/her position after they muster their visions to a specific situation. In other words, students are responsible for the task they are taking not only in order to provide productions or written elements to be corrected; rather, they are exposed into life-like situations. Comparing the previous prompt to the following one creates sharply the difference in preparing students to writing process targeting by so their critical thinking abilities. As Barell (2003: 140) mentions in his book while describing how geography experts, as an example, give students homework assignments following prompts like as:

Read about geography of the continent of Africa in your textbook. Now, imagine you are taking a hot air balloon trip across the continent. In your journal describe what you see, include geographic features, changes in climate, and so forth.

The activity suggested frees students from the ineffective way to react towards an advocated prompt where they will write more professionally following the opening horizon and the inviting task. Both of the prompts generate not only the language proficiency in students, but it also targets the thinking capabilities they are going to experience while doing the task. It is due to teachers that students can escalate the thinking stages as far as they approach them with critical thinking objectives other than knowledge per se forms of interaction.

### CONCLUSION:

This work investigates the extent to which teachers produce challenging prompts relating them to interesting and updated topics that involve students more effectively into the task given and that will summon developing their critical thinking capabilities and solid and logical pieces of writing. Thus, revisiting teachers' prompts as well as topics suggested can advance both students' critical thinking in embarking into real-life activities and preparing them to make use of the learnt strategies as a life-long means of dealing with situations. The finding of this study centres on students' proficiency along with the use of advanced thinking modes and how to generate it.

It is clearly a system problem. Teachers at all levels must deal with students' writing failure at prior educational levels. Regardless of being aware where the problem resides teachers will never eliminate students' writing problems entirely unless they introduce their students to programs that will be necessary as long as the trend in writing skill deficiency continues. Teachers at all levels must not succumb to the inertia of the trend but fight it with all the tools at their disposal. The time for complaining about students' writing skill is the past; the time to act is now. Their proficiency goes hand in hand with creating and instructing using critical thinking tendencies that suffers from the same negligence as instructing students to more proficient outcomes. However, applying the use of effective prompts along with generating thinking process comes to limits as long as instructors find it hard in coping with the trend or find themselves ineffective in presenting their students to such illuminating strategies and breaking-through methods. Sometimes it requires a teacher's move towards accumulating knowledge of his/ her usage of the prompt in a more valuable and interactive way; however, changing one's modes can be more challenging not only to the instructor only but to the surroundings that will receive the new mode. Thus, applying the mode presented here can be somehow demanding to one's class or one's adaptation to the new situations; nonetheless, it promises for better outcomes that will develop not only the level of students only but the general mode of teaching process. Introducing creating critical thinking to students through using provoking and effective instructions will bring about better outcomes reflecting both students thinking development and logic to their pieces of writing. Such an outcome cannot be achieved unless teachers work more on their prompts and establish scenarios that involve their students. Prompts to be provided cannot be isolated from the situations they are going to be used in making sure that a prompt suits not only students' interests or provoke their mental actions, but they should also be suitable to the overall situation where will be used. For example, there is no room to address a huge number of students with a prompt that requires individual and more interactions between the instructors and students or between students and students themselves. Rather, the implication of provoking critical thinking through introducing them to interactive prompts require allowing to some extent a room for students to write more freely and more creatively away from strict guidance or limited scope of thinking. Exploring the topic deeply can help students realize the majority

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of its angles and allow them to bring about new implications to it basing that on their overall understanding of the topic at hand. Being aware of the topic is intimately related to being proficient in the steps and dimensional aspects in producing pieces of writing. Mechanics and awareness of the topic are some of the pillars that foster involving students more effectively into the task of writing focusing by so on coming up with new ideas to the topic by activating their critical thinking and using their visions to the topic presented. Creating critical minds through writing task specifically through giving instructions in writing skill cannot be fulfilled unless it is treated more attentively at the level of teachers' targeted mode of thinking through exposing their students to the responding prompts. Adapting, editing, and refining one's prompts to suit different purposes play a turning-point role in bringing about the corresponding objectives that produce more critical mindsets of students. It is a way out to create autonomous learners and learners who would take advantage of the learnt items and use them for the life-long real situations. It is about giving space to students to think differently about their roles inside the classroom and allow them to take risks and develop their vision towards the topic basing it on the prompts and tasks they are exposed to.

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