

**“The Effect of Using the Station Rotation Model on
Preparatory Students’ Writing Performance”**

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مستخلص البحث :

أختصت الدراسة الحالية بمحاولة قياس مدى فاعلية نموذج تدوير المراكز في تنمية الأداء الكتابي لطلاب المرحلة الاعدادية. تضمنت الدراسة خمسة وعشرون طالباً من طلاب المرحلة الاعدادية الملتحقين بالصف الأول الاعدادي بإحدى مدارس القاهرة الجديدة بالقاهرة. تبنت الدراسة المنهج شبه التجريبي حيث تم تحديد خمسة وعشرون طالباً تم إلحاقهم بمجموعة تجريبية تعرضوا فيها لتدريس المحتوى التعليمي من خلال نموذج تدوير المراكز. تم تجميع البيانات وتحليلها بواسطة أدوات كمية وتمثلت في: اختبار قبلي -بعدي وارشادات التقييم الخاصة بالكتابة و استطلاع رأي خاص باستخدام الانترنت وقائمة تدقيق وعينات الكتابة. وأشارت النتائج الى وجود تطور في الاداء الكتابي الخاص بالطلاب من حيث المحتوى والتأمل والتنظيم والدقة والطلاقة. كما اشارت النتائج الى تطور ملحوظ في اكتساب المفردات واستخدامها. وبناء على هذه النتائج فتقتصر هذه الدراسة الاعتماد على نموذج تدوير المراكز بهدف تنمية الاداء الكتابي لطلاب المرحلة الاعدادية .

الكلمات المفتاحية: التعلم المدمج – نموذج تدوير المراكز – الاداء الكتابي

“The Effect of Using the Station Rotation Model on Preparatory Students’ Writing Performance”

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Abstract :

The present study attempted to examine the effect of the station rotation model on developing preparatory students’ writing performance. The study included twenty-five-1st preparatory stage students enrolled in a preparatory school in New Cairo, Cairo, Egypt. The study adopted the quasi- experimental design. Twenty-five participants were randomly selected and assigned to one group and they received instruction through the station rotation model. Data were collected and analyzed using quantitative and qualitative instruments; A pre post writing test, an analytical writing scoring rubric, internet usage survey, a self-assessment checklist, and writing samples. Findings illustrated that participants showed stronger writing performance in the area of relevance of ideas, reflection, organization, accuracy, and fluency. Findings also showed significantly higher levels of vocabulary acquisition. The improvement of students’ writing as illustrated by multiple measures suggests that the station rotation model is an effective model for enhancing preparatory students’ writing performance.

Key words: Blended learning, Station Rotation Model, Writing Performance.

Introduction:

Several methods and strategies have been suggested as effective solutions for teaching English as a foreign or as a second language. All methods aimed at providing teachers with specific practices and procedures that may provide learners with potential opportunities to acquire and use the target language. Methods of teaching foreign languages usually take a set of factors into consideration. Methods vary for each method tackles content, purpose and learners' needs according to a distinctive theoretical framework. Learners' needs have been closely studied by various theorists with the aim of meeting the needs of the learners.

Schools started to use technology as aids to assist teachers when teaching. Smartboards were implanted inside the classroom as a tool to assist teachers. Smart boards made it easy for teachers to teach English. Teachers used it to show videos and pictures which surely facilitate the process of teaching English in general. At first, technology had been used only a tool to support the methods of teaching used by teachers. Consequently, technology was only used by teachers, not learners. 21st-century learners need to implement technology as a powerful tool for learning. Given the fact that English language learners deal with mobile phones, tablets, laptops and other forms of technology all day, these tools could be beneficially used to assist learners to learn English and spontaneously develop their autonomy.

One of the approaches that focused on the role of learners in using and utilizing technology as means that could facilitate their learning process is blended learning. Blended Learning is defined by the Clayton Christensen Institute as a formal education program in which a student learns at least in part through online delivery of content and instruction with some element of student control over time, place, path or pace, and at least in at a supervised brick and mortar location away from home. (Horn, 2014, p. 4). Blended learning is different from other types of online learning as it is a formal type of education in which the learner is expected to follow a certain procedure through the learning process.

Blended learning offers a distinguished set of modalities; traditional instruction, technology-rich instruction, informal online learning, and full-time online learning (Horn, 2014). Traditional instruction and technology-rich instruction take place inside the school or any other brick and mortar facility. However, informal online learning and full-time online learning take place at the students' residence or any other place of their choosing. The combination of these four modalities has proved its efficiency in providing better learning experiences for learners.

Brick and mortar is an indispensable learning aspect of blended learning which makes use of two types of instructions; traditional instruction which allows teachers to use teacher-led activities and discussions and technology- rich instruction which allows the use of various technological aids such as electronic books, smart boards, active boards, tablets, laptops, etc. Technology-rich instruction provides these tools to facilitate learning. However, it is not capable of providing instruction (Horn, 2014).

In addition to Brick and mortar context, blended learning involves online learning which takes place away from brick and mortar institutions and involves two main parts; Informal online learning, which is defined as any attempt of learners to use technology to learn outside a structured educational program, and Informal online learning may include the use of educational games, videos, etc. Full-time online learning, which offers structured educational online courses. Instruction and content are available online. Thus, learners are not supervised and do not need to exist in a brick and mortar facility (Kennedy, 2014).

Blended learning has the power to engage students and help them take ownership of their learning in ways that are not always possible in a traditional classroom. Teachers are able to take key steps toward providing instruction that is student-centered as opposed to teacher-centered. The ever-increasing abundance of high-quality, and often free, online resources to which teachers have access has opened instructional gateways that have previously been available only to the very few. Now, by introducing blended learning into their classrooms, all teachers are able to provide differentiated instruction that responds to students' learning needs and to student interests. This is the very essence of great teaching and learning (Horn, 2014).

Many models have been suggested to implement blended learning. This study will study the effect of the station rotation model on the learners' language performance. In a Rotation-model implementation in which within a given course or subject, students rotate on a fixed schedule or at the teacher's discretion among classroom-based learning modalities (Horn, 2014, p. 9). The rotation includes at least one station

for online learning. Other stations might include activities such as small-group or full-class instruction, group projects, individual tutoring, and pencil-and-paper assignments. Some implementations involve the entire class alternating among activities together, whereas others divide the class into small group or one-by-one rotations (Horn, 2014).

Station Rotation and language learning:

Station rotation allows a portion of class time for online and digital learning. Learners have a positive attitude towards using multimedia resources. Thus, it offers authentic exposure to language through searching and surfing the internet or through exposure to specific multimedia resources chosen by teachers. Station rotation offers a great opportunity to language learners who do not respond well to traditional instruction as it provides a chance for those learners to experience more than one type of learning experience; online learning, in which they could get exposed to more than one way of presenting the target content, and collaborative activities; in which they could collaborate with their peers to create a product or solve a specific problem.

Station Rotation accelerates the process of learning a foreign language as it gets learners involved in the process of their own learning. Through the online learning station, learners deal with authentic items over the internet. Items as articles, videos, blogs, etc., are considered as authentic opportunities for learners to improve their receptive skills in addition to improving critical reading and listening skills as learners experience a variety of items which are related to the target content. Thus, learners evaluate various items and choose resources that they think will best help

them solve the problem or create the product in their collaborative learning station.

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Motivation and self-confidence are considered two of the most important factors that are attributed to using a foreign language in class. The more motivated and self-confident the learners are, the more they will use the target language. Station rotation offers a great window through the online learning station in which learners are able to study the target content, find ideas which aligns with their own ideas and support their stands, and review both linguistic items and thoughts before using them openly in class. Thus, station rotation provides a chance to reduce learners' anxiety towards using the target language.

Language learners are expected to use language fluently. Traditional instruction does not assist learners by any means to become fluent users of language. Fluency is usually achieved through continuous exposure to authentic items in the target language. Station rotation provides continuous authentic exposure to various items. The online station provides an opportunity for learners to increase the amount of items used as input. The more input invested by learners, the more they will use the language.

A person's proficiency in a language refers to the degree to which that person is able to use the language. Language is used for various purposes. In education we can classify the uses of language into two dimensions: the social dimension and the academic dimension. We can compare language to an iceberg. The portion that is visible on the surface, usually the social dimension, is only a fraction of the total iceberg. In order to use a language in academic work, the speaker must have an extensive foundation related to the language. This foundation is acquired through

using the language over an extensive period of time in settings designed to build that foundation.

Station rotation provides a chance for developing both BICS, the skills involved in everyday communication - listening, speaking, carrying on basic conversation, understanding speakers, and getting one's basic needs met, and CALP, the skills that are needed to succeed in the academic classroom, including problem solving, inferring, analyzing, synthesizing, and predicting. They go beyond the BICS, demanding much greater competence in the language. Through the online station, students get exposed to cognitive academic items and acquire similar items through face to face instruction. Learners could use these items through the collaborative learning station along with BICS which is used by learners through authentic communication within collaborative groups.

Language competence is a term which includes the linguistics or grammatical competence, discourse competence, sociolinguistics competence and what might be called as textual competence (Manitoba, 2009). Language competence refers to the knowledge of a language, cognitive aspect in learning a language, and of course the ability to use that language to produce meaningful production and language performance. Competence is used to describe the learner's capacity to produce a language (Vaclav Hemerka 2009: 15)

Language performance can be realized by the meaningful of the students' classroom activities, assignment and task as the implementation and application of language competence (knowledge) they have as a result of learning the language grammatical rule, structure and vocabulary.

Writing as one of the four basic language skills, is given a unique importance. The value of writing is confirmed by research. That shows its value for academic as well as occupational purposes. Writing is a valuable tool for communicating one's thoughts to others. It helps to both promote the sense of ownership and express his inner feelings. Writing is the commonest way of assessing students' performance in English especially in the Arab countries (Salem, 208).

Previous Studies:

Teaching English in Egypt focuses on teaching vocabulary and grammar through traditional methods. Only few time of the English sessions is dedicated to speaking, listening and writing. Thus, English language learners' overall language performance is drastically affected.

Writing is considered a major challenge for Egyptian students. Many studies that was carried on in the Egyptian context figured out the low level of writing performance of Egyptian students enrolled at different stages in Egyptian schools. Thus, focused on developing students' writing performance through different methods. Egypt's teaching culture conflicts with the approach set out in the standards based, communicative textbooks, such as Hello!. One study found that grammar and vocabulary was allocated over two-thirds of class time (70.08 per cent) with listening, speaking and writing barely accounting for four minutes in a lesson (Hamish McIlwraith and Alistair Fortune, 2016).

Though most of the previous studies confirmed the feasibility and practicality of the process writing approach to developing the EFL writing skills of Arabic speaking students, a few studies have been conducted in experimental contexts, under controlled practices and

variables using samples of students and teachers (Al-Hosani, 2008; Al-Ashri,2013). Yet, few studies have paid attention to the actual teaching context considering the problems around it, e.g. lack of resources and large classes. That is why this paper is important as it might reflect factual teaching EFL writing context in the Egyptian classrooms.

Most Egyptian researchers believed that the product approach resulted in a remarkable weakness in Egyptian students EFL writing (Salem, 2007). In addition that Egyptian students lost creativity; they became dependent on their teachers and passive listeners most of the lessons (Ahmed, 2010) .On the other hand, the teaching method has been mostly teacher-centered and lecturing has been the most commonly method for teaching. This approach has developed students' tendency to memorize extracts from texts and recall them when they need. It is a big problem if they are asked to write about a topic without being given previous practice (Salem, 2007).

Statement of the problem:

Egyptian students' writing performance shows diverse points of weakness in ideas production, correctness, and organization due to the exam-oriented nature of teaching and learning English at Egyptian schools which urged teachers and students to focus more on mere memorization of grammatical rules and vocabulary allowing almost no time to practice using these items. Egyptian English language learners are not engaged in the process of their own learning because of the exam-oriented methods used at Egyptian schools which turned them into passive receivers of information. Given no time to practice writing or applying the vocabulary and rules learned in constructing written essays, it was no surprise that English language

learners in Egypt show low writing performance in terms of meaningful reflection of ideas.

Research Questions:

The present study attempted to find answers to the following question through this main one:

"What is the effect of using the station rotation model on improving the prep. stage students' English writing performance?"

This main question elicits the answer to the following sub-questions:

This major question branches out into the following questions:

- 1- What influence does the station rotation model have on the quality of students' writing performance?
- 2- Are the writing strategies and concepts of the station rotation model transferred to their independent writing?
- 3- What improvement in writing will be demonstrated by learners within a station rotation model?

Research Objectives:

The present study attempted to achieve the following objectives:

1. Identifying the effect of using the station rotation model on developing students' writing performance.
2. Identifying the effect of using the station rotation model on developing students' ideas and content.
3. Identifying the effect of using the station rotation model on developing students' writing coherence.
4. Identifying the effect of using the station rotation model on developing students' writing reflection.

5. Identifying the effect of using the station rotation model on developing students' vocabulary and structure.
6. Identifying the effect of using the station rotation model on developing students' writing organization.

Research Hypotheses:

The following hypotheses were tested:

The following hypotheses were tested:

- 1- There are statistically significant differences between the mean scores obtained by participants in the pre-test and those of the post-test in the ideas and content of writing on the writing test in favor of the post-test.
- 2- There are statistically significant differences between the mean scores obtained by participants in the pre-test and those of the post-test in the area of writing organization in favor of the post-test.
- 3- There are statisti
- 4- cally significant differences between the mean scores obtained by participants in the pre-test and those of the post-test in the area of reflection in favor of the post-test.
- 5- There are statistically significant differences between the mean scores obtained by participants in the pre-test and those of the post-test in the area of accuracy on the writing test in favor of the post-test.
- 6- There are statistically significant differences between the mean scores obtained by participants in the pre-test and those of the post-test in the area of fluency on the writing test in favor of the post-test.

Research Significance:

The present study aimed at providing a digital learning environment along with collaborative activities and traditional instruction.

In the light of the previous considerations, it is hoped that the present study would:

- 1- For Learners:** The study emphasizes the importance of exploiting a critical view of learning. The learners will be exposed to various items that they will have to evaluate and select appropriate writing styles and forms.
- 2- For instructors:** They can use the suggested model and activities to enable them to improve the learners' language use.
- 3- For Curricula Developers:** They can put the results of the research into consideration when they design activities or curricula for pupils.
- 4- Researchers:** This study opens the doors for researchers to look for, develop and adopt up-to-date strategies that assist the learning process.

Research Delimitations:

The present study was delimited to:

- 1- A number of twenty students enrolled in a preparatory school in Cairo.
- 2- Online and face to face learning Context.
- 3- Collaborative activities and small-group instruction are mainly used.

Participants of the Study:

Twenty-five students were chosen from a larger population enrolled in a preparatory school in Cairo. Students' median age ranged from 12 to 13 years old. All students were enrolled in 1st prep.

Research Design:

The present study utilized the pre- post-experimental design. One group was used and the mean scores of the pre and post-test were compared in order to determine to what extent was the dependent variable (preparatory students' writing performance) affected by the independent variable (the station rotation model).

Research Variables:**🌟 The independent variables**

This refers to the treatment used in the study (the station rotation model).

🌟 The dependent variables

Preparatory students' writing performance.

Instruments:

The researcher designed a number of tools to be used in the present study:

1. Pre and Post-writing test.
2. Internet usage survey.
3. A self-assessment writing checklist.
4. Writing analytical scoring rubric.

Piloting the Instruments:

A Pilot study began two weeks before the real experimentation to determine the validity and the reliability of the tools.

Research Procedures:

Before initiating the experiment, the researcher trained the participants for four hours as a trial on applying the procedure of the station rotation model. The experiment lasted for one academic

semester, two sessions a week (2 hours per week), starting from February 2017 to May 2017. Thus, the experiment included a sum of 20 sessions (20 hours).

- 1- Reviewing the writing difficulties faced by Egyptian students and their current writing performance.
- 2- Reviewing the previous studies and the related literature to identify the principals of the station rotation model.
- 3- Designing the instruments and tools and validating them by the EFL experts.
- 4- Selecting the sample randomly from a preparatory school in Cairo, 1st preparatory students.
- 5- Equating the treatment group in the control variables.
- 6- Pre-testing the treatment group.
- 7- Piloting the station rotation model for two sessions (4 hours) in order to make students familiar with it.
- 8- Applying the station rotation model to the treatment group.
- 9- Post-testing the treatment group using the same procedures followed in the pre-testing stage to evaluate the effect of the model used.
- 10- Comparing the pre-test to the post-test results.
- 11- Using the appropriate statistical methods for analyzing the obtained data.
- 12- Reporting and discussing results.
- 13- Presenting recommendations and suggestions for further research.

Findings and Discussion:

Having the study conducted and administering the tests, T-test and Eta-squared formula were used in analyzing the obtained data. Scores of the study group in the pre and posttests were analyzed and compared. Results revealed the following:

- 1- There are statistically significant differences between the mean scores obtained by participants in the pre-test and those of the post-test in the area of relevance of content on the writing test in favor of the post-test.
2. There are statistically significant differences between the mean scores obtained by participants in the pre-test and those of the post-test in the area of writing organization in favor of the post-test.
3. There are statistically significant differences between the mean scores obtained by participants in the pre-test and those of the post-test in the area of reflection in favor of the post-test.
4. There are statistically significant differences between the mean scores obtained by participants in the pre-test and those of the post-test in the area of accuracy on the writing test in favor of the post-test.
5. There are statistically significant differences between the mean scores obtained by participants in the pre-test and those of the post-test in the area of fluency on the writing test in favor of the post-test.

Recommendations:

In light of the results obtained in the present study, a number of points can be recommended:

- 1- Incorporating technology and internet resources should be emphasized in teaching writing.

- 2- Students need to experience more engaging learning strategies.
- 3- The focus of the objectives of English language teaching should be changed to viewing writing as a process that goes beyond the mechanical view of writing.
- 4- Technology should be an indispensable part of any lesson presented in the English language classroom.
- 5- Technology skills should be addressed in a mandatory course for all the grades of the primary school students.

Suggestions for Further Research:

This section includes several suggestions for future research involving the use of the Station Rotation Model as follows:

- 1- It would be useful to replicate this research with other participants to make use of the effectiveness of the station rotation model on students with different backgrounds.
- 2- The use of the station rotation model should be viewed as a means of teaching and developing language learning.
- 3- Investigating the effect of station rotation model on the students' creative writing.
- 4- Investigating the effect of station rotation model on the students' critical reading.
- 5- Investigating the relationship between station rotation model and students' attitudes towards English language learning.
- 6- Investigating the effect of using station rotation model on special needs students.

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