Abstract

This study was set out to investigate the effect of a writing program based on the principles of the constructivist theory and the process writing approach on developing second year university students' essay writing skill. The study adopts the quasi-experimental design in which two intact groups were randomly assigned to control and experimental groups. Two equivalent forms of pre and post tests were administered to both groups to determine the gain obtained by both groups. The program that lasted for the whole of the first term in the academic year 2010-2011 used group, pair work and private tutoring. Many tools were used to measure the results: pre-test, post-test, a self-editing checklist, a peer-editing checklist and a rubric. Results of the study indicated that the experimental group students’ writing improved greatly considering four writing sub-skills: content / generating ideas, organization, mechanics and language use “grammar” after the implementation of the suggested program as compared to their performance before the application of the program. Moreover, results of the study revealed that the experimental group students out-performed those of the control group in their overall writing performance and in writing sub-skills in the post-test. Results indicated that some sub-skills “Content, organization of ideas, grammar and mechanics” greatly improved, whereas “vocabulary” witnessed a little improvement. The researcher concluded with some recommendations that can amend these weak areas.

Key words: process writing approach, essay writing, constructivist, writing skills