

## Developing ESL Students' Writing: Brainstorming VS. Outlining

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### Abstract

Some of the problems students have in writing skill, stem from inadequate preparation for the writing assignment and all of the instructions center around a description of the results of writing. None provide assistance with regard to helpful processes or information for preparing an acceptable paper. Students should be taught how to write well when they arrive in language classes. The first consideration in prewriting phase of writing assignment centers on ways to motivate students regarding the objectives such as : 1) students' interest about the topic ; 2) students' ideas and background knowledge for writing about the topic and etc. Having selected a topic, the students examine and explore the theme from as large a variety of viewpoints as their background and imagination make possible. This Brainstorming stimulates students' schemata, generates latent vocabulary, helps them to organize ideas and activates their imagination. In fact, Brainstorming provides valuable affective support by building students' confidence in their ability to find something to say about the topic while increasing interest and motivation. Another strategy is that the students outline their writing. This is done by preparing an Outline before writing the paper which helps the writer in the creation phase. The comparison between the two mentioned thought provoking techniques was carried out among the two class groups – the second year college students of Islamic Azad University of Dezful who were studying " Writing 2" as their main course. Both of the two class groups were given a proficiency pre- test based on their course book. After checking the result, it was observed that there was no difference between the two groups ,so they were considered to be homogeneous. Following this, each class group was assigned to write five compositions separately in different periods of time based on one of the two thought provoking techniques. Then a t-test was run for each pair of exams between the two class groups and it was shown that the t-observed in each pair was more than the t-critical. Consequently, the null hypothesis was rejected and the first hypothesis was accepted. That is, those who utilize Brainstorming as a thought provoking technique in prewriting phase are more successful than those who Outline the papers before writing.