

# THE EFFECT OF ONE MINUTE PAPER TECHNIQUE ON IRAQI ESP PRIVATE COLLEGE STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE IN COMPOSITION WRITING

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**ABSTRACT:** *Writing difficulties are one of the most notable problems that affect thousands of English as second or foreign language students around the world. The current study aims at investigating the effect of one minute paper technique on Iraqi ESP Private College Students' Performance in Composition Writing. To achieve the purpose of this study, 89 first –year students have been chosen to be the sample of the present study. Forty-three students were enrolled in an experimental group and the other forty-three students were enrolled in a control group. The findings indicate that the experimental group students' performance in composition writing has been found better than that of the control group ones on the writing composition post test. The conclusions have been made on the basis of the findings, and consequently the recommendations have been drawn.*

**Keywords:** ESP, composition writing, one minute paper

Writing is one of the main language skills. It plays a major role in expressing one's ideas, thoughts, opinions, and attitudes.

In terms of skills, writing is the most difficult thing there is to do in language even native speakers never master [1]. As for second language learners, it has been noticed that many students have learned to camouflage their writing difficulties. Teachers could not identify students' weaknesses until they hand in papers or take exams [2]. Besides, not only self-strategies influence students' performance, but also the effectiveness of the methods and techniques that teachers apply in their English Composition courses.

Over the decades, teachers have believed that learning to write and getting corrective feedback on written texts is an essential part of learning a foreign language and hence writing tasks have been quite common in language [3]. Yet, many students claim that they have received no feedback in learning how to write composition when they were in the previous stages of education, i.e., the primary and the intermediate stages. Instead, they received only grades in the examinations when their teachers returned their papers filled with red marks without notes. In that case, their reaction was to complain [4].

Concerning the above – mentioned points, students need effective feedback from their teachers to stimulate them to maintain their motivation to continue and develop their writing skill. Teachers have to look for positives as well as negatives in writing. They should not pass judgment on its quality unless they are examiners and not teachers because good writing ability is highly sought by examiners [5]. One technique which provides a quick and extremely simple way to collect written feedback on student learning is "one minute paper".

One minute paper (hereafter, OMP) is defined as "a short, in-class writing activity (taking one minute or less to complete) in response to an instructor-posed question, which prompts students to reflect on the day's" [6]. It can also be one means of developing students' writing skills, indicated by the improvements in the content of replies OMP users have noted over the course of a teaching program [7].

The researchers have adapted the OMP and used it as an

instructional feedback technique and more as a student-centered reflection technique designed to help students build instructor-student rapport.

## 1.2 Aim

The current study aims at investigating the effect of one minute paper technique on Iraqi ESP Private College Students' Performance in Composition Writing.

## 1.3 The Hypotheses

It has been hypothesized that:

1. No statistically significant difference has been found between the mean score of the experimental group (EG) and that of the control group (CG) in writing sentences and paragraphs.
2. No statistically significant difference has been found between the mean score of the EG and that of the CG in capitalization and Punctuation.
3. No statistically significant difference has been found between the mean score of the EG and that of the CG in Spelling and Grammar.
4. No statistically significant difference has been found between the mean score of the EG and that of the CG in ideas and length.

## 1.4 Limits

This study is limited to:

1. Iraqi ESP first year students from Department of Pharmacy / Private University Colleges during the academic year 2017-2018.
2. The prescribed textbook "New Headway Elementary" by Soars and Soars (2011).

## 1.5 Procedures

To achieve the aim of the current study, the following procedures have been conducted:

1. choosing two groups of Iraqi ESP university college students to represent the study sample and assigning them as an experimental group and a control one,
2. equalizing the two groups in terms of several variables which are age, sex and the pretest,
3. preparing pre and posttests for the students and exposing the tests to a group of specialists who examine its validity and make comments, suggestions and modifications if necessary,

4. teaching the students of the EG Composition writing according to the OMP, while teaching the students of the CG Composition writing by the conventional technique,
5. interpreting the results in the light of the hypothesis by using the proper statistical means that suit the study.

## 1.6 Value of the Study

1. This study is expected to be of importance for Iraqi EFL college students to help students to write in English and to develop their writing ability for the future course in composition writing.
2. Also, it is expected to help instructors develop suitable methodologies in teaching English writing.

## 2. Theoretical Background

### 2.1 What is Writing?

According to [8] writing is a complex, cognitive process that needs sustained intellectual effort over a considerable period of time. [9] adds, writing is a multidimensional skill. It requires knowledge and proficiency in many areas.

Writing is a decision-making process in nature where writers define the rhetorical problem. This includes all aspects of the writing situation, i.e. the purpose of writing, the likely audience, the topic, the writer's knowledge of the topic and the writer's own goal in writing [10].

#### 2.1.1 Composition Writing

[11] refers to "composition" as "a written discourse intended for communication and to diverse activities involved in putting thoughts on paper." Composition writing is the ability of students to express ideas in a way that is meaningful to others. Quackenbos [12] lists the basic types of composition. They are:

- narration ( i.e. to tell a story),
- exposition, ( i.e. to make the matter in hand more definite),
- argumentation ( i.e. to influence opinion or action or both), and
- description ( i.e. to bring before the mind of the reader persons or things as they appear to the writer).

#### 2.1.2 The Process of Writing

For years, the writing process has been described in several stages or phases, including:

- **Prewriting:** It includes any experience, activity, or exercise that motivates a person to write
- **Drafting (writing):** building appropriate sentences which convey the thoughts.
- **Revising:** shaping meaning and improving language
- **Editing:** recognizing problems in grammar (e.g., subject – verb disagreement, improper pronoun use, incorrect verb

tense) and mechanics (e.g., spelling and punctuation errors) [13].

- **Post-writing:** constitutes any classroom activity that the teacher and students can do with the completed pieces of writing. This includes publishing, sharing, reading aloud, transforming texts for stage performances, or merely displaying texts on notice-boards

Yet, Writing doesn't have to be a one way path. The nature of this process is recursive, rather than linear. This means that the writer can revise the previous stages and finding a new ways of refining a piece of writing to improve it [14].

#### 2.1.3 Feedback on Written Work

Ramaprasad [15] has conceptualized feedback as "information about the gap between actual performance level and the reference or standard level, which is subsequently used to alter that gap". It is the information provided by an agent (e.g., teacher, peer, book, parent, self, experience) regarding aspects of one's performance or understanding [16]. [17] stressed that written feedback is designed not just to give an assessment to students' work, but also to help and teach. In other words, teachers give feedback to affect their students' language use in the future as well as comment upon its use in past. [18] adds that the teacher feedback must occur through the entire writing process, especially when students are working on revising the work. Therefore, provide feedback on student writing to support students' writing development and to nurture their confidence as writers. The teacher's comments on the students' drafts inform students about the quality of their writing and its effect on the audience.

#### 2.2 One Minute Paper (OMP)

[19] defines OMP as "a short informal writing assignment that typically occurs at the end of a lecture." It is the most open-ended and flexible of the techniques and can be used to elicit student reactions to virtually any simple questions [20]. Originally, OMP was found by Charles Schwads in the early 1980s and developed by Angelo and Cross in the 1990s [21]. OMP works best at the end or the beginning of a class session. It is a productive warm-up or wrap-up activity (Cross and Anglo, 1988:148).

[22] stated that in conducting the OMP, usually at the end of the lesson, two questions are typically asked:

- What is the most important thing you learned in today's class?
- What question(s) remained unanswered in your mind?

Other questions are possible. Below is a list of the most frequently used OMP used by the researchers: [23]

**Table 1: List of OMP Frequently Used Questions**

Category	Questions
<b>Interest</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ During today’s class, What was most unforgettable or stick out in your mind ?</li> <li>▪ What was the most unpredictable and/or surprising idea expressed in today’s class?</li> <li>▪ In your opinion, what would you say was the most inspiring idea discussed in today’s presentation?</li> <li>▪ What interesting questions remain uppermost about today’s topic?</li> </ul>
<b>Relevance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ what was the most beneficial idea argued in today’s class?</li> <li>▪ what idea(s) hit you as things you could or should put into practice about today’s discussion?</li> <li>▪ What example mentioned in today’s class could you relate to the most?</li> </ul>
<b>Attitudes/Opinions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What was the most persuasive or convincing argument (or counterargument) that you heard expressed in today’s discussion?</li> <li>▪ Was there a position taken in today’s class that you strongly disagreed with, or found to be annoying and unsettling?</li> <li>▪ What idea expressed in today’s class strongly affected or influenced your personal opinions, viewpoints, or values?</li> <li>▪ Would you agree or disagree with this statement: . . .? Why?</li> </ul>
<b>Analysis</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What did you distinguish to be the main purpose of today’s class?</li> <li>▪ What do you think was the most important concept or central point communicated during today’s discussion?</li> </ul>
<b>Conceptual Connections</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What relationship did you see between today’s subject matter and other subjects previously covered in this course?</li> <li>▪ What subjects in today’s class that seemed to connect with what you are learning or have learned in other course(s)?</li> </ul>

**2.2.1 How to Use OMP Inside Classroom**

**1. Presenting the topic.** Teachers should ask a specific question which includes a key concept from lecture or they use a general question such as "What is the most important thing we discussed today?"

**2. Students' reflection.** Teachers either have their students work individually or divide the class into informal groups and give them up to few minutes to consider their answer to the question. Groups of two or three students work best.

**3. Writing.** Teachers must appoint a reporter for each group and have them write a few sentences to answer the question. They should collect the writing assignments for later review. Then they must give one minute only for writing. Students should be encouraged to explain a single concept. It is best not to include student names on the assignments.

**4. Assessment.** Teachers should review the minute papers of the class to determine if student perceptions of lecture material corresponded to their teaching and learning goals. If there is a common misconception or a gap in comprehension it should be addressed at the start of the next lecture period (ibid).

**2.2.2 OMP for Enhancing Students' Composition Writing**

Essentially, writing is a way of expressing thoughts, and good writing comes from good thinking and preparation. Before students start writing something, it seems reasonable to offer them opportunities to think about the topic in question. Writing is an essential skill in the teaching and learning of English as a Foreign Language. On one hand, it stimulates

thinking, compels students to concentrate and organize their ideas, and cultivates their abilities to summarize, analyze, and criticize. On the other hand, it reinforces learning, thinking, and reflecting on the English language (Harmer, 2001:203).

**2.2.3 Benefits of OMP**

Despite its simplicity, the OMP assesses more than mere recall. Here are the five top benefits of OMP offered by [24]:

1. OMP offers quick during-course feedback to teachers and provides rapid response to students.
2. Feedback on OMP allows individual students to compare their responses with those of the class as a whole.
3. Learners must first evaluate what they recall in order to choose the most critical or important information. Then, to think of a question, students should assess themselves by asking how well they understand what they have just heard or studied.
4. Even from a huge class, responses can be read, tabulated, and analyzed immediately and with limited effort.
5. Significantly, Faculty using OMP demonstrate respect for and interest in student feedback, thereby encouraging active listening and engagement, which are often lacking in large classes.

**3. Procedures**

To carry out the aims of the study, the following procedural measures have been adopted:

**3.1 The Experimental Design**

The researcher has used “the pre- posttest control group design”. This design takes the following form:

**Table 2 : The Experimental Design**

The Groups	The Test	Independent Variable	The Test
EG	Pre Test	OMP Technique	Post Test
CG	Pre Test	-----	Post Test

### 3.2 Population and Sample Selection

The population of the present study includes 1<sup>st</sup> stage EFL Private University students of Pharmacy at Baghdad Governorate who were attending required ESP English

course during the academic year (2017-2018). The total number of the 1<sup>st</sup> year students' population is (947) students (see Table 3).

**Table 3: The Population of the Study**

Colleges	Number of 1st Year Students
Usoul Al-Deen University College	89
Baghdad College of Pharmacy	200
Dijlah University College	90
Al Rasheed University College	75
Al Yarmouk University College	95
Al - Isra'a University College	150
Uruk University College	98
Al-Bayan University	75
Al-Mustafa University College	75
Total	947

Among the above colleges, Usoul Al-Deen College has been chosen to represent the sample of the study. The entire number of student at Department of Pharmacy is 89, distributed into two separate groups: A and B. Group A, which includes 44, has been selected to be the experimental group (EG); and Group B, which includes 45, has been selected to be the control group (CG). To avoid their past experience, three repeaters have been excluded from the two sections. The final number of the selected sample is eighty six and each group has forty three students.

### 3.3 The Equalization of the Groups

To increase the sensitivity of the experiment, the subject has been equated on the basis of three variables.

- The age of the participant.
- The Gender of the participant.
- The participants' pre- test performance in composition writing.

### 3.4 The Instructional Period of Time and Teaching Material

The instructional period of Time has lasted for nine weeks during the second course of the academic year 2017- 2018. The instructional materials consists of five units which have been taken from "*The New Headway Elementary (4<sup>th</sup> ed)*", written by Liz and John Soars. Each lecture usually lasted for one and a half hour. Each unit has covered within two lectures according to the timetable of Department of Pharmacy. Two typical lesson plans are set for the two groups; the first is for the EG which is based on OMP (see App A), while the second is for the CG, which is based on the traditional technique (see App B).

### 3.4 The Study Tests

In order to equalize the two groups involved in the current study, a pretest has been conducted on the 25<sup>th</sup> of Feb. 2018. It is composed of two questions: the first one is writing about things (activities) that students' enjoy doing in their free time while the second one is a writing a job application letter. (See App D)

To evaluate the effectiveness of the experimental procedure, a Posttest is needed. The posttest is composed of two questions: the first question is writing a replay to given e-mail and the second one is writing a description of a place that students' have visited as a tourist. The total score is 20. (See App F)

### 3.5 Scoring Rubric

The pre and post test for writing task has been scored according to five components as follows:

- 1- content:** it focuses on thesis statement, development of ideas, use of description, and consistent focus,
- 2- organization:** it focuses on effectiveness of introduction, sequence of ideas, conclusion, and appropriate length,
- 3- discourse:** it focuses on the topic sentence, paragraph unity, discourse markers, cohesion, and fluency,
- 4- vocabulary :** it focuses on selection of words ,
- 5- mechanics:** it focuses on neatness and appearance, spelling, and punctuation.

Each of the five components has 4 scores as seen in (App. G). The total score for each of the pre and post test is 20 scores.

### 3.5 Face Validity

Harris (1969, as cited in Oller, 1979:51) defines face validity as "simply the way the test looks to the examinees, test administrators, educators and the like". Face validity of the topics of the pre and posttest and the scoring scheme has been achieved by exposing them to a number of jurors (see App. C), the agreement percentage among the jurors has been 100%.

### 3.6 The Pilot Administration of the Post Test

The researcher has conducted a pilot study in order to

- determine the workability of the test and the clarity of its instructions,
- estimate the time required to answer the test,
- and calculate the reliability of the test.

The pilot study was carried out on 100 students. The findings of the pilot administration have indicated that the

test items are appropriate to the respondents, and the time which all the students took to answer ranges between 40 to 45 minutes. The average time is then 42.5 minutes. To obtain the internal consistency among the five components of the test, Alpha Cronbach Formula has been used. The reliability coefficient is found to be 0.82.

### 3.7 Final Administration of the Post Test

The post-test has been administered at the end of the experiment to the sample of the present study. The tes-tees were instructed to do the particular composition writing. The total score is 20. For the purpose of objectivity and reliability, the researcher has adopted the rubric in scoring students"

responses as explained previously in App .

## 4. RESULTS, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS & SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

### 4.1 Results

Using the t-test for two independent samples to compare the EG and CG, it is found that the computed t-value is (7.039) which is greater than the tabulated t-value which is (1.984) at 84 degree of freedom and 0.05 level of significance. This reveals a statistically significant difference between the mean scores in favor of the EG which is taught by the OMP technique.

**Table 4: The Mean Scores, Standard Deviations and t-test Value For the Two Groups in the Post Test**

Group	No.	Mean	SD	Computed t- value	Tabulated t- value	df	Level of significance
CG	43	10.09	2.89	7.039	1.984	84	0.05
EG	43	14.67	3.13				

### 4.2 CONCLUSION

In the light of the results obtained, OMP technique is found to be effective and an excellent mean in developing students' writing ability in ESP context. In this way, teachers and instructors may be able to take advantage of OMP technique in their writing classes to improve their students' writing ability.

### 4.3 Recommendations

The researcher recommends the following:

1. The establishment of a writing center to improve students' basics of writing.
2. Holding continuous sessions to involve students in a series of writing assignments and exercises.
3. Using the internet to help students improve their writing.
4. Creating challenges among students and offering a prize for the best group.

### 4.4 Suggestions for Further Reading

In the light of the results of the current research, the researcher suggests the following readings:

1. A study is suggested to examine the impact of OMP on students' reading skills.
2. In another study it is suggested to examine the effect of OMP technique on lower levels at primary and secondary schools EFL students.
3. Furthermore, a study is suggested to examine the impact of OMP technique on students with writing disabilities.

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**APPENDIXES****Appendix A: Sample Lesson Plan-The Control Group****Subject:** Composition Writing**Class:** First -Year**Topic:** Somewhere to Live**Behavioral Objectives:** The students are required to write a description of their home individually.**Procedures:**

1. Students are asked to write notes about where they live,
  - where is it?
  - is it far or near?
  - How many rooms are there?
  - Is there a garden?
  - Who do you live with?
  - Do you like it? Why?
2. In pairs, they are asked to talk to a partner about their notes.
3. Then, students write a description of their home, using linking words to join ideas.
4. After finishing their writing, each student read his writing aloud to the class.

**Appendix B: Sample Lesson Plan-The Experimental Group****Subject:** Composition Writing **Class:** First -Year**Topic:** Somewhere to Live**Behavioral Objectives:**

1. The students are required to write composition in pairs.

**Procedures:** The teacher must:

1. Give the students the following prompt , Adapted from Cross & Angelo (1998):  
Give students *one or two* minutes to think about the topic without writing anything.
2. Give students a short period of time (1 minute) to write as much as they can.
3. Collect papers depending on the class atmosphere and the types of questions used.

**One-Minute Paper**

1. What was the most useful or the most meaningful thing you learned this class?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Is there anything you didn't understand as we end this class?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Ask students to put their names on them but generally these ungraded assignments are left anonymous to encourage open responses to the questions.
5. Assess the given feedback by students to their partners' composition.

**Appendix C: The Academic Rank, Names, and the Location of the Jury Members**

No.	Academic Rank	Name	Location
1	Prof., Ph.D. in ELT	Al-Qaraghooli ,Dhuha	University of Al- Mustansiryah/ College of Basic Education.
2	Instructor, Ph.D. in ELT	Mizhir, Dhea	University of Baghdad /Ibn Rushd for Human Science.
3	Instructor, Ph.D. in ELT	Riyadh, Elaf	University of Baghdad /Ibn Rushd for Human Science.
4	Asst. Prof.,M.A. in Linguistic	Raheem, Mayada	Universty of Technology/ English Language Teaching
5	Instructor Ph.D. in Linguistic	Aarif , Ali	University of Baghdad / college of Language

**Appendix D: Pre Test**

Q1- Write about things (activities) you enjoy doing in your free time. Consider the following questions: (20m)

- How much time do you have each week for doing these things?
- Why do you like doing these activities?
- How did you start doing this activity at first?
- Is there some other hobby or sport you would like to try? Why?

Q2- Read the job advert and write a letter to the organization explaining why you are the right person for **the job**. (20m)

**STAR TOURS INTERNATIONAL**

*Summer Tour Guide Needed!*

We are looking for someone to work as a tour guide in your area from July to September. The job involves accompanying English-speaking tourists around your town as they visit the most important sights.

You should be aged 18–30, good at organizing people, and able to communicate in English.




Write to Roger Anderson at Star Tours International, 306 Millers Lane, Birmingham, BM3 9RT

Now write your job application letter in 120–180 words .Include information about:

- your reason for writing/where you heard about the job
- details of your relevant knowledge/skills/experience
- why you want the job/why you are suitable for the job

**Appendix F: Post Test**

**Q1-** Write a replay to the following e-mail declining the request, then give two reasons for declination.

From: Lance Helms <lhems@cup.org>  
 To : Lucy Wu <Lucyw@cup.org>  
 Subject: favors

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Lucy, I really need a few small favors.  
 I hope you don't mind! I had a terrible cold last week, and I missed a couple of classes. I was wondering if you could borrow me your notes. One more thing, is it okay if you return some books to the library for me?

**Q2-** Describe a place that you have visited as a tourist. Consider the questions below:

- What is this place?
- Whome did you go there with?
- When did you last go to such a place?
- Did you enjoy it? Why?

**Appendix G: The Analytical Scoring Scheme for Composition Writing**

Category		Scores
Content	focuses on thesis statement , development of ideas through personal experience , use of description , and consistent focus	4
Organization	effectiveness of introduction , sequence of ideas , conclusion , and appropriate length	4
Vocabulary	selection of words	4
Discourse	topic sentence , paragraph unity, discourse markers, cohesion ,and fluency	4
Mechanics	neatness and appearance, spelling and punctuation	4
Total		20