

## The Impact of Blended Collaborative Pre-Task Planning on Enhancing EFL Secondary Stage Students' EFL Writing Performance

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### Abstract

The current study aimed at exploring the impact of blended collaborative pre-task planning (BCPTP) on enhancing EFL secondary stage students' EFL writing performance (EFL WP). This study had a quasi-experimental design including pre-test, treatment, and post-test to assess the students' writing performance before and after the BCPTP sessions. In this context, two complete classes totaling 66 first year EFL secondary stage students were identified and assigned to an experimental group (EG) and a control group (CG), each comprising 33 students. Over a period of 10 weeks, students in both groups produced a variety of essays. Students' EFL WP was analyzed in terms of accuracy, fluency, complexity, lexical richness, and ideational content. To collect data, a pre-post EFL WP test was used to assess the participants' EFL WP before and after the treatment. The statistical processing of the data was conducted using SPSS. The independent t-test results showed that students in the EG significantly outperformed those in the CG in respect of the EFL WP posttest. In addition, paired-samples t-test results indicated that the EG students' mean score on the EFL WP posttest exceeded their mean score on the pre-test. Based on the study's results, it can be inferred that BCPTP had a constructive impact on enhancing EFL secondary stage students' EFL WP.

**Key words:** *Blended collaborative pre-task planning, EFL writing performance, EFL secondary stage students.*

## The Impact of Blended Collaborative Pre-Task Planning on Enhancing EFL Secondary Stage Students' EFL Writing Performance

أثر التخطيط التشاركي الخليط قبل المهمة في تحسين الأداء الكتابي لدى طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية بالمرحلة الثانوية

المستخلص:

هدفت الدراسة الحالية إلى استكشاف أثر التخطيط التشاركي الخليط قبل المهمة في تحسين الأداء الكتابي لدى طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية بالمرحلة الثانوية. وقد اعتمدت هذه الدراسة على التصميم شبه التجريبي ذو الاختبار القبلي والبعدي لتقييم الأداء الكتابي للطلاب قبل وبعد تنفيذ التخطيط التشاركي الخليط قبل المهمة. في هذا السياق، تم تحديد فصلين كاملين مجموعهما 66 طالباً في الصف الأول الثانوي وتم توزيعهم على مجموعة تجريبية ومجموعة ضابطة، تضم كل منهما 33 طالباً. قام الطلاب في كلا المجموعتين بكتابة مجموعة متنوعة من المقالات لمدة 10 أسابيع. تم تحليل أداء الطلاب من حيث الدقة والطلاقة والتركيب والشرء المعجمي والمحتوى الفكري. ولجمع البيانات، تم استخدام اختبار الأداء الكتابي القبلي والبعدي لتقييم الأداء الكتابي للطلاب قبل وبعد التجربة. وأجريت المعالجة الإحصائية للبيانات باستخدام برنامج SPSS. أظهرت نتائج اختبار "ت" للعينات المستقلة أن طلاب المجموعة التجريبية تفوقوا بشكل ملحوظ على طلاب المجموعة الضابطة في الاختبار البعدي للأداء الكتابي. أيضاً، أشارت نتائج اختبار "ت" للعينات المرتبطة إلى أن متوسط درجات طلاب المجموعة التجريبية في الاختبار البعدي للأداء الكتابي أكبر من متوسط درجاتهم في الاختبار القبلي. واستناداً إلى نتائج الدراسة، يمكن الاستدلال على أن التخطيط التشاركي الخليط قبل المهمة كان له أثر بناء في تحسين الأداء الكتابي لدى طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية بالمرحلة الثانوية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التخطيط التشاركي الخليط قبل المهمة، الأداء الكتابي، طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية بالمرحلة الثانوية.

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### **Introduction**

Writing represents an essential life skill that is necessary for preparing learners to thrive in a world that is increasingly dominated by textual and digital information. The process of learning to write entails the comprehension of a completely different linguistic system. The act of writing is seen as a valuable opportunity for learners to cultivate their writing competencies and deepen their content understanding, in addition to facilitating the learning of the target language. As a result, the capacity to compose text in a Foreign Language (FL) serves as the essential factor in determining a learner's literacy in that language.

Moreover, Abdelhafez (2024) stated that writing constitutes a vital language skill that enables English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students to articulate their knowledge, thought processes, and personal experiences effectively. Writing is a vital and effective means of enhancing communication for EFL students as they engage with the target language. Developing proficiency in EFL writing requires engaging in several key processes, which include planning, drafting, revising, and editing.

According to Banados (2006), the development of writing skills encompasses various processes, including interactions between students and teachers. Additionally, enhancing writing skills involves focusing on the message's content, its organizational framework, its structural components, and the various mechanisms employed in writing. Camahalan (2014) argued that, it is essential for teachers to adopt effective instructional strategies that bolster their students' skills in expressing their thoughts clearly and effectively through written communication. It is evident that integrating traditional writing courses with contemporary technological advancements holds the promise of enhanced success. Notably, Blended Learning (BL) serves as a prime example of this combination.

As technology continues to evolve rapidly, BL has emerged as a prominent trend within the educational landscape, garnering the attention of many researchers who consider it a novel approach to motivate students in their educational endeavors. In academic literature, BL is

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frequently referred to as 'flipped learning', 'mixed learning', or 'hybrid learning' (Ataizi & Kömür, 2021).

In recent years, English classrooms have experienced a transformation in language teaching methodologies, moving away from a teacher-centered model to an emphasis on student-centered learning. This modification acknowledges the significance of catering to the needs of learners and their capacity to employ language proficiently in practical contexts (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). As a result, a teaching method that has become increasingly popular is the task-based approach.

According to Li (2023), task-based language teaching (TBLT) represents a pragmatic educational strategy that engages learners in particular communication and language tasks throughout the teaching framework. It features specialized content and is simple to navigate, which has led to its considerable popularity among educators in today's learning communities.

Various theoretical frameworks have elucidated the relationship between TBLT and FL/L2 writing. Collaborative writing represents a key focus of study within the context of TBLT. Collaborative writing involves a collective effort in which individuals engage and communicate throughout every phase of the writing process, assisting in the formulation and development of ideas, discussions regarding the organization of the text, as well as modifying and refining the text (Storch, 2013).

The utilization of collaborative writing techniques has the potential to significantly boost the writing performance of EFL learners. Mulligan and Garofalo (2011) posited that engaging in collaborative writing has produced observable improvements in students' writing performance. Furthermore, the study revealed that students maintained a constructive attitudes towards collaborative writing, considering it to be a valuable tool for improving their EFL writing skills. According to Khatib and Meihami (2015), implementing collaborative writing activities and tasks enhances different aspects of writing like organization of ideas, grammar, content, mechanics, and vocabulary.

As a result of the rising interest in examining FL/L2 writing within the context of the TBLT approach, pre-task planning (PTP) has emerged as an important area of research within the pedagogy of FL/L2 writing, garnering substantial attention in the realm of task-based studies (Thompson, 2014; Ellis, 2021). Using the language, whether in oral or written communication, entails a form of planning. Such planning is instrumental for writers as it enables them to set objectives, develop and

arrange their ideas, and gather pertinent information, consequently supports FL/L2 writers in optimizing their cognitive resources, diminishing their attentional strain, and facilitating a more effective integration of meaning and form (Ellis and Yuan, 2004).

As evidenced by both theoretical frameworks and pedagogical considerations, the exploration of PTP effects in the context of FL/L2 learning is essential. FL/L2 learners have the opportunity to derive benefits from PTP. According to Kellogg (2008), writing constitutes a sophisticated activity in which learners invest considerable attentional resources to navigate the recursive nature of the online planning process, to formulate sentences, and to analyze written content. Based on that, PTP serves as a valuable resource for learners to manage the writing process.

Furthermore, effective planning is crucial for learners as it enables them to organize their thoughts regarding what to articulate or compose, as well as the manner in which they will execute the task. This process activates pertinent content and linguistic structures while alleviating cognitive load during the actual writing activity. According to Williams (2003), planning involves the examination of prewritten content in order to create a plan aimed at resolving academic issues. Moreover, among the various elements of the writing process, planning is recognized as one of the most impactful yet challenging features. Abrams and Byrd (2016) posited that PTP enhances the accessibility of linguistic resources and concepts for learners during the writing process, thereby leading to an anticipated improvement in the quality of their writing. So, the benefits of PTP can extend across various stages of the writing process.

Consequently, examining the role of collaborative planning through a variety of tasks in a blended learning context may significantly advance our understanding of the development of FL writing. This approach actively involves EFL writers in dialogic interactions during the processes of planning, composing, and revising written works, whether in group settings or through online discussions.

### **Context of the Problem**

Given that writing serves as a crucial means of communication in contemporary society, it is essential for EFL students to attain a high level of proficiency in writing. Despite the importance of EFL writing skills, FL writing is perceived as one of the most demanding activities for EFL learners. The greater the requirement for learners to engage in writing in English, the more they face significant challenges. Consequently, the prevalent obstacles and challenges that EFL students experience in essay writing can be outlined to include organizational and planning problems

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e.g. coherence and cohesion; lexical and stylistic difficulties; and technical problems e.g. spelling, punctuation, grammar, revising, and editing.

Writing is perceived as the most demanding of the four language skills, necessitating extensive interaction with the language that enhances productive communication skills. Furthermore, students have the opportunity to articulate their thoughts in a coherent and structured way when engaging in writing. Therefore, the capacity to convey one's ideas in written form in a FL/L2, while maintaining a reasonable level of coherence and accuracy, poses a considerable difficulty (Celce-Murcia, 2001). According to Hapsari (2011), writing is the most intricate of the four skills. It presents difficulties in generating and structuring ideas, along with the need to master different components of writing, such as grammar, vocabulary, word selection, and punctuation.

Mason, Kubina, and Taft (2011) identified several writing challenges faced by ESL/EFL students. These challenges encompass a lack of familiarity with the writing subject, insufficient time dedicated to the planning process, and obstacles in generating ideas as well as in the editing of their written work. Students frequently write shorter pieces and are more prone to making mechanical errors. Furthermore, According to Woo, Chu, and Li (2013), writing is inherently more challenging as it demands a high level of self-regulation and intentional oversight to effectively handle the writing context, the restrictions associated with the chosen topic, and the intricate processes that comprise the act of composing.

Chen (2021) mentioned that writing is considered the most challenging skill for EFL students to acquire among the four essential English language skills. According to Hentasmaka and Cahyono (2021), a writer should take into account various factors while composing, including the theme of the work and the intended audience. Additional elements of writing encompass content, structure, vocabulary, and the mechanics associated with language utilization. Before submitting any written work, students should undertake several essential processes, which encompass planning, drafting, revising, and editing.

Furthermore, according to ELbashir (2023), the majority of EFL students encounter challenges when attempting to create a well-structured composition in English, as they often lack the requisite writing skills essential for achieving successful writing performance. EFL students commonly experience obstacles in structuring their thoughts and information, articulating their ideas in written format, composing with



lucidity and accuracy, employing the appropriate grammatical structures, as well as deliberately opting for the correct language and formulation of sentences.

Moreover, Abu Rass (2015); Younes and Albalawi (2015) mentioned various factors that influence the writing difficulties encountered by nonnative speakers. The shortcomings include delivering supporting details e.g. examples and rationale, that are not completely developed, and the incomplete mastery of the English style. EFL learners, especially those from Arab backgrounds, exhibit the stylistic features inherent to Arabic, their native language. Students frequently exhibit a tendency to write protracted sentences that incorporate coordinating conjunctions, thereby allowing them to restate their assertions and reinforce their arguments through comprehensive presentation and elaboration.

For the purpose of documenting the problem identified in the current study, the researcher interviewed five teachers who were responsible for teaching English to first year secondary stage students. All of the teachers highlighted that first year secondary stage students demonstrate a deficiency in writing skills. Also, The teachers reported that they utilize conventional teaching techniques to impart writing skills. They often prioritize completing the extensive and challenging syllabus mandated for the semester, which results in a lack of focus on fostering these skills.

Moreover, the problem of the ongoing study was substantiated through the implementation of a pilot study that incorporated a writing test. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> of September 2024, the researcher administered the writing test to 40 first year EFL secondary stage students (not included in both the EG or CG). The results showed that most of students (90%) generated essays that contained multiple problems concerning content, structure, vocabulary, and the mechanics associated with language utilization.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The problem of the present study can be summarized as follows: first year EFL secondary stage students lack necessary writing skills and often struggle with the organization of their thoughts and information, the expression of their ideas in written communication, the clarity and accuracy of their writing, the use of proper grammatical structures, and the intentional selection of appropriate language and sentence formulations. Therefore, the ongoing study explores the impact of BCPTP on enhancing first year EFL secondary stage students' EFL WP.

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### **Aim of the Study**

The current study aimed at exploring the impact of BCPTP on enhancing the first year EFL secondary stage students' EFL WP.

### **Question of the Study**

To address the aim of this study, the ensuing question was devised:

1. Does BCPTP have any significant effect on enhancing the first year EFL secondary stage students' EFL WP?

### **Hypotheses of the Study**

The hypotheses put forth for this study is detailed as follows:

1. A statistically significant difference would exist in the mean scores of the EG and the CG on the EFL WP post-test, favoring the experimental group.
2. A statistically significant difference would exist in the mean scores of the EG on the EFL WP pre-posttest, favoring the posttest.

### **Significance of the Study**

The ongoing study would facilitate fulfilling the following:

1. Stressing the critical role of boosting the EFL learners' EFL WP.
2. Analyzing the potential effects of BCPTP on enhancing the EFL secondary stage students' EFL WP.
3. Supplying EFL teachers with a relevant framework for developing writing skills using BCPTP.
4. Providing EFL curriculum developers with an innovative method for instructing writing skills.
5. EFL curriculum designers have the opportunity to integrate teaching and learning activities pertaining to BCPTP as a core aspect of the EFL writing curriculum at different educational levels.
6. Facilitating opportunities for other researchers to undertake further investigations into the effect of BCPTP on enhancing various English language skills.

### **Delimitations of the Study**

The ongoing study was restricted to the following considerations:

1. Sixty six first year EFL secondary stage students enrolled at Ahmed Taha Hussein Secondary School, Aswan.
2. Assessing first year EFL secondary stage students' EFL WP in terms of accuracy, fluency, complexity, lexical richness, and ideational content.
3. The first semester of the academic year 2024/2025.



## **Definitions of Terms**

### **Collaborative pre-task planning**

According to Weissberg (2006), collaborative pre-writing planning is an approach to planning that facilitates interactions among L2 writers, allowing them to assess their interlanguage collaboratively, investigate each other's linguistic and conceptual assets, provide mutual support, and cultivate a deeper awareness of their writing audience.

In the scope of the present study, BCPTP is operationally conceptualized as stimulating the first year EFL secondary stage students' attention and instructing them to collaboratively write accurate, fluent, complex, lexically rich essays including clearly relevant ideas, and details in a blended environments.

### **Writing Performance**

According to Amin (2016), WP is viewed as the students' ability to produce written essays with clear organization of ideas; adequate, sufficient and relevant development of topic, sentence structure, and word usage and mechanics.

In the scope of the present study, WP is operationally conceptualized as the first year EFL secondary stage students' ability to produce well-written, accurate, fluent, complex, lexically rich essays including clearly relevant ideas, and details in a blended and collaborative environments.

## **Review of Literature**

### **Writing Performance**

Writing functions as a vital instrument for expressing oneself, facilitating communication, and engaging in self-reflection. It represents a key pillar upon which content knowledge is constructed and is a reflection of the literacy growth among students. For EFL learners, achieving a commendable level of writing proficiency is crucial, evolving from a significant aim to a foremost and continuous priority. WP has consistently held significant importance for EFL students. It transcends being a mere mechanical skill; instead, it integrates various cognitive competencies that aid in the academic progress of learners, promoting their creativity and innovative thinking regarding language.

Moreover, Bello (1997) asserts that the act of writing significantly contributes to language acquisition, as it allows learners to engage with words, sentences, and various writing components to effectively convey their ideas. This practice not only solidifies the grammar and vocabulary learned in class but also indicates that writing is fundamental to the development of other language skills, rather than simply a tool for communication.

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Further, Nunan (2003) posited that writing is a cognitive endeavor that involves the discovery of ideas and the contemplation of how to articulate and structure them into coherent statements and paragraphs that are easily comprehensible to readers. This underscores the expectation that student-writers must effectively convey their thoughts and organize them into well-structured compositions.

Writing serves as a catalyst for thought and learning in the realm of communication, making ideas available for deeper consideration. By transcribing their thoughts, individuals are able to review, categorize, rearrange, and adapt their ideas. According to Negari (2011), WP is a multifaceted process that encompasses various cognitive and metacognitive activities, including planning, brainstorming, outlining, organizing, drafting, and revising. Consequently, writing should be understood as a series of interconnected activities.

As noted by Bukhari (2016), successful writing involves several important considerations, such as the arrangement of thoughts, the creation of systematic links with relevant details to organize those thoughts, and the clear and cohesive articulation of opinions to ensure that all ideas are connected to the main theme. As students prepare to participate in a writing task, it is essential for them to consider the genre they are addressing. This consideration will provide clarity regarding the primary objective of their composition, the appropriate structure to adopt, and the suitable style to implement.

Yu and Reynolds (2018) elaborated that writing necessitates a variety of additional skills, such as the capacity to create vivid descriptions, articulate opinions and attitudes with clarity, negotiate meanings, and interpret information and diagrams within their own written work. They also pointed out that writing is not a straightforward, linear process but is inherently recursive.

Furthermore, writing poses considerable difficulties for learners, as it encompasses more than the straightforward transcription of ideas into written form. It demands the development and synthesis of additional competencies, such as organizing, finding solutions, and determining actions. Abu-Rass (2001) articulated that writing constitutes a multifaceted skill, as it encompasses various cognitive processes, including thinking, composing, generating ideas, evaluating the connections between these ideas and the central theme of the topic, as well as memorizing and systematically arranging these ideas based on their significance.

In addition, Tuan (2010) noted that EFL learners often find WP to be a daunting task. This perception can be attributed to the necessity for students to concentrate on several critical success considerations simultaneously, which is essential for producing a coherent and well-structured written work. These considerations involve transforming their ideas into a written form, analyzing the linguistic attributes associated with the intended writing style, recognizing the target audience, conveying a powerful voice, and employing appropriate language.

In 1978, Vygotsky articulated the concept that learning is a phenomenon constructed through social interactions, where engagement among peers and societal members facilitates the acquisition and construction of knowledge. In the framework of knowledge development, working alongside expert learners empowers novice learners to proficiently undertake the process of knowledge acquisition.

Further, According to constructivist theory, individuals engage in learning by actively constructing, creating, exploring, and evolving their own knowledge and understanding (Liu & Chen, 2010). To ensure effective learning, it is essential for students to participate in genuine meaning-making activities. This includes engaging in group discussions, exchanging viewpoints, and integrating prior knowledge to develop an accurate comprehension of the subject matter. The act of exchanging ideas through discourse enables individuals to uncover and reformulate their existing knowledge and understanding (Smagorinsky, 2013).

According to Bueno-Alaustey and Larumbe, (2017), the process of learning a FL/L2 is significantly improved when undertaken collaboratively, either in pairs or within groups. In the view of Zhang (2018), the practice of collaborative writing is particularly beneficial for developing writing proficiency among learners, as it creates numerous opportunities for them to engage with one another and collaboratively resolve language difficulties in pairs or small groups.

The early 1970s saw the emergence of collaborative writing, driven by the goal of identifying innovative approaches to support learners in becoming more proficient writers. Bruffee's foundational theory proposed that language learners exhibit enhanced performance in composition when participating in group writing activities as opposed to writing independently. This notion of collaborative writing has rapidly gained prominence and has been widely embraced in the realms of FL/L2 instruction (Li & Zhang, 2023).

Collaborative writing is a dynamic and communal endeavor that engages a group working towards a shared goal, facilitating negotiation, coordination, and communication throughout the development of a

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unified document. It entails learners being designated to collaborate with a partner or fellow group members, fostering the production of quality written work. Consequently, collaborative writing can be viewed as a technique to inspire learners to purposefully engage with each other in pairs or groups to produce a written piece together (Zhang & Plonsky, 2020; Zhang & Chen, 2022).

Engaging in collaborative writing allows each learner to participate actively in the processes of comprehension, manipulation, production, and interaction within the target language. This process not only allows learners to hone their writing skills but also promotes knowledge sharing and the enhancement of critical and reflective thinking, as well as decision-making abilities. Engaging in cooperative efforts during the entire writing process cultivates a collective sense of accountability and beneficial interdependence for the end result. Therefore, collaborative writing emphasizes the significance of interactions that allow learners to learn from their peers.

For collaborative writing to be effective in EFL environments, it is essential for teachers to assist students by offering comprehensive guidelines prior to the commencement of the process. It is essential for students to have a clear understanding of the what, how, when, where, and with whom to participate in each phase of collaborative writing. To support this understanding, teachers should strive to ensure that every student has a comprehensive grasp of the steps involved and knows how to remain actively engaged in each stage. Engaging in brainstorming is essential for maintaining participation and addressing all facets of the writing task, as it promotes significant interaction and collaborative decision-making (Pardede, 2024).

In addition, technology has provided a variety of tools that enable communication effortlessly at any time and from any location. Consequently, students engaged in writing groups should utilize suitable social media platforms, such as Messenger, WhatsApp, and email, for discussions and the exchange of ideas, while employing Microsoft Word for collaborative revision and editing. Today's students primarily utilize computers for their writing endeavors. Many of them engage in this activity on a regular basis, frequently posting on multiple social networking sites. The tendency to write concise messages for communication purposes indicates a stronger affinity for digital writing tools over conventional writing instruments such as pen and paper (Coskie & Hornof, 2013).

Investigations into the application of blended learning and collaborative writing as methods to boost the WP of ESL/EFL learners have been significant and extensive throughout the past several decades. Taki and Fardafshari (2012) examined the impact of weblog-based collaborative learning on the writing skills and motivation of young Iranian EFL learners. The study findings demonstrated that the integration of blogging into collaborative learning instruction proved to be more effective than conventional in-class language learning instruction. Moreover, blogs function as an effective tool for language learning, providing a space for learners to actively utilize the language.

Shukor and Noordin (2014) examined the impact of collaborative writing groups via Facebook on the WP of ESL undergraduate students. The study compared Facebook, which was used as the treatment, to a conventional approach involving face-to-face collaboration in writing activities. The results revealed that participants in Facebook collaborative writing groups attained superior scores on the writing performance test when compared to those in face-to-face collaborative writing groups.

Challob, Abu Bakar & Latif (2016) explored how a collaborative blended writing environment influences Malaysian EFL students' WP and apprehension. The Students participated in the writing process through in-person and online learning formats, using the class blog and Viber for discussions. The results revealed that the students held favorable views regarding the collaborative blended writing environment they encountered. They believed that the collaborative blended activities contributed to a decrease in their writing apprehension and enhanced their WP, as they gained substantial knowledge about both the micro and macro elements of writing. Students perceived that their engagement in online discussions and collaborative writing within Viber groups and the class blog significantly aided them in completing their writing assignments.

Ramadan (2020) explored the effect of using a collaborative blended learning environment on enhancing students' EFL academic writing skills and writing motivation. According to the study's results, the EFL academic writing skills of students in the experimental group were notably improved, allowing them to surpass their control group peers in these specific skills, while also boosting their motivation for EFL writing. Overall, the study highlights the effectiveness of the intervention in enhancing both writing skills and motivation among EFL learners. It has been suggested that EFL learners should be given opportunities to participate in EFL academic writing skills courses that employ a collaborative blended learning environment.



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Hassan, Abdul Rahman and Azmi (2021) examined the impact of blended learning on the development of English writing skills among Malaysian ESL learners. The study's findings demonstrated that blended learning significantly enhances the writing performance of the participants.

Mulyadi, Riyanto, and Kristanto (2024) examined how collaborative blended learning (CBL) through written small group discussions (WSGD) influences the enhancement of students' analytical writing skills. The objective of the study was to analyze how students express their ideas, organize their texts, and utilize language effectively in a group learning context. The findings showed considerable enhancements in every area assessed, indicating that the CBL through WSGD greatly improves students' analytical writing skills.

An overview of prior research indicates that collaborative learning and blended learning have proven effective in enhancing students' writing skills. Collaborative learning settings positively influence students' writing skills. Therefore, integrating collaborative and blended learning approaches into language programs improves students' writing competencies and equips them for the collaborative and communicative requirements of the professional world.

### **Blended Collaborative Pre-Task Planning**

Conventional EFL writing instruction often emphasizes a single writing session, where the first draft is considered the final version. Students' writing is exclusively reviewed by their teachers, leading students to become reliant on teachers' feedback and to perceive their writing primarily as an exercise intended for teachers. Also, the volume of written texts requiring correction is excessively high for teachers. Consequently, they dedicate a significant amount of time to the task of reviewing and correcting compositions. (Zhao, 2019; Zhang and McEneaney, 2020).

The fast-paced evolution of technology has resulted in the extensive implementation of BL within English writing education. BL seeks to optimize teaching effectiveness through the combination of multiple resources and pedagogical approaches. Online learning platforms facilitate BL by promoting both synchronous and asynchronous interactions among students. This approach creates an environment rich in feedback opportunities, thereby improving student learning outcomes and nurturing a culture of continuous feedback.

As Sianna (2018) argued, BL pertains to an educational approach that merges digital learning experiences with direct, face-to-face



instruction. Teachers commonly employ various artifacts, including mobile phones, computers, internet resources, videos, and online materials, to bolster EFL learners' writing performance. The integration of these resources creates a conducive and dynamic writing environment, enhances self-confidence, and contributes to better learning outcomes.

The TBLT approach has garnered significant interest in the field of FL/L2 acquisition research, owing to its beneficial effects on the efficacy of FL/L2 instruction and learning. According to Zhou (2021), in TBLT, tasks serve as the fundamental component for both planning and instruction in language education. The use of tasks promotes active engagement among students, thereby enhancing their motivation to learn. Engaging in task-based activities encourages collaboration among students through group work and peer tutoring, thereby strengthening their sense of autonomy while allowing them to receive support from peers who can provide motivation as needed.

Research has demonstrated that planning serves as an effective instrument for advancing writing fluency, elevating writing quality, and optimizing language use in the FL/L2 writing realm. According to Ellis (2005), there are two distinct categories of planning: pre-task planning and within-task planning. This classification is determined by the timing of the planning process, either before the task is initiated or while the task is being carried out. PTP occurs before the implementation of the primary task and is categorized into two components: strategic planning and rehearsal. Conversely, within-task planning involves the processes that take place while the main task is being performed.

Alzoubi (2024) argues that, PTP creates opportunities for learners to engage in systematic processing, thereby reducing the strain on working memory. Additionally, it enables learners to oversee their output, as they can draw upon their retained linguistic resources and refine their language use through their existing knowledge. In addition, PTP may foster an increased awareness among learners regarding the knowledge or skills that are to be learned or produced. As a result, PTP is indispensable for promoting learners' focus and for mobilizing their implicit and explicit knowledge of the FL/L2 for use in productive tasks.

PTP is viewed as a strategy that frees learners from the anxiety often experienced in communication settings, diverts learners' concentration from the grammatical forms of the language, and allows them to do a more profound and meaningful processing of the information. (Sangarun, 2001; Wendel, 1997).

A number of studies have investigated the effects of different planning conditions on FL/L2 learners' WP. Farahani and Meraji (2011)

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investigated how varying the duration of PTP influences EFL learners' narrative writing performance. In this study, the researchers established a framework for planning that encompasses three tiers: no planning, planning for three minutes, and planning for ten minutes. A total of 45 Iranian EFL learners participated in the study, and they were categorized into three groups, with each group being randomly assigned to one of the planning conditions. The findings indicated that both planning groups demonstrated a significantly superior WP in terms of fluency and accuracy compared to the group that did not engage in planning. Also, the two planning groups exhibited comparable levels of accuracy, fluency, and complexity in their narrative WP, with no significant differences identified.

The study carried out by Johnson, Mercado and Acevedo (2012) explored the effects of several PTP conditions (organization, goal setting, and idea generation) on Spanish EFL learners' essay composition skills. Participants were distributed randomly among the three planning conditions and executed a comparable writing task. The study results demonstrated that PTP conditions exerted a small but significant effect on writing fluency, with no discernible impact on the lexical and grammatical complexity of the compositions produced.

Further, Lin (2013) examined the impact of PTP and online planning on Chinese EFL university students' WP. Participants were categorized into three distinct groups for the purpose of the treatment: a no planning group (NP), which was allotted 15 minutes to finish each writing task; an online planning group (OLP), which received 25 minutes for task completion; and a pre-task planning group (PTP), which was permitted 10 minutes for planning before executing the task within a 15-minute period. Each week, the participants undertook four experimental writing tasks, each characterized by different conditions. The assessment of learners' written work focused on four key aspects: fluency, organization, accuracy, and complexity. The findings demonstrated that both PTP and online planning did not influence WP in relation to syntactic complexity, accuracy, or essays' organization. Further, The implementation of PTP positively influenced both lexical complexity and fluency.

In addition, Tavakoli and Rezazadeh (2014) explored the contrasting influences of individual and collaborative approaches to PTP on Iranian EFL learners' argumentative WP. The participants' WP was evaluated based on three criteria: accuracy, fluency, and complexity. The findings revealed that those who engaged in collaborative planning achieved higher accuracy in their text, while those who engaged in individual

planning demonstrated superior fluency in their writing. Concerning the complexity of their writing, there was no substantial distinction found between the two groups.

Biria and Karimi (2015) examined the effect of PTP on intermediate Iranian EFL learners' argumentative writing fluency. A random division was employed to categorize the participants into experimental and control groups. Participants in the experimental group implemented PTP, in contrast to the control group, which received traditional writing instruction. The findings illustrated that the experimental group demonstrated superior writing fluency compared to the control group.

Further, Kang and Lee (2019) analyzed the effects of both individual and collaborative PTP on the complexity, accuracy, fluency, and lexical richness of Korean EFL students' writing. The study examined the relationship between planning and task complexity, emphasizing the total number of elements associated with the task. In the study, participants were organized into simple and complex task groups, where they undertook a writing task that required individual planning, alongside a collaborative writing task completed in pairs. Results indicated that, while collaborative planning had beneficial effects on fluency and syntactic complexity, it did not affect accuracy when compared to individual planning.

Moreover, McDonough and Vleeschauwer (2019) explored the effect of pre-writing planning on improving Thai EFL learners' writing skills. Participants were organized into individual and collaborative planning groups. An analysis was conducted on the students' written texts, focusing on aspects such as content, organization, grammar, and vocabulary. The results of the study indicated that collaborative planning yielded more significant advantages compared to individual planning regarding linguistic accuracy. In particular, while individual planning enhanced the overall quality, students who engaged in collaborative planning demonstrated a more pronounced improvement in accuracy.

In summary, the aforementioned studies have enhanced our understanding of how pre-task planning offers language learners numerous opportunities to anticipate, structure their thoughts, and familiarize themselves with task requirements, thereby aiding in language acquisition.

To summarize, the current study intends to employ BCPTP as a meaningful, authentic, and goal-oriented means to boost EFL secondary stage students' EFL WP. Understanding how collaborative planning, facilitated by a variety of tasks in a blended learning context, can improve students' EFL WP is valuable, as it encourages dialogic interactions

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throughout the stages of planning, composing, and revising written works, both in group collaborations and online exchanges.

### **Methods**

The current investigation adopted a quasi-experimental design with a pretest-posttest, comprising an EG and a CG. Testing was conducted for both groups prior to and subsequent to the experiment's implementation.

### **Participants**

The present study included 66 first-year EFL secondary stage students from Ahmed Taha Hussein Secondary School in Aswan as participants. These students are of the same age, language proficiency, and originate from the same cultural background. Moreover, the researcher explained the study's objectives to them and assured that any information shared would be treated with confidentiality.

### **Instruments and Materials**

To meet the aims of the present study, the researcher constructed and employed the instruments and materials mentioned below:

### **The Checklist of EFL Writing Performance Measures**

Throughout the ongoing study, the participants' EFL WP was evaluated based on certain measures e.g. accuracy, fluency, complexity, lexical richness, and ideational content. The checklist of EFL WP measures was provided to five TEFL specialists to verify its validity. The jury concluded that the checklist was valid for meeting the study goals and proposed no further changes. Appendix (1) contains the definitive version of the final list of measures related to EFL WP.

### **The EFL Writing Performance Test**

The researcher developed an EFL Writing Performance Test (EFL WPT), as illustrated in (Appendix 2), to assess the first year EFL secondary stage students' EFL WP. The test comprised two writing tasks. For each task, students were given a topic to collaboratively write an essay about. The topics selected were deemed relevant to ongoing global events and were also aligned with the interests of the students.

The EFL WPT was provided to five TEFL specialists to verify its validity. The jury concluded that the test was valid for meeting the study goals and proposed no further changes. The test was piloted on 30 first year EFL secondary stage students (not included in the EG or the CG). The purpose of this piloting was to ensure that the EFL WPT was clear and to measure the time required for the test's completion. Moreover, by determining the square root of the test reliability coefficient, the EFL WPT validity coefficient was verified. Consequently, the validity

coefficient of the test was determined to be (.83), which is regarded as falling within an appropriate range. Based on that, the test is acknowledged as valid and is able to accurately measure the participants' EFL WP before implementing the BCPTP- based program and following its completion. Furthermore, to verify the EFL WPT reliability, the test-retest method was applied. The students were subjected to test on the 25<sup>th</sup> of September 2024. A retest was administered two weeks later. The correlation coefficient was (0.79).

To assess the students' responses to the EFL WPT, the researcher formulated a scoring rubric. The EFL WP rubric consists of four distinct achievement levels, organized on a scale ranging from one to four, where "4" signifies the most exceptional performance level, and "1" denotes the least satisfactory performance level. In order to confirm the validity of the EFL WP rubric, it was presented to a panel of EFL jurors who provided their opinions on the suitability of each performance level in relation to the EFL WP measures. The jury determined that the WP rubric was valid for achieving the objectives of the study and recommended no additional modifications. Appendix (3) illustrates the EFL WP rubric final form.

Furthermore, To assess the reliability of the WP scoring rubric, an inter-rater reliability analysis was performed. Based on that, The responses provided by the pilot sample students (N=30) for the EFL WP pilot test were assessed by three raters according to the scoring rubric. Pearson correlation coefficient between Rater 1 and Rater 2 was (0.775), between Rater 1 and Rater 3 was (0.832), and between Rater 2 and Rater 3 was (0.810) all of which are statistically significant at (0.01). Moreover, the One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was also performed. The findings indicated that there were no statistically significant differences among them ( $F = 0.842$ , sig. = 0.463,  $p > 0.05$ ).

### **The BCPTP-Based Program**

Designed to enhance the WP of the first-year EFL secondary stage students, the BCPTP-based program was executed in the first semester of the academic year 2024/2025. Covering a duration of two months, the program featured ten sessions, with a two-hour allocation for each session. The initial session concentrated on familiarizing the students with the BCPTP. Subsequent sessions emphasized instructional activities, during which the EG students were assigned into groups and instructed to collaboratively identify the writing topic, strategize their writing prior to commencing the task, plan their research to collect relevant information for the topic, establish the writing purpose and organize the content, drafting, revising, editing, and proofreading. Appendix (4) illustrates the



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final version of the BCPTP-based program incorporated in the ongoing study.

### Results of the Study

The conclusions drawn from this study are conveyed in line with the proposed hypotheses, utilizing the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23. Below is a concise summary of the results:

#### Hypothesis (1)

The first hypothesis proposes that “a statistically significant difference would exist in the mean scores of the EG and the CG on the EFL WP post-test, favoring the EG”. The ensuing table illustrates the EG and CG groups' statistics on the EFL WP post-test.

Table (1): Results of the EG and the CG on the EFL WP posttest.

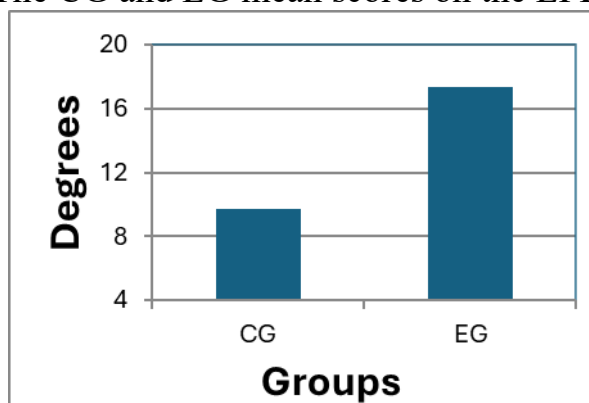
Test	Group	N	Mean	S.D	T- Value	D.F	Sig.
The WP Posttest	CG	33	9.75	.93	36.61	64	0.01
	EG	33	17.39	.74			

. Table (1) indicates that there is a significant difference at (0.01) between the CG and EG mean scores on the EFL WP posttest, favoring the EG.

Comparing the mean scores of the CG and EG on the EFL WP posttest shows that the EG students' mean score on the EFL WP posttest is (17.39), while the CG students' mean score on the EFL WP posttest is (9.75). These values signify the considerable improvement of the EG students concerning their EFL WP over the CG. This confirms the proposed BCPTP-based program's effectiveness in enhancing the first year EFL secondary stage students' EFL WP. This finding presented statistical evidence supporting the first hypothesis.

The difference between the CG and EG mean scores on the EFL WP posttest is illustrated as shown in Figure (1).

Figure (1): The CG and EG mean scores on the EFL WP posttest





## Hypothesis (2)

The second hypothesis conveys that “a statistically significant difference would exist in the mean scores of the EG on the EFL WP pre-posttests, favoring the posttest”.

The table that follows indicates the results of the EG on the EFL WP pre-posttests.

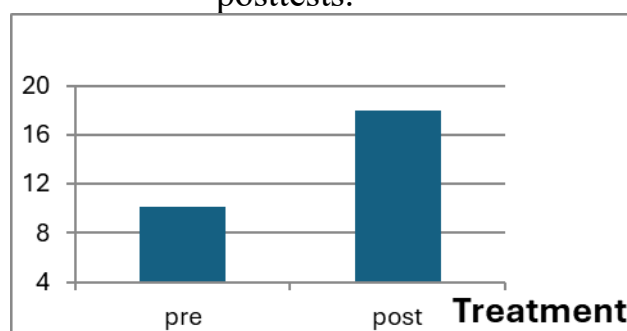
Table (2): Results of the EG on the EFL WP pre-posttests.

Test	Measurement	N	Mean	S.D	T- Value	D.F	Sig.
WP	Pre	33	10.12	.96	36.72	32	0.01
	Post		17.96	.72			

According to table (2), the mean score achieved by the EG students on the EFL WP posttest is higher than their mean score on the pre-test. The calculated t-value is (36.72), indicating significance at the 0.01 level. Based on that, the second hypothesis is corroborated.

The second hypothesis results indicated a notable statistical difference between the EG students’ mean scores on the EFL WP pre-posttests, showing a preference for the posttest. Table (2) illustrated that t-value was significant at 0.01 level. This result functioned as statistical proof backing the second hypothesis. Figure (2) indicates these results.

Figure (2): The EG students’ mean scores on the EFL WP pre-posttests.



The present study targeted the enhancement of first year EFL secondary stage students’ EFL WP via a BCPTP-based program. The students were requested to articulate in words and phrases regarding the content, structure, and organization of the writing assignment. Furthermore, during the BCPTP-based program, the EG students were guided to identify the writing topic; plan for research to collect information related to the topic; establish the writing purpose; organize the content; draft; revise; and edit their written work. Therefore, the post-assessment showed an advancement in the first year EFL secondary stage students’ EFL WP, which can be connected to the effects of the BCPTP-

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based program. The upcoming table highlights the effect size of the BCPTP-based program on the EFL WP of EG students:

Presented in the following table is the effect size of the BCPTP-based program concerning the EFL WP of the EG students:

Table (3): The effect size of the BCPTP-based program on the EG students' EFL WP

Skill	t-value	$\eta^2$	Effect size
WP	36.61	.98	Large

Table (3) demonstrates that the eta square ( $\eta^2$ ) value is (0.98). It is clear that this value surpasses (0.14), indicating a substantial effect size of the BCPTP-based program on improving the EG students' EFL WP. The ( $\eta^2$ ) value signifies the substantial impact of the experimental treatment applied in this research. As a result, the BCPTP-based program remarkably enhanced the first year EFL secondary stage students' EFL WP.

### Discussion

The central goal of the present study was to enhance the first year EFL secondary stage students' EFL WP by employing a BCPTP-based program. The findings of the current study indicated that BCPTP allowed EG students the opportunity to organize their content and structure their paragraphs, clarify the ideas and information presented in their essays, and practice the key terms and linguistic structures utilized. In addition, the prior organization of key vocabulary before the writing process helped to increase the lexical richness among the EG students. The amount and significance of ideas are also linked to BCPTP, which encouraged collaborative brainstorming and the sharing of concepts related to the intended topic. Consequently, BCPTP minimized the time dedicated to revising and editing the text during the writing process, thereby improving writing fluency.

In addition, the EG students, who engaged in the writing tasks within the BCPTP framework, demonstrated a higher output of error-free clauses and a more significant use of correct verb forms than their CG counterparts. Furthermore, BCPTP assisted the EG students in more effectively structuring the information that must be communicated, along with the evidence required to substantiate their arguments in the essays. The EG students generated a higher quantity of unique and precise ideas than those in the CG. This conclusion indicates that BCPTP had a notable

effect on the number of words and ideas the students articulated in their subsequent work.

Furthermore, BCPTP enabled the EG students to generate pertinent vocabulary and concepts, resulting in more comprehensive texts. During the pre-task planning phase, learners directed their attention towards the propositional content and sought out the relevant vocabulary to express the propositional content of their essays. Moreover, the quantity of ideas produced during the BCPTP is significantly linked to both the volume and quality of the written materials in the following writing assignments.

The findings derived from the present study support the conclusions drawn from multiple recent studies. (e.g. Nitta and Baba, 2014; Abrams and Byrd, 2016; Kang and Lee, 2019; Tabari, 2022, Fan, 2024). The findings of these studies on PTP might have been impacted by a range of interacting factors, which encompass proficiency levels, understanding of genre, and the instructions related to pre-task planning. To sum up, The students, utilizing PTP, concentrate on organizing concepts and essential terms, leading to an enhancement in overall writing quality, increased fluency, richer ideational content, and greater lexical diversity. Collaborative planning helps students create writings that exhibit greater syntactic complexity, organize their ideas and vocabulary, and consequently enhance their writing structure, leading to quicker writing output and clearer idea presentation.

## **Conclusions**

The current study adopted a quasi-experimental design to explore the impact of BCPTP on enhancing first year EFL secondary stage students' EFL WP. The statistical results indicated that BCPTP considerably enhanced students' EFL WP. Significant differences were found in students' post-test mean scores between the EG (BCPTP group) and the CG (no-planning). BCPTP positively impacted the EFL WP represented in complexity, accuracy, fluency, ideational content, and lexical richness of students' written texts. Evaluations of the students' texts demonstrated that they made use of an adequate number of simple, compound, and complex structures, along with a wide range of subordination and linking words, and they contained hardly any grammatical errors. The results demonstrated that students paid diminished attention to language issues during composition and writing activities, implying that BCPTP effectively fosters the creation of superior content characterized by more profound ideas and a broader vocabulary. Moreover, BCPTP supported the students in defining their writing goals, formulating ideas associated with these goals, and arranging these ideas for transformation into concrete writing.

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### **Recommendations of the Study**

Based on the results of the present study, the following suggestions are offered:

1. EFL curriculum developers are urged to incorporate BCPTP into language programs to improve students' EFL WP and their collaborative and communicative skills.
2. Instructing EFL students on BCPTP to direct their focus towards specific content and language constructs, thereby creating opportunities for constructive feedback.
3. EFL teachers are recommended to adopt BCPTP to reap the benefits associated with both writing activities conducted on paper and those performed on a computer.
4. EFL students are urged to utilize BCPTP and benefit from the additional time to process both input and output, the greater opportunities to focus on form, and the improved conditions to reflect on one another's language and content.

### **Suggestions for Further Research**

The following points are suggested for further research:

- Exploring the effect of BCPTP on improving EFL students' attitudes towards writing skills.
- Examining the impact of BCPTP on decreasing EFL students' writing apprehension.
- Examining the impact of BCPTP on improving EFL students' speaking skills.
- Replicating the same study with other EFL population such as primary and preparatory stage EFL students.

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