

Abstract

This study investigated the effect of individual Concept Mapping (CM) as a pre-writing planning strategy on English Language Learners' (ELL) writing performance on different modes of writing. The present study also intended to investigate the effect of the explicit teaching of CM on ELL's knowledge and skills pertaining to vocabulary, organization, grammar and punctuation. An experimental design study was implemented at a female high-school in Palestine. Fifty six eleventh grade students were divided in two equal groups: non-mapping group (Control) and mapping group (Experimental Group). The study focused on differences in the effect of individual paper-and-pencil CMs under three conditions: in-class writing tasks, exams and home assignments. A pre-assessment on writing was administered before treatment. Instruction was focused on the use of CM as a prewriting strategy for expository and argumentative essays for the Experimental Group while the Control Group followed the traditional way of writing to write these modes. To analyze the results, the study used Independent Sample T-Test and ANOVA Test on composition scores. The results of the pre-tests and posttests of the two groups scored by two raters based on predetermined criteria (an analytical rubric) were compared. Descriptive statistics was also used to analyze the student survey responses. The findings indicated that the Experimental Group who used CMs scored significantly higher than the Control Group in all areas of writing. Analysis of the questionnaire results regarding the usefulness of CMs indicated that the majority of students were satisfied with using CMs activities for writing. The study provided experimental evidence that using CMs as a pre-writing planning strategy is very beneficial in teaching English as a foreign language. It was concluded that CMs used effectively have the potential to enhance students' writing skills. As a result of the study some pedagogical implications and recommendations for using CMs in teaching writing to ELL learners are discussed.