

Reaching Students Who “Don’t Like Writing” through Scenario Based Learning

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Abstract : Writing is an essential skill in many vocational, academic environments, and notably workplaces, yet many students perceive writing as being something tiring and boring or maybe a “waste of time”. Studies in the field of foreign languages related this fact might be due to the lack of connection between what is learned in the university and what students come to encounter in real life situations”. Arabic learners felt they needed more language exposure to the context of their future professions. With this idea in mind, Scenario based learning (SBL) is reported to be an educational approach to motivate, engage and stimulate students’ interest and to achieve the desired writing learning outcomes. In addition, researchers suggested Scenario based learning (SBL) as an instructional approach that develops and enhances students skills through developing higher order thinking skills and active learning. It is a subset of problem-based learning and case-based learning. The approach focuses on authentic rhetorical framing reflecting writing tasks in real life situations. It works successfully when used to simulate real-world practices, providing context that reflects the types of situations professionals respond to in writing. It was claimed that using realistic scenarios customized to the course’s learning objectives as it bridged the gap for students between theory and application. Within this context, it is thought that scenario-based learning is an important approach to enhance the learners’ writing skills and to reflect meaningful learning within authentic contexts. As an Arabic foreign language instructor, it was noticed that students find difficulties in adapting writing styles to authentic writing contexts and addressing different audiences and purposes. This idea is supported by studies who claimed that AFL students faced difficulties with transferring writing skills to situations outside of the classroom context. In addition, it was observed that some of the Arabic textbooks for teaching Arabic as a foreign language lacked topics that initiated higher order thinking skills and stimulated the learners to understand the setting, and created messages appropriate to different audiences, context, and purposes. The goals of this study are to 1) provide a rationale for using scenario-based learning approach to improve AFL learners in writing skills, 2) demonstrate how to design/ implement a scenario-based learning technique aligned with the writing course objectives, 3) demonstrate samples of scenario-based approach implemented in AFL writing class, and 4) emphasize the role of peer-review along with the instructor’s feedback, in the process of developing the writing skill. Finally, this presentation highlighted and emphasized the importance of using the scenario-based learning approach in writing as a means to mirror students’ real-life situations and engage them in planning, monitoring, and problem solving. This approach helped in making writing an enjoyable experience and clearly useful to students’ future professional careers.

Keywords : meaningful learning, real life contexts, scenario based learning, writing skill

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