

than those groups that weren't allowed to shot down ideas and the groups with no instructions were the least productive. Clemens (2013) concluded that conventional brainstorming is based on the idea that you'll get fewer ideas when you let people criticize each other. But it has been shown that agreement does provide the brain with much stimulation. The results of the study emphasizes the point that we should revise our views toward brainstorming technique. If a problem is investigated from different perspectives it is more likely that new ideas are developed. In order to get the best results from a brainstorming session,

discussion and criticism should be directed toward the idea, not the person. If any personal attacks come up, team leaders need to stop them before they derail the discussion (Clemens, 2013).

Conclusion

According to French and Rhoder (1992), writing can be regarded as a major component of the curriculum which is associated with creativity. Therefore, improving students' writing is the most important skill which EFL learners need to develop throughout their schooling.

The use of the brainstorming strategy has a major influence on writing performance of EFL students. The brainstorming strategy implies that EFL teachers should move from a product- based approach to a process-based approach in teaching writing. Brainstorming contributes to activating students' thinking skills and creates ideas for a writing task (Maghsoudi& Haririan, 2013).

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a sense of ownership, and will help all members participate in the brainstorming process actively. When students in a team contribute to decision making, they are more likely to support it.

Osborn's Guidelines for Brainstorming

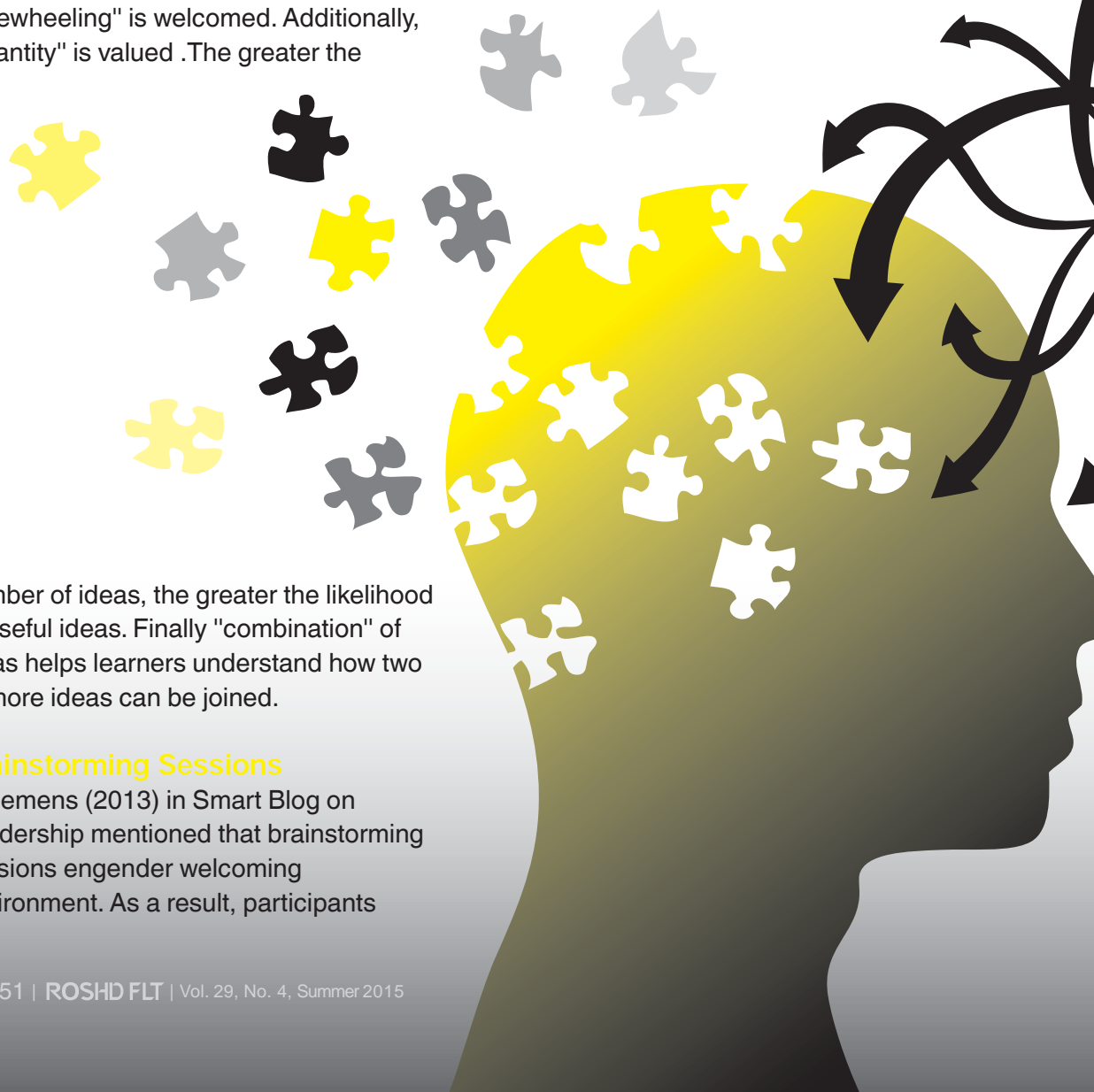
Osborn (1952) stated that "each of us does have an Aladdin's lamp, and if we rub it hard enough, it can light our way to better living just as that same lamp lit up the march of civilization" (p. 8). According to Osborn (1952, p.272), during a brainstorming session "criticism is ruled out" and "adverse judgment of ideas" must be withheld until later. On the other hand, "freewheeling" is welcomed. Additionally, "quantity" is valued. The greater the

feel more willing to bring up ideas without fear of criticism. He refers to a research which was conducted in the University of California-Berkeley where a psychology professor had investigated the optimum conditions for team creativity. The researcher asked students to make groups of five members and brainstorm ideas about reducing traffic. She told one-third of the teams to brainstorm in such a way that no idea is shot down. She told another third to come up with as many solutions as they can without criticizing each other's ideas. The other third got no instructions. The result of the study showed that the critics came up with 20% more ideas

number of ideas, the greater the likelihood of useful ideas. Finally "combination" of ideas helps learners understand how two or more ideas can be joined.

Brainstorming Sessions

Clemens (2013) in Smart Blog on Leadership mentioned that brainstorming sessions engender welcoming environment. As a result, participants



of view. She can start with a sentence containing facts she wanted to write about then develop a number of Wh-questions about each fact. After completing a list of questions, she can answer them then she can use the information generated to write an essay (Smally, et al.,2014)

Here's an example of a student's writing:

My uncle was laid off from his job at the hospital last month because of the recession.

1. Who is my uncle? What kind of person is he? What do people think about him?

2. What happened exactly? Who was present there? What did my uncle say when he found out that he was laid off?

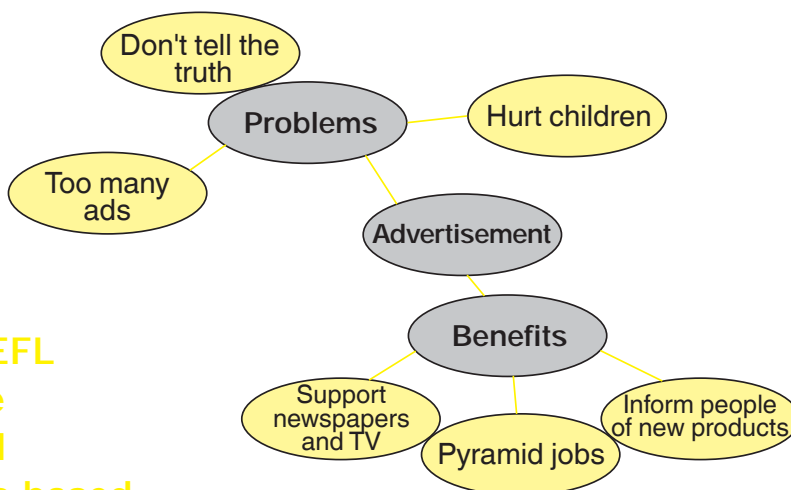
3. Where did my uncle work? Where is this place? What did he do there?

middle of a sheet of paper.

Then, draw a line out from the circle and write the idea associated with the topic in a new circle.

Next, draw lines and then write ideas associated with the new ideas and continue this activity until you have many associations.

Finally, study the map to find new associations about the topic and see relationship between ideas. The graphic may reveal a connection that you had not thought about before.



The brainstorming strategy implies that EFL teachers should move from a product- based approach to a process-based approach in teaching writing. Brainstorming contributes to activating students' thinking skills and creates ideas for a writing task

Clustering

Smally et al. (2014) mentioned that clustering is another technique for making a visual map of ideas. It may allow student to think more creatively and make new associations. The researchers believed that during this stage the student should follow the followingse steps:

First, begin with the topic circled in the

Why Should a Team do Brainstorming?

According to Osborn (1953) brain storming stimulates creativity, expands thinking and offers a wide range of options. Through brainstorming learners can produce a large number of ideas. Throughy motivating students to suggest any idea that comes to their mind; this technique can help groups develop many ideas quickly. Through the brainstorming technique teachers can balance involvement of all members and provide a convenient situation which can encourages everyone to suggest ideas. Thus, it will increase



designers in the field of Foreign Language Teaching is good ESL/EFL writing (Lee, 2003). Creating a text is difficult for most ESL/EFL students because the writing process needs a wide range of cognitive and linguistic strategies of which ESL/EFL students are mostly unaware (Luchini, 2010). Alsamadani (2010, p.53) asserted that "EFL/ESL writing is a difficult, complex and challenging process. In ESL/EFL writing the difficulty and complexity is due to the fact that writing includes discovering a thesis, developing support for the thesis, organizing, revising, and finally editing the thesis for an error-free piece of writing". O'Brien (2004) viewed writing as the discovery of meaning and ideas. During the writing process, teachers help learners see writing as finding of meaning and ideas. Teachers can assist learners to explore their thoughts and develop their own writing. Thus, the writing process can be seen as a dynamic process (Tribble, 1990, as cited in Tangpermpoon, 2008). Rao (2007) used brainstorming techniques as pre-writing activity in order to investigate its effect on writing ability of students. The researcher found that students who had been trained in brainstorming techniques and used them regularly over a twelve - month period created noticeably better results in writing tasks. Likewise, an attitudinal survey showed that students who participated in this research project felt positive about the effectiveness of the brainstorming techniques. Smally, Ruetten and Kozyre (2014) in their book *Refining Composition Skills* considered brainstorming as a pre-writing activity for writing and generating ideas as well as stimulating thinking. They instruct the students to follow the following special procedures for brainstorming:

6 First, start with a word or phrase and

for a set period of time write a list of ideas as quickly as possible and put down whatever comes to mind.

é Then follow thoughts without looking back for organization. After the set time is up, look at the list for related ideas which may suggest a topic that you can write about.

Smally, Ruetten and Kozyre (2014) mentioned an example which shows that how a student should check the ideas to write about a physical description of her grandmother. As signified in the following example, at the first stage, the students has written down all the characteristics related to her grandmother, and then she has selected the characteristics which can express her grandmother's physical description.

Topic: My Grandmother's Physical Characteristics

✓ Small	Energetic
✓ Wrinkled	✓ Skinny
✓ Short	Drives old car
Slippers	Smells homemade cookies
Grows vegetables	✓ Pony tail
✓ Glasses	Light blue curtain in the kitchen
Clean clothes	✓ Sports on hands
Apple tree	✓ Twinkle in eyes

Free Writing

For this stage Smally et al. (2014) instruct the students to follow the following steps:.

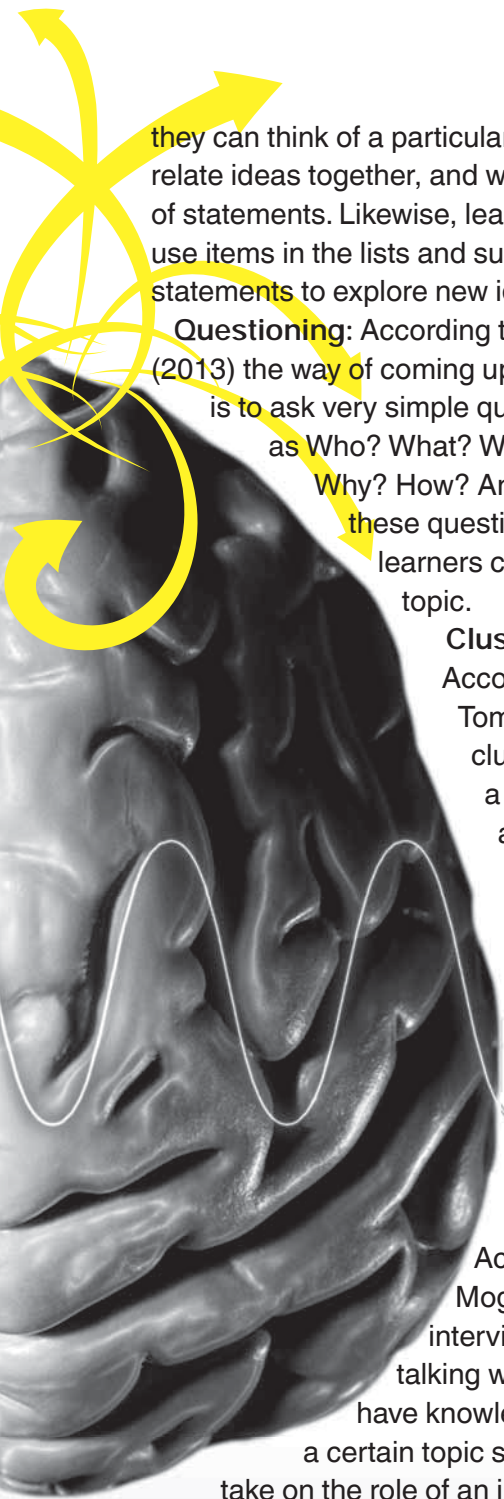
é First, set a time limit of 15 minutes.

é Second, don't censor any thoughts and don't cross anything out.

é Third, re-read what is written and look for interesting ideas that might be useful for writing.

Asking Wh-Questions

Asking questions allows the student to see the topic from different points



they can think of a particular topic, then relate ideas together, and write summary of statements. Likewise, learner can use items in the lists and summary of statements to explore new ideas.

Questioning: According to Mogahed (2013) the way of coming up with a topic is to ask very simple questions such as Who? What? When? Where? Why? How? Answering these questions can help learners come up with a topic.

Clustering: According to Tomlinson (1998) clustering is a pre-writing activity which helps the writer to connect ideas related to a single idea or a word.

Interviewing: According to Mogahed (2013) interviewing means talking with people who have knowledge about a certain topic so learners take on the role of an interviewer as they interview. This experience helps them learn to analyze people and events accurately.

Charts and story maps: For writing directions about how to do something, or for keeping a lot of different ideas in categories, charts are useful instruments. Likewise, for retelling books, plays or

stories, story maps can be used (The Oracle Education Foundation, 2003).

Webbing: According to Mogahed (2013), webbing offers learners a visual picture of how words or phrases connect to a concept or a topic. The teacher can make a list of the topics and builds a web-like structures of words, phrases and verbs which are offered as being connected with the central topics. Bada (1996) believed that webbing offers opportunities for the visual learners to recall the connections for later use.

Concept mapping: It shows the relationships among concepts. According to Bada (1996), concept mapping assists learners in envisioning how ideas are connected and how knowledge can be structured.

Flowcharts: Bada (1996) stated that this activity directs learners to discover details and specific points of reference; it also improves their organizational skills and help them in planning and writing outlines. Moreover, it enhances cognitive development and helps learners focus on relationships between ideas.

Venn diagrams: According to Mogahed (2013), they represent similarities and differences among concepts. It is made by using two or more overlapping geometrical figures (i.e. circles, squares, rectangles) which share an area in common.

According to Bada (1996) the Venn diagrams are beneficial because they offers an alternative form to process complex information and at the same time changes the learners' minds to higher reasoning levels.

Brainstorming as a Pre-writing Activity

An important factor for teachers, researchers, textbook writers, and program

What is Brainstorming?

Brainstorming is a technique to bring out the ideas of each individual and present them in an orderly style to learners in order to come up with a list of possible solutions to a certain problem (Maghsoudi & Haririan, 2013). Brainstorming helps teachers respect different views proposed by their students. The major purposes of brainstorming, as a teaching strategy, include fostering communication skills, promoting thinking and decision-making skills, and cultivating students' opinions regarding different issues. It may equally be used in all key areas of learning (Humaidan, 2005, as cited in Al-khatib, 2012).

Richards (1990) claimed that student interaction was an important part of developing the cognitive skills and brainstorming was an effective way of achieving this. Results of his study showed that students who were trained in brainstorming techniques were more efficient at generating and organizing ideas than the other students. According to Hoing (2001) brainstorming is the multiple thinking which includes the breaking up of old ideas, expanding the limits of knowledge and creating wonderful ideas.

Brainstorming strategy was introduced by Alex Osborn, an American advertisement company manager in 1938 as a result of his awkward traditional business meetings. Osborn (1959) proposed that groups could dual their innovative output with brainstorming. Strategies that could be followed to develop students' creativity and help them generate ideas are problem solving, attribute listing, morphological analysis, brainstorming, and checklists (Manktelow 2003, cited in Khalaf Ibnian, 2011). According to Bobb-Wolff

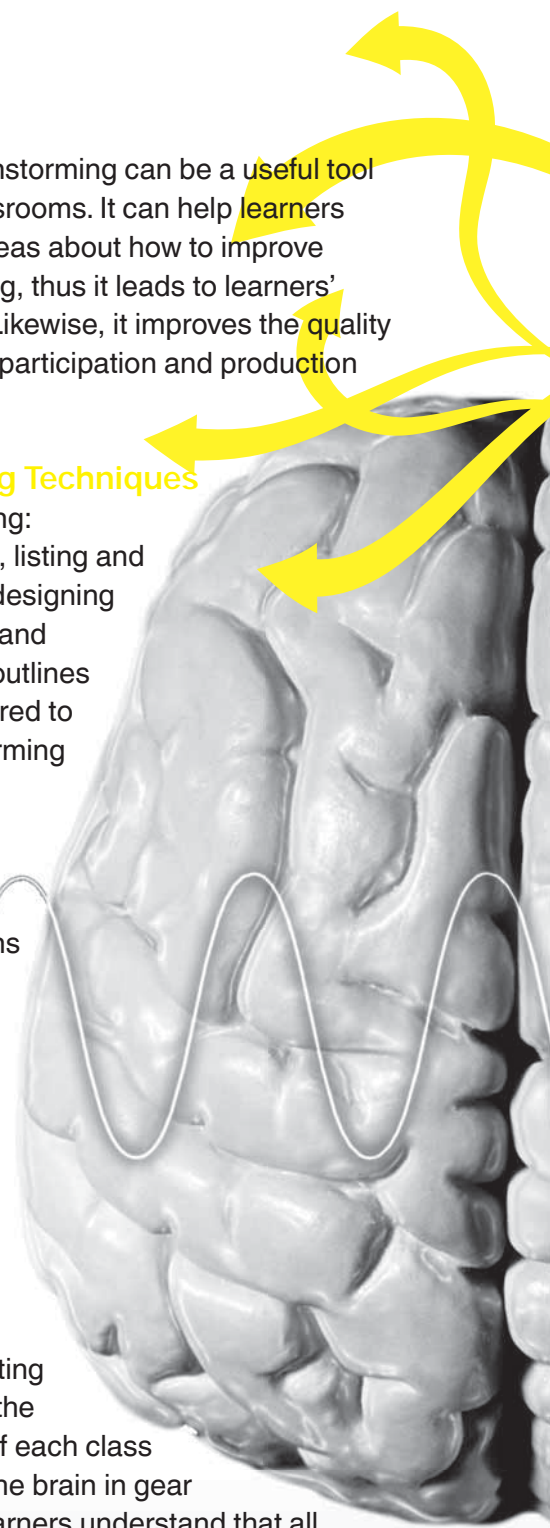
(1996) brainstorming can be a useful tool in EFL classrooms. It can help learners generate ideas about how to improve their learning, thus it leads to learners' autonomy. Likewise, it improves the quality of learners' participation and production in class.

Pre-writing Techniques

Free-writing: questioning, listing and clustering, designing word maps and scratching outlines are considered to be brainstorming strategies which can aid learners in writing compositions (Mogahed, 2013).

Free Writing: According to Darling (2004) in writing classes instructors use free writing exercise at the beginning of each class for getting the brain in gear and help learners understand that all parts of their writing is not good and they have to learn to remove some parts of their writing. Saskatchewan Education (1997) considered free writing technique as an important factor which helps learners discover new ideas or gain insights.

Listing: According to Scholes (1989) learners use listing to remember ideas



Brainstorming: A Useful Strategy in Teaching Writing to English Language Learners

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چکیده

این مقاله به معرفی راهکار بارش مغزی و به روش‌های آموزش این راهکار می‌پردازد. این راهکار در فعال کردن طرحواره‌های ذهنی دانش‌آموزان تأثیر به‌سزایی دارد و می‌تواند در کلاس‌های آموزش نگارش زبان انگلیسی مورد استفاده قرار گیرد. یکی از عوامل بازدارنده در پیشبرد توانایی دانش‌آموزان نبود اطلاعات یا ایده‌های کافی در مورد موضوع انشاء است. این راهکار به معلمان کمک می‌کند بر این مشکل غلبه کنند.

کلیدواژه‌ها: مهارت نوشتاری، بارش مغزی، مراحل رویکرد نوشتاری

Abstract

The aim of the present article is to introduce the brainstorming strategy and the way its explicit instruction can be useful in extending the students' knowledge. Brainstorming, as argued in this article, has a significant influence on students' writing performance. It is also suggested that EFL teachers should move from a product-based approach to a process focused approach when teaching writing since it can activate students' thinking and create ideas for writing compositions.

Key Words: writing skill, brainstorming, process approach to writing