

## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study has proven that discussion is an effective pre-writing tool. The higher essay scores of the subjects in the Experimental Group show that discussion has an effect on the writing process. The data obtained provides answers to the research questions in this study.

Discussion helped the adult learners in their writing in this study. Through discussion, too, the subjects were able to focus on the scope of the essay. The aspects in which the subjects were helped in were receiving more ideas for their writing and being more accurate in the areas of expression and linguistic.

However, there were problems faced in discussion, too. They were not having good rapport among the group members and having too opinionated members who might cause unfruitful discussion.

In the rest of this chapter, ideas on how to use discussion effectively and ideas for future research to be carried out on this topic are presented.

## **5.1 Summary of Findings**

### **5.1.1 Essay Scores**

Students in the Experimental Group achieved slightly higher scores than their counterparts in the Control Group. The former obtained a higher mean score (Mean = 3.3267, SD = 0.8614) than the Control Group (Mean = 3.1, SD = 0.9813). The descriptive data appears to show that discussion was useful in the writing process.

The data was subjected to a t-test to discover if the difference between the means of the Experimental Group was statistically significant from the Control Group. There was no significant value between the scores obtained by the two groups. This could be due to the small number of subjects used in this study.

### **5.1.2 Role of Discussion**

Firstly, discussion is a means for obtaining ideas needed for writing. The subjects in the Experimental Group discovered they could get more ideas when they brainstormed with their peers.

Secondly, discussion could act as an organising tool. The subjects in this study realized that they were kept from going out of topic in their writing due to their attempts in defining the task and talking about the scope of their essay.

Another evidence of discussion functioning as an organizing tool is from the use of Thesis Statements and Topic Sentences. The subjects in the Experimental Group produced more Thesis Statements and Topic Sentences than the Control Group.

Thirdly, discussion is also a tool for expression in the subjects' writing. Students who participated in the discussions could write clearly without resorting to use excessive words and many sentences compared to the Control Group.

Fourthly, discussion could function as a tool for linguistic accuracy in the students' writing. It is discovered that students who utilized discussion as a pre-writing tool produced more error-free sentences and were able to use a variety of complexity structures and transitions more frequently.

Problems faced in discussions were the subjects complained feeling uncomfortable with unfamiliar group members and having opinionated members who might argue for a long time. As a result, time was wasted since nothing much was achieved through it.

## **5.2 Implications and Suggestions to Teaching and Learning**

The findings of this study have resulted in highlighting some implications on the use of discussion in the writing classroom. Several suggestions on how to facilitate purposeful interaction in the teaching of English will be presented in detailed.

### **5.2.1 More Opportunities to Interact**

Group work in the form of discussion provides learners with opportunities to have verbal communication with their peers. According to Long and Porter (1985), if half of the class time were spent on group work, individual practice could increase five-fold

over whole-class traditional methodology. Hence, students could practise and improve their spoken language.

### **5.2.2 Process Approach Towards Writing**

In the past, the product approach was perceived as important in writing. The final written work always received utmost attention. Teachers of writing have discovered that writing is a long and painful process whereby the final draft will only emerge after many drafts. (Nunan, 1995) When discussion is used as a pre-writing tool, the focus has moved to the process involved in writing.

Rossiter (1993) emphasizes that consideration should be given to the use of peer discussion in assessment of a professional course. Teachers of writing can allocate marks not only on the final written pieces but also on the stages involved in writing, such as the brainstorming session. Thus, learners can see the relevance of the different steps to be followed in producing compositions.

### **5.2.3 Improving Quality of Student Talk**

It is believed that students can improve the quality of their talk when they work in a group. Barnes (1976) mentions that students can be involved in “exploratory” talk and use wider speech repertoire. In other words, the emphasis is on fluency and not so much on accuracy of the language produced.

### **5.2.4 Creating an Affective Climate**

According to Long (1990), group work helps to create an affective climate in the classroom. Such a situation is conducive to shy and linguistically insecure students. Jones (1994) discovers that learners who are released from the constraints of working solely with their own limited resources and not having a teacher to lead or intimidate them become less inhibited than before. They can learn better when their affective filter is low.

### **5.2.5 High Quality Ideas in Writing**

From this study, it shows that discussions provide opportunities for students to share and enrich each other’s ideas for they will bring along unique individual information and experience into it. When group members think together, they could see the matter in a number of different ways. Consequently, more in-depth thought can be produced.

### **5.2.6 Peer Learning and Teaching**

Ur (1987) comments that there is a scope for peer teaching in discussion. In the process of discussion, the students will learn from each other, whether consciously or unconsciously. They can correct each other's mistakes, provide a needed word when necessary and teach each other some non-linguistic material as well as the content of the interaction. Such learning experiences can be more effective than classroom teaching by the teacher itself.

### **5.2.7 Increasing Level of Motivation and Interest**

Ur (1987) says that the level of motivation improves when the students work in small groups. Students who have interest and motivation in their task will learn better.

Wilson (1996) explains that the opportunity to work in a group can be fun and more satisfying than working as an individual. The interaction feeds many needs such as stimulation, belonging and esteem. When one is left to attempt it individually, it can be a boring task. The group members can spur each other to greater heights by their encouragement and their co-operation necessary to their learning.

### **5.2.8 Helping Students in Areas of Difficulty**

From this study, it has been discovered that the subjects were helped in a few aspects such as keeping them focused on the scope of writing and being accurate in their expression and linguistic. Therefore, teachers can utilise discussion as a bid to aid learners to master these areas especially if they were weak in them.

### **5.3 Suggestions for Future Research**

Firstly, in order to validate the findings of this study, it would be appropriate to conduct more researches of this nature. This can be done by selecting subjects from other schools and institutions.

Secondly, the number of subjects could be increased. Only thirty students were used in this study. By using a bigger sample size, more conclusive results can be achieved. The sample should consist of students with differing levels of proficiency in English.

Thirdly, the flow of discussion can be analysed in detailed. The researcher should interview students to explain their behaviour and utterances. The number and quality of turn-takings, negotiation for meanings and disagreement management could be investigated, too.

Fourthly, the group dynamics can be observed. Besides analyzing the verbal communication, non-verbal communication can be focused on. They can be gestures in the form of a frown, a nod or a shrug. Recommendations can be made later on how to solve group conflicts and how to create a conducive setting for interaction to occur.

Fifthly, it would be interesting to seek out the types of personalities which befit the role as spokespersons, mediators and followers in a discussion. Siti (1998) has commented that the reason for uncooperative behaviour could be contributed to the personalities of the students. The teacher can delegate tasks effectively to the students in a group discussion according to their psychological makeup. Hence, less friction will take place among them and a win-win situation can be created.

Sixthly, in future researches, other materials in the form of visuals like photographs, mind-maps and pictures can be used instead to stimulate the students' interest. Input in the form of poems and songs can be given to them, too, to enable them to elicit information for their interaction.

Lastly, another aspect that can be looked at is the influence of the teacher's presence during discussion. It would be interesting to find out if it will encourage or inhibit participation from the students.

#### **5.4 Conclusions**

Discussion is an effective pre-writing tool in the language classroom. It is important that careful planning be done to ensure the success of its implementation. This is to prevent conflicts from taking place in the group, resulting in unfruitful interactions.

Successful collaborative work has to involve people who are willing to accept others' opinions, able to reason logically with others and willing to work as a team. These skills do not come naturally. Fatima (1995) has suggested that students be trained in team building and negotiation skills before allowing them to be involved in collaborative work.

Ur (1996) emphasizes that if a task is based on group discussion, instructions about participation should be included. This can be done by instructing them to appoint a chairperson in order to regulate participation. When students are aware of the proper behaviour to be manifested, they can contribute to the fullest in their peer interaction.

Another problem is making sure there is sufficient time for the discussion. According to Kessler (1992), time is crucial in implementing successful groupwork. Reid and her colleagues (1989) note that if students do not have enough time, they cannot engage in necessary explorations. Therefore, teachers need to ensure that ample time is given to students for discussions to obtain maximum results. In a situation when there is a prolong argument, more time can be given to the group to discuss other issues after that.

Teachers who wish to have productive discussion in the classroom must be selective in choosing members for the group. From this study, the subjects stated that they preferred selecting their own friends on their own. The reason for it was they would feel comfortable, resulting in good rapport. Teachers could collaborate by allowing students to form discussion groups with those from other classes when they have common hours for writing. This would definitely help to enliven the lessons.