

ESSAY WRITING SKILLS NECESSARY FOR SECONDARY STAGE STUDENTS AND THE EXTENT TO WHICH THEY MASTER THEM

Abstract

The present study aimed at identifying the essay writing skills necessary for students at the secondary stage and the extent to which they master them. A questionnaire of the essay writing skills (N=28) was derived from the literature on composition/essay writing – theory and practice (Chapter Two), as well as on the nature of the students at the secondary stage, writing requirements, and the difficulties they face (Chapter Three). The list, in its final form, included Thirteen (N=13) skills divided into three (n=3) for the introduction, seven (n=7) for the body, and three (n=3) for the conclusion.

The study population comprised six student samples (N=259) from the secondary schools in Benha who completed the writing assignments. Two writing tests were used to assess the students' mastery of the essay writing skills. The guided essay writing test was intended to measure the students' mastery of the prescribed essay topics/texts while the free essay writing test was to assess their mastery of the skills under investigation. Both tests were scored into the light of a separate correction scheme/guide.

Results of data analysis supported the four hypotheses set for this study, namely: students at the secondary stage do not reach/achieve mastery level (75%) of the essay writing skills—guided nor free, and that there are no statistically significant differences between male and female students on the essay writing skills—guided nor free. However, students' scores were similar in eight of the essay writing skills—guided and free. Implications for teaching essay writing and materials development at the secondary stage are offered.

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A Thesis

**Submitted for the Master's Degree in Education
(Methods of Teaching Arabic Language)**

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