

**ÇUKUROVA UNIVERSITY
THE INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**

125639

**THE USE OF RUBRIC TO DEVELOP ESSAY-WRITING SKILLS OF
EFL LEARNERS**

125639

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MASTER OF ARTS

in the Subject of

ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

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*This thesis is dedicated to my dearest parents who were
always in support of my decisions about my life.*



Acknowledgements

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Asst. Prof. Dr. Sema TUNCEL, my thesis advisor, for her invaluable support, guidance and professional advice. I would like to thank her once more for her mother-like attitude, patience, and tolerance.

I would also like to thank Prof Dr. F. Özden EKMEKÇİ for her warm encouragement and support during my study time. Moreover, I am most grateful to her for the opportunity to fulfill my study at ELT Department of Çukurova University.

I am greatly indebted to Asst. Prof. Dr. Trkay BULUT and Asst. Prof. Dr. Abdurrahman KİLİMCİ for their constant help in statistical analysis and editing.

I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to my friend Nurcan KÖSE for she has spent many hours with me in proofreading this study. I would like to thank her again for being a close friend of mine.

Most of all, I wish to express my warm thanks to my mother Fatma KIZILDAĞ, my father Ahmet KIZILDAĞ, and my brothers as they always supported me in completing MA program.

I also would like to thank to the Research Foundation of Çukurova University which supported this thesis with #SOSBE.2001.YL.7.

ÖZET
YABANCI DİL ÖĞRENCİLERİNİN KOMPOZİSYON YAZMA
BECERİLERİNİ
GELİŞTİRMEDE *RUBRIC* KULLANIMI

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Haziran, 2002, 92 sayfa

Bu çalışmanın amacı, İngiliz Dili Eğitimi Anabilim Dalı öğrencilerinin kompozisyon yazma becerilerini geliştirmelerine yardımcı olmaktır. Bu amaçla, kompozisyon yazma sürecinde yardımcı olacak bir öğretim aracı olan *rubric*'i kullanacak bir grup birinci sınıf öğrencisi oluşturulmuştur. Bir ön, bir son ve bir de tamamlayıcı/izleyici test verilmiştir. Ön ve son test arasında dört ayrı yazım yapısında (betimleme, öykü anlatma, neden-sonuç ilişkisi inceleme ve tartışma) kompozisyon ödevi tamamlamışlardır. Tüm bu ödev ve testlerden alınan sonuçlar, öğrencilerde başlangıçtan beri değişiklik olup olmadığını tespit etmek amacıyla kıyaslanmıştır. Sonuçlar, *rubric* kullanımından tezde yer alan uygulama grubu öğrencilerinin faydalandığını ve böylece kompozisyon yazma becerilerini geliştirdikleri yönündedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Rubric, kompozisyon yazımı, öğretim aracı.

ABSTRACT**THE USE OF RUBRIC TO DEVELOP ESSAY-WRITING SKILLS OF
EFL LEARNERS****Ayşe KIZILDAĞ****Master Thesis, English Language Teaching Department****Supervisor: Asst. Prof. Dr. Sema TUNCEL****June 2002, 92 pages**

The aim of the present study is to help the students of ELT Departments to improve their essay-writing skills. For this purpose, one group of ELT freshmen was formed to utilize rubric as an instructional tool to guide them during the essay writing process. They had taken one pre-test, one post-test, and one follow-up test. Between pre-test and post-test, the students had completed four essay tasks on different writing structures (descriptive essay, narrative essay, cause & effect essay, and argumentative essay). The data derived from these tasks and tests were compared and/or contrasted whether there had been any change. Moreover, during the essay task, the learners were conferenced and given a questionnaire in order to get qualitative data. The results have positive tendency showing that the group of students in this study benefited using rubric to develop their essay-writing skills.

In Chapter1, after giving a brief background to the study and presenting the problems related to essay-writing in general, the aim and scope of the study are clarified. Then, research question and hypotheses are stated.

In Chapter 2, we have divided the literature review into two. The first part works with the background of teaching writing since 1800s and the theory of the present study. Consequently, the second part explains the studies conducted previously in the scope of this thesis.

In Chapter 3, the methodological information such as subjects, the study design, and instrumentation is explained in detail. The data analysis and results are given in Chapter 4.

Finally, the summary of the study, the general conclusions that can be interpreted from study results and suggestions for other researchers are argued in Chapter 5. In the conclusion part the implications of this study for ELT context is explained.

Key Words: Rubric, essay-writing, instructional tool.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Writing is one of four language skills which people use to communicate. However, communication is not the unique value of writing for second language (L2) learners. As Raimes (1983) suggests, writing helps students to learn a language better. This becomes true with the power of writing to reinforce grammatical structures, idioms, and vocabulary that have been taught in the classroom. While students write, they have the chance to discover the language, to go beyond what they have learned to say, and to take risks. In general, writing involves expressing the students' ideas more effectively by constant thinking.

There have been numerous studies conducted on writing achievement of students. Moreover, researchers used many different instruments such as teaching writing through portfolio keeping, literature, oral or reading skills, visual organizers or colour coding objects. More recently, after a positive acceptance of teaching writing in process in 1980s, when teaching writing is mentioned, it is referred to the composing process rather than the composition. "Indeed, the term 'writing' can refer both to the finished products and to the processes underlying the production mirrors...." (Arndt, 1987, p. 257). Since the emphasis on the process leads to a better product, the product and the process do not stand in opposition but in completion of each other (Horowitz, 1986). Thus, recent approaches to teaching writing emphasised process writing to reach better result. As Hughey, Hartfield, Jacobs and Wormouth (1982) claim acquiring writing skills requires much more effort than acquiring speaking skills since we acquire it 'naturally' in our first language (L1). Thus, the emphasis on the process writing can close this gap as much as possible. Apart from that, the feedback and the guidance from the teacher and/or the peer are other emphasised points in the process approach. Likewise, the studies conducted on this approach support these points (Zamel, 1983; Şahinkarakaş, 1998).

The use of rubrics to develop writing skills is a new approach in the field of Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL), which can be applied to education levels such as kindergarten, primary and secondary education, and higher education. Rubrics are also used in many different school subjects such as music (Doherty, 2000), mathematics, and science (Sims, 1999; Duehr & Nugent, 2000). Although most of the studies done with rubric focus on the assessment of the performance, this study, with a few similar ones, is distinct using rubric as an instructional tool rather than an assessment one. Thus, regarding the majority of studies performed in this field, rubrics can be thought of to be tools for assessing the students' performance, but this idea is not completely true since rubrics are also tools of learning (Rhoads, 1998). Brookhart (in Moskal, 2000, p.1) explains that rubrics are "descriptive scoring schemes that are developed by teachers or other evaluators to guide the analysis of the products or processes of students' efforts." (See Chapter 3). What is meant by 'rubric' in this study is the guidance that the student will use to reach a better product at every step of writing process (pre-writing, writing&drafting, revising, and evaluation).

Rubrics are tools to guide the students through the learning process in addition to the assessment of learning in any course. Recently, there has been a tendency to use the rubrics to improve the students' writing skills. Moreover, current research suggests a positive impact on student achievement with the use of writing rubrics in the classroom. Rhoads (1998) has found that kindergarten students were very comfortable in writing with the use of rubric, and their awareness and expectations for good writing grew. Consequently, Parker (1995) found that there was a great involvement of students in the classroom using rubric during the writing process. This enhanced the students' writing skills to reflect at every phase of writing process. In addition to these studies, Gearhart & Wolf (1993) point out that the use of rubric in the assessment process promoted the students to examine the current understanding of the learning process. Lastly, Beaudry (in Rhoads, 1998) also underlines the positive correlation between the student achievement and the use of rubric in writing courses.

Among the previous studies with the use of rubric, the most related ones with the scope of this thesis have been conducted by Shaffner (1997) at Grade 7 level and Rhoads (1998) at kindergarten level. Similarly, Shaffner and Rhoads have also used rubric as a guiding tool during writing. The subjects of their studies had rubrics with them while producing any kind of written work. As a result, these two studies have been found closely related to this study, and they will be explained in a detailed way.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The general objective of writing courses in English Language Teaching (ELT) Departments is not only to improve the general or academic writing skills of the students, but also to enable them to acquire the ability to teach writing skills when they graduate and become language teachers. Any skill not acquired well enough cannot be taught properly in the future. Apart from this point, a graduate of an ELT Department is expected to be more proficient in four language skills when compared to other students in different departments at university. As a result, the students who cannot establish a firm background will not be able to reflect on the knowledge for teaching writing. From this perspective, empowering the students with the ability to write effectively and accurately is the basic aim of this study.

1.2.1 The Situation in Turkey

In 1996, the approval of eight-year compulsory primary education in Turkey led to the addition of English courses in the curriculum from the sixth grade to the fourth grade. As a result, students had two more years of exposure to the English Language.

However, most of the English Language teachers in Turkey cannot apply the communicative teaching models to their classroom settings since Test of Foreign Language for University Entrance do not require speaking, listening and writing skills. Consequently, the teachers have to prepare students for the exam by emphasizing reading and core language thus decreasing the time spent to develop the other language skills.

Because of the emphasis on reading and core language, students have not had the chance to benefit from other language skills, especially writing. Therefore, the students at university level who are required to write essay-type answers to the exam questions struggle with writing.

1.2.2 The Situation at Çukurova University

This study has been completed at Çukurova University since we have already observed some problems of the students in essay-writing. The students who could not improve their L2 writing skills during high school years come to the ELT Department at Çukurova University, so the requirement of developing their writing skills in parallel with the objectives in writing syllabus makes the teachers' work at the department more difficult. To prove our point, we interviewed the first-year students to see the problems neatly at the beginning of the 2000-2001 academic year. We asked them to state five basic problems they had in writing. After reviewing the results, five major, common problems are:

- difficulty in defining the topic,
- difficulty in organizing the ideas,
- difficulty in supporting the main idea,
- difficulty in using appropriate language,
- difficulty in deciding on the length of the essay.

The findings gave us the idea that our students have problems both at the macro level (the general organization and the structure of an essay) and the micro level (the use of appropriate language and the content of the essay). As a result, we have decided to use rubric to solve the problems above and to guide the students toward improving their essay-writing skills.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

This study aims to develop the EFL learners' essay writing skills by using rubric as a guiding tool. Goodrich Andrade (2001) calls this rubric type "instructional rubric". Instructional rubrics are devised not only to evaluate the student work but also to support their developing higher order thinking skills, motivation, autonomy and ownership. Additionally, this type of rubric has impact on the knowledge of the qualities of effective writing as well as the development of a specific skill (Goodrich Andrade, 2001). Using this, we tried to solve the learners' basic essay writing problems through the use of rubric.

while they were writing their drafts. Yet, providing autonomy, motivation or feeling of ownership was assumed that they already exist in the background of the study, but they were not tested directly in this study. Thus, the basic aim of this study is to provide an environment for students to develop their knowledge and applications on essay writing best. What is meant by essay, here, is a three to five paragraph-length written work on a specific topic.

There have been some other results during the study. Since the rubric was both prepared and used by the students in the present study in writing process to reach their final paper, they became aware of the negotiation on how they would be guided and measured for their writing papers. Thus, with a negotiated guide, we decided to decrease the participants' anxiety and increase motivation during the course. Moreover, it is aimed to give the feeling of ownership of their learning because, as Wiggins (1993) suggests, negotiation gives the opportunity for sharing the responsibilities between learners and the teacher.

1.4 Statement of Research Question

The research question that we focus on in this study is:
Whether or not the use of rubric in writing helps students to develop basic essay-writing skills to overcome the most common problems in organizing their essays, writing essays in rich content, and using the language efficiently.

1.5 Statement of assumptions

The following assumptions are expected at the end of the study:
--There might be significant difference in essay-writing skills of the participants of this study with the use of rubric between the pre-condition and post-condition.

Based on the hypothesis above, during the writing courses students might have difference in their essay-writing skills:

- in organizing their ideas,
- in supporting the main idea,
- about using the language efficiently.

Despite the fact that these will not be considered and tested directly via instruments, we expect that the students will be able to display progress.

- The use of rubric will help students to reflect on their learning.
- The students will be aware of the writing process, and they will develop not only essay-writing skills but also general writing skills.

1.6 Limitations

There is only one basic limitation for this study; time. The time of the study manipulation was limited to the 2000-2001 academic year, Spring Term. Since the aim of this study was to develop essay-writing skills of the learners, we applied this treatment in Spring Term. Then, we matched the time of teaching essay-writing skills and using rubric.

Moreover, this time was very restricted in that we had to not only follow the course objectives but also introduce the rubric to the learners. Consequently, as using rubric in writing classes was new to the participants to spend more time with them would be better.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter explains the history of writing instruction and the use of rubric in the field of education. As Popham (1997) has expressed, rubrics started to be popular among educators within recent years. Additionally, rubrics have been used in different school subjects as well as at different education levels for various purposes.

Therefore, in the following sections you will be able to find information about the history of teaching writing. Then, we will work with the theory of this study. Following this, we will discuss about the various purposes of rubric use. Furthermore, the different use of rubric types at various education levels with different school subjects, will be discussed. Next, rubric use in developing writing skills of the learners will be faced with. Finally, similar studies to the scope of this thesis conducted previously in the world will be examined.

2.1 The History of Writing Instruction Through Late 19th Century and 20th century

The 20th century was full of English studies of teaching of literature and composition (Berlin, 1990). This is due to the realization that the study of literature and language was an integral part of learning. Despite this awareness, the writing instruction struggled to take its part in the curriculum. As Berlin stated, “the argument over the contents and methods of writing instruction will then be regarded as reflections of larger conflicts, with the curriculum...” (1990, p. 187)

In the last years of 19th century, the schools had still catered to the elite. Thus, the content of writing instruction was teaching the rhetoric to those who would lead the society. However, due to the increased attendance to schools from all parts of the general public during 1870s, the profession of teaching showed its significance to community. This growth in attendance to schools caused the first debate over the composition courses in high schools. The secondary school had previously been committed to prepare students for

colleges with the emphasis on classical language and literature. Yet, increased attendance to the schools caused to cover a range of literature pieces in addition to the classical ones. Thus, the content of the courses had to be rearranged.

Following this debate, Harvard was the first school in which writing had been added to the entrance exam in the 1873-74 academic year. It announced that each candidate was required to write an essay. This was not to test literature knowledge of the students, but their essay-writing skills (Applebee as cited in Berlin, 1990). The prestige of Harvard pressed secondary school boards to add writing to their curriculums for college preparation. Consequently, The National Education Association gathered to standardize the curriculum for all secondary schools across USA in 1892. In the end, the Council of The National Education Association published its statement beginning:

The main objective of the teaching of English in the schools seems to be two: (1) to enable the pupil to understand the expressed thoughts of others and to give expression to thoughts of his own; and (2) to cultivate a taste for reading to give the pupil some acquaintance with good literature, and to furnish him with the means of extending that acquaintance. (Burrows cited in Berlin, 1990, p. 188)

The first statement is very important for the future of writing instruction. It enabled students to express their own thoughts through writing, while the teachers had to reinforce this expression of thought.

After the standardization of curriculum for secondary schools, the methods for teaching were still problematic. For example, some used the *philological method*, which emphasized responding to literature text as an historical artifact. Therefore, the text could be used to demonstrate certain rhetorical structures. The purpose was clearly to develop literary appreciation in students. In general, high school English classes were marked by uncertainty and experimentation.

Yet, schools started to improve in terms of “social efficiency” in the first two decades of the 20th century. For the first time, individual differences and psychological developmental stages were mentioned; as a result, lesson plans were reshaped. In 1911, hence, the primary and secondary school teachers argued that they themselves should decide the objectives of writing and reading

courses at schools not the colleges who would accept the students later. This argument led to the separation of teaching literature and teaching composition.

After the separation in the 1930s, three paradigms to teach writing emerged; social constructionist rhetoric, expressionist rhetoric, and cognitive rhetoric. Dewey and subsequently Scott discovered social constructionist rhetoric. They supported that the students had to write for increasing the awareness of community. Furthermore, they argued that the first consideration of schools had to be the preparation of citizens for democracy. Thus, the students would be specialized to serve their public. Moreover, their writings had to reflect reality, and then, writers who could cope with the vital requirements of the situation would be beneficial.

For the second paradigm, expressionist rhetoric supporters put forward the argument that English courses should emphasize personal needs. This was the result of an individualistic trend in the years between the World Wars. According to expressionists, students at schools should be directed toward creative writing. The writing instruction, therefore, should include imaginary journeys, stories about the students' experiences and fictional conversations.

The last paradigm, the most influential on contemporary times, was cognitive rhetoric. It works with the cognitive processes that a writer goes in. To cognitivists, the instruction of writing should be parallel to the cognitive processes. The students should focus on the process of writing rather than the mere product. Then, those processes could easily guide them towards quality in product.

Writing instruction, as a result, was reformed according to these paradigms. The founding of various councils of writing gave teachers insight on their professional development. The focus on the concept of "teacher-as-researcher" was helping them to reflect on their practices. When teachers were gathered through some organizations such as College Composition and Communication Conference (CCCC) and National Council for Teachers of English, they exchange their experiences. A perfect example of this was The National Writing Project (NWP) of the United States. The committee of the project established teacher training-centers to improve the teaching of

writing with summer workshops where the statewide teachers came together and shared their instructional materials in their writing classes.

2.2 The Theory of the Study

This study is based on the theoretical basis of authentic assessment which is also known as performance assessment. Before we go into greater detail, it is important to express that when used as an educational tool, authentic assessment serves the purpose of learning as well as the purpose of evaluation (Gardner, 1991; Goodrich Andrade, 2000; Shepard, 2000).

Currently, *alternative assessment*, also called *authentic* or *performance assessment*, is a term that has been widely used as an alternative to traditional assessment methods. In definition, alternative assessment is, as Callison (1998) states, “an evaluation process that involves multiple forms of performance measurement reflecting the student’s learning, achievement, motivation and attitude on instructionally relevant activities.” It differs from formal assessment that it gives much time to learners, and the task itself is suitable to real world (Wiggins, 1993). Apart from these features, authentic assessment values the thinking behind the finished product (Wiggins, 1989). In other words, in authentic assessment the teacher considers the processes that a learner goes through while s/he is progressing in tandem with the syllabus. Furthermore, ‘teacher focus on student learning’ means not testing him/her via formal tests, but searching his/her strategies of problem solving. Following this focal point of authentic assessment theory, the present study has the purpose of gaining insight into what makes a good paper according to the criteria of rubric by improving the students’ already existing skills with a new technique.

Since the authentic assessment aims to assess the desired performance in a context which closely resembles actual situations, the task itself should also reflect this feature (Wiggins, 1993). Thus, an authentic task could be produced as in the format of conducting research and writing a report, developing a character analysis or debating a character’s motives. It is worthwhile to teach using authentic task because it guarantees the skills and strategies we concentrate on (Wiggins, 1989). Students learn how to apply important skills for authentic purposes not simply recall information when they are asked.

On the other hand, the reason for the change from formal assessment tasks to alternative authentic assessment methods is to support the needs of learners (Wiggins, 1993). Rather than forming the test for the teacher's choices, student's requirements for the real world are emphasized. Using this assessment method the teacher can positively influence the performance of students as teachers are:

1. Selecting assessment tasks that are clearly aligned or connected to what has been taught.
2. Sharing the scoring criteria for the assessment task [rubric in this study] with students prior to working on the task.
3. Providing students with clear statements of standards and/or several models of acceptable performances before they attempt a task... (Elliott, 1994, p. 2)

In the authentic assessment, teachers can use different techniques to evaluate the learning outcomes. These are class assessment, checklist, journal, rubric, conversations, conferencing, examinations, and collaborative examinations. Among them, we used rubric as the basic technique to guide the students through essay writing. In the following section, we explain the rubric studies in the scope of the thesis in detail.

2.3 Rubric Studies for Different Purposes

Though it was stated that there had been many studies done with the use of rubric in the field of education, the purposes of these studies showed divergence. Just as in Wenzlaff, Fager and Coleman (1999), rubric can be categorized under two headings such as for assessment and for instructional purposes.

Rubric was mostly used for assessment purposes in the earlier studies. Rubric replaced the traditional testing methods since it could test a student's understanding of the concepts rather than the ability to memorize (Montgomery, 2000). Whatever the school subject was, the aim was to develop an objective and an easy assessment strategy for the student's written work (Strong, 1999; Duehr & Nugent, 2000). The intent was either teacher assessing the paper or student developing self-assessment skills. Therefore, the teacher and students could check the product with previously decided set of rules; rubric.

A less but an increasing trend in the use of rubric was to promote not only the assessment process but also the instruction stage. Although rubrics were used as tools for assessment, there were few researchers who tried to benefit from them (Goodrich Andrade, 1997, 2000, 2001; Rhoads, 1998; Shaffner, 1997; Schirmer, Bailey & Fitzgerald, 1999). As Goodrich Andrade (2000) suggested, “at very best, rubrics are also teaching tools that support student learning and the development of sophisticated thinking skills.” (p.13). Hence, rubric can be used for more than one purpose; guiding students in their work and learning and giving proper feedback on their performance. Extending the aims of use, these researchers targeted to develop learners’ reflection on what a good writing was.

Therefore, the term rubric was changed by Goodrich Andrade (1999) as “instructional rubric”. Yet, she discovered benefits of rubric use in 1994, firstly. After the research she had conducted on the subject, she introduced the term to the literature in the field of education with her publication in 1999 for the first time, though her earlier publications were about the general use of rubric, but not in terms of this concept (1997). She first defined *instructional rubrics* as “rubrics that have been explicitly designed to support as well as to evaluate student learning” (Goodrich Andrade, 2001, p. 2). On the other hand, Shaffner, Rhoads and Schirmer, Bailey & Fitzgerald advanced their studies with rubric in similar approach. They aimed to promote class instruction, in the meantime, the students’ better understanding of what, good writing was. Furthermore, these studies included assessment aim, but the main one was guiding the learners through their writing process. Thus, rubric served for two purposes; (a) feedback to the students about how writing became final and (b) feedback to the teacher about whether or not instructional goals were achieved by means of the tool (Luft, 1999).

2.4 Rubric Studies at Different Education Levels (Pre-School, Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Education)

The studies conducted with the use of rubric were not only at different school subjects but also at various education levels. Rubric was used at all education levels from pre-school to the tertiary levels. It was even used in the

special education programs for the emotionally or physically handicapped children.

Rhoads (1998) conducted his study to develop the kindergartners' writing to a prompt. He also developed a class rubric with his students, and he motivated them to use it while writing to a prompt. Moreover, he observed the appropriateness of using a writing rubric in a kindergarten.

Rubrics were often used in primary and secondary schools. Jensen (1995), Liu (1995), Shaffner (1997), Goodrich Andrade (2001) are among the researchers who have studied the effectiveness of rubric use with primary and secondary school students. They also found positive conclusions in rubric use which indicates the development of intended skill.

At university level, Luft (1999), Ford (cited in Luft, 1999), and Finson (1994) reported the advantages of rubric use. They studied on the use of rubric with the student-teachers of science department. Consequently, they noted benefits for both the instructors and learners at schools. In Luft's terms (1999), rubric benefits to learners were illustrated as follows:

...rubrics can be templates that encourage reflective thought among students and instructors. For students, the process of creating rubrics can result in meaningful discussions about assessment, instructional goals, learning, and curriculum. As students utilize rubrics, they are provided with an opportunity to assess their own learning and understand what they know about science education. Instructors who develop rubrics for their classes have the opportunity to constantly re-evaluate their instructional goals and understand the effectiveness of their instruction and curriculum. (p. 116)

Furthermore, as for the advantages for teacher:

... it can become a tool that assists an instructor in enacting instruction and crafting curriculum. Rubrics provide information about students; they do not analyse or interpret what a student or teacher does. Rubrics provide science teacher educators another view of their students and a view of themselves. (p. 116)

Another interesting study was conducted by Schirmer, Bailey and Fitzgerald (1999) in the field of special education. This study aimed to develop writing-skills of ten physically handicapped children at the fifth and seventh grades. Although the class rubric was designed for assessment purpose, it was used as a strategy in teaching to these handicapped children. In the end of the study, the researchers suggested that ‘...teachers can use a writing rubric to help their students who are deaf to recognize some qualities of writing and incorporate these qualities into their own compositions’ (1999, p. 395).

In summary, the majority of the rubric studies are conducted at primary and secondary school levels. Therefore, it has been planned to contribute to the English language education field at university level with this study.

2.5 Rubric Studies in Different School Subjects

As it was stated earlier, rubrics were used in different school subjects. These courses were mathematics (Danielson, 1997), science (Sims, 1999), music (Doherty in Strong, 1999), social studies such as history or expeditionary learning (Carlson, 1999), and writing courses (Strong, 1999).

In a study conducted by Parker, it was reported that “students of all ages can reflect on their learning” (1995, p. 623). Thus, in his study, he claimed that involving the learners into determining the standards of the course helps them to take control of their learning. Furthermore, this act empowered the teacher to facilitate general learning in the class.

In Mathematics, the rubric was used for not only assessing the students’ solutions to the mathematical problems but also helping in the assistance to the problem-solving techniques of them (Danielson, 1997; Popham, 1997). Moreover, the students were asked to write about their personal experiences in solving the problems. By doing so, they automatically would reflect on their individual learning styles.

On the other hand, when National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) started the discussions about the standards of how mathematics had to be taught and skills had to be promoted in educational setting a decade ago, thirty-five states accepted use the standards of NCTM (Mabry, 1999). Yet, the standards were still under investigation to see their effects on student learning. Meanwhile, the rubrics were greatly in favour of use in the writing curriculum.

Therefore, in the field of mathematics, those standards diverted the teachers to design the rubrics in the state-mandated performance assessments (Mabry, 1999).

Rubric was used in science lessons at primary and middle schools and science teacher education courses at faculties since science teachers discovered the benefits of rubric in their courses (Jensen, 1995; Lebowitz in Luft, 1999; Liu, 1995; Lundberg, 1997; Nott, Reeve & Reeve, 1992; Radford, Ramsey & Deese, 1995; Shaka & Bitner cited in Luft, 1999).

At the primary and middle schools, for example, the rubric was used in the experiments to write a report about them. Sometimes, while the students were presenting their experiment reports they benefited from it (Sims, 1999). In addition to this, the students used the rubric to create their narrative essays from the information they had learned in the science lesson (Duehr & Nugent, 2001).

In the faculty, however, the application of rubric was somewhat different. The student-teachers of science faculty were allowed to create their class rubric to use in their future classes (Luft, 1999). Beforehand, they came to an agreement in the definition of a rubric during the course hour. After this process, they started to design the class tool, rubric. Firstly, they decided the criteria to be considered in the students' performance. Then, they passed to the descriptions of those criteria. After the approval of the created rubric by the course teacher according to the aim of the National Science Education Standards (NSEC), the rubric became a final form. (See Table 2.1)

Table 2.1

Example of a Holistic Rubric Generated by Students

A	-Always prepared and attends the class -Participates constructively in class -Exhibits preparedness and punctuality in class/classwork -Works well with others and is a team player -Challenges his/her thoughts about science education -Demonstrates initiative and improvement -Seeks to understand and acknowledge others thoughts -Demonstrates exceptional pedagogical content knowledge -Often reaches full potential if sufficiently challenged -Class assignments have extra something about them -Demonstrates ability to integrate new knowledge into work
B	-Usually prepared and attends class -Demonstrates excellent pedagogical content knowledge -Completes all assignments, occasionally adds something extra -Participates constructively in class, works well with others and is a team player -Demonstrates initiative and improvement -Seeks to understand and acknowledge others' thoughts -Stretches to reach full potential
C	-Sometimes prepared or attends class -Average pedagogical content knowledge -Occasionally or only challenges thought when encouraged by others -Assignment reflect average work -Sometimes an active participant in class, works with others
D	-Rarely prepared or attends class -Rarely participates constructively in class -Assignments are late, incomplete, or not turned in at all -Low level of pedagogical content knowledge -does not strive to reach potential

(Excerpted from Luft, 1999, p.119)

The designing process in this case was more important, as designing enhances the users to reflect on what a good performance is or what kind of a performance is poor. As Luft (1999) presented the dialogue between the student-teachers during the creation of rubric, they were greatly involved in their teaching criterion.

(The criterion is attendance of a good student.)

Mary: An A student attends class 100% of the time.

Mark: Attending is not as important as participating. Besides, if I attend 95% of the time, does that make me a B student, even though I have

demonstrated my knowledge in science education?

Jill: What if you have to miss class because of an emergency? Are you not an A student? (p.111)

As the group discussed the criteria in details, they had to decide which criterion was necessary to be considered as more valuable than the rest. They also had the chance of evaluating the objectives of the course and the curriculum (Luft, 1999).

Similar to the other studies conducted in different school subjects, the rubric was used in a resembling way in music (Doherty, 2000), and social studies such as history or expeditionary learning courses (Carlson, 1999). For instance, the students did research about a particular cultural element in the society, and they designed a rubric which reflected the main points of that cultural element in the expeditionary learning course. After this work, they evaluated the literature pieces according to the rubric they had designed beforehand. While evaluating them, they also modified their rubric accordingly to the cultural components newly met. Subsequently, they designed their class rubric due to their new experiences, which gave them time to think about their learning (Carlson, 1999).

Although rubric was applied to the different school subjects such as music and science, it was mostly used in writing courses. It was used in different writing courses at different rhetoric levels. Additionally, it was used in writing essays, paragraphs or research papers. However, the use was changed in the studies conducted on developing writing skills. (See 2.4 for the different purposes of rubric use.) The rubric has different roles in different classes such as assisting the teacher in instruction, enhancing the learners to reflect on their learning, or helping both the teacher and the students to assess the written work (Luft, 1999; Wenzlaf, Fager & Coleman, 1999). When rubrics started to be used in writing classes a decade ago, it was the teacher's duty to ensure the validity and reliability of the tool. Yet, for K-12 education levels it has been standardized by Council of Education of thirty-eight states in which the instructors use rubric to assess their students' work in the Unites States, recently

(Mabry, 1999). For example, Vermont's "Analytic Assessment Guide" or Kentucky's "Holistic Scoring Guide" are the rubrics which save the teachers from subjectivity while assessing the students' written paper. Similar to this state-wide standardization, The Dirksen Primary School has just accepted the use of rubric during the writing instruction to be able to get higher results from the state-wide or district-wide writing examinations in 1999 (ISAT Writing Analysis, 1999).

Another study to be analysed has been conducted by Strong in 1999 with the third and fourth grade students in Expeditionary Learning course. The course contained a portfolio of cultural or historical investigation. The researcher reported that writing this kind of a research paper was very challenging to his students. He decided to use a class rubric so that he would ensure the proper feedback on such a difficult task. He let his students to build their rubric, since he had the idea of sharing the ownership and responsibility of quality of the students' work. As a result, he observed that the students, by using the rubric, were easily adapted to revise their research paper again and again. Moreover, they got help from their class rubric on what a good research paper looks like. He concluded that his students were "more responsible and independent writers" (Strong, 1999).

Still another study was of Stix (1996), in which she reported the study of Mrs. Polin, a social sciences teacher at Robert Wagner Middle School in the U.S.A. She gave the task of creating a geography mural at the beginning of the term. Following this task, they determined the elements of a good mural on which they would be responsible for their performances. As in Strong's study, students were involved in the act of reflecting on the good quality of their work.

It can be concluded that many researchers have found similar results in their studies. Shaffner (1997), Rhoads (1998), Goodrich Andrade (2000, 2001), Schirmer, Bailey and Fitzgerald (1999) report that when the rubric is used as an instruction tool, to develop the learners writing skills and their understanding on their learning, the results are usually positive.

2.6 The Rubric Studies Similar to the Scope of this Thesis

Rubric has been served for two purposes since being used in the field of education for approximately two decades. As stated earlier, these are assessment and instructional purposes.

This thesis mainly focuses on the use of rubric in the instructional role and the effects of it on the essay-writing skills of EFL-learners. It can be restated as it has been searched whether or not instructional rubric can help the students to develop their essay-writing skills.

Much research was done. One of them was conducted by Shaffner at Edgar Allen Poe Middle School in 1997. She started searching for a tool to help the students in both assessment and learning stages. Consequently, she discovered the rubric, and finally, she created her own rubric to use with her student in writing class. She realized that during the writing process learners not only refer to rubric for finding their ways to the good quality but also for going into how that mastery for quality was gained.

Answer 1: I have just finished my search and I feel that the rubrics were I feel that the rubrics that were [sic.] used in search were very helpful. It was very precise and the directions were very clear. ... Great, I think they helped me do better on my project.

Answer 2: The rubrics since we have been using since fall have helped me better grades in English. They make me think about what I write about so I can improve my writing (pp. 268-269).

As it can be understood from the excerpts of the students' answer to a question of whether they have benefited rubric, they obtained higher grades and presented introspection to their knowledge on writing. At the end of the study, most of the students were happy to announce their comfort and enthusiasm toward writing a research paper which would generally otherwise be irritating for the rest of the students.

Another study conducted by Rhoads (1998) allowed the learners to build up their class rubric so that they could participate in the act of determining good qualities of writing. Wiggins (1993) noted that this act, "negotiable contracting", would give the feeling of ownership to the students in their

learning. When the researcher gave a prompt and asked the learners to write, they used the class rubric to guide them during the process of writing to a prompt. He repeated this act three times during the course. As the descriptions of a good answer were clearly defined in their rubric, it was easy for them to receive the guidance from their class tool. At the end of the term, he once again gave the same task to the students, but this time he did not let them use their class rubric. Consequently, Rhoads observed that the students were comfortable while writing without the help of a rubric after his study. He stated “the rubric as a learning tool can be powerful” (1998, p. 17); thus, he revealed the positive result of using a rubric in kindergarten.

A final but the most relevant study was conducted by the copyright holder of “instructional rubric”. Goodrich Andrade (2001) invented the term when she realized the benefits of rubric to the instruction of the teacher in class in 1996 (H. Goodrich Andrade, personal communication, November 9, 2001). The other researchers such as Rhoads (1998) and Shaffner (1997) followed her trend, but they did not discriminate the rubric types as she did. Thus, Goodrich Andrade conducted her study on finding the effects of instructional rubrics on learning to write (2001). The study contained three writing scores of students from different essay tasks. Each assignment was included in the school curriculum needs. The essays written with the help of an instructional rubric (see Table 2.2) were assessed by the scorers who used the assessment rubric (see Table 2.3). As a result, dissimilar to the other researchers, she designed two different rubrics, one for instruction and the other for the assessment process. Hence, she set apart the rubrics used in her study.

Table 2.2

The Instructional Rubric Used in Class by Students

	4	3	2	1
Makes a claim	Makes a claim and explains why it is controversial.	Makes a claim but doesn't explain why it is controversial.	A claim is made but it is buried, confused, or unclear.	Does not make a claim.
Gives reasons in support of the claim	Gives clear and accurate reasons in support of the claim.	Gives reasons in support of the claim, but overlooks important reasons.	Gives one or two weak reasons which don't support the claim well, &/or irrelevant reasons.	Does not give reasons in support of the claim.
Considers reasons against the claim	Thoroughly discusses reasons against the claim and explains why the claim is valid anyway.	Discusses reasons against the claim, but leaves out important reasons, &/or doesn't explain why the claim still stands.	Acknowledges that there are reasons against the claim but doesn't explain them.	Does not give reasons against the claim.
Relates the claim to democracy	Discusses how issues related to democracy can be used both in support of and against the claim.	Discusses how issues related to democracy can be used to support the claim.	Says that democracy is relevant but does not clearly explain how or why.	Does not mention democracy.
Organization	Writing is well organized, has a compelling opening, an informative body, and satisfying conclusion. Has appropriate paragraph format.	Writing shows organization through a clear beginning, middle and end. Generally uses appropriate paragraph format.	Writing is usually organized but sometimes gets off topic. Has several errors in paragraph format.	Writing is aimless and disorganized.
Conventions	Uses correct grammar, mechanics and spelling. May use complex sentences, sophisticated vocabulary, analogies, etc.	Generally uses correct grammar. Some minor errors do not distract or confuse the reader.	Shows some control of conventions but frequent errors are distracting or confusing to the reader.	Writing shows little control of conventions. Serious and numerous problems distract and confuse the reader.

(excerpted from Goodrich Andrade, 2001)

Table 2.3

The Assessment Rubric Used by the Scorers (adaptations to instructional rubric in italics)

Criteria	4	3	2	1
Makes a claim	Makes a claim and explains why it is controversial.	Makes a claim but doesn't explain why it is controversial.	A claim is made but it is buried, confused, or unclear.	Does not make a claim.
Gives reasons in support of the claim	Gives clear and accurate reasons in support of the claim. e.g., <u>pro</u> : leadership, informed voters, productive workers, learning from history, self-esteem, decision-making & other <i>tht. skills, jobs/\$, economy, delinquency/risk</i> ; <u>con</u> : freedom of choice, extra-curricular pursuits self-education, waste of \$, bad students' ruin it for others, jobs/\$, having kids of one's own.	Gives reasons in support of the claim, but overlooks important reasons.	Gives one or two weak reasons which don't support the claim well, &/or irrelevant reasons and/or confused reasoning.	Does not give reasons in support of the claim.
Considers reasons against the claim	Thoroughly discusses reasons against the claim and explains why the claim is valid anyway. Reasons, as listed above, should come from whichever side was not taken as the claim	Discusses reasons against the claim, but leaves out important reasons, &/or doesn't <i>explain why the claim still stands.</i>	Acknowledges that there are reasons against the claim but doesn't explain them.	Does not give reasons against the claim.
Relates the claim to democracy	Discusses how issues related to democracy can be used both in support of and against the claim.	Discusses how issues related to democracy can be used to <i>support the claim.</i>	Says that democracy is relevant but does not clearly explain how or why.	Does not mention democracy. Might mention freedom or choice, but without <i>connecting beyond self to country or world.</i>
Organization	Writing is well organized, has a compelling opening, an informative body, and satisfying conclusion. Has appropriate paragraph format.	Writing shows organization through a clear beginning, middle and end. Generally uses <i>appropriate</i>	Writing is usually organized but sometimes gets off topic. Has several errors in paragraph format, and/or middle is disorganized.	Writing is aimless and disorganized.

		paragraph format.		
Conventions	Uses correct grammar, mechanics and spelling.	Generally uses correct grammar. Some minor errors do not <i>distract or confuse</i> the reader.	Shows some control of conventions but frequent errors are <i>distracting or confusing</i> to the reader.	Writing shows little control of conventions. Serious and numerous <i>problems</i> distract and confuse the reader.
Words and Sentences	Words are striking but natural, varied, and vivid. Sentences are clear, defined, fluent, and diverse. May use <i>sophisticated vocabulary & analogies</i> .	Fine but routine word choice. Well-constructed but somewhat <i>flat sentences</i> . Some minor errors. May attempt analogies.	Word choice is dull, uninspired, or overly self-conscious. Some words may be <i>used incorrectly</i> . Sentences are redundant, possibly awkward or mechanical. No analogies or strange ones!	Minimal variety in vocabulary, and some words may be bewildering or confusing to the reader. Sentences are poorly crafted and difficult to read, e.g. run-ons, fragments, awkward phrasing. No analogies.

(excerpted from Goodrich Andrade, 2001)

Yet, the students were aware of only the class rubric which was to utilize the students' understanding the writing process and to provide them some criteria while writing their work. The rubric to help learners in the assessment process was used by the researcher, but it was also designed parallel to the class rubric of learners. As demonstrated in Table 2.3, the italics are the additions to the instructional rubric in Table 2.2. Otherwise, it would be unfair to measure the students on what they had not known beforehand and to divert their attention to another way by providing a list of different sets of rules. The results showed that instructional rubrics could "increase the student's knowledge of the criteria as communicated by the rubric, but that translating that knowledge into actual writing is more demanding" (Goodrich Andrade, 2001, p.22).

From this point we have thought to analyse the concept of translating the knowledge into actual writing. However, since creating rubrics is not as easy as it seems, we aim to develop basic essay-writing skills such as the general conventions, punctuation and language use. We have decided to use only one rubric so as to guide the students in their writing process and to enhance the reflection on their learning. We also want to contribute to the field by conducting this study at university level, as it was not possible to find more

studies in the field of English Language Teaching.

The rubric has been designed negotiatedly as in the studies of Rhoads (1998), Stix (1996), Strong (1999), Luft (1999). Consequently, the students use rubric during performing four essay tasks given by the instructor. Finally, the scores are taken via the same rubric.



CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter starts with the design of the study, and progresses to the subjects and data collection instruments of the study, which are pre, post and follow-up essay-writing tests, teacher-student conferences, and a questionnaire. Rubric will be explained in a detailed way since it holds the key point in the present study. Then, we move to the study procedure. Finally, we will work with data analysis.

3.1 The Design of the study

The study is designed to be an action research as we have started it based on an already existing problem. The purpose of action research is to solve the problems by developing new skills or approaches, which could be applied to the other work settings as well as the classroom setting (Ekmekçi, 1997, Gay, 1987). Moreover, Wallace (1998) adds that action research is conducted due to the issues or specific problems which arise from the professional context. Thus, it is problem-focused and practical in its context.

Action research, in general, progresses in a cyclical process. Within this cycle, there is already an actual problem. In order to solve this problem the facts are analysed, and action is taken (Lewin in Zuber-Skerritt, 1992a). Zuber-Skerritt (1992b, p.94) presents three steps in action research:

Step1: The researcher starts with a general idea to reach a certain objective. The idea must be examined carefully by fact-finding about the situation. Thus, there will be an overall plan of how to reach the objective.

Step 2: The researcher executes the overall plan followed by fact-findings.

The fact-finding has four functions:

- (a) to evaluate the action,
- (b) to give the planners the possibility to learn and gather new insights,
- (c) to help plan the next step correctly, and
- (d) to help modify the overall plan.

Step 3: The researcher reviews a circle of planning, executing and fact-finding in order to evaluate the second step and to prepare a reasonable basis for the fourth step or modify overall plan.

Thus, the action research flows in a spiral of steps, each of which is formed by a cycle of planning (Şahinkarakaş, 1998). As a result, the action research is an ongoing problem solving process starting with a problem, continuing with its analysis through the facts or events and coming to an end with the planning or implementing an action program. In this action program, the plan of the action is the hypothesis of this study. If the stated hypothesis is not confirmed, a new action program is determined, and the cycle of research re-starts. In the following figure we can see the theoretical base of this study.

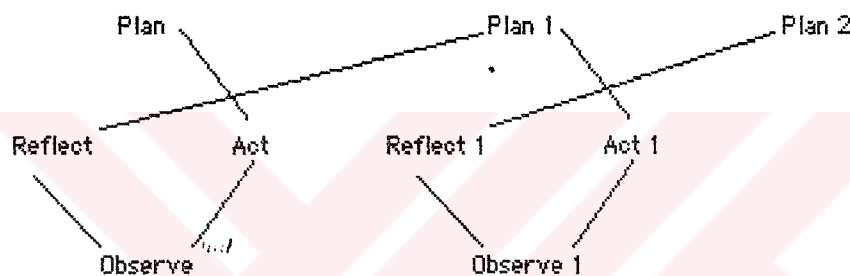


Figure 3.1 The basic plan of action research (excerpted from Roberts, 1997)

As can be seen from Figure 3.1, action research starts with a plan for the solution to the problem already existing in the study context. After researcher makes a plan, s/he performs in accordance with the study design. Then, observations of the situations are recorded. Finally, the conductor reflects on the results of this action cycle, and takes the further steps in the next cycle, if necessary (Plan 2). For this study, this basic cycle can be adapted as in the figure below.

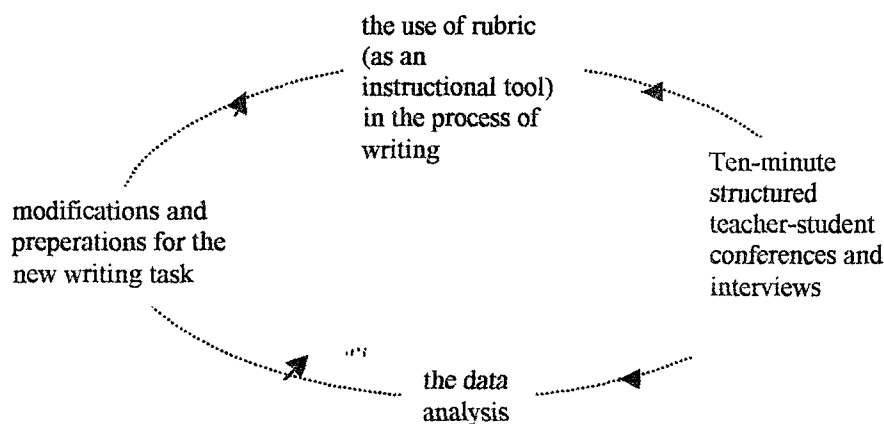


Figure 3.2. The action research plan for this study (adapted from the Lewinian experiential learning model cited by Kolb in Zuber-Skerritt, 1992a, p. 13)

The overall study plan is based on the figure above (3.2.). In the first step of the cycle, the learners get the writing instruction. Upon completion of writing instruction, the data collection starts and the teacher conducts interviews and conferences with the learners about their writing. In the data analysis section the written papers of the learners are graded. In the last step of the first action research cycle, the results of the written paper and qualitative research are interpreted for the action plan of the next cycle. The study plan continues in this manner until the research is completed.

3.2 Subjects

The subjects of this study are determined by clustered random sampling and consist of 25 first-year students at ELT Department at Çukurova University. The average age of the students is 20. Turkish is their first language and English the foreign language. All the students have an intensive English-instructional high school background, such as Anatolian High School, Anatolian Teacher Training High School or a private high school. These schools they graduated have an English Preparatory school. Afterwards, during the tenth, eleventh and twelfth grade, they have had in intensive English courses that consist of thirty per cent of whole courses taken during an academic term.

Apart from this, most of the students attended a preparatory program at Çukurova University. Nevertheless, this factor will not be

considered since language background of the students is not a variable in this study. Furthermore, at the beginning of the term every student newly registered in the ELT Department takes a placement test and they are grouped accordingly. Thus, similar linguistic background knowledge is assumed.

3.3 Instruments

The data collection instruments for this study have been both quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative data were collected via assessments of four written papers of learners and one pre-writing test, one post-writing test and one follow-up test with rubric. Similarly, qualitative data were collected through teacher-student pre and post writing conferences and the questionnaire given at the end of the study period.

In the following sections these instruments and how they were used in this study will be explained in detail. It starts with the various definitions of rubric. In addition to this, the pre, post and follow-up tests, the questionnaire, the teacher-student writing conferences, conducted during the courses will be presented accordingly.

3.3.1 Rubric

The term *rubric* when heard may not be familiar, although it is known and widely used with its content (Moskal, 2000). In the United States of America (USA) there are numerous studies conducted with the use of rubric. Thus, this study follows a newly common trend of using rubric in a writing course. The rubric will be discussed at length since it is the focus of this study in the following sections.

3.3.1.1 Various Definitions

Rubrics can be defined in many different ways. One meaning of rubric is 'scoring guide to define the criteria which will judge student performance' (*Really Fine*, 2000). Another meaning is, as Popham (1997) has defined, 'a scoring guide used to evaluate the quality of students constructed responses--for example, their written compositions, oral presentations, or science projects'. Similar to this, rubric has been defined by Goodrich Andrade (1997) as 'a scoring tool that lists the criteria for a piece of work or "what counts"'. For instance, a rubric for an essay might tell the students that their written work will

be judged on organization, details, language use and/or mechanics. On the other hand, rubric is a 'description of student performance that clearly articulates the requirement for each of the score points' according to Indiana Statewide Testing Guide for Teachers of Grade 10 in Mabry (1999). Also, Mabry (1999) has defined that 'rubrics are translations of visions of desirable performance into specifications of exactly what is desirable' (p. 2). More than this, Brookhart (in Moskal, 2000) explains that rubrics are 'descriptive scoring schemes that are developed by teachers or other evaluators to guide the analysis of the products or processes of students' efforts.'

Despite the variety in the definitions above, there also are some common points in all of them. The terms of *student performance* and *scoring guide* are common for a rubric in the combination of all those definitions. As a result, it can be concluded that rubric is a scoring guide for any student performance.

3.3.1.2 Origin of the Rubric

As Popham (1997) has clearly stated, the original meaning of rubric had no relation with the 'scoring of students' work'. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, rubric referred to the titles of sections in a book in the mid 15th century. Since the Latin word for red is *ruber*, rubric became the sign of headings for major divisions of a book. This meaning had stemmed from the work of Christian monks who copied the sacred literature with the red colour section names.

However, rubric had a similar meaning to the contemporary one among educators a couple of decades ago. Measurement specialists who scored the students' written work began to use the term to describe the scoring checklist. Today, rubric has adequate opacity that makes it understandable enough for classroom applications.

3.3.1.3 Features of Rubric

For Popham (1997) a rubric has three essential features. These are evaluative criteria, quality definitions, and a scoring strategy. *Evaluative criteria* are used to distinguish acceptable responses from unacceptable ones. The criteria may differ from rubric to rubric depending on the skill involved. As an illustration, when evaluating written work of students, instructors usually use

such evaluative criteria as organization, mechanics, word choice, and supporting details. These criteria can be given equal importance or not. It depends on the objectives of the course. The most dominant features of the course are the most prominent to put to the rubric.

Quality definitions describe the way that qualitative differences in students' responses are to be judged. For example, if supporting details is the evaluative criterion, the qualitative definition for this shows, to achieve high marks, *the paper should have all supporting details of main thesis* in the rubric. The rubric must contain a clear qualitative definition for each qualitative level. This means that if four different levels of quality are assigned to a written work's supporting details, the rubric must provide four exact descriptions for levels.

A *scoring strategy* defines how the written paper will be scored. The paper is graded either on a six, five, or four-trait holistically, or on different evaluative criteria separately. In an analytic rubric, the scores are added and the sum shows the result. In a holistic one one, however, there is no need to make calculations to find the result, as sometimes seeing the combination of two strategies in one rubric is possible, though it is rare (See Table 3.1).

Table 3.1

Scoring strategy

The Features of a Rubric

Elements	Exemplary 4	Acceptable 3	Improving 2	Not OK 1
Audience	Needs and wants of audience met in unique and interesting ways. Visual and verbal cues used to enhance the presentation and further draw the audience in	Style, vocabulary and supportive audio/visuals appropriate for audience. Visual and/or verbal cues used to make adjustments to maintain audience interest	Style, vocabulary, length and supportive audio/visuals do not clearly match audience needs. Visual/Verbal cues recognized with little or no adjustments to maintain audience interest	Presentation demonstrates overall lack of attention to audience needs. Visual/Verbal cues ignored or completely missed.
Purpose	Purpose is clearly identified and is intertwined throughout the presentation, with each piece building on the one before it, illuminating the conclusion for all listeners	Purpose is clearly identified and met through presentation. All elements lead listener to desired conclusion.	Purpose is identified and loosely followed to a conclusion. Careful listeners can identify the purpose.	Purpose unclear or not identified at all. Presentation rambles with audience left to ponder the purpose.
Information	Information is accurate, timely, appropriate and interesting. Information is presented in a novel way which clearly connects to audience and purpose.	Information is accurate, timely and appropriate. Information is selected and used based upon audience and purpose.	Information is accurate and timely. Some information is included or absent which detracts from the purpose and audience needs,	Information is inaccurate and unclear. Information provided doesn't allow listener to comprehend and follow the message

3.3.1.4 Types of Rubric

Moskal (2000) explains that rubrics can be categorized into two (Figure 3.3). The types under the categories can be shown in a tree diagram as:

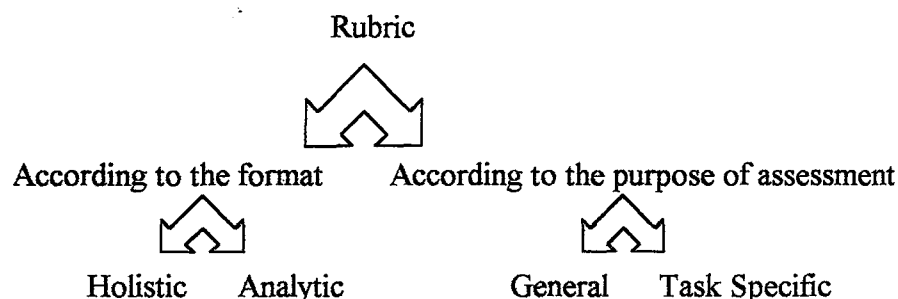


Figure 3.3 Rubric types

As can be seen from Figure 3.3 the rubric can be divided into two according to its features. One is according to its format, and the other is according to its purpose of use. In the format part, *holistic* and *analytic* rubric types can be seen. Additionally, under the purpose of assessment category, there are *general* and *task specific* rubric types.

3.3.1.4.1 Holistic and Analytic Rubric

In a holistic rubric, evaluative criteria are not available separately; only the scores and descriptions of them exist. As can be seen in the Appendix 1a the evaluative criteria are considered in the qualitative descriptions. (Brookhart in Moskal, 2000)

Analytic rubric contains the criteria that the scores will be given accordingly. In Appendix 1b there is an analytic essay rubric as a model, and it is possible to compare it with the one in Appendix 1a. The evaluative criteria are clear; thus, the learners can realize the value of their performance for each criterion.

It is not possible to separate the evaluation into independent criteria every time (Moskal, 2000). When there is an overlap between the criteria set for the evaluation of the different factors, a holistic rubric is preferable to an analytic one. As a result, the learner gets a general idea of his/her performance objective. The instructor should determine whether the overlap result from the original objective of evaluation.

In this study an analytic rubric was used because the problems of the students in writing were usually in specific writing areas. According to the report of Kentucky Department of Education (1999) it has been discovered that analytic scoring guides work best in the most classroom situations. Moreover, analytic rubric provides specific feedback to students to support their learning (Whittaker, Salend and Duhaney, 2001). Thus, depending on this information, while using rubric in writing essays, the students could easily focus on their problematic areas, which were clearly stated in their classroom rubric (See Chapter 4 for the problems of the students in writing). Furthermore, they would have opportunity to get more detailed feedback. After the students had completed their essay writing on a specific task, they were informed holistically on writing proficiency levels. Otherwise, they would not know their overall writing proficiency level on that specific writing task.

3.3.1.4.2 General and Task Specific Rubric Types

Another criterion to select the rubric for use is its purpose of assessment. In addition to this, the objective of the course is also very important - whether the course aims to improve general skills or the specific ones. The combination of two features determines which type to be used during the course. For example, a general writing course aims to enhance the students' general writing skills, while a specific course such as "Poetry Writing" may use a very specific one focusing on the criteria about writing poems. (See Appendix 1c for a generic and Appendix 1d for a task-specific rubric.)

As this study aimed to develop general essay-writing skills of the students, a general rubric was designed to be used. However, because preparing a specific rubric for each type of essay would be time consuming, the generic one was preferred.

3.3.1.5 The advantages of using rubric

Relevant literature review has suggested that using rubric has many advantages in student learning. Furthermore, it allows the teacher to gain confidence to teachers, specifically at the feedback and assessment stages. Therefore, rubrics:

- promote powerful motivation (Rhoads, 1998),
- promote unanxious expectations,

- promote student awareness about the process of learning,
- reduce teacher subjectivity,
- focus the teacher and the student to clarify his/her points in specific terms,
- provide useful feedback regarding the effectiveness of the instruction,
- maintain focus on content and performance standards and student work,
- develop self and peer assessment autonomy.

(Adapted from Pickett, 1999)

3.3.1.6 Rubric as an “instructional tool”

This study is among the research which uses rubric as an instructional one. In other words, rubric is not used only for assessing the written papers of learners but also helps students learn the writing process. Instructional rubric is defined by Goodrich Andrade (2000) as “a one or two-page document that describes varying levels of quality from excellent to poor for a specific task.” Rubrics help teachers to teach as well as evaluate student work. Furthermore, these kind of rubrics support student learning and the development of sophisticated thinking skills.

Andrade adds that when used appropriately, rubrics serve for the purposes of learning as well as of evaluation. Because the distinction between instruction and assessment may often be unclear, instructional rubric refers to teaching tool, which means that it is used in the process of teaching.

3.3.1.7 Rubric as an “assessment tool”

Since rubric is also defined as the ‘rating system by which teachers can determine at what level of proficiency a student is able to perform a task or display knowledge of a concept’ (Brualdi, 2000), the researchers mostly used rubric as a scoring guide for their students’ performance. Thus, rubrics usually served as the assessment tools in the field of education (Simms, 1999; Duehr and Nugent, 2000; Strong, 2000).

Therefore, this study also used the rubric as an assessment tool for the students and the teacher to assess the written works. As Moskal (2000) states, rubric provides feedback to students on how they can improve their

performance. It is also used as an alternative for traditional assessment tools. The written works are graded in accordance with the classroom rubric which is created in a negotiated way. Not only does the instructor evaluate the paper, but also the students perform self-assessment or peer-assessment.

3.3.1.8 The validity and the reliability with rubric

The tools used for assessment purposes must provide the validity and reliability to reach the intended goal. Thus, rubric must be tested for the consistency of this thesis. Moskal (2000) provides guidance in checking the validity and reliability of a designed rubric.

To provide validity we need to focus on content, construct, and criterion. Content refers to the extent to which a student's responses to a given assessment instrument reflect that student's knowledge of the content area that is of interest (Moskal, 2000). For instance, a mathematics rubric should contain the mathematical knowledge and skills that are considered necessary for completing the course. Construct validity can be defined as the centre of the appropriate interpretation of the extent to which performance on a given test is consistent with theoretical views of abilities (Bachman, 1990). Construct validity explores the adequacy of a test in relation to theory (Sequera, 1995). In other words, we must identify and define what we intend to measure, and through this process we define the construct. In the case of this study, writing rubric should reflect the theoretical assumptions under which writing teachers operate. For instance, if teachers view writing as an interactive process, rubric has to be designed to give students opportunities to make use of their schematic knowledge. As a result, the rubric used in this study should enable students to understand the concept of essay writing. In relation to criterion, a test should demonstrate a high criterion-relation between the high performance and low performance (Altmann, 1999). Thus, rubric has the power to discriminate between good and bad written works.

Moskal and Leydons (2000) suggest a number of questions to ensure the validity with rubrics, which we have taken into consideration while preparing the rubric for this study. The checklist contains a few questions for each validity types. In the following table these questions are separated for different validity issues.

Table 3.2

Questions to Examine Each Type of Validity Evidence

Content	Construct	Criterion
1. Do the evaluation criteria address any extraneous content? 2. Do the evaluation criteria of the scoring rubric address all aspects of the intended content? 3. Is there any content addressed in the task that should be evaluated through the rubric, but is not?	1. Are all of the important facets of the intended construct evaluated through the scoring criteria? 2. Is any of the evaluation criteria irrelevant to the construct of interest?	1. How do the scoring criteria reflect competencies that would suggest success on future or related performances? 2. What are the important components of the future or related performance that may be evaluated through the use of the assessment instrument? 3. How do the scoring criteria measure the important components of the future or related performance? 4. Are there any facets of the future or related performance that are not reflected in the scoring criteria?

(Excerpted from Moskal and Leydons, 2000, p. 5)

Regarding the reliability issues, we come across inter-rater and intra-rater reliability issues. Reliability in general, refers to the consistency of assessment scores (Moskal&Leydons, 2000). Inter-rater reliability means that the scores of students may vary from one rater to another. This reliability ensures the objectivity of the raters. Thus, rubric must provide that objectivity to the instructors in the assessment stage. On the other hand, intra-rater reliability is concerned with one raters' consistency towards assessing all

papers. To provide the reliability in rubrics Moskal and Leydons (2000) raise a few questions:

- (1) Are the scoring categories well defined?
- (2) Are the differences between the score categories clear?
- (3) Would two independent raters arrive at the same score for a given response based on the scoring rubric?

If the answers to these questions are “no”, then, the rubric should be revised until the answers become “yes”.

Considering the validity and reliability issues in the assessment stage, the rubric utilized in this study is revised three times. Once the first draft is completed, after piloting it on one of the students' written work, second revision is done to maintain because there were some missing points while designing rubric with students. Additionally, some ambiguous words were clarified to provide comprehensibility. The last modification was after the completion of the first essay task of the students. When we discussed the written paper with a colleague, we have seen that there were some points that were regarded differently. This affected the interrater reliability, so the terms were modified to be more understandable.

Bearing in mind all the information above, we created our class rubric as below.

Table 3.3

The Rubric Created Negotiatedly and Used in the Study

Y-117 1-B'S WRITING RUBRIC	<u>CONTENT</u> (Did I express my ideas and knowledge about the topic?)	<u>ORGANISATION</u> (Did I organize my essay?)	<u>LANGUAGE USE</u> (Did I use the language well?)	<u>MECHANICS</u> (Did I edit my essay?)
A (EXCELLENT-5) 	Clear presented topic. Complete, important and original ideas. Specific details. Rich and interesting supporting ideas and/or examples.	Clearly seen intro, body, conc. Ideas connected logically. Easy to follow the development of the essay.	Various sentences in length and type. Vivid, rich and interesting voc. No repetitions. No major error, but some minor errors. Clear, various and appropriate transitions.	No errors in capitalization, spelling and punctuation. Misspelling only in challenging words such as <u>device</u> versus <u>devise</u> .
B (4) 	Well-presented topic. Nearly all-necessary information. Most of the details and/or examples.	Distinct intro, body, conc. Ideas are connected logically enough.	Various sentence types and length. Accurate words. One major, a few minor errors. A few repetitions. Clear transitions.	A few errors in capitalization, spelling and punctuation.
C (AVERAGE-3) 	Fairly presented topic. Some of the necessary information with some details and/or examples.	Perceivable organization with intro, body, conc. parts. Not easy to follow what is meant.	Sentences are somewhat in the similar type and length. Usual voc. Some repetitions. 2 major, many minor errors.	Some errors in capitalization, spelling and punctuation.
D (2) 	Averagely presented topic. A little of the necessary information. Topic less perceivable to the reader. A few examples and/or details.	Intro, body, conc. parts are not clear. Loose order. Hard to see the organization.	Same sentence types and length. Weak voc. Several repetitions. 3 major, several minor errors.	Several errors in capitalization, spelling and punctuation.
E (POOR-1) 	Unsatisfactorily presented topic. Loose ideas. Details and/or examples not appropriate.	No intro, body, conc. parts. The reader is confused since s/he can not perceive the organization of the essay.	No variety in the sentence type and length. Multiple repetitions. More than 3 major error and multiple minor errors.	Multiple errors in capitalization, spelling and punctuation.

3.3.2 The pre-test, post-test and follow-up tests

The students were given a pre-test at the very beginning of the study period, and they were asked to write an essay (see Appendix 2a). They were not limited to any kind of criteria such as the scope of the essay and the length of the essay. Consequently, they were asked to state three to five problems in writing essay. The same procedure was performed at the end of the study. A post-test was conducted by giving an essay topic again (see Appendix 2b).

The pre-test was conducted to see the writing level and general writing problems of the students. On the other hand, the post-test was necessary to see whether there has been any development in their essay-writing skills after they have had writing instruction with the use of rubric.

Finally, students took a follow-up essay-test after four months of the study (see Appendix 2c). Since the time between was the summer holiday, they had no instruction at all. Summer holiday could be significant for the results of essay-test since Turkey is an English as a Foreign Language context, and they had no English Language instruction during this time.

3.3.3 The questionnaire

At the end of the application of the study instruction the subject group was asked to answer the questions in a questionnaire designed by the instructor (see Appendix 3). The aim was to receive the general ideas and attitudes towards learning writing with the new instructional tool-rubric.

There were eight open-ended questions and thirteen more items of which were prepared on a three-Likert scale. The questions and statements of the questionnaire were prepared to test the hypotheses of this study.

3.3.4 The Structured Teacher – Student Conferences

The teacher-student writing conferences were conducted four times throughout the academic term (see Appendix 4a and 4b). Since literature suggests that feedback during the conference session can be very useful in helping students if it is well planned beforehand, we used a structured teacher-student conference guide (Carnicelli, 1980; Graves, 1983). The value of this type of conferences is to divert students to 're-see' and to rethink their writing.

Conferences were held with the learners once upon completion the first

draft and once after they completed their essays for every writing task during the study period. The students were asked to answer a few questions to get them to involved in the reflection on their writing. In other words, they were made to realize the conceptual processes they used while writing.

3.4 Procedure

At the very beginning of the term the students were given an essay-writing task on a specific topic as a pre-test. In the end of the test, they were asked to specify five problems they experienced in essay writing. This way, the general proficiency levels in essay writing of the students were determined.

After the pre-tests the instruction stage started. First of all, we designed the classroom rubric with the students. Since we wanted them to be involved in the creating rubric process, we followed such a strategy. The students were asked to determine the definition of rubric and different rubric types. Also, they were required to bring rubric examples on essay writing to have a general idea on what an essay-writing rubric looks like.

During the creation of rubric, they were guided with a three questions adapted from Polin in Stix (1996).

- (1) If you were a writing teacher, what criteria would you consider while grading an essay?
- (2) How many levels could exist to rank the essay?
- (3) What could be the description of each criterion on each level?

Each question was discussed for ten to fifteen minutes, and the final decisions were written in the related sections on table that were drawn on the board by the instructor. The students had difficulty in answering the third question. The instructor helped them to clarify the different level descriptions. After completing the creation of rubric process, they were given a copy of it.

In the next session, instructor explained the students how they would use their classroom rubric while writing their essays. As practice, they wrote an essay on a particular topic specified by the instructor. In the meantime, they were guided to use rubric while writing their essays. When they had completed their essays, they also assessed their paper with rubric. Later, the instructor

randomly took a student's paper as an example, and she explained the use of rubric by demonstrating the processes which should have been used in while writing and assessing an essay.

While they were using their classroom rubric both for writing essay and assessing the written paper, they had some problems in terms of different criteria. This showed a weak point to be revised in the rubric. As a result, instructor explained the modifications which should have been in their course rubric. Moreover, there were some missing points which should be added to rubric. After the modifications, the third version of the rubric was given to the students.

In the second stage, we moved to the actual study. The students got the instruction on a specific writing type such as writing a descriptive essay. Then, they were asked to write the first draft of their chosen essay topics. At this point the teacher-student conferences started. This was called a pre-writing conference. During the conference they were helped to revise their drafts, if necessary. In addition to this, they were asked whether they had any problems, and they were reminded to use their classroom rubric while writing their essays.

They wrote many drafts until their paper was determined to be the final form. Between the drafts they received feedback from their instructor. After the first draft, the students had a peer-review using their classroom rubric. Furthermore, participants also assessed their own drafts using rubric. Thus, self and peer assessments were conducted in the writing process. When their essays came to the final stage, the teacher-student conference took place, which was called as post-writing conference. The conference focused on the problems they had faced while writing their essays and using their rubric. As a second point, they were asked to talk about their essay-writing proficiency level. How students felt while writing essay and using rubric, and whether or not they thought they had developed their essay-writing skills were a valuable feedback for the next writing tasks for the instructor.

The whole process was repeated four times, each with a different essay type. The writing tasks were respectively a descriptive, narrative, cause and effect, and an argumentative essay.

In the last stage of the study, the students were given a post-essay test. They wrote their essays in one hour with a specific topic given by the instructor as it had been in the pre-test. Afterwards, the subjects were given a questionnaire to evaluate the new method used in the writing course during the academic term.

Again, when the study was completed students had summer holiday. After four months they came back, and we conducted a follow-up study so as to re-check the effects of the study on the participants' essay-writing skills. We gave an essay-test similar to pre-test and post-test. The students had to write an essay limited to three to five paragraphs.

As a result, we had three cluster of writing scores of the subject group; pre-test, post-test and follow-up test. Moreover, data from teacher-student conferences and questionnaire constituted the other sources for qualitative data.

3.5 Data Analysis

The interval data collected through pre and post-tests and tasks were analysed with the help of a statistical package program of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), version 9.0. The mean, median, standard deviation (SD) were computed for any scores gotten in the study time including pre and post-test results to describe the raw scores. Then, the sign test and Wilcoxon-matched paired test were computed between the pre and post and follow-up tests. Moreover, to be able to investigate the change in the student writing proficiency level, four essay task scores of the written papers from pre, post and follow-up tests during the study were analysed through descriptive statistics; mean, median and standard deviation.

Besides, the qualitative data collected through the feedback of the students on their drafts, interviews, conferences, and questionnaire were analysed by grouping the results. The results will be described with the percentages (%) and frequencies (f).

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

This chapter works with the results of the tests, essay-tasks questionnaire and the conferences made with the subject group of 25 ELT Department freshmen at Çukurova University during the 2000-2001 spring term. Furthermore, data elicited from the participants are compared and contrasted to see if there is any statistically significant difference between the pre, post and follow-up test grades of the study group.

In the following sections, we explain the results of various instrumentation techniques. To be clear, we prefer to write them in the treatment order. In some parts, it will be seen some intersections as we designed the instrumentation in a repeated way to check the effect of the tool more than once.

4.1 The pre-test, post-test and follow-up results

The subject group was asked to write three essays of three to five paragraphs within a limited time, one before the study (pre-test), one immediately after the study (post-test) and one four months after the study (follow-up study). All the sample papers from each group are presented in Appendix 2a, 2b and 2c. They were also asked for their writing problems during the pre-test. The results will be explained during the discussion of questionnaire items (Section 4.4).

The following table shows the raw scores of subject group for pre-test, post test, and follow-up test. The three raters including the instructor rated all the written papers of students during this study. The inter-rater reliability is computed utilizing the alpha (α) reliability analysis. It is found that the raters are reliable at 97% with the α value 0,9706. Indeed, the Pearson r between the raters is computed as 0,943.

Table 4.1

The Raw Scores of Pre-test, Post-test, Follow-up and Another Group Test

pre-test						post-test					follow-up						
#	C	O	LU	M	TOT	C	O	LU	M	TOT	C	O	LU	M	TOT		
1	4	3	3	4	14	5	4	4	5	19	5	5	5	4	19		
2	4	5	5	5	19	5	5	4	5	19	5	5	5	5	20		
3	2	3	2	3	10	4	3	3	4	14	4	4	3	4	15		
4	3	2	3	3	11	4	4	5	5	18	5	5	5	5	20		
5	4	5	4	5	18	5	5	4	5	19	3	4	3	3	13		
6	2	2	3	4	11	3	3	3	4	13	4	3	4	4	15		
7	3	3	4	4	14	4	4	4	5	17	4	4	4	4	16		
8	4	4	3	3	14	5	5	4	4	18	5	5	4	4	18		
9	4	4	3	3	14	4	4	3	4	15	3	3	3	4	13		
10	3	3	3	3	12	4	4	4	5	17	4	4	4	4	16		
11	3	2	3	3	11	4	3	3	4	14	5	5	4	4	18		
12	3	2	2	3	10	5	4	4	5	18	5	5	4	4	18		
13	3	2	2	2	9	4	4	4	4	16	5	5	4	4	18		
14	2	2	3	3	10	4	4	3	4	15	5	5	4	3	17		
15	3	2	3	3	11	4	4	3	4	15	5	4	4	3	16		
16	2	3	3	3	11	4	4	3	5	16	5	5	5	4	19		
17	3	3	3	4	13	5	4	4	5	18	4	4	4	4	16		
18	4	3	3	2	12	4	4	4	4	16	5	5	5	5	20		
19	3	2	3	2	10	4	4	5	4	17	4	4	4	4	16		
20	3	2	3	4	12	5	5	4	5	19	5	5	5	5	20		
21	4	3	4	4	15	5	5	3	4	17	4	4	3	3	14		
22	3	2	3	4	12	5	5	4	5	19	5	5	5	5	20		
23	4	3	3	4	13	4	4	3	4	14	4	4	4	4	16		
24	5	5	4	4	18	5	5	4	5	19							
25	4	3	3	4	14	4	4	3	4	15							
Mean			12,7			Mean			16,7			Mean			17,1		
SD			2,65			SD			1,91			SD			2,25		

C: Content O: Organization LU: Language Use M: Mechanics

As it is seen from Table 4.1, twenty-five students take pre and post-tests, while there are two missing subjects in the follow-up. The rubric categories upon which the students are measured (content, organization, language use and mechanics) are out of five scales and totally out of twenty points (see total columns).

When the mean values are compared, the difference between the pre-test and post-test may be noticed. Moreover, the change of values between the post

and follow-up tests are in the tendency of positive development.

Using those raw scores, the statistical computations have been made. As the number of participants in the study is less than 30, we are able to use non-parametric tests. To see whether the differences between the groups are meaningful, we used Wilcoxon Matched-Pairs Signed-Ranks (T score), z score and Paired *t*-test.

Wilcoxon Matched-Paired Signed-Ranks is utilized to see the trend of development between the scores. Between pre and post-tests, the T score is 0 (zero) since there had been no decrease from pre-test through post-test. The table value of 68 (at.01) demonstrates that there is a positive development between these tests. Moreover, z score is used between pre-test and post-test to re-check whether we may reject the null hypothesis. The result is -4.37 ; consequently, we were able to accept the change in the essay-writing skills of the study group. In other words, we are right to reject null hypothesis at 99% according to the z score table values.

The changes can be seen via the following figures. In Figure 4.1, the areas of pre, post and follow-up test scores are presented. They have been ordered in terms of the success rate. According to this, follow-up comes first. Post-test and pre test fall under this test, which may be interpreted to mean that this group of students benefited from this study.

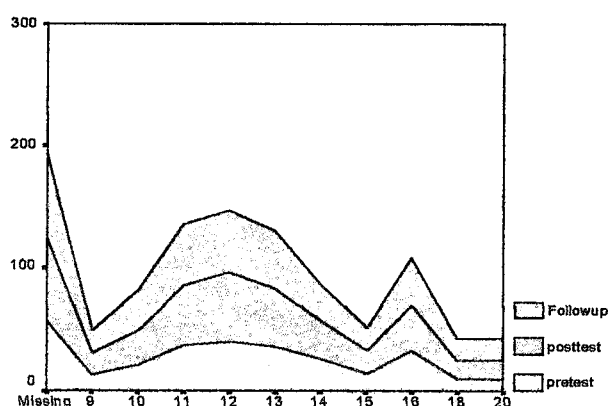


Figure 4.1. The area chart of pre-test, post-test and follow-up

Correspondingly, the test scores of above 70% as passing level can be viewed from Figure 4.2. One of the biggest pies goes to follow-up, which may mean that learners still hold the skills they get from the study although four

months passed without any instruction as it was the time for summer holiday. Understandingly, the pre-test gets the smallest share as the students have not yet met the application.

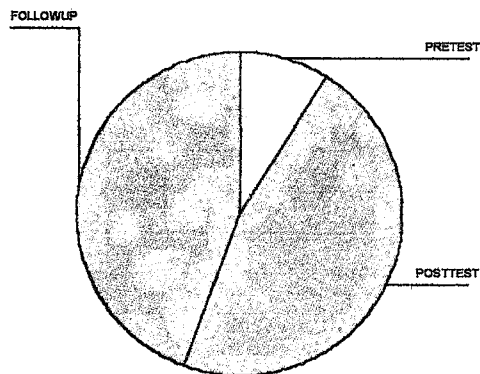


Figure 4.2. The pie chart for pre-test, post-test and follow-up

Figures 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, and 4.6 also represent the histogram tables and curves of pre-test, post-test, follow-up and test results of another group. The curves reveal the improvement of students in time. While the curve of the pre-test and another group test skew towards the lower grades, the post-test and follow-up results of the study group skew toward the higher grades.

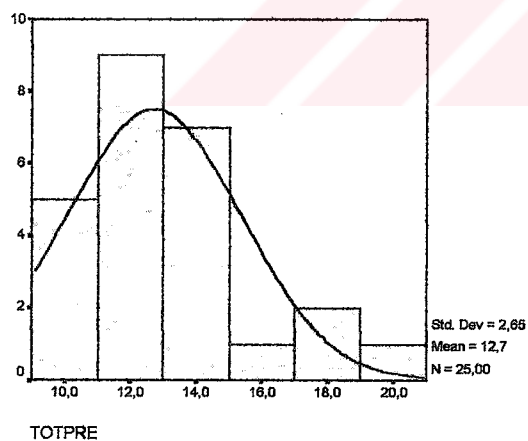


Figure 4.3. The histogram for pre-test

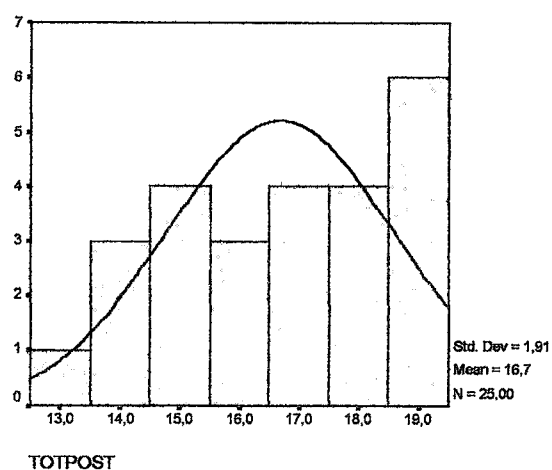


Figure 4.4. The histogram for post-test

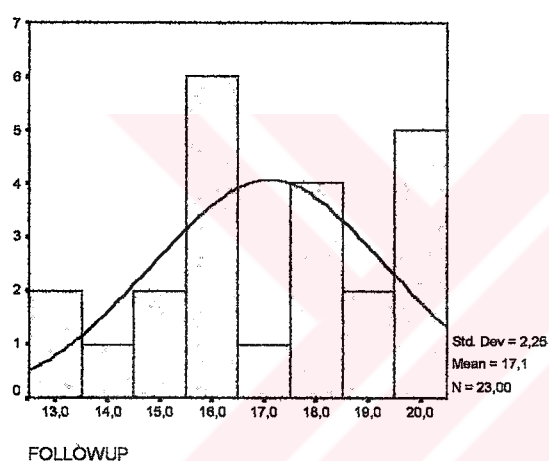


Figure 4.5. The histogram for follow-up

All the comparisons of these three tests are made using the Paired *t*-test. In the following table, these results are presented.

Table 4.2

The Statistical Values for the Comparison of the Groups

	Between pre and post-test	Between pre and follow-up test	Between post and follow-up test
Mean difference	-3.96 (Out of 20)	-4.22 (Out of 20)	-0.43 (Out of 20)
<i>t</i>	8.288*	5.774*	1.140

* Statistically significant at $p < .001$, 2-tailed

The negative values in the line of mean difference of Table 4.2 show that the mean of the second test of the pair is superior to the first one, while the positive one is vice versa. According to *t* values in the table above, the mean

difference between the pre and post-test is statistically significant at $p < .001$, which means that post-test results of the subject group exceed the pre-test ones. Likewise, a similar conclusion may be interpreted for the relationship between the follow-up and pre-test. Yet, the difference between the post-test and follow-up study do not reveal any great significance.

The statistical values presented above are conducted to test the first assumption of this study. Consequently, when we consider the assumptions 2, 3 and 4 (see Chapter 1, section 1.4), we come up with the following table.

Table 4.3

Descriptive Statistics of Pre-test, Post-test and Follow-up in Content, Organization and Language Use

	Mean	Standard Deviation
Pre-test Content (C)	3,28	,79
Pre-test Organization (O)	2,92	1,00
Pre-test Language Use (LU)	3,12	,67
Post-test Content (C)	4,36	,57
Post-test Organization (O)	4,16	,62
Post-test Language Use (LU)	3,68	,63
Follow-up Content (C)	4,48	,67
Follow-up Organization (O)	4,43	,66
Follow-up Language Use (LU)	4,13	,69

N=25

When the pre-test mean values (3.28, C; 2.92, O; 3.12, LU out of 5) are compared to those of post-test (4.36, C; 4.16, O; 3.68, LU out of 5) it is clearly seen from Table 4.3 that the values are increased. When the change between post-test and follow-up considered, we see similar mean values. In Table 4.4, it is possible to see the statistical comparisons of these categories in pairs.

Table 4.4

Pre-Test, Post-Test and Follow-Up Comparisons

Between →	Pre-test C and post-test C	Pre-test O and Post-test O	Pre-test LU and Post-test LU	Post-test C and Follow-up C	Post-test O and Follow-up O	Post-test LU and Follow-up LU
Mean difference	-1.08 (Out of 5)	-1.24 (Out of 5)	-.56 (Out of 5)	-.8 (Out of 5)	-.26 (Out of 5)	-.52 (Out of 5)
<i>t</i>	-7.688*	-7.050*	-3.219**	-.569	-1.817**	-4.219*

* Statistically significant at $p < .001$, 2-tailed ** Statistically significant at $p < .05$,

2-tailed

Table 4.4 displays the significance levels between the categories of sub-hypotheses in terms of paired-*t* test values. The significances between pre-test categories and post-test categories are shown in the *t* value line. The negative values mean that the second score of the pair is greater than the first one. Thus, Post-test scores on *Content* (df 24; $p < .001$), *Organization* (df 24, $p < .001$) and *Language Use* (df 24; $p < .05$) of subjects exceed the pre-test scores. Likewise, follow-up scores of subjects in *Organization* (df 22; $p < .001$), and *Language Use* (df 22; $p < .05$) are significant from post-test scores.

We can conclude that assumption 2, 3 and 4 are justified with these results. The significant values represent the differentiation between the previous score and latter score. Thus, rubric helped the subjects in this study helped to improve their essay-writing skills in three categories (Content, Organization and Language Use).

4.2 The questionnaire

A total of twenty-one item-questionnaire of which thirteen were Likert-like scaled on three choices and the rest eight were open-ended ones, was conducted immediately after the study (See Appendix 3 for the questionnaire). The questionnaire was given in Turkish so as to guarantee the exact understanding of the items and the answers to them.

Questionnaire Item #1: Did you benefit from the use of rubric in your writing classes? If your answer is "yes" which part(s) of the rubric you benefited most? If your answer is "no", what is/are the reason(s)?

Table 4.5

Questionnaire Item #1

	f	%
Yes	25	100
No	--	--

When the Table 4.5 was analyzed, none of the subjects answered "no" by stating that they had benefited from using rubric.

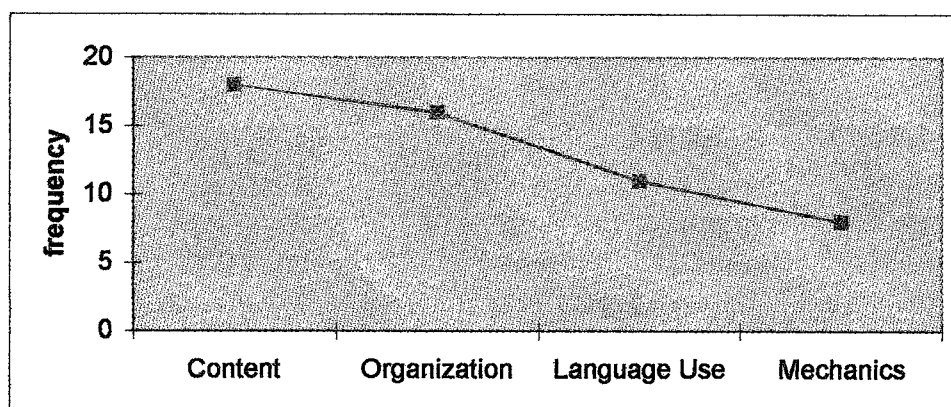


Figure 4.6. Questionnaire Item #1

Consequently, when we consider the mostly benefited parts, they are rated as “content” section the first with 34 per cent and “organization” section second with 30 per cent in the second segment of item 1. “Language use” section with 21 percent and “mechanics” section with 15 percent follow them.

Questionnaire item #2: Is/Are there any particular section(s) of your class rubric which you benefited from less? If your answer is “yes”, what is/are it/they? If your answer is “no”, why not?

Table 4.6

Questionnaire Item #2

	f	%
Yes	14	56
No	11	44

The percent of the subjects who regarded that rubric has helped them wholly; with all sections are 44 in Table 4.6. On the contrary, 56 per cent of them accepted that some parts were less useful than the others.

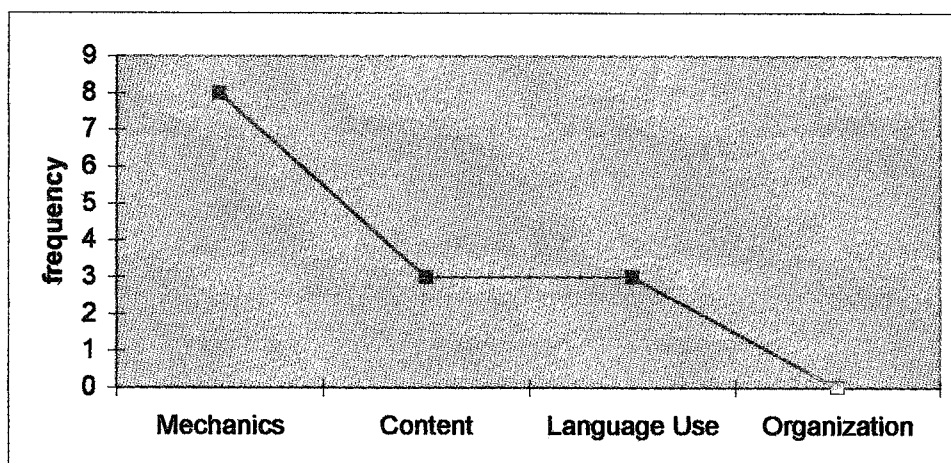


Figure 4.7. Questionnaire Item #2

In accordance with this answer, among fourteen participants of this study, the “mechanics” was rated as the least utilized section of rubric. Moreover, the “language use” and the “content” parts were also among the less used sections, each rated as 21 per cent. It is worth noticing that the “organization” part was not rated by anyone. Thus, we may deduct that all the class benefited equally from this section of their class rubric.

Questionnaire item #3: Does the use of rubric developed your essay-writing skills? If your answer is “yes”, what is/are this/these development(s)?

Table 4.7

Questionnaire Item #3

	f	%
Yes	25	100
No	--	--

All the students state that they benefited from using rubric. Thus, none of the students answered as “no” for the first part of the item.

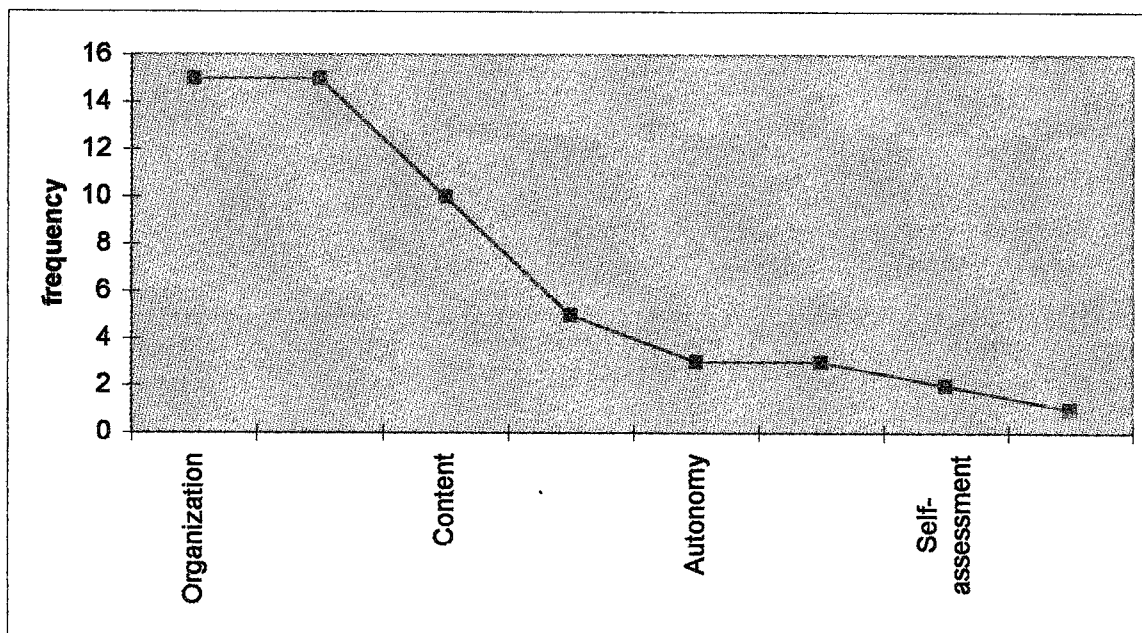


Figure 4.8. Questionnaire Item #3

The listed benefits are various while those are clear from Figure 4.8. We notice that content and organization are ranked top with 28 per cent. In addition to this, content (18%) and mechanics (9%) come after them. Moreover, gaining autonomy (6%), being aware of the mistakes (6%), being able to self-assess (3%) and understanding the criteria of a good essay paper (2%) are among the stated promotions. These contributions are quite parallel with the advantages of using rubric, previously explained in Chapter 3, Section 3.3.1.5.

Questionnaire item #4: Currently, do you have problems while writing an essay? If your answer is “yes”, what is/are it/they? If your answer is “no”, why not?

This question item is related to the question asked during the pre-test at the beginning of the study. We aimed to see whether use of rubric eased their problems and enhanced their essay-writing skills by asking this question once again in the end of the study. Moreover, we had a purpose to see the students' self-perception of their problems in their essay writing. Therefore, in Table 4.8, there are problems of these subjects before this application.

Table 4.8

Problems of Subjects about Essay Writing Before the Study

	f	%
LANGUAGE USE (TOTAL)	35	38
Vocabulary (total)	28	30
a. knowing enough words,	14	15
b. finding appropriate words,	7	7.5
c. difficulty in remembering the known words.	7	7.5
Using structures accurately	1	1.5
Using transitions effectively	6	6.5
CONTENT (TOTAL)	25	27
Developing ideas	2	2
Finding appropriate examples	2	2
Emphasizing the important point(s)	1	1.5
Writing introduction	14	15
Writing conclusion	6	6.5
OTHER (TOTAL)	17	19
Finding appropriate title	6	6.5
Finding a good topic	1	1.5
Limiting the subject	1	1.5
Having enough information about the given topic	4	4
Limited time	4	4
Boring subjects	1	1.5
ORGANIZATION (TOTAL)	11	12
Overall organization	2	2
Focusing	2	2
Organizing various ideas about a topic	7	7.5
MECHANICS (TOTAL)	4	4
Spelling	1	1
Punctuation	3	3

We have grouped the problems of students before the study on essay writing under five headings (content, organization, language use, mechanics and other). Since the students stated three to five problems, *f* ratio in the table displays the times that the students had mentioned the item presented in Table 4.8. In other words, for example, the number 35 for *Language Use (Total)* means not that thirty five students had expressed it, but the item was mentioned thirty-five times among those problems of essay writing.

The analysis of Table 4.8 shows that the biggest problem are in the language use section (38%), especially related to vocabulary use (knowing enough words with 15 per cent, finding the appropriate word and being able to remember the known word with 7.5 per cent each). Apart from these, the subjects have problems with the appropriate structure use with 1.5 percent and effective transition use with 6.5 per cent.

The second highest rated problem students are faced is about content of an essay with totally 27 per cent. The various problems asserted respectively by students are writing introduction (15%), writing conclusion (6.5%), developing ideas and finding appropriate examples (2% each), and emphasizing the important point (1.5%).

Next, the problems in the *other* category are rated as 19 per cent. The students find difficulty in finding an appropriate title with 6.5 percent, knowing enough information about the given topic to write an essay and writing an essay within a limited time period with 4 per cent each, finding a good topic to write about and limiting the given subject or not liking the given topics make up 1.5 per cent each.

Problems about organization of an essay comprise (12%). The assorted troubles are either about organizing the whole essay or focusing on one point at a time (2% each), and organizing ideas in view of scope (7.5%).

Finally, they experience problems in the mechanics part of an essay. Among them, spelling (1.5%) and punctuation (3%), a smaller percent for mechanics and organization part can be related with questionnaire item #2. As students become familiar with those standards in a particular rubric section, it seems that they do not use those sections so frequently.

Table 4.9

Questionnaire Item #4

	f	%
None	6	16
Yes	19	84

Table 4.9 displays the numbers of the students who still have problems in essay writing or those who have not any problems left. According to Table 4.9 six of the students affirm that they have no problems at all. On the other hand, nineteen of the students stated they have still some problems.

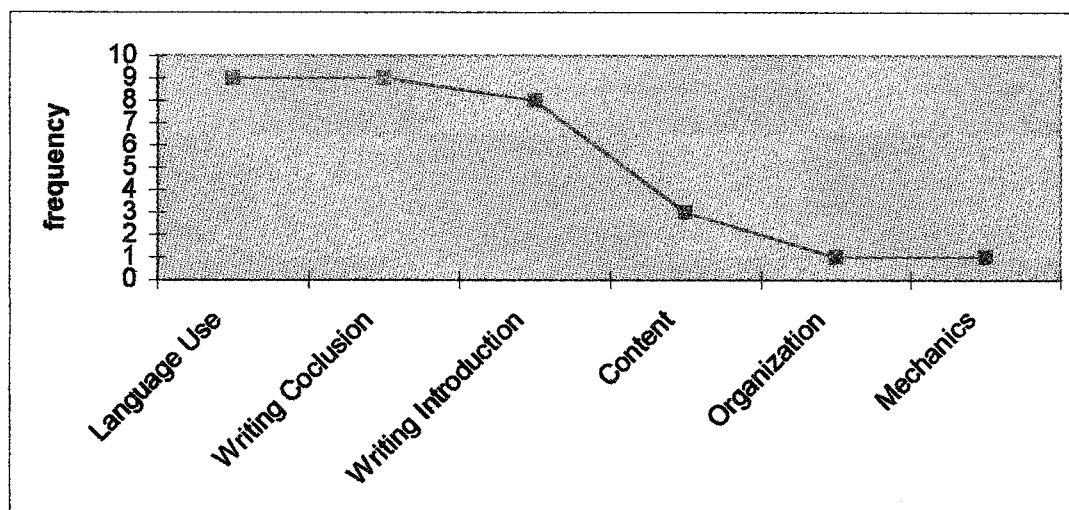


Figure 4.9. Questionnaire Item #4

As in Figure 4.9, some problems such as in the area of language use (24%), writing introduction (24%) and conclusion (22%), content (8%), organization (3%) and mechanics (3%) are listed as problematic areas by the students. When compared with the previously stated problems, while the troubles in the language area lessens by 14 percent (38% previously, 24% later), the difficulties with content and organization have a more significant decrease. Problems in the area of mechanics nearly remain the same (1% fall). Additionally, we do not see any problems related to *other* parts that had occurred as a result of the previous problem question asked during the pre-test. However, another two issues arise at this point. The students still find difficulty in writing introduction (22%) and conclusion (24%).

The reason why six of the students answer that they have no problems in essay writing is the use of rubric. They explain that rubric itself is a sufficient tool to understand what a good essay requires.

Questionnaire item #5: Do you have problems in writing essays while using your class rubric? If your answer is “yes”, what is/are your problem(s)? If your answer is “no”, why not?

Table 4.10

Questionnaire Item #5

	f	%
Yes	--	--
No	25	100

This item was added to the questionnaire to determine whether the use of rubric was easier for the students while writing their essays. Fortunately, no students find it difficult to use, as can be seen from Table 4.10. The cause is stated as the clarity of the rubric itself.

Questionnaire item #6: Up to now (during 2000-2001 academic year), do you think you have improved in writing generally? If your answer is "yes", in what point(s) is/are this/these progress(es)? If your answer is "no", why not?

Table 4.11

Questionnaire Item #6

	f	%
Yes	25	100
No	--	--

This item aims to question whether this study on essay writing helped to understand and develop general writing of the subject group since one of our assumptions (not to be tested though) suggested that advancing in essay-writing skills would enable the students to develop their general writing skills.

Therefore, rubric is likely to have not only developed essay-writing skills of this group of freshmen but also to have helped them to gain insights about general writing skills, since they admit that they improve in general essay-writing skills (yes: 100%). This point is what we expected but did not test directly; where through this item of the questionnaire the subjects state it.

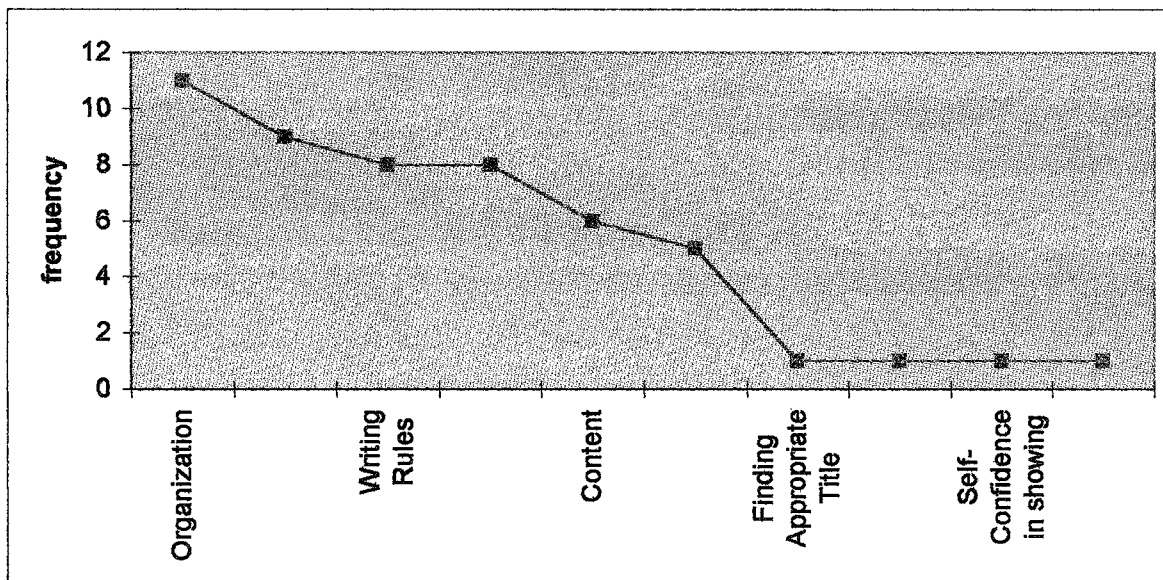


Figure 4.10. Questionnaire Item #6

As can be seen from Figure 4.10, the students have progressed in different points. Apart from rubric categories of *Content*, *Organization*, *Language Use* and *Mechanics*, participants have stated having insight in writing rules in general and gaining speed in making outlines (16 percent respectively). Then, though it is expressed by a few students, getting transitional concept (cohesive ties), finding appropriate title, attaining quality in writing and self-confidence in sharing written work are among the other improvements as an answer to item 6.

Questionnaire item #7: (Related to the sixth question) Is/Are this/these progress(es) related to the use of rubric? If your answer is “yes”, in what point(s) is/are this/these progress(es)? If your answer is “no”, why not?

Table 4.12

Questionnaire Item #7

	f	%
Yes	24	96
Not much	1	4

According to Table 4.12, most of the students (n=24, 96%) accept that their improvements are related to the rubric use. However, one of the students (4%) does not accept the role of rubric use in her progress since she

confessed that she could not use the rubric properly.

Besides, the students have various answers for improvement points. While 28 per cent of the students are able to see their mistakes in their writings easily with the help of rubric, 48 percent of them are either enriched content of their papers ($n=5$) or organized their writings well ($n=5$). Moreover, some of them ($n=3$, 14%) benefit from rubric in the efficient language use. Similarly, the others find rubric beneficial in assessment ($n=1$, 5%) and gaining speed in writing ($n=1$, 5%).

Questionnaire item #21: Do you have suggestions about the rubric use while writing essay? If your answer is “yes”, what are they?

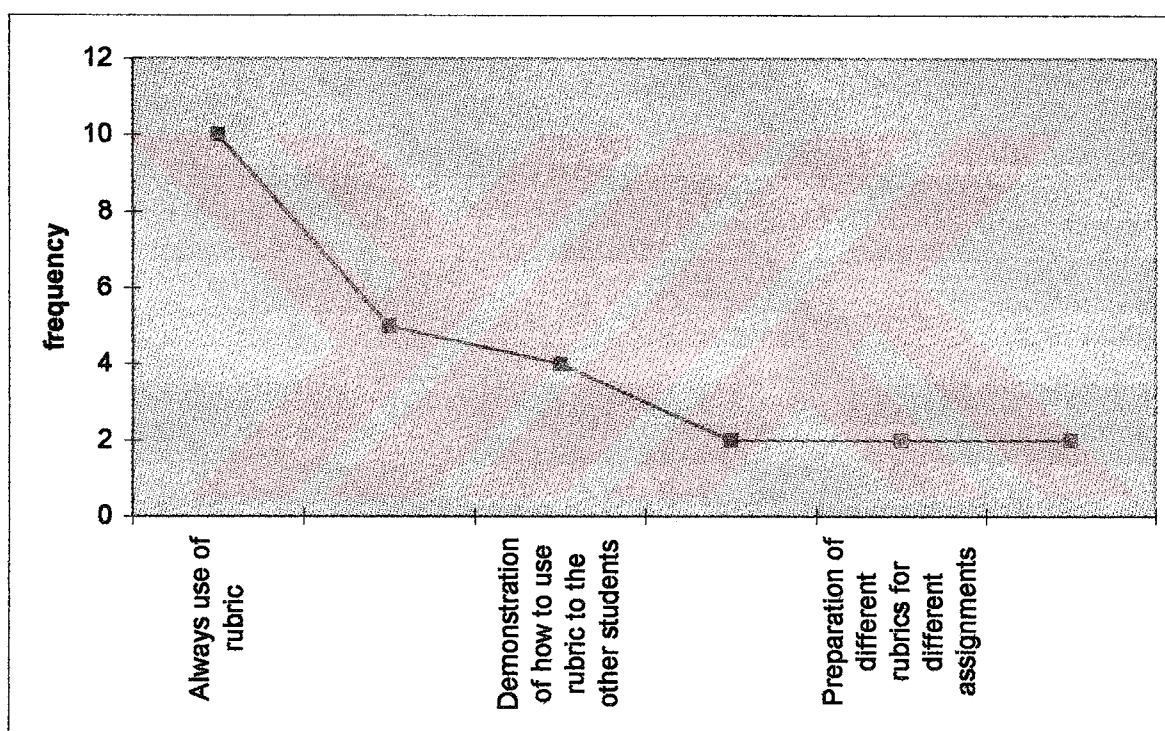


Figure 4.11. Questionnaire Item #21

Figure 4.11 reveals that most of the students suggest more use of rubric in other school subjects. 40 per cent of the students advise other students to use rubric all the time while writing. Furthermore, five of the students request the use of rubric not only for writing but also for assessment. Additionally, 16 per cent of them propose for the generalization of this application to the other parts of the faculties. Moreover, two of the students inform that they want continuum with this application. Likewise, 8 per cent of them ask for the different rubrics

for the other courses or assignments, and the rest 8 per cent recommend rubric to those who like to write with standards.

The other questionnaire items were Likert-like type on three choices.

- I.8 I spent much time while writing essay with the use of rubric.
- I.9 It was easy for me to make an outline with the use of rubric.
- I.10 It was easy to develop the content of my essay with the use of rubric.
- I.11 Rubric helped me to organize my essay well.
- I.12 Rubric eased my work while using the language in essay writing.
- I.13 Rubric helped me to develop my mechanics (i.e. punctuation, spelling) while writing essay.
- I.14 Rubric developed my essay-writing skills at every draft while writing.
- I.15 Rubric provided me to assess my paper easily and helped me to understand why I gave that grade to my essay.
- I.16 Rubric enhanced my assessment of friends' essays easily.
- I.17 Rubric provided me the understanding of the "writing process".
- I.18 I can write different essay types (e.g. cause & effect, compare & contrast) easily without the help of an instructor.
- I.19 Not only my essay-writing skills but also general writing skills have developed via rubric.
- I.20 I understood rubric quite well as any work I had to perform was written clearly in it.

These thirteen items were prepared in 3 Likert-like type. (1) stands for *agree/always*, (2) stands for *not much/sometimes*, and (3) stands for *do not agree/never*.

Table 4.13

Likert-scale items

	1 (agree/always)		2 (not much/sometimes)		3 (do not agree/never)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
#8	2	8	16	64	7	28
#9	17	68	7	28	1	4
#10	19	76	6	24	--	--
#11	22	88	3	12	--	--
#12	16	64	8	32	1	4
#13	12	48	9	36	4	16
#14	24	96	1	4	--	--
#15	25	100	--	--	--	--
#16	20	80	4	16	1	4
#17	18	72	6	24	1	4
#18	19	76	6	24	--	--
#19	14	56	9	36	2	8
#20	24	96	1	4	--	--

Table 4. 14 presents the results of thirteen items of the questionnaire, which were prepared to re-evaluate the student answers in terms of reliability of the results. The results are quite parallel with the open-ended answers, first of all. Consequently, the results generally have tendency towards 1 (agree/always) despite a few exceptions. For instance, most of the students point out that they have benefited from rubric while making outlines *sometimes* according to item 9. While nearly half of the students choose 2 (not much/sometimes) as well as 1 (agree/always) in item 13 and 19.

As a result, the answers to the Likert-like items demonstrated reliability with the open-ended items of the questionnaire. In addition to this, the students, once again, state that they have benefited from the use of rubric in the aspects of content (#10), organization (#11), language use (#12), mechanics (#13), assessment (#15 and #16) and autonomy (#18) of essay writing.

4.3 The structured teacher-student conferences

The aim of these conferences was to guide the students through their essay tasks and guarantee the use of rubric while writing their essays. The students were met twice during each task, once when they had written their first draft and once after they received a "final" remark for their task from their

instructor.

During these conferences, the students were asked four questions (See Appendix 4a and 4b for the structured teacher-student conference questions). We analyzed these answers holistically. Accordingly, the analysis allowed us to reach the following conclusions.

For Question 1:

They informed us that they had several problems in essay writing.

In content:

S.1 I spent a lot of time trying to find an interesting idea.

S.2 I had difficulty in developing ideas in the body part of my essay.

In organization:

S.3 I still have problems in the organization of my conclusion part. I do not know whether the order of ideas in that part is accurate.

In the language use

S.4 This task (descriptive) requires vast knowledge of vocabulary. I do not have much, however.

S.5 I sometimes confuse the words I know. I am hesitant as to whether my essay seems a lot like Turkish.

In mechanics:

S.6 I have difficulty in the use of "i" and "I". I mix them up all the time.

These problems occurred during the first stages of the task. However, they decreased in the following tasks. For example, a student answer below, demonstrates how this process is related to the use of rubric (post-conference question 1)

S.7 Whenever I use the words *effect* and *affect*, I need some time to think. Yet, I look at my rubric, and I remember what my instructor told me about the discrimination of those words quickly. Thus, I like to look at my class rubric.

For Question 2:

S.8 Yes, because it guides me well while writing my essay.

S.9 Absolutely. Each time I see rubric, I solve my problem in my mind.

S.10 Yes. Why not? It helps me a lot to write the essay.

S.11 Certainly, it makes easier to see the mistakes.

All the answers are related to the benefits of rubric explained in Chapter 3. It seems that the students become aware of them by using their class rubric.

For Question 3:

S.12 Content and organization.

S.13 All the parts of the rubric.

S.14 Mechanics and content parts.

S.15 Organization and mechanics.

S.16 Language use and content.

These combinations show variety. The students state that they have benefited from these parts of the rubric prior to their essay task. One student may answer as “mechanics” for a specific task, while that answer can change as “organization” for the next time. It is seen that the priority is determined by a specific need at a specific task.

For Question 4:

S.17 Nearly one hour.

S.18 I spent fifteen minutes.

S.19 I have used rubric for half an hour.

S.20 I have no idea, but not much time.

The time spent by each student varies. The analysis reveals that the time span for the use of rubric ranges between thirty-five minutes to forty-five minutes.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, there are four sections to be explained respectively. The first is the summary of the study. The second part presents the results that can be deducted from the conducted study. In the next section, we work with the educational implications of the study. Finally, we give suggestions to the researchers for further studies.

5.1 Summary of the study

This study started with the discovery of general problems of ELT Department students in writing. Then, the scope was widened to essay writing parallel with the curriculum of the first-year writing course objectives which had been determined from National Higher Education Council beforehand. Hence, we aimed to develop the essay-writing skills of freshmen in the ELT Department at Çukurova University.

Randomly selected a cluster of students was determined to apply the new idea for improving essay-writing skills at Çukurova University . The study was designed in the action research cycle. A pre-essay test was given to see the level of essay-writing skills of the study group. Furthermore, action research cycle was used four times in different essay structures, two of which were conducted with teacher feedback to the written drafts, while remaining two were not. Subsequently, the post-essay test was conducted along with another group who had regular writing instruction at the same-level so as to compare and contrast the results. Apart from these tests, through the essay tasks, the subjects were interviewed within the structured teacher-student conference questions. Besides, the subject group was given a questionnaire that receives their ideas about the application. Finally, the students had a follow-up essay test four months after the actual study was completed.

5.2 Implications for ELT context

The main result of this study was that rubric can be used for not only assessment purposes but also instructional ones. Therefore, rubrics may teach as well as measure the performance of students at a particular assignment.

Beside instructional purposes, rubrics help ELT students to understand the expected performance and the criteria better because the descriptions of performance levels are clear enough to list the required work quality one by one. For teachers, rubrics guarantee the understanding of feedback to the specific performance by the students, as the students are aware of the description via rubric.

From the aspect of assessment, rubrics provide reliability between the raters. The descriptions and the grades are predetermined on rubric, so it allows for greater objectivity.

In its most general view, rubrics may be eligible to be used at different levels for different assignments. For instance, they could be applicable to different student groups at various grades such as secondary schools.

In summary, rubrics could have a wide application zone in classrooms. They have various benefits demonstrated in related studies and in this particular study both students and teachers have benefited. Most of all, they can be very useful guides for student learning in ELT context.

5.3 Suggestions for further research

There were some limitations for this study which restricted and made it impossible to generalize the results. These limitations were the size of the study group and duration of the study.

Further researchers interested in using rubric could use a larger sample group. Hence, s/he may utilize the experimental research design so as to collect more quantitative data. This will enable the researcher to broaden the results and achieve a more general conclusion. Furthermore, some different variables such as gender and age may be considered.

In terms of duration of the study, researchers may conduct study over a lengthy period of time in order to detect the change in student performance comprised with different variables. Besides, more exposure to the tool (rubric)

might create different effects on learning.

Apart from these factors, it is discovered that the use of rubric in the higher education has not been examined at length. For this reason, this level may be main scope of the researchers in detail. Likewise, the focus on faculty students at different universities may present different results.

On the other hand, it is clear from relevant literature review that using rubric at primary or secondary schools is convenient. Therefore, I recommend the teachers and educators at those levels to use the rubric to improve the performance of learners.

The use of rubric to develop essay-writing skills of the participants in this study was ensured. However, the curiosity of seeing the comparison and contrast of the study results with those of another group who were at the same level of these participants led the researcher to administer another test.

5.4 The essay-test conducted to compare and contrast the results of the study

This essay-test was given to both groups with the same topic. The raw scores of the test results are as follows.

Table 5.1

The raw scores for the further essay-test of the study and another group participants

N	Study participants					Another group				
1	C	O	LU	M	TOT	C	O	LU	M	TOT
2	5	5	5	4	19	4	5	3	3	15
3	5	5	5	5	20	3	4	4	5	16
4	4	4	3	4	15	3	2	2	3	10
5	5	5	5	5	20	3	4	3	4	11
6	3	4	3	3	13	3	3	3	3	12
7	4	3	4	4	15	2	2	3	4	11
8	4	4	4	4	16	4	3	3	3	13
9	5	5	4	4	18	4	4	4	4	16
10	3	3	3	4	13	3	4	4	3	14
11	4	4	4	4	16	3	2	3	3	11
12	5	5	4	4	18	3	3	4	3	13
13	5	5	4	4	18	3	3	3	3	12
14	5	5	4	4	18	5	5	5	5	20
15	5	5	4	3	17	5	5	4	4	18
16	5	4	4	3	16	3	2	2	3	10
17	5	5	5	4	19	3	3	3	4	13
18	4	4	4	4	16	2	2	2	3	9
19	5	5	5	5	20	3	3	4	4	14
20	4	4	4	4	16	3	3	3	3	12
21	5	5	5	5	20	3	3	3	3	12
22	4	4	3	3	14	3	3	3	2	11
23	5	5	5	5	20					
24	4	4	4	4	16					
Mean				17,1		Mean			13	
SD						SD				
				2,25					2,76	

C: Content O: Organization LU: Language Use M: Mechanics TOT:Total

The comparison between the scores allowed the researchers to constitute the following table.

Table 5.2

The Statistical Values for the Comparison of the Groups

	Between post and another group test
Mean difference	3.67 (Out of 20)
t	5.202*

* Statistically significant at $p < .001$, 2-tailed.

As can be seen from Table 5.2, it is clear that the scores of study participants surpass those of another group who are at the same level and who have regular writing instruction. The t value obtained from the paired- t test presents significance between the groups at $p < .001$.

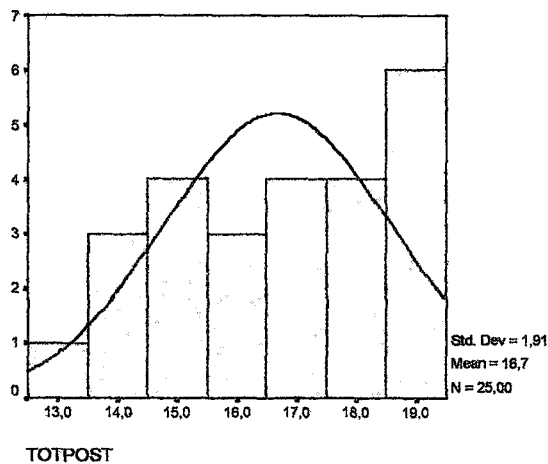


Figure 5.1. The histogram for study group

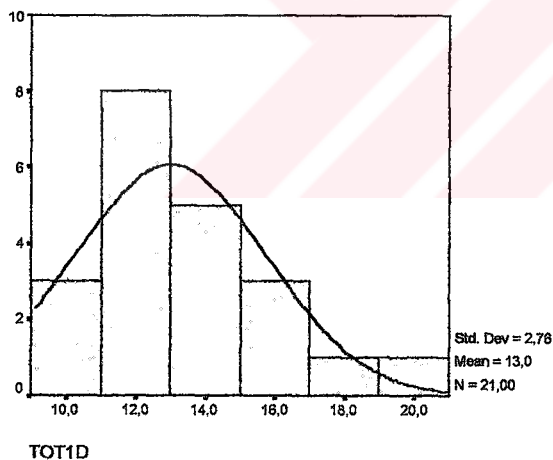


Figure 5.2. The histogram of another group essay test-results

Likewise, the histogram figures above display the significance between the results via the curves. When the curve in Figure 5.1 skews to higher grades, it is vice versa in Figure 5.2. In other words, the grades of another group fall under the scores of the study group in this essay test.

Thus, we recommend the further researchers who wish to conduct a similar study to the present one to consider this kind of comparison in order to evaluate the results of the main study.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1a

Holistic Rubric Sample

Mark Twain Elementary School - 5th Grade Inquiry: the Oral Presentation

- 5 Excellent:** The student clearly describes the question studied and provides strong reasons for its importance. Specific information is given to support the conclusions that are drawn and described. The delivery is engaging and sentence structure is consistently correct. Eye contact is made and sustained throughout the presentation. There is strong evidence of preparation, organization, and enthusiasm for the topic. The visual aid is used to make the presentation more effective. Questions from the audience are clearly answered with specific and appropriate information.
- 4 Very Good:** The student described the question studied and provides reasons for its importance. An adequate amount of information is given to support the conclusions that are drawn and described. The delivery and sentence structure are generally correct. There is evidence of preparation, organization, and enthusiasm for the topic. The visual aid is mentioned and used. Questions from the audience are answered clearly.
- 3 Good:** The student describes the question studied and conclusions are stated, but supporting information is not as strong as a 4 or 5. The delivery and sentence structure are generally correct. There is some indication of preparation and organization. The visual aid is mentioned. Questions from the audience are answered.
- 2 Limited:** The student states the question studied, but fails to fully describe it. No conclusions are given to answer the question. The delivery and sentence structure is understandable, but with some errors. Evidence of preparation and organization is lacking. The visual aid may or may not be mentioned. Questions from the audience are answered with only the most basic response.
- 1 Poor:** The student makes a presentation without stating the question or its importance. The topic is unclear and no adequate conclusions are stated. The delivery is difficult to follow. There is no indication of preparation or organization. Questions from the audience receive only the most basic, or no, response.

0 - No oral presentation is attempted.

(Excerpted from <http://ttt.ssd.k12.wa.us/dwighth/rubricclass.htm>)

Appendix 1b

Analytic Rubric Sample

Rubric for Evaluating a Lead Teacher

	Never	Seldom	Usually	Almost Always	Always
	1	2	3	4	5
Facilitated Meetings:					
The degree in which the Lead Teacher preplanned, created an agenda, stayed on task/time, encouraged participation, handled conflict/follow up.					
Peer Relationships:					
The degree in which the Lead Teacher <i>demonstrates good listening skills</i> , establishes a safe environment, motivates and guides team spirit, promotes professionalism.					
Innovating New Ideas:					
The degree the Lead Teacher develops authentic assessment, interdisciplinary units, inclusions, art and music, <i>cooperative learning</i> .					
Implementing Technology:					
The degree in which the Lead Teacher provides <i>encouragement</i> , trouble shooting, provides training.					
Problem Solving:					
The degree in which the Lead Teacher resolves conflict, builds consensus, mediates, shuffles papers.					
Participation in Leadership Activities:					
Expression of team concerns, consistent attendance (meetings, etc.)					

(Excerpted from <http://www.sarasota.k12.fl.us/~g2k/leadteac.htm>)

Appendix 1c**Generic (General) Rubric Sample****General Math Rubric**

- 4** The student fully achieves all mathematical and project goals. The presentation demonstrates clear thinking and explanation. All work is complete and correct.
- 3** The student substantially achieves the mathematical and project goals. The main thrust of the project and the mathematics behind it is understood., but there may be some minor misunderstanding of content, errors in computation, or weakness in presentation.
- 2** The student partially achieves the mathematical and project goals. A limited grasp of the main mathematical ideas or project requirements is demonstrated. Some of the work may be incomplete, misdirected, or unclear.
- 1** The student makes little progress toward accomplishing the goals of the project because of lack of understanding or lack of effort.

Rubric Scale

Rating 4

90-100

Rating 3

80-89

Rating 2

70-79

Rating 1

60-69

(Excerpted from <http://www.glade.net/~rfletcher/RubricMath.htm>)

Appendix 1d

Task-specific Rubric Sample

Poetry Writing Rubric			
	1 novice	3 proficient	5 advanced
Ideas	Idea is unclear or unfocused May include random ideas.	Focuses on a single idea. Idea may be <i>understandable</i> , but still fuzzy	Presents a fresh, original idea Focuses on an idea, feeling, or experience Uses specific, concrete images
Organization	-Sequencing is illogical, or not evident.	-Sequencing is logical The poetry form has been followed with few or no errors.	Uses a logical, effective <i>organizational strategy</i> . Poem uses form to interpret idea creatively and effectively
Word choice	General or ordinary words Attempts new words with <i>limited</i> success may include inappropriate words or limited use of vocabulary	Attempts to use descriptive words to <i>create images</i> Tries to use words for specificity Experiments with new and different words with some success	<i>Precise, original, fresh</i> words Creates vivid images
Presentation	Limited quality of appearance Assigned format not followed	Assigned format is followed Presentation is neat and legible	Presentation includes features beyond the assigned requirements <i>which enhance meaning</i> Neat and legible

Scoring

Novice 4-8 points

Proficient 9-14 points

Advanced 15-20 points

(Excerpted from <http://w3.trib.com/~johnbn/poetry/poetrub.htm>)

Appendix 2a

Written samples of study group pre-test

REASONS OF USING INTERNET

People have used some ways to communicate the others living in another countries from the past to our century. Fire, birds are the first ways of communication. Even though letters and phones are the modern ways of communication, internet ^{has} ~~been~~ the final and the most important technology for the last years. It is so because you have a chance to talk to someone from the other country of the world or learn everything about the life by using your computer.

Communication is the most important reason for using internet because you spend less time the other ways. You can send e-mail easily inspite of calling or writing a letter. "Chat" is so popular nowadays. People can meet anyone else by chatting, they can find new friends and maybe a partner in order to share their life.

Internet can be used as an entertainment with the plays. People enjoy by using their computer after a tiring and boring work hours. However informing about the events which happen all around the world is the most important aim. When you touch your computer, you can learn everything immediately.

Day to day, internet is getting more and more common way to communicate and inform about whatever you wonder. So it is very necessary for following the life easily...

INTERNET

The computer business is developing in everyday as the other things in the world. The most important development is 'internet' which has different and necessary facilities for people.

The most important thing about internet is that it supplies us to communicate with other people in the world. For example, you can have a page in internet, so you can post a mail to another e-post address you know. As the same way, you can get mail.

The next point is getting information about different subjects from sport to history; thus, you can get information about everything you wonder without looking up the different books and being tired, because the only thing you must do is using the keypads.

Entertainment is the other benefit of it. If you feel yourself bored, you can chat or play games with another person you don't know and spend your free time.

These are the benefits I know about internet, but everything is changing in everyday as I said. As a result, we will see a lot of changes and benefitions in internet.

THE MOST ESSENTIAL THING

Internet is taking a great role in our life increasingly. In my opinion it is essential for the people and especially for the new generation. Because it is easy to search the things which are needed for us by internet.

Thanks to internet we can follow the technology easily. The new ideas, new inventions and the others are likely to appear in a few minutes on the computer screen.

I think we should spend our time using to computer rather than doing other unnecessary things. Because computer and of course internet have much uses for us.

For example if we are thinking over a subject, we may have information about it via internet. Because it has many sites nearly about all the subjects. If we are willing to buy a car for example, we can choose a convenient one without going to a showroom. Of course different examples can be added.

Some people like chatting, because through it they can find new friends. We hear that the people can ~~many smn~~ thanks to chat.

Consequently the people should benefit from the internet. Because by entering the sites they can obtain new ideas about various subject and they can follow new technology.

BENEFITS OF INTERNET

Untill the last century, people have used many ways to communicate each other or find information whatever they need. Nowadays, internet using is a more effective and speed alternative for people than telephone, ancylopedia, television and etc. is. The reasons of this preference are great benefits such as getting time, communicating in a short time, doing daily things and so on...

Internet provides people more available time in their lives. While time is the most valuable thing, everybody chooses to use internet for doing more in life. For example, they can immediately communicate each other by e-mail, learn what happens in the world, find different information about what they want, purchase or sell something, do their application for jobs, etc. whenever they need. Shortly, they spend less time for all these things with internet so they have more time for their private life.

Another point of using internet is to communicate. To telephone, send a letter or telegram are out of fashion because technology runs in front of them. It is easy to use a computer instead of writing a letter or calling someone. The distance is not a matter with internet. People can chat even if they live in different countries. By using internet, world is a small planet and everybody is with everybody.

Doing daily things is the most beneficial alternative of internet. People have a chance to take an appointment, spend their money, apply for a work or something else. People don't have to go out for doing all of these.

It is clear that internet makes people live easily. Life is on the top of the fingers. As a result, people have many alternatives by using internet. Its benefits are limited with dreams and internet makes the dreams real.

Appendix 2b

Written samples of study group post-test

— ADVANTAGES OF THE INTERNET —

Internet is a vehicle which help people to do their work's easily in a short time. Thanks to Internet, people can do their works wherever they are or whenever they want.

Internet which is the most useful invention for the humanit has many advantages. First, people all over the world can communicate ^{with} each other at the same time. With the help of Internet, people can share many things with the different people who are in different areas. Second, ~~also~~ they can reach many information in one minute. For example, if you have to find ~~an information~~ about cancer, about its reasons or results, you can find it easily. Then, you can read magazines, newspaper. You can play games, you can send e-mails to your friends. In addition, your e-mails reach your friends in a short time. So, you don't have to think if your messages sent or not. Next, if you don't have time to go to the bank, you can do your work's without going tired. ~~help of Internet~~. Furthermore, you can shopping, get information about the new books, and you can learn weather conditions.

We don't end the advantages of the Internet. It has become a part of our daily lives. As we have a limited times, we ^{don't} want to spend much time on ~~the bank~~. For example, going to the bank. Instead of going to the bank, we use Internet.

Internet using is spreading in all of the world with full tilt. Nowadays, it is a great industry and getting a big part in people's life, because of providing many benefits.

Firstly, it is available to obtain any information you want in a quick and easy way. For instance: instead of spending many hours for searching books, you can get all the datum on the scene with a little effort.

Also, it ~~is impossible~~ ^{makes possible} to catch the speed of the new developments in science and other areas, because day by day new things are adding to the previous ones. ~~It is very hard~~ To learn the daily news of the world is one of its advantages.

Thirdly, to use the internet as a vehicle of communication is very common. People contact with each other by the help of e-mail despite the distance. It is taking place of the letter. In addition to that people have a chance to meet others by chatting.

To sum up, money and time has a great importance and role for this century's people. Moreover, world is changing with an incredible speed and every moment something is invented. The main aim must be to use the internet for the benefit of the human-being although its ~~some~~ ^{dis}advantages.

ADVANTAGES OF INTERNET

Nowadays internet has become one of the most important parts of people's lives. Although it is argued that it has many harmful effects on people, it has a lot of advantages for people. They can do many things while sitting in front of computers.

One of the advantages of internet is communication. People can communicate with each other even though they live in different countries, speak different languages. They can learn about people who live far away from them and can make a lot of new friends.

The second advantage of internet is making researches. When people don't have enough information about a subject, they can learn many things by making researches. Instead of searching for books in library for long hours, they can reach a lot of information in a very short time by the help of internet.

Another advantage of internet is shopping. If people don't want to spend their time by shopping, they can do this thing work in a very short time. The only thing they must do is sitting on a chair in front of computers and searching for the things they want to buy. After they choose the products they want, these products will be sent to their addresses in a very short time.

To sum up, internet has a lot of advantages for people. They can communicate with other people, make researches about a subject and can shop. Apart from these, internet has a lot of advantages for people, too. In conclusion internet is an important part of people's lives.

Internet THE IMPORTANCE OF INTERNET

Internet ~~takes place~~ ^{Plays} very important role in people's life. Today, Almost everything is done by means of internet. For example: communication, chat, playing game. Even, there are some people getting married after meeting internet.

Communication ^{was} ~~is~~ an ^{important} ~~part~~ of our life. and It ^{to each other.} makes ~~it~~ easier to communicate. We can learn everything from the internet. In schools, especially universities, teachers want students to do their homework from the internet. It has both advantages and ~~disadvantages~~. Learning much more information is an advantage ~~but~~ ^{however,} you spend less time in this way because you find ^{more quickly} ~~what you want~~ ^{rather} on the internet than an encyclopedia or a book wherever you want. On the other hand, you spend much more ^{money using the internet.}

Chatting is another ^{activity} ~~advantage~~ to be done using the internet. You can chat ^{with all} ~~people~~ in the world. Thanks to it, you can meet them and learn their culture, social life, their ~~for~~ ^{foods} and etc. ---

Playing game is an ^{enjoying} ~~activity~~ ^{for many people} ~~that~~ you could do but. It is not ~~a~~ very useful ^{because} it causes students not to do their homework or not to go to the school regularly. That is, if ~~of~~ ^{people} ~~do~~ ^{do} it ~~in~~ sometimes, in their spare times, it can be enjoyable not harmful.

To sum up, Internet ~~is an necessary~~ is needed everytime and everyplace. If people use it in right ways, it is very useful. Otherwise, it ^{can} ~~create~~ bad results. However, its importance is increasing day by day and I think it will be more important in the future that is people ^{will} ~~do~~ everything from the internet.

Appendix 2c

Written samples of study group follow-up

A NEW WORLD

Internet is one of the most important technological development in this century. It has some benefits to people.

First of all, it's a door that opens to the world. For example, you are aware of all the news that occur in your country, but don't know what happens in other countries. In this case you can learn all the news that you wonder very easily by using internet.

Secondly, internet is full of sources that will help you learn something more detailed. For instance, you must search a topic for your homework. If you look for it in internet, you can find much more information than you expected. So that, not only you will learn the topic very well but also your research will be perfect.

Thirdly, it is a vehicle for entertainment. For example, if you get bored and want to do something different, you can enter the internet and find a lot of pages in which there are jokes, photos and games. Moreover, you can communicate with all the people in the world by the help of e-mails. You can share your feelings although you're miles away from each other. Thus, you can find entertainment and communication together in internet.

As a result, internet plays a very important role in our lives. If one wants to keep up with this computer age, s/he must know this new world

DISADVANTAGES OF TELEVISION

Television, which brings the distance to the near, has become a permanent part of daily life. News, movies, competition and music programmes, soap operas, discussion programmes and documentaries are attractive for people to watch TV. However, all of the programmes don't contain useful information for life. Especially young people can be influenced from them in many bad ways because they have a tendency to keep in their mind and carry out what they've watched.

Firstly, TV is like a colorful world, so young people cannot leave their seats as if they were stuck on the seats. This situation can cause them eat unhealthy food too much and they get weights. In the course of time, each of them becomes a TV addict and they spend most of their time for watching TV without any activity. Secondly, violence that is shown on TV can easily reflect to their behaviours. They try to carry out the violence to people near them in order to show their strength. Next, young people lose their creativeness because they don't think about life very much while watching TV. They only imitate but they don't find new ideas. Finally, they don't have a social life because they prefer watching TV instead of talking with parents, going out with friends, reading books, going to theatre and so on.

Even though television is one of the important inventions, it sometimes affects people's lives badly. People begin to live like a machine because TV directs their behaviours. However, these affects should be taken under control by showing more useful programmes or being interested in the other activities such as sport, meeting with friends, etc. The next generation will need young people, so we don't give permission TV to imprison them to the past!...

BAD EFFECTS OF TELEVISION

As young people, we observe ourselves in one day, we can easily recognize that we spent an much more time in front of the TV. As a result of that it would be right to accept that TV affects us in a good way such as entertaining or getting information and so on. However what about the bad effects? Let's see them together.

First of all, it prevents us from interesting in other activities. Being a member of a group of social activities such as theatre or reading can be an example for this. It is a handicap for being aware of our capacity and capability. In other words, it isolate us from social life very easily.

Secondly, it creates an unconscious adulthood at caring of the problems around the world, because after a certain time, they are stimulated by only the entertaining, colourful side of TV. They satisfy with the things that they see on it.

Finally, perhaps the most important bad effect is its creating violence. As you know young people are affected very easily for the violence in different age. They copy everything they see or practice in real life because of seeing them as a hero/heroes.

To sum up, as you see TV has more bad effects than its good sides. What can be done to solve all these problems? Programme managers may make more qualified, interesting and helpful programmes not acquiring terror, if they don't want TV, a useful invention, to turn into a threatening and very dangerous machine.

EFFECTS OF TV ON YOUNG PEOPLE

Everyday we spend most of our time in front of television, therefore, it is an important part of our lives. Although TV is useful in some ways, here are several harmful effects of it on young people.

First, TV forces young people to use violence. The programs including violence are shown on TV everyday and when young people watch these programs they become aggressive. Moreover, when they see that the characters solve problems by using violence, they think that is a solution. Consequently, whenever they are in difficult situation they start to fight with other people instead of talking.

Second, TV isolates young people from their families. They spend most of their time in front of TV, so they can't talk to their families. When they have some problems, they don't try to find solution by talking to their families. Conversely, they become introversion and don't share their problems with their families. As a result, young people and their families find it difficult to communicate with each other.

Finally, TV forces young people to spend a lot of money. When they watch commercials on TV, they want to buy the products. They spend their money on unnecessary things, so their rooms fill with the items that they don't use. Furthermore, when they can't afford these products, they become sad.

To sum up, TV has a lot of harmful effects on young people. It forces them to use violence, isolates them from their families and forces to spend a lot of money. The government should take some precautions to prevent these events. They should control the programs and if these programs are harmful for young people they should ban them.

Appendix 3

Questionnaire

Dear Students,

Below, there exists a list of questions about the use of rubric during 2000-2001 spring term. 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,21 are open-ended questions, while the questions between 8 and 20 are likert-like scaled ones. For those, the scale is 1: agree/always, 2: not much/sometimes, 3: not agree/ never.

Thank you for your invaluable answers.

Course Teacher Ayşe Kızıldağ

1. Did you benefit from the use of rubric in your writing classes? If your answer is "yes" which part(s) of the rubric you benefited most? If your answer is "no", what is/are the reason(s)?
2. Is/Are there any particular section(s) of your class rubric which you benefited from less? If your answer is "yes", what is/are it/they? If your answer is "no", why not?
3. Does the use of rubric develop your essay-writing skills? If your answer is "yes", what is/are this/these development(s)?
4. Currently, do you have problems while writing an essay? If your answer is "yes", what is/are it/they? If your answer is "no", why not?
5. Do you have problems in writing essays while using your class rubric? If your answer is "yes", what is/are your problem(s)? If your answer is "no", why not?
6. Up to now (during 2000-2001 academic year), do you think you have improved in writing generally? If your answer is "yes", in what point(s) is/are this/these progress(es)? If your answer is "no", why not?
7. (Related to the sixth question) Is/Are this/these progress(es) related to the use of rubric? If your answer is "yes", in what point(s) is/are this/these progress(es)? If your answer is "no", why not?
8. I spent much time while writing essay with the use of rubric.
9. It was easy for me to make an outline with the use of rubric.
10. It was easy to develop the content of my essay with the use of rubric.
11. Rubric helped me to organize my essay well.
12. Rubric eased my work while using the language in essay writing.
13. Rubric helped me to develop my mechanics (i.e. punctuation, spelling) while writing essay.
14. Rubric developed my essay-writing skills at every draft while writing.
15. Rubric provided me to assess my paper easily and helped me to understand why I gave that grade to my essay.
16. Rubric enhanced my assessment of friends' essays easily.
17. Rubric provided me the understanding of the "writing process".
18. I can write different essay types (e.g. cause & effect, compare & contrast) easily without the help of an instructor.
19. Not only my essay-writing skills but also general writing skills have developed via rubric.
20. I understood rubric quite well as any work I had to perform was written clearly in it.
21. Do you have suggestions about the rubric use while writing essay? If your answer is "yes", what are they?

Appendix 4a**Structured Questionnaire of Teacher-student pre-conference**

1. Do you have problems while writing your essay?
2. Do you benefit from using rubric while writing your essay? If so, how?
3. Which part(s) of the rubric is/are most beneficial for you in this task?
4. How much time do you spend while writing your essay with the use of rubric?



Appendix 4b**Structured Questionnaire of Teacher-student post-conference**

1. Did you have problems while writing your essay?
2. Did you benefit from using rubric while writing your essay? If so, how?
3. Which part(s) of the rubric was/were most beneficial for you in this task?
4. How much time did you spend while writing your essay with the use
of rubric?



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