

DO EFFECTIVE PRACTICES FOR TEACHING WRITING CHANGE STUDENTS' RELATIONSHIP TO WRITING?

Exploratory study with students aged 10-12 years

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Abstract

The present research aims to highlight the impact of effective writing instruction on 1) the progress that students can make in their written products and 2) the relationship that students have with writing. It is not yet known what influence such instruction can have on primary school students' relationship with writing, particularly the emotional, conceptual and axiological dimensions of this relationship. Writing instruction that includes known effective practices was contrasted with a teacher's usual practices. Two classes of 10- to 12-year-old students (a total of 40 students) were given instruction aimed at supporting their production of the same kind of text, but based on either usual practices or known effective practices. The results show that writing instruction that implements effective practices leads to greater progress by students than a teacher's usual practices. In addition, students who experienced the system combining effective principles for teaching writing reported an improvement in their relationship with writing.

Keywords: writing instruction, relationship with writing, effective practices, elementary school, intervention

1. INTRODUCTION

Recent work in the educational sciences has led to reflection on teaching in terms of effective practices (Ko, Sammons & Bakkum, 2014; Scheerens, 2008). As a result, recent meta-analyses concerning writing instruction have identified effective practices to improve students' writing skills (Koster, Tribuschinina, de Jong, & van den Bergh, 2015; Van Weijen & Janssen, 2018). Rietdijk, Janssen, van Weijen, van den Bergh and Rijlaarsdam's research (2017) showed that these principles have not yet been adopted in the classroom to teach writing in elementary school. This is mainly because teachers' beliefs about writing influence their practices. They are not ready to change what they do in the classroom, despite research findings (Gaitas & Alves Martins, 2015; Theriot & Tice, 2008; Wang & Matsumura, 2019). Teachers also have difficulty implementing certain practices. For example, they have difficulty teaching students the cognitive skills and strategies necessary to plan and produce well-written texts (Graham, Capizzi, Harris, Hebert, & Murphy, 2014; Graham & Hébert, 2010).

But what about the student as a writer? Several studies have shown that people with high levels of self-efficacy for writing have more positive outcomes and produce better quality texts (Bruning, Dempsey, Kauffman, McKim, & Zumbrunn, 2013; Pajares, 2003). They are able to set more important goals, use more effective learning strategies and have lower anxiety levels when performing tasks. Nevertheless, as Villalóna, Mateos, and Cuevas (2013) said, "at the present time, however, students' conceptions of writing, that is, the different ways students conceive and approach writing, seem to be another variable which can also influence students' performance in writing-to-learn tasks" (p. 654).

Several studies have examined the link between beliefs about writing and the quality of texts produced. Some research has studied these links among undergraduate students (Campbell, Smith, & Brooker, 1998; Lavelle, Smith, & O'Ryan, 2002; White & Bruning, 2005). The results showed that students' beliefs about writing have an impact on the quality of the texts they write. Another study (Villalóna et al., 2013) looked at Spanish high school students. Their results showed that boys and girls in high school differ in the way they conceive of writing. However, to our knowledge there has been no research looking at the impact of methods of teaching writing on the evolution of students' beliefs about writing in primary schools, where basic knowledge is taught.

Thus, the objective of our research is to show whether implementation of the principles of effective writing instruction, as highlighted by the research, can contribute to changing and improving elementary school students' beliefs about writing.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 What are effective principles for teaching writing?

Nowadays, teaching about the written word is understood in a communicative perspective. It is done through genre-based pedagogy (Dolz & Gagnon, 2008; Horverak, 2016; Hyland, 2003), in which the language is worked on in different discursive and social situations. This is done to provide the foundation for coping adequately in life situations. Using the models of Flower and Hayes (1981) and Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987) as their basis, Tynjälä, Mason and Lonka (2001) said that “the essential characteristic of expertise in writing is a matter of mastering problem-solving strategies” (p. 11). In this view, writing is best learned by trial and error, which requires allowing students to review their text for revision (Colognesi & Lucchini, 2018a; Heurley, 2006) and work on several rewrites.

Genre pedagogy and rewriting are therefore the general guidelines for helping students to learn how to write. In this context, recent meta-analyses (Koster et al., 2015; van Weijen & Janssen, 2018) have highlighted the factors that determine the effectiveness of writing instruction. Four effective practices were identified in these two meta-analyses: goal setting, strategy instruction, text structure instruction, peer assistance and teacher feedback.

Setting goals is about giving students clear writing goals, and explaining to them what they need to get to. It as well means explaining the meaning of the writing task, telling them why they are writing this text and what it will be used for. Ferretti et al (2000) showed that students who had a specific writing goal and sub-objectives as the writing process progressed wrote more convincing texts. Thus, before embarking upon a written task, the objective-setting step can take two different forms. On the one hand, setting a product objective consists of determining the characteristics of the text that need to be taken into account (e.g., number of paragraphs, overall length of text, etc.; Koster et al., 2015). On the other hand, the setting of process objectives, according to Koster et al. (2015), consists of specifying the acquisition of learning or work strategies. Setting goals is also found throughout the writing process described by Graham et al. (2012). Providing students with clear and precise objectives about what they need to accomplish during their rewriting has a positive effect on the quality of writing.

The aim of strategy instruction is to highlight the effective and economical cognitive and metacognitive strategies that will enable the student to progress in the task (Tardif, 1997).

As outlined in a recent meta-analysis, “A writing strategy can be general in nature, applicable to all kinds of texts, or a genre-specific strategy, for instance, a strategy for writing an opinion essay” (van Weijen & Janssen, 2018, p. 12). Teaching of the genre-related strategies related to the type of writing to be produced improves the quality of students' writing (Graham et al., 2012). Thus, explicit teaching is an

opportunity for the teacher to make a contribution to helping the student write his or her text.

Peer assistance refers to when “students work together in pairs or small groups, and help each other to plan, draft and/or revise their texts” (van Weijen & Janssen, 2018, p. 13). This can include collaborative learning, tutoring and/or peer assessment of other people's texts. Peer assessment involves two or more students in the assessment of their respective skills, approaches, progress and/or difficulties (Gielen, Dochy, & Onghena, 2011). In our latest research we have shown two things. First, students must learn strategies to evaluate the texts of others. Otherwise, they evaluate like the teacher, and often look only at surface aspects such as grammar or spelling (Colognesi & Van Nieuwenhoven, 2017). If students learn these strategies, then when peers evaluate the writings of others in small groups, there is a double benefit. They use others' comments to improve their own text. But they also use what they have said to others and advised others to do to improve their own text (Colognesi & Deschepper, 2018).

Teacher feedback is also an effective practice, although it was not very common in the studies analyzed by Koster et al. (2015). Feedback is “information communicated to the learner that is intended to modify his or her thinking or behavior to improve learning” (Shute, 2008, p. 154). It is all the comments and opinions, oral or written, that the teacher can give to the student to improve his or her text. The goal is to reduce the gap between the current product and previously set targets (Hattie & Timperley, 2007).

In addition to these four practices, common to both of the recent meta-analyses (Koster et al., 2015; van Weijen & Janssen, 2018) mentioned previously, Koster et al. (2015) identified a fifth effective practice: text structure instruction. This type of instruction helps the student writer to “organize his ideas” and structure the text according to the format expected by the reader (Colognesi & Lucchini, 2018b). It also means teaching the specific knowledge and skills needed to produce the text. For greater effectiveness, teaching about the structure of the text can follow several steps (Colognesi & Lucchini, 2018b). First, have students compare their initial products so that they can find similarities and dissimilarities. Second, compare models to highlight the characteristics of the type of text to be produced. Allal (2018), in synthesizing a series of studies, explained that learning by observing models can significantly contribute to students' progress in writing.

2.2 What are the components involved in writing?

In parallel with these teaching principles, Lafont-Terranova, Blaser and Colin (2016) argued that thinking about writing in the school environment implies considering the scriptural competence model (Dabène, 1991). This involves the “set of knowledge, abilities and representations” of writing (Dabène, 1991, p. 14). In this model, teaching of writing tends to consider these three components.

The first component refers to knowledge of language (Dabène, 1991; Lord, 2009), which includes seven distinct types. Socio-pragmatic knowledge refer to the specificities of a communication situation, the social functions of the written word. Encyclopedic knowledge is the knowledge needed to write about a given subject. Generic knowledge is related to the writing of text genres. Textual knowledge ensures consistency and text progression. Linguistic knowledge is linked to the lexicon and morpho-syntactic rules. Spelling knowledge considers the rules for writing individual words. Semiotic knowledge concerns calligraphy, typography, organization of the "scriptural area", and the like.

The second component of scriptural competence relates to abilities, that is, to the use of knowledge in a writing task. Indeed, knowledge of language cannot exist for itself alone. It would then be isolated declarative knowledge, without use. This knowledge must "be updated in equally multiple and complex abilities" (Lafont-Terranova, 2009, p. 94). These are textual abilities and graphic skills.

The third component involves conceptions of writing, "the sum of an individual's writing experiences throughout his or her existence" (Barré-De Miniac, 2002, p. 29). This component comes from the students' observations of their difficulties and fears in producing written material. This includes the cognitive aspects that link the writer to his or her writing, but also the emotional, cultural and social aspects (Barré-De Miniac, 2008).

Usually, ways of conceiving of writing are studied by two different approaches. The first is phenomenography (Campbell et al., 1998; Lavelle et al., 2002). In this way of looking at it, conceptions of writing depend on the life stories, the experiences of each individual. The second approach is metacognition (García & Fidalgo, 2004; Graham, Schwartz, & MacArthur, 1993; Veenman, 2012). This approach focuses on people's knowledge of their writing processes, often as expressed in the verbalizations they can make of them. The approach also considers how this metacognitive knowledge will influence control of writing, that is to say, self-regulation (Muijs et al., 2014). Villalón and Mateos (2009) considered that in order to access students' conceptions of writing, two aspects must be taken into account: students' beliefs about writing and their actual practices. In this sense, we have chosen to take the model of Chartrand and Blaser (2008) as our basis. This model combines the phenomenological and metacognitive approaches. It includes five dimensions (Barré-De Miniac, 2002; Chartrand & Blaser, 2008; Colognesi & Lucchini, 2016a; Niwese & Basile, 2014): emotional, axiological, conceptual, praxeological, and metascriptural.

The emotional dimension concerns the feelings, emotions, and passions that the writer has related to writing. It depends on the psychological and social predispositions of the writer (Falardeau & Gregoire, 2006), but it is also shaped by prior experiences. It thus reflects the investment that is made in writing: the emotional interest in the written word, the time that can be devoted to it, the frequency of writing and the amount of energy that is allocated to it (Chartrand & Prince, 2009).

The conceptual dimension refers to the representations that people have about writing and learning to write. Two conceptions of writing can be a barrier to learning

(Lafont-Terranova & Colin, 2006). The first is the belief that writing is a coding of oral language (Castello & Donahue, 2012). On this belief, writing requires specialized knowledge of how the language works (Bucheton, 1997). It is as common among children as it is among adults, including teachers (Barré-De Miniac, 2002). The second is to believe that writing ability is a gift (Lafont-Terranova & Colin, 2006). This implies that writing is not a matter of learning or a particular job. In this view, you think either one can write or one cannot. To counter these two conceptions, two key aspects can be mobilized. First is the notion of literacy (Morin, Gonçalves, & Alarmargot, 2016), which shows that writing is not just about encoding or storing information. Second is placing value on writers' drafts and the revision process.

The axiological dimension includes the opinions, values and attitudes that people may have towards the written word. The social groups to which individuals belong have an influence on this dimension. These opinions and attitudes seem to be shaped by the social groups to which the individual writers belong.

The praxeological dimension includes the observable activities of the individual, including what they produce (or read), when, how, in what context and with what purpose(s). It is also the time invested in these activities. This dimension therefore refers to the subject's own activities and the aims being pursued.

The metascriptural dimension was added to the initial model, following the work of Falardeau and Grégoire (2006) and Niwese and Basile (2014). This is what writers say about their writing (and reading) practices. It is also the way they explain what they do while they write. There is therefore a close link with metacognition (Veenman, 2012): explaining writing practices, approach, choices, work status, difficulties, and so forth. Moreover, this dimension has major importance for the development of conceptions of the written word (Colognesi & Lucchini, 2016a).

2.3 *This study*

In this study, we want to highlight whether an instructional approach that includes the principles of effective writing instruction (Koster et al., 2015) allows students to improve their writing skills, as compared to more typical instructional practices. We adopted the principles set out above because they are based on recent meta-analyses on the issue of writing instruction, specifically in primary school.

Moreover, considering that writing competence is not limited to knowledge of the language and the use of this knowledge to produce written texts (Chartrand & Blaser, 2008; Dabène, 1991), we want to investigate whether the teacher's practices can also influence students' relationship with writing. Indeed, it is not yet known what influence such instruction can have on school students' relationship with writing, particularly the emotional, conceptual and axiological dimensions of this relationship. Writing instruction that includes effective practices was contrasted with a teacher's usual practices.

Our investigation focused on primary school writers, more specifically those aged 10-12. First of all, the effective principles adopted are directly linked to this age

group. Second, this is the age at which students acquire automaticity in writing (Bourdin & Fayol, 1994). Third, during this period (the end of primary school) students are on the point of experiencing a major break: the transition to secondary school, where the use of writing is called upon extensively. Fourth, we believe that changes in students' relationship with writing can be observed more easily in this age group, since students are still young.

Two classes of 10- to 12-year-old students (a total of 40 students) were given instruction aimed at supporting their production of the same kind of text; the instruction was based either on effective writing teaching practices derived from research or on a teacher's usual practices (explained further in the next section). Our hypothesis is that in the class where students receive writing instruction based on effective practices (1) they will make more progress as writers and (2) their relationship with writing will change. This change can be emotional, axiological, conceptual or even metacognitive.

3. METHOD

3.1 *Sample*

The sample consisted of 40 pupils aged 10-12 years from the same school (a public school in the French-speaking community of Belgium), located in a very low socio-economic environment.

Class 1 included 22 students (9 girls and 13 boys) with different nationalities (Belgian, Polish, Greek, Moroccan, Italian, French, Algerian); class 2 was composed of 18 students (8 girls and 10 boys), also with different nationalities (Belgian, Georgian, Moroccan, Pakistani, French, Portuguese, Italian and Georgian). To check the initial level of writing skills at the beginning, we conducted a pre-test. The results are presented below. Consent was obtained from the parents of the two classes of students in the sample.

3.2 *Procedure*

To answer our research questions, a different instructional approach was taken in each class by the same teacher. In both classes, students worked on writing for the same number of hours over three weeks (14 periods of 50 minutes each). The students had the same writing task: to write a text in the style of a "wanted notice" to help them find their childhood cuddly toy. This task was constructed and evaluated in another study (Cognesi, 2015), and then formalized in a textbook (see Colognesi, Deschepper, Barbier & Lucchini, 2017).

The same materials were used in both classes (model texts). Work on pronouns was done in both classes as well.

In class 1, the teacher used the itineraries method (Colognesi, 2015), which was derived from an analysis of existing writing instruction programmes (Colognesi &

Lucchini, 2016b). The method integrates the principles of effective writing instruction (Koster et al., 2015). The students rewrote their text several times. Between versions, activities were provided by the teacher or peer review time was provided. The teacher had completed an in-service training module on the method. First, he experienced the itineraries method as a writer. Working through it as a participant, he was able to see the different steps. Then, an analysis of the process was proposed, accompanied by theoretical contributions. Each effective practice was presented in relation to theory and linked to the itineraries method. The teacher received the protocol (instructions, materials, documents for students, etc.) several weeks before the experiment. He was able to read them and prepare questions about the different sessions. A meeting with one of the researchers made it possible to discuss the teacher's various worries (e.g., timing, instructions, how to put the students into a working group, etc.).

In class 2, the teacher kept to his usual practices. He usually allows students to rework their text several times before evaluating it. They do this independently, without any particular support. Students have several occasions (usually two), separated in time, in which they can work on their written product. Then, an evaluation grid is drawn up with the students. The teacher also rereads the texts to help students correct spelling. A text evaluation grid is created with the students. Grammar and conjugation skills are taught according to a pre-established program. There are no direct links between writing tasks and content teaching. Many skills-related exercise sessions are offered to students so that they can integrate the learning.

Since the same teacher carried out the lessons in both classes, we had to make sure that the activities in class 1 respected the "itineraries" protocol. In addition, we also had to check that his usual practices in class 2 were not influenced by class 1 principles. For these reasons, the researcher was present in both classes during the activities to observe the teacher's actions. This made it possible to validate the fidelity of the intervention. Table 1 shows the activities in the two classes.

In the end, the major difference between the two classes was the guidance offered to the students. Indeed, in the usual practice as in the first group, the activities were not linked to the writing project. This was not the case in the other group where the effective writing practices have been adopted. Each work period was directly linked to the writing project: the formulation of objectives, the teacher's instructional moments, and feedback from peers.

Table 1. Activities of class 1 and class 2

Class 1 (Itineraries method: 700 minutes)	Class 2 (Teacher's usual mode: 700 minutes)
Project planning: write a portrait of a cuddly toy (10 minutes)	
Goal setting. The teacher explains to students the specific product and learning objectives. The social meaning of the text product is highlighted. A discussion on the parameters of the communication situation takes place (who writes, for whom, for what, for what purpose, etc.)	Students reformulate the instructions. The teacher asks several students to give initial ideas orally.
Version 1 (work-related instructions and writing of the first version: 50 minutes)	
Text structure instruction / Strategy instruction. Students, in sub-groups, analyze model texts to identify similarities and differences. They identify the characteristics of the text to be produced. The activity is explicitly linked with production of the desired text. The teacher explains the useful strategies for writing this type of text. (2x50 minutes).	Students, individually, read the texts presented (which are the same as in the other class) and answer comprehension questions. Whole-class correction of the comprehension questions is done. No explicit link with current product. (2x50 minutes).
Rewriting the text (25 minutes)	
In class 1, the teacher explicitly asks students to revise their text taking into account the learning activity that has just been done.	
In class 2, this is a time for independent work, to continue writing and improving the text. The teacher does not give any other instruction.	
In both groups, the teacher answers students' specific questions.	
Peer assessment. Students, in sub-groups, review and comment on each other's texts. (2x50 minutes).	Conjugation exercises. No link with current product. (2x50 minutes)
Rewriting the text (25 minutes)	
Strategy instruction. Work on how to avoid repetition. Students must improve a given text that has many repetitions. Teaching strategies to avoid repetitions. (2x50 minutes).	Work on pronouns: classification and exercises. No explicit link with current product. (3x50 minutes)
Work on punctuation based on a text that is analyzed and corrected in groups. (50 minutes)	
Rewriting the text (25 minutes)	
In class 1, the teacher explicitly asks students to revise their text taking into account the learning activity that has just been done.	
In class 2, this is a time for independent work, to continue writing and improving the text. The teacher does not give any other instruction.	
In both groups, the teacher answers students' specific questions.	
Peer assessment. Students, in sub-groups, review and comment on each other's texts (50 minutes).	Conjugation exercises. No link with current product. (2x50 minutes)
Rewriting the text (25 minutes)	
Construction of an evaluation grid (50 minutes)	
Teacher-guided spelling review of the text. He corrected and annotated the products, using the existing code in the school (50 minutes)	
Writing of the final version (50 minutes)	

3.3 *Data collection and processing instruments*

3.3.1 *Measuring student progress*

To measure student outcomes, their first and final versions were evaluated by two independent assessors (experienced teachers). The 80 texts were evaluated with the following criteria:

- intention to communicate (max of 4 points): attention to the intention to communicate (0 to 3) and consideration of the reader (0 or 1);
- presence of relevant ideas (max of 7 points): quality of the content developed (0 to 3), the attention the text arouses in the reader (0 to 3) and ease of understanding of the whole subject (0 or 1);
- organization of the text (max of 6 points, 1 point each for presence of expected characteristics): title, three paragraphs, a reference to the author and an illustration;
- use anaphoric references (pronouns, nominal groups to avoid repetitions) (max of 3 points);
- syntactic and lexical aspects (max of 33 points): use of an adapted lexicon (0 to 3), syntactic and semantic correction of sentences (ratio of the number of correct changes to total changes of this type, max of 10 points), plural agreement (ratio of the number of correct uses to total uses, max of 10 points), verb agreement (ratio of the number of correct uses to total uses, max of 10 points);
- orthography (max of 50 points): counting the first 50 different words and assigning one point per correct spelling, with the same word spelled in the same way included only once;
- page layout (max of 7 points): handwriting (0 to 3), overall presentation of the document (0 to 3) and appropriate length (0 or 1).

The Kendall's Tau concordance coefficient, used to determine the rate of agreement between the evaluators, showed a very significant agreement between the correctors for all the items evaluated.

The pretest scores thus obtained were analyzed using *t*-tests to determine whether the two classes differed in their initial scores. The results are presented in Table 2.

Two significant differences between the two classes are to be noted: syntactic and lexical aspects were better in class 1 and page layout was better in class 2. For the other items, there is no significant difference between the two groups (intention to communicate, text organization, anaphoric references, syntax and lexicon, and spelling).

Table 2. Descriptive statistics and comparison of initial pretest scores for writing aspects per condition (class 1, itineraries method; class 2, teacher's usual instruction)

	Class 1 (n = 22)		Class 2 (n = 18)		t
	M	SD	M	SD	
Intention to communicate (/4)	2.36	.79	2.16	.92	.73
Development of ideas (/7)	3.77	1.44	4.44	1.54	-1.41
Organization of the text (/6)	1.27	1.39	.83	1.38	.99
Anaphoric references (/3)	1	1.02	1.33	.76	-1.14
Syntactic + lexical aspects (/33)	28.20	7.51	21.98	6.72	2.82*
Orthography (/50)	34.77	12.63	39.42	12.18	-1.03
Page layout (/7)	1.50	1.50	3.33	1.38	-4.45***

* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

3.3.2 Survey on relationship with writing

A written questionnaire assessing students' relationship with writing (Table 3), adapted from Barré-De Miniac (2002), was administered to the students before the first version and after the last version of their text¹. A pilot study with 16 participants had been conducted to pre-test and improve the questionnaire (Colognesi, 2015). Students were informed that the answers were intended for the researcher and not the teacher. To help keep the students' attention, the questionnaire was divided into four parts. The students responded to one part per day.

We collected 80 questionnaires, which gives 1680 responses to be processed. The data were analyzed for content (Miles & Huberman, 1994). They were grouped into emerging categories (Poisson, 1991) within the pre-existing categories: the dimensions of the conceptions of writing. Frequencies (percentages) of mentions of a category per question and per class are reported. Students' responses before and after were also compared to determine if there were any changes.

To obtain additional information, in both classes, four students had to explain orally to the researchers how they felt. They were interviewed before, during and after the writing moments. The students had to answer several questions such as: how do you feel now? what have you done so far? what do you think of your written

¹ Questionnaires are the most frequently used tool to assess individuals' relationship to writing. That is why we made this choice. Nevertheless, it should be noted that other tools—such as interviews or text production—can be used (Niwese, 2010). We have also collected these types of data, but they are not covered in this article because they have been published elsewhere (Colognesi & Lucchini, 2016).

production? A content analysis was also applied to these data, and illustrative quotes are used to support the quantitative results.

Table 3. Questionnaire to probe students' relationship with writing

Dimensions	Questions
Emotional dimension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is your first writing memory? - Tell a strong memory about writing. - If you have one, tell about a "nice" writing activity done at school. - Do you like to write? - Have you ever felt pride after producing a text? - What do you think of your texts in general? - What do you think of the last text you wrote? Explain what text it is. - How do you react when your teacher asks you to write a text? - In comparison to others, do you feel you are better or worse than them? - What efforts do you make when you write? - Do you feel like you're making an effort when you write? What type? - What are the last texts you wrote? - Do you prefer to write at home, at school or elsewhere?
Conceptual dimension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What do you think writing is? - Is writing taught? - Do you think your teachers write a lot?
Axiological dimension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is the purpose of writing? - What's the point of being able to write? - Do you think writing is very important?
Praxeological dimension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - When do you write? - Do you write at home, at school, elsewhere?

4. RESULTS

Our research question is whether effective writing instruction practices have an impact on students' progress as writers and their conceptions of writing. The students' writing scores for the two versions evaluated (initial and final versions) are first presented. Then, the results of the questionnaire analysis are offered, ordered by dimension, and illustrated by verbatim (translated) quotes from the interviews.

4.1 Student progress

Table 4 shows the results of students in both classes at time 1 (the first version) and time 2 (the final version). While the students' results were close or favored class 2 in the first version, this was no longer the case in the final version. Class 1 students improved in all areas assessed, while class 2 students improved only for development of ideas and syntactic and lexical aspects.

Table 4. Descriptive statistics and repeated measures t-tests for writing scores in class 1 (itineraries method, n = 21) and class 2 (teacher's usual instruction, n = 18)

	Class 1 (itineraries method) (n = 22)					Class 2 (teacher's usual instruction) (n = 18)				
	Time 1		Time 2		t	Time 1		Time 2		t
	M	SD	M	SD		M	SD	M	SD	
Intent to communicate (/4)	2.36	.79	3.81	.59	6.92****	2.16	.92	2.52	.61	.98
Development of ideas (/7)	3.77	1.44	6.63	.90	7.88***	4.44	1.54	5.37	1.16	2.17*
Organization of the text (/6)	1.27	1.39	4.78	1.90	6.97***	.83	1.38	.79	.31	-.35
Anaphoric references (/3)	1	1.02	2.72	.42	7.49***	1.33	.76	1.57	.61	.94
Syntactic and lexical aspects (/33)	28.20	7.51	44.68	11.06	5.78***	21.98	6.72	28.89	8.27	2.82**
Orthography (/50)	34.77	12.63	46.68	4.29	4.18***	39.42	12.18	45.26	5.70	1.89
Page layout (/7)	1.50	1.50	6.63	.66	14.67***	3.63	1.38	3.47	1.34	-.35

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Specifically, for class 1 students, the mean score for intention to communicate improved from 2.36 ($SD = .79$) at time 1 to 3.81 ($SD = .59$) at time 2, $t(21) = 6.92$, $p < .001$. Their idea development score improved from 3.77 ($SD = 1.44$) at time 1 to 6.63 ($SD = .90$) at time 2, $t(21) = 7.88$, $p < .001$. Their score for organization of the text went from 1.27 ($SD = 1.39$) at time 1 to 4.78 ($SD = 1.90$) at time 2, $t(21) = 6.97$, $p < .001$. Their use of anaphoric references went from a mean score of 1 ($SD = 1.02$) at time 1 to 2.72 ($SD = .42$) at time 2, $t(21) = 7.49$, $p < .001$. Their score for syntactic and lexical aspects improved from 28.20 ($SD = 7.51$) at time 1 to 44.68 ($SD = 11.06$) at time 2, $t(21) = 5.78$, $p < .001$. Their spelling score went from 34.77 ($SD = 12.63$) at time 1 to 46.68 ($SD = 4.29$) at time 2, $t(21) = 4.18$, $p < .001$. And their layout score grew from 1.50 ($SD = 1.50$) at time 1 to 6.63 ($SD = .66$) at time 2, $t(21) = 14.67$, $p < .001$.

These results contribute to showing that the effective practices defined by Koster and his colleagues (2015) do indeed lead to a significant improvement in written products. Indeed, the instructional method used in class 1 system integrated the different factors of effective practices.

In class 2, only two aspects improved. Their mean score for development of ideas went from 4.44 ($SD = 1.54$) at time 1 to 5.37 at time 2 ($SD = 1.16$), $t(17) = 2.17$, $p < .05$, and the score for syntactic and lexical aspects improved from 22.28 ($SD = 6.77$) at time 1 to 28.89 at time 2 ($SD = 11.06$), $t(17) = 2.82$, $p < .01$. We attribute this progress made in class 2 with regard to development of ideas and syntactic and lexical aspects to rewriting. Indeed, this result is consistent with research on rewriting. These studies have explained that if rewriting is used alone, that is, without explicit support and without a specific objective, its effects are limited. These effects tend to be focused on improving ideas and correcting minor and punctual elements such as grammar or lexicon (Fayol, 2009; Olive & Piolat, 2003; Niwese, 2010).

To conclude this part of the analysis, it should be noted, as shown in Table 5, that there are significant differences between the two groups in the post-test. They are in favour of class 1 (itineraries method). These differences are found on all items except spelling. This is not surprising since the students were able to revise their spelling through the various rewritings. They also received feedback from the teacher in each class. Indeed, he corrected and annotated the products, using the existing code in the school.

Table 5. Descriptive statistics and comparison of posttest scores for writing aspects per condition (class 1, itineraries method; class 2, teacher's usual instruction)

	Class 1 (n = 22)		Class 2 (n = 18)		t
	M	SD	M	SD	
Intention to communicate (/4)	3.81	.59	2.52	.61	-6.86***
Development of ideas (/7)	6.63	.90	5.37	1.16	-3.85***
Organization of the text (/6)	4.78	1.90	.79	.31	-7.79***
Anaphoric references (/3)	2.72	.42	1.57	.61	-7.16***
Syntactic + lexical aspects (/33)	44.68	11.06	28.89	8.27	-5.21***
Orthography (/50)	46.68	4.29	45.26	5.70	-0.88
Page layout (/7)	6.63	.66	3.47	1.34	-9.31***

*** p < .001

4.2 Students' relationship with writing

In general, as we will show later, the students' relationship with writing in class 1 (itineraries method) changed for the better. This was not the case in class 2 (teacher habits). To show this, we have chosen to present in detail the results to key questions for three dimensions: emotional, conceptual and axiological. The praxeological dimension has no influence here (activities and writing habits) since the task is imposed. The metacognitive dimension was the subject of a specific study (Colognesi & Lucchini, 2016a).

4.2.1 The emotional dimension: feelings, emotions and investment in writing

As shown in Table 6, before the experiment, students in both classes had few strong memories of writing moments, and few "fun" activities to tell about.

In both classes, it seems that previous writing experiences had not had much impact overall.

In class 1, more than half of the students said they have no strong writing memory (14/22), and the same was the case for a "nice" writing activity (12/22). The memory of a "nice" writing activity for eight of the students concerned handwriting. In addition, 6 students in class 1 said they have a strong memory, but it happened outside the school.

In class 2, half of the students said they have no strong memories. Seven students reported that their strong memories are part of a school task: inventing a story (5) or producing a comic strip (2).

Table 6. Writing memory before the experiment

	Class 1 (n = 22)	Class 2 (n = 18)	
Telling a strong memory about writing.	14	9	No memory
	6	1	Specific performance linked to a specific context outside the school context
	1	1	Inadequate response (question not understood)
	1	7	Response related to a school task
If you have one, tell about a "nice" writing activity done at school.	12	9	No activity mentioned
	8	2	School activity for the current year: handwriting
	1	5	School activity of the previous year
	1	1	Inadequate response (question not understood)
	0	1	Extracurricular activity (outside the school context)

On the second administration of the questionnaire, after the three weeks of work, the answers of the students in class 1 were different. Nineteen students (out of 22) talked about the text about their cuddly toy, written during the experiment. The following two excerpts are representative of the responses of the students in class 1.

The text about the cuddly toy, I find it super good, there is no mistake, it is clean and understandable. (Student 1, class 1, interview at the end of the intervention)

The masterpiece of the cuddly toy: I liked writing that. It was about my blanket, and I was telling my story about him and me. I thought it was very nice. Good idea from the gentleman. (Student 2, class 1, at the end of the intervention)

We could attribute the increase in strong memories related to the task to the recency effect. But in class 2, where they continued with their usual writing instruction and the same task, there was no change in students' responses.

Table 7 shows the survey results for the question, "How do you react when your teacher asks you to write a text?"

Table 7. Change from pretest to posttest for the question "How do you react when your teacher asks you to write a text?"

	Class 1 (n = 22)	Class 2 (n = 18)	
Telling a strong memory about writing.	14	9	No memory
	6	1	Specific performance linked to a specific context outside the school context
	1	1	Inadequate response (question not understood)
	1	7	Response related to a school task
If you have one, tell about a "nice" writing activity done at school.	12	9	No activity mentioned
	8	2	School activity for the current year: handwriting
	1	5	School activity of the previous year
	1	1	Inadequate response (question not understood)
	0	1	Extracurricular activity (outside the school context)

At time 2, only two students in class 1 still held to the idea of writing without motivation or by obligation. Some of the pupils (5/22) changed their response to indicate that the type of text and task would matter. This suggests that they might be differentiating between their ordinary classroom practices and what happened during their work with the itineraries method (since the writing process and task moved away from classroom habits). Eight others changed their response to enthusiasm (14/22). The students explained that they enjoyed writing the search notice for their teddy bear. They justified this by referring to aspects related to the increased expectation the perceived value of the tasks completed between rewrites. These responses is related to the expectancy-value motivation theory of Eccles and Wigfield (2002).

Changed / I changed a lot / moved a lot / we did things in group also to improve the text / I had help from my teacher. (Student 3, class 1, interview after the writing of the third version)

Usually // I don't want to get into it / there / it was funny / to talk about Charles // my blanket (silence) I'm happy with my final text // I changed a lot of things // I didn't describe enough / layout / there were mistakes and sentences badly made // too many repetitions // now it's much better. (Student 4, class 1, interview after the last version was written)

In class 2, the results for this question did not change. In this class, students did not receive any special support between rewrites, either through scaffolding or peer review.

4.2.2 *The conceptual dimension: conceptions of writing and its learning*

To discuss this dimension, we present the results related to the question, "What do you think writing is" (Table 8).

Table 8. Change from pretest to posttest for the question " What do you think writing is?"

Categories	Class 1 (n = 22)		Class 2 (n = 18)	
	Time 1	Time 2	Time 1	Time 2
Forming letters, handwriting	7	1	7	9
Composing texts, sentences, words		5		
A way to communicate	2	8	3	4
A way to learn	3	6	1	1
Something we do in school - academic knowledge	3			
A hobby		1		
I don't know	4	1	5	3
Something complicated	3			
<i>Something very useful</i>			2	1

In both classes, it is the handwriting aspect that stands out at pretest. Many students in both classes said that writing is "making beautiful letters". This refers to writing perceived as a transcription (Lafont-Terranova & Colin, 2006).

In class 1, students' opinions changed more than in class 2. At the beginning, students had different types of answers: nebulous ("I don't know"), emotional ("writing is good"), purely academic ("writing is spelling"), "it is a way to answer on math, French, etc." tests. At time 2, the answers focused more on communication: "writing is a way of expressing oneself", "it is making texts, sentences to say something and being understood", "it is a set of words to communicate", "it is a way of understanding what others have to say". Thus, in class 1, several pupils moved from a conception of the written word that is essentially a matter of graphic skills to representations that evolved towards recognition of textual skills. They integrated the pragmatic aspects related to communication ("writing is making a text to be read", "it is making sentences, correct words for someone", "it is being able to write different texts: a letter, a presentation, a text to say your opinion,...", "it is writing several times to make it great"). This was not the case in class 2, where the number of students in the "writing, writing beautiful letters" category increased at posttest (from 7 to 9 students).

4.2.3 *The axiological dimension: opinions and attitudes towards writing*

Looking at the distribution of the answers to the question, "What is the purpose of writing", presented in Table 9, we see a change from pretest to posttest in the opinions of students in class 1, compared to class 2 where the numbers did not change.

Table 9. Change from pretest to posttest for the question, "What is the purpose of writing?"

Categories	Class 1 (n = 22)		Class 2 (n = 18)	
	Time 1	Time 2	Time 1	Time 2
To communicate with others (and yourself)	4	7	4	4
To learn and understand things	3		5	5
Being able to read	1	1		
Handwriting, making beautiful letters	8	1	3	3
Usefulness in life, for the future	1	5	6	6
To complete school tasks (homework, exercises, tests, etc.)	5			
To improve one's written products		7		

In the classroom that experienced the itineraries method, several interesting elements emerged. The idea of writing to complete school tasks completely disappeared. The conception that writing is about handwriting and beautiful letters also nearly disappeared, except for one student. These two aspects gave way to other values and opinions about the usefulness of writing. More answers talked about writing as a means of communication or something useful in life. This aspect also appeared in the question, "What do you think writing is", presented above. Seven students responded at posttest by mentioning that writing is used to improve one's written products. This refers to the fact that they certainly perceived the improvements in their consecutive versions of their text. These quotes illustrate this:

We can already see that it's different. When I wrote my first text, there were no paragraphs. Now there are paragraphs. I took some words out, I added some more. Things are changing. (Student 1, class 1, after the second version)

Each time we rewrite, there are either words, sentences or ideas that are different or improved each time (Student 3, class 1, after the fourth version,)

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this study, we wanted to highlight whether an instructional approach that included the principles of effective writing instruction (Koster et al., 2015) allowed students to improve their writing skills. Moreover, considering that writing competence is not limited to knowledge of the language and the use of this knowledge to produce written texts, we wanted to investigate whether the teacher's practices can also influence students' relationship with writing. Two relevant aspects have emerged from this research.

First, an instructional approach that implements effective writing instruction practices (Koster et al., 2015) leads to more progress by students than a teacher's usual practices. Indeed, in the "itinerary" class, all assessed aspects of writing competence (Dabène, 1991) improved significantly (intention to communicate, idea development, text organization, use of anaphors, syntactic and lexical aspects, spelling and layout). In the other class, where the instruction followed the teacher's usual mode, only two aspects significantly improved (idea development, syntactic and lexical aspects). We suggest that in class 2, it was the rewriting that allowed these two significant improvements, since the work done by the teacher was not directly related to production of the desired text. Research by Olive and Piolat (2003), Mutta (2017) and Colognesi & Lucchini (2018a) has shown that rewriting on its own can support enrichment of the text by adding ideas and making surface (sentence-centered) improvements. Our result also reinforces the fact that doing activities without giving the students specific objectives, and without informing them of the links they have with the current writing project, is not very effective (Graham et al., 2012). In addition, other research has shown that each effective practice has specific effects (Colognesi & Lucchini, 2018a, 2018b; Colognesi & Van Nieuwenhove, 2017). Thus, instruction about textual structure leads to significant progress in the general organization of the text. Instruction of strategies leads to the improvement of aspects inherent to the text to be produced (in this case, avoiding repetition by using anaphors). Peer evaluation influences the uptake of all the activities presented by the teacher and leads to further progress in all the criteria.

Second, the relationship with writing (Chartrand & Blaser, 2008) of students in class 1, who experienced the instructional approach that combines effective principles for teaching writing, changed as a result of their work. More specifically, the students' responses revealed changes in the emotional, conceptual and axiological dimensions of this relationship. This was not the case in the class where the teacher followed his usual mode of instruction (class 2). In this class, it was noticeable that

students did not change their minds about writing. The majority of responses were almost identical at the pretest and posttest. Indeed, even if the students' formulations were different, the categories we identified remained unchanged.

In class 1, on the other hand, changes were noticeable. In particular, the desire of students to write (Pham, 2013) improved. More specifically, the three dimensions considered showed change. For the emotional dimension, at first, a majority of students did not have a strong memory of writing. By the end, most students responded that writing the text about their cuddly toy was a particularly significant moment for them. In addition, initially, there was a strong tendency among students not to want to start writing, or to write "because it is imposed by the teacher". The group's opinion changed here too. The students said they wrote with enthusiasm and pleasure. They reported pride and satisfaction with their text. For the conceptual dimension, students initially thought that writing was a tool for "transcribing, for handwriting" (Lafont-Terranova & Colin, 2006). The changes here are important. They said, after working in the itineraries approach, that they see writing as a means of communication. Others said that it is a learning object (writing texts, sentences, words). For the axiological dimension, writing seemed to have gained value in the eyes of the students. On the second questionnaire, we saw that they feel that we write to learn, to improve intermediate and final products, to respond to a specific communication situation. The notion of writing as a force for success in everyday life and the future also appeared.

It should be remembered that the same teacher carried out the instruction in both classes. It is therefore reasonable to attribute the changes noted to the difference in the teaching practices and not to a teacher effect. Nevertheless, it is important to remain cautious about these results. The positive responses given by the students in class 1 could have come from the novelty aspect of the instructional approach. These new practices for students (assessing each other, receiving strategy instruction, etc.) may have influenced their responses. Previous research has shown that the relationship to writing changes slowly. It moves according to events and multiple encounters with writing (Barré-De Miniac, 1996). However, our results tend to indicate that for students in class 1, their relationship with writing changed quite quickly: the learning process took place in three weeks. They also indicate that the possibility of this evolution depends on how the teaching of writing is carried out.

5.1 Limits and perspectives

This research had a pair of limitations. The first concerns the sample. It was composed of only two classes, which were compared. It seems appropriate to us, to continue the study with more students. The second limit concerns the duration of the intervention. Our conclusions are based on a three-week intervention. This represents a short period of time compared to total school time. In addition, we did not carry out a delayed post-test in this study. This would have been useful to observe whether students' relationship to writing stabilized, or was still changing in response

to subsequent school activities. This is an interesting research question. Beyond effective practices for teaching writing, does the particular type of writing task also influence students' relationship to writing? Hence, it would therefore be interesting to see how the students' relationship to writing evolves in a more longitudinal way, over a year, for example. It would also be relevant to look at the elements of the instructional approach that trigger one or more changes in the different dimensions.

Consequently, we believe, in the light of our analysis, that teaching writing with effective practices could allow improvement in knowledge and skills as well as in students' connection of writing. In addition, beyond the improvement of each individual, a corresponding shift in the collaborative climate of the class could also be obtained, moving toward a logic of learning rather than performance.

Two elements thus seem fundamental for the teaching of writing. First, it is necessary to work with teachers, starting with their initial training, on effective practices. As research has shown (Rietdijk et al., 2017; Wang & Matsumura, 2019) that they are not yet using these practices, it is important that they become able to do so, not only by understanding the theoretical aspects developed by each of the practices, but also by being equipped to do so. Second, probing students' responses to the questionnaire at the beginning of the year would allow the teacher to know his or her group. He will be able to perceive the way his students perceive writing. This, as Barré-De Miniac (2002) pointed out, "would be a precious help in giving meaning to a school writing that does not always have meaning, or not always the meaning that adults attribute to it" (p. 4).

The tools and methods developed in this study were completed and reused in a large-scale research project: ECRICOL (ANR-16-CE28-0001). It was conducted in 29 classes with 744 students (11 and 12 years old). The objective was to identify the writing skills and difficulties of these students in relation to their first language of instruction in order to develop pedagogical tools and devices adapted to their needs.

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