
THE EFFECT OF THE CoRT PROGRAM AS A NEW DEVELOPMENTAL MODEL ON IMPROVING WRITING THE DRAMATIC TEXTS AT UNIVERSITY LEVEL

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Abstract:

This paper intended to study the impact of using the Cognitive Research Trust programme of teaching writing skill in analysing the dramatic texts among a sample of students at the University of Basra - College of Education/Qurnah - Department of English. The researcher in this paper has put a hypothesis in order to achieve its aim, which is “there is no statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the control group (taught according to the traditional approach) and the experimental group (taught according to CoRT programme)”. with the aim of achieving the purpose of the current paper and confirm the hypothesis, a theoretical background about writing skill and CoRT programme must be presented. The sample of this paper consists of 30 students, they are into two groups (the control and the experimental), which are randomly selected. The researcher conducts a pre-test to make the equalization. To analyze data and get results, the researcher utilized an appropriate mathematical device. The results of this paper have validated the hypothesis of and achieve the aim of this paper, which show that “there is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the control group (taught according to the traditional approach) and the experimental group (taught according to CoRT programme)”.

Keyword

CoRT Program, Writing Skill, Dramatic Texts, Breadth (CoRT 1), and PMI “plus, minus, interesting”.

1. Introduction

Language is a crucial tool for social communication and is also used as a means of communication. As a result, Iraqi EFL students encounter a variety of writing-related challenges. These issues might be brought on by speaking in one's native language, a lack of vocabulary, inadequate reading and writing practise, anxiety brought on by the fear of committing mistakes, a lack of time, the traditional method of teaching English as well as the large classes, which creates a monotonous learning environment.

Learning is supposed to occur through the process of teaching. According to Falk (1994, 1), teaching should put more emphasis on effectively growing students' analytical and problem-solving skills than on getting them to complete the curriculum. The quality of instruction provided in the classroom has a significant impact on how well students learn (Lie, 1990: 1).

Writing has a positive effective role in both the academic and future professional lives of learners. Teaching writing involves enabling students in order to organize and improve what the students intend to write and guide the students in the process of getting it down

on papers. Ryan (2004: 1) states that modern approaches emphasize fluent thinking and fluent writing more than correctness. The emphasis is on developing idea generation skills and utilising writing as a thinking tool. Grammar is only addressed during the final editing step, after students have written and revised their papers. Students are advised to put aside any grammatical issues during these stages.

Unfortunately, many EFL teachers who teach drama at the college levels have complained that most undergraduate students lack experience in composing sentences in English, rather they think of forming sentences, translate them from mother tongue into English. "Students are interested in the world around them and the teacher who fails to make use of these realities risks students' boredom and enmity. Correctness-centered writing activities destroy students' interest" (Ruane and Lensmire, 1989: 4). The other part of the problem may be attributed to the methods and techniques used by teachers of writing and analyzing the dramatic texts. Using traditional methods and techniques in teaching writing may have an effect on the failure of improving writing.

The issue needs to be resolved for the sake of improvement, as teaching and learning English as a foreign language depend on learners' ability to write. As a result, it's important to adopt fresh approaches that will teach students how to develop their writing. The CoRT programme would thus encourage participation, mastery of the material, and information sharing among students in an effort to enhance or fill any gaps in the writing instruction for Iraqi EFL university students. This research aims to provide an answer to that. What impact does the CoRT programme have as a new developmental model for enhancing dramatic text writing skill?

The results of this paper can be valuable for both EFL and ESL learners and teachers. So, the CoRT programme makes the students and teachers have the opportunity to look differently at assessment, instruction, and curriculum. Furthermore, every indication of the relationship between students' personality traits and their self-regulation can help teachers and those who are involved in this process to devise different methods of teaching for different individuals. Based on the present paper it is hoped that teachers attempt to be more mindful of the variances among students and by the use of these individual characteristics improve their self-regulation. Thus, the teachers must take into consideration these differences and the skills of the language should be educated in various methods, students will have more opportunity to learn and comprehend the lessons being taught. Even students themselves can be aware of their personality types and their relationships with their language learning so that they can try to overcome their weaknesses.

2. Literature Review

2.1 CoRT Programme

The CoRT programme is a universal programme, which was written in 1970 by Edward de Bono in 1970. This programme is considered as one of the most well-known programmes issued by CRT "Cognitive Research Trust" of the Cambridge Government, and it is the largest programme for teaching thinking as an independent subject. Where this

programme contains thinking skills that students are trained to practice in their daily lives, this programme has achieved wide success (Freeley and Steinberg, 2000: 127).

CoRT programme is a set of thinking skills, which make the learners get rid of traditional thinking designs, by seeing things broadly and clearly, and developing a more inventive views in facing difficulties. By using this programme, students become full-fledged thinkers (De BOno, 1989: 11).

In this paper, the researcher states that CoRT programme is a complete thinking curriculum used for teaching the four skills “speaking, listening, reading and writing” for the students in all levels and link these skills with the skill of thinking.

2.2 The Aims of CoRT Programme

De Bono (2008: 12) summarizes the aims of the CoRT programme in the following four issues:

1. There is space in the curricula through which thinking can be dealt with directly and appropriately.
2. Students consider thinking a skill that can be improved with attention, learning, and practicing.
3. Students see themselves as thinkers.
4. Students acquire transportable thinking tools that work well in all situations and in all areas of the curriculum.

2.3 The Components of CoRT Programme

The researcher summarized the components of the CoRT programme in the following table, which consists of six parts, each part consists of ten lessons:

Part	Title	Objectives
CoRT (1)	Breadth	“handling ideas, taking into consideration all variables; laws, logical and subsequent results; goals, planning; the first important priorities, alternatives, and possibilities; decisions, other folk's point of view”.
CoRT (2)	Organization	“learning, analyzing, comparing, selecting, finding other ways, starting, organizing, combining, focusing, concluding”.
CoRT (3)	Interaction	“Checking the parties, the evidence and forms of evidence, the evidence values, the differences, the agreement and lack of agreement, being right or wrong, and the ultimate decision”.
CoRT (4)	Creativity	“creative yes and no, stone rolling, random inputs, opposing the idea, the main idea, the definition of the problem, removing dangers, connectivity, requirements, evaluation”
CoRT (5)	Information	“information, questions, keys to the solution, contradictions, expectation, the belief, the views and ready alternatives, emotions, values, simplification and clarification”
CoRT (6)	Action	“goal, broadening, briefing, all previous operations, the goal, the introduction, solutions, selection, the process, all previous operations”

2.2 Writing as a Four Step Process

The product-oriented model was the writing paradigm that had the most impact. Kaplan has advocated for this model for many years. This model prioritised mechanics and grammar over content and procedure. Little was done to encourage the development of the processes and strategies among students, and little was taught to them about them. Writing was expected to be learned independently by students, usually through reading and copying other people's work. The teacher was the only reader of first draughts, who primarily corrected mechanics errors and assigned grades. The importance of writing for communication and learning was underappreciated. Writing instruction today shows a significant departure from that model. Zsef (1999: 3) declares that a process- oriented approach to writing has emerged, which was proposed by Singh (1992).

The steps one must take in order to create a piece of written content are referred to as the writing process by Worthington (2002:1). Students become active knowledge producers, shapers, and organisers through the writing process. It needs to be possible to experiment without worrying about the results. This is accomplished through the use of journal entries, unstructured writing, lists, graded rough draughts, and other types of exploratory writing (Waller et al., 1996: 3).

In order to teach students how to write, one must first demonstrate to them how to develop and organise what they want to say before assisting them in putting it on paper. According to Heald Taylor (1986: 1), who state that the process writing in the following way “an approach which encourages ESL youngsters to communicate their own written messages while simultaneously developing their literacy skills in speaking and reading rather than delaying involvement in the writing process.”

The learner and their needs are put front and centre of interactive learning between teachers and students in the process approach to writing. Learning is viewed as a socially situated activity that is strengthened in contexts of meaningful and practical literacy. Learners can, in accordance with Harris et al. (1997:3):

1. collaborate in evaluating their efforts and progress.
2. take risks in their reading and writing,
3. see writing as a process- and a first draft as just that,
4. take ownership of and responsibility for their learning,
5. share and help each other, and
6. make personal choices about what they read and write,

According to Frederick (1987:2), the process approach does not disregard the final written product because it is still used to assess students' progress. The process has several distinct phases, as depicted in Figure (1):

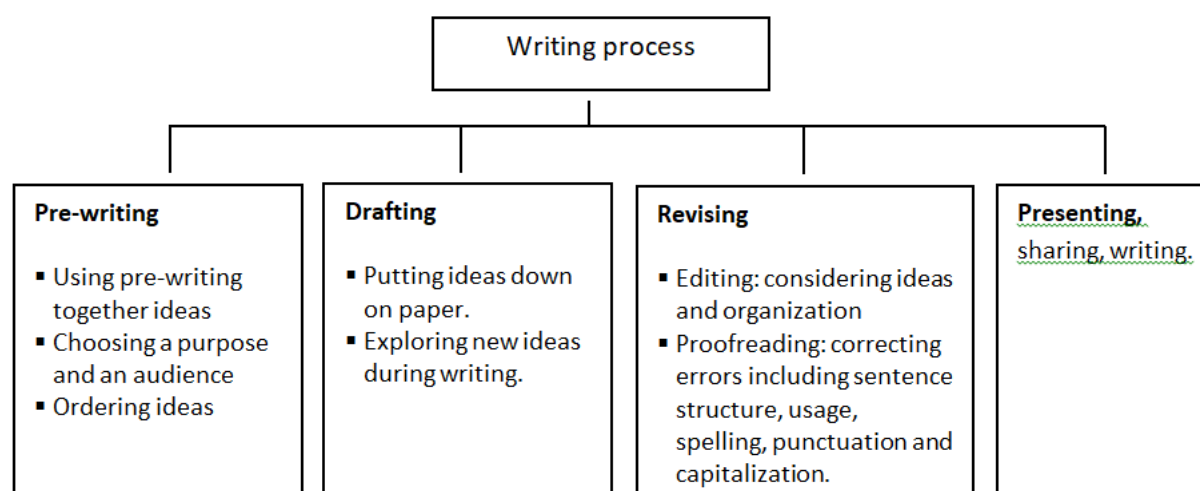


Figure (1): Displays the Phases of Writing Process (Cotton, 1988: 3).

3. Methodology

3.1 The Experimental Design

The researcher can test his hypothesis by following the steps in the experimental design to get reliable findings concerning the relation between the independent and dependent variables (Key, 1997: 1). The main goal of experimental design is to restrict factors that will unclear the true effect of independents on dependents (Cohen et al., 2000: 126). The experimental design adopted in the present research is a "quasi- experimental design: the nonrandomized control group pre-test -post-test design". According to Seliger and Shohamy (1989: 148), the situations used in quasi-experimental design are taken from the actual world and are likely more reflective of the conditions seen in educational environments. The following is a paradigm for this design:

Table (1) Shows the Design of the Experiments

Group	Pretest	Independent Variables	Posttest
Experimental	Writing and Analyzing the Dramatic Texts	CoRT	Writing and Analyzing the Dramatic Texts
Control		Traditional Method	

3.2 Sampling

The sample of this study consists of thirty college students in the fourth stage at University of Basra / College of Education-Qurnah / Department of English for the academic year 2022-2023. This sample has selected randomly, which consists of 30 students they are divided into the experimental group (contains 15 participants) and the control group (contain 15 participants) as presented in the table below:

Table (2): Distributing the Study Participants on the Exp. and Con. Groups

Groups	Teaching Method	Number of Participants	College	Department
EG	CoRT Programme	15	College of Education- Qurna	English Department
CG	Traditional Method	15	College of Education-Qurna	English Department
Total		30		

3.3 Equivalence of the Groups

Although, all the participants in “experimental and control groups” are in the fourth stage and they study at the same University; University of Basra / College of Education-Qurnah / Department of English, but the researcher has equalized the two groups have been equalized by matching them in the following variable:

3.1.1 The Equivalence Scores in the Pretest

The mean value of the participants’ marks in the pretest is found to be (66.86) for the EG, and (65.6) for the CG. The “t” value is found to be (0.707) and the level of significance is (0.05) which means that “there is no significant difference between the two groups”. As presented in table (3):

Table (3): “The Mean, Standard Deviation, and ‘t’ Value of Equalization between the Two Groups in the Pre-Test Scores”

Variable Group	No.	“X”	SD	t- Value		Degree of freedom	Level of significant
				Comp.	Tab.		
C.G	30	66.86	11.15	0.707	2.00	58	0.05
E.G	30	65.6	7.7				

3.4 Materials

The instructional material selected for this study included the passages that have not been studied by the subjects from ‘Great Gatsby’ for the fourth stage at the department of English in the first course of the academic year (2022-2023).

3.5 The Experiment Application

The researcher conducted several interviews before implementing the experiment with the instructor who would be implementing the experimental lesson series to familiarise her with the purpose of the study and the procedure to be followed when teaching the experimental group in accordance with the CoRT programme. After the subjects were pretested in writing, the instructor started teaching writing to the experimental and control

groups, following the procedures in every instructional program. Conversely, the participants of the EG were exposed to the techniques of the CoRT programme, whereas CG were exposed to the conventional techniques. It should be pointed out that the researcher attended all the lectures given to both groups to ensure that the suggested programme was being introduced in the way designed and aimed at.

While carrying out the experiment, which lasted three weeks (from the 20 of December, 2022 to 15 January, 2023). In order to strengthen the conclusions drawn from contrasting the two groups' performance on the pre- and post-tests, the current study has taken the CG into account. The participants were also made aware that they would need to learn the information being covered and that their grades would be averaged monthly in order for the experimental classes to be taken seriously. On January 17, 2023, post-tests were given to the CG and EG students at the conclusion of the academic year. The test was carried out using the same testing procedures.

3.6 Construction and Description of the Test

"Tests, like exams, invite candidates in a focused manner so that the results can be graded and in forces made from the standard of performance in the test about the general standard of performance that came to be expected from the candidate, either at the time of the test or at some later time" (Allen and Corder, 1974: 313).

The researcher in this study creates a posttest to gather information from the exp. and the con. groups. The goal of the posttest is to assess how much the CoRT programme, a new developmental model, has improved university-level dramatic text writing.

3.6.1 The Scoring Scheme

Both the pretest and posttest responses of both groups were checked. Each participant's reply in all questions was checked against every of the following variables: (appropriate words or chunks, spelling and grammar). The following scheme was adopted in scoring the subjects' responses:

1. Appropriateness:

Whether or not the subject produces (most frequently, occasionally, slightly) appropriate words or chunks that match the contexts given.

2. Grammar:

Whether the subject makes (no, occasionally, or frequently) noticeable errors of grammar; occasionally makes grammatical mistakes which do not, however, obscure meaning; or always commits grammar mistakes that make his/her writing difficult to understand or so severe that make it unintelligible.

5. Spelling:

Whether the subject's written performance is correct, makes few if any noticeable errors of spelling; occasionally, frequently makes spelling mistakes which do not, however, obscure meaning; or makes terrible mistakes that might severely affect intelligibility.

3.6.2 Validity of the Test

When creating any kind of testing, validity is the first thing to be examined (Hall, 1993: 25). If a test captures the expected outcome with accuracy, it is considered to be valid. Validity, according to Lado (1961: 30), depends on the test's linguistic content as well as the setting or methodology employed to assess it. A text that uses perfectly valid written texts but does not test the elements of the language is not valid and vice versa. In this study, the test measures the writing skill of college students.

Validity has many different types, in this paper the most important types are: face validity and content validity. Therefore, these two types are used to estimate the test of this study in order to give accurate and truthful results.

3.6.3 Reliability of the Test

Reliability refers to “the consistency with which different examiners mark the same test, or with which the same examiner marks a test on different occasions” (Hall, 1993: 24). So, the concern here is with how far the results produced can be consistent. Van Dalen (1979: 138) defined a test as trustworthy if it consistently produces the same findings when a property is measured again on the same subjects under the same circumstances.

Rea (1987), cited in Weir (1990: 33), contends that the inability of tests that evaluate language as “communication to automatically claim high standards of reliability, as discrete item tests can, should not be accepted as a defence for continuing to rely on highly reliable measures with questionable validity”. The performance of each test subject was evaluated separately by each examiner, and the three assessments were then added together and divided by three to determine the average score for each test subject.

3.6.2 The Pilot Study

After confirming the test validity, a pilot study was conducted on October 2, 2022. Twenty fourth-grade students that make up the study sample were chosen at random and administered the exam. The students came from the English Department at the University of Basra - College of Education in Qurnah. The pilot study had the following objectives:

1. Determine the difficulty level of the items.
2. See whether distractors were suitable or not .
3. Calculate the items level of discrimination.
4. Reduce the length of the test.
5. Change or remove the materials that weren't appropriate for those students.

3.7 Statistical Procedures

A paired T-test using the SPSS programme version 11 was carried out to ascertain if any difference found between the pre- and post-test responses of each group individually was significant or non-significant. Then, in order to validate the impact of applying the experiment, an unpaired T-test was also used, but this time on the post-test replies from both groups to see if the differences between these responses are significant .

In order to strengthen the validity of the experiment, an unpaired T-test was also used to the pre-test responses from both groups to see whether these two groups were equivalent or not .

Therefore, the mean scores, standard deviation of the difference in scores, paired T-test to compare pre- and post-test scores within each group independently, and unpaired T-test to compare pre- and post-test scores between the two groups dependently to determine whether the difference is significant or not were the statistical measurements used .

T-test for two dependent samples is utilized to find out the significant differences between the CoRT programme and the traditional method in the testees achievement. The following formula is used:

$$t = \frac{Md}{\sqrt{\frac{\sum X^2 d}{N(N-1)}}$$

Where:

Md = mean of the scores

Xd = deviation

N = number of pairs samples

(Guilford, 1965:

185)

4. The Results

4.1 The Presentation of Results

After administering the test which consists of four questions, testees' responses are analysed to determine whether there are statistically significant differences at $(0.05 > \alpha)$ between the students' mean scores of the two groups (experimental and control) in the pre-test of writing the Dramatic Texts for the experimental group (taught according to CoRT programme).

Consequently, the results of the testees indicate that "there are statistically significant differences at $(0.05 > \alpha)$ between the students' mean scores of the two groups" (experimental and control) in the pre-test of writing the Dramatic Texts for the experimental group (taught according to CoRT programme).

In this part of the study, we are going to devote to the statistical analysis and discussion of the data obtained to test hypothesis: "*There is no statistically significant difference between*

the mean scores of the experimental group, who are taught according to CoRT programme, and the mean scores of the control group, who are taught according to the conventional method”.

4.1.1 Comparison of the Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores of the Control Group

On the pre-test, the control group mean score was 44.1000; on the post-test, it was 48.100. The t-test formula for the two dependent samples is utilised to ascertain whether there is a statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores for the control group. Table (4) shows that there is a significant difference in the control group performance on both tests, as indicated by the computed t-value of 2.498 at the 0.05 level of significance from the t-test :

Table (4): Mean, Standard Deviation, T-Test Value of the Pre-Test and Post-Test of the Control group

Variable s Tests	No. of Students	“X” Mean	Standard Deviation	Degree Of Freedom	T-Value	
					Calculated Value	T Distribution
Pre-Test	30	44.100	14.8123	29	2.498	2.045
Post-Test		48.100	11.3756			

4.1.2 Comparison of the Pre-Test and Post Test Scores of the Experimental Group

In the pre-test, the experimental group mean score was 46.2203, and in the post-test, it was found to be 57.733. To determine whether “there is a statistically significant difference between the experimental group scores on the pre-test and post-test”, the t-test formula for two dependent samples is also used. The t-test result is found to be 9.233 at the 0.05 level of significance, indicating that the CoRT program influence is the reason behind there is a statistically significant difference between the two scores .

Table 5: “Mean, Standard Deviation, T-Test Value of the Pre-Test and Post-Test of the Experimental Group”

Variables Tests	No. of Students	“X” Mean	Standard Deviation	Degree of Freedom	T-Value	
					Calculated	Table
Pre- Test	30	46.2203	14.2203	29	9.233	2.045
Post-Test		57.7333	14.8253			

4.1.3 Comparison of the Post-Test Scores of Both Experimental and Control Groups

The t-test formula is used to determine whether there is a significant difference in the post-test scores of the two groups by comparing the mean score of the experimental group post-test, which is found to be 57.7333, with the control group's post-test mean score, which is found to be 46.100. At a significance level of 0.05 and 58 degrees of freedom, the calculated value for the t-test is found to be 2.824 . The experimental group performance is better than the control group performance because they received instruction using the CoRT programme as opposed to the traditional approach. This shows that the two groups differ significantly from one another. Because of this, using the CoRt programme to educate is more efficient than using the traditional approach. As a result, the earlier-presented null hypothesis is disproved.

Table (6): Shows the “Mean, Standard Deviation, and t-Test Value of the Post-Test Scores of the Experimental and Control Group”

Variables Groups	No. of Students	“X” Mean	Standard Deviation	Degree of Freedom	T-Value	
					Calculated	Table
Experimental	30	57.7333	14.8253	58	2.824	2
Control		48.1000	11.3756			

4.2 The Results Discussion

According to the data analysis, the experimental group mean post-test scores are (57.7333), which are higher than the control group mean post-test scores, which are (48.1000) . This shows that the students of the E.G. performed better than the C.G. students, proving that the CoRT programme is more effective at teaching writing skills to students than the conventional method of teaching. The result shows that CoRt programme has a positive effect in teaching writing skill for the following reasons:

1. “The students are more confident in their abilities because they have the support and encouragement of fellow group members”.
2. “Interaction among team members promotes their psychosocial adjustment as the individual effort of every student is encouraged and supported in order to achieve group process”.
3. “The students in CoRT programme feel important because they perform roles that are essential to the completion of the group tasks”.
4. “The students have opportunities for using a variety of instructional techniques such as whole- class brainstorming, discussion, question and answer”.

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5. "The students depend on cooperation rather than competition, explanation, rather than memorization".
 6. "The construction of groups from students of heterogeneous levels of proficiency enforces those of low levels to work hard to be equal with their mates and they get benefit from those of high levels through exchanging information".

5. Conclusion

According to the findings of this study, it can be obtained the following conclusions:

1. Through CoRT programme lecture activities like: discussions, students have more opportunities in order to utilize the English language written forms.
2. The CoRT programme promotes critical thinking among students because it allows them to freely express their thoughts and opinions.
3. The CoRT programme excites students because it gives them total freedom from teacher control and the chance to share knowledge with one another.
4. A new approach or programme such as CoRT programme can encourage students to learn, which also emphasises the value of their collaboration, affirms their independence and values their skills in accomplishing the tasks given to them. This increased their self-assurance as they carried out the tasks.
5. By establishing an efficient and suitable learning environment inside the classroom, the CoRT programme seeks to enhance student engagement with the lesson.
6. Lessons on writing should be taught using engaging and real-world content to make them more learnable and effective.

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Appendices

- 1) “What is each character like? Background? Social or Cultural class? Experiences? Thoughts? Any prejudices or biases? Emotions? Psychology? What supporting evidence can you find **in the text** that supports your opinion or your answer to each question”?
- 2) “What does the character **look like**? Is there any specific evidence in the text that helps establish the character's appearance and physical behavior? If not, why do you imagine the character in the way that you do? What sort of clothes does the character wear? Explain why you chose that particular sort of attire, including even things like color and style. Remember that plays from the historical past can always be staged in "modern" ways, with modern or contemporary settings and costuming. Why might a director choose to use a setting and a "look" that is different from that of the original play? How do different sorts of costumes (and costuming choices) affect the ways in which audiences "see" and react to the play”?
- 3) “What sort of **gestures** do you imagine that the character uses? Gestures -- and even physical postures and movements -- are often just as revealing of character as words (dialogue) are, and they often signal to the audience how the character's words are to be understood. Sometimes gestures are suggested in the stage directions, but most often they are not. So how does an actor (or a director) decide what gestures to use”?
- 4) “Is the character **sympathetic**? **Unsympathetic**? Some combination of the two? Please explain your answer. Does the character see herself or himself the way that other characters do? If not, why not”?