



## **Brainstorming to Develop EFL Writing Skills: Bangladeshi Secondary Level Students' Perceptions**

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### **Abstract**

Writing is a fundamental skill that is taught in schools and the idea of brainstorming is intertwined with writing. The study aims at investigating the perceptions of secondary level students of Bangladesh on brainstorming to develop their writing skills in EFL classroom. This study employed a mixed-method approach to gather data from the students, utilizing both qualitative and quantitative methods. To ensure comprehensive data collection, a questionnaire was utilized, comprising a combination of open-ended and close-ended items. This study reveals the positive perceptions of students. The findings highlight how brainstorming contributed to developing various aspects of writing. Educators can leverage these findings to implement brainstorming in their EFL writing class.

**Keywords:** Brainstorming, Writing, EFL, Higher Secondary Schools, Bangladesh

### **Introduction**

Brainstorming plays a significant role in teaching English as a foreign language (Khan, 2013). It is highly regarded as an effective technique for generating new ideas (Isaksen & Gaulin, 2005; Putman & Paulus, 2009; Al-Samarraie & Hurmuzan, 2018). It is a crucial element that has a significant impact on writing performance (Rao, 2007). Writing has always been regarded as one of the most crucial abilities in the process of learning a second or foreign language as it serves as a tool for learning, exploration, and mastery of language abilities (Astuti et al., 2020). This writing skill needs to be built continuously to broaden a student's language competence. It is a very important productive skill (Golkova & Hubackova, 2014) and its main aim is to express individual's ideas or thoughts without

ambiguity (Gunadevi & Narayana, 2017).

The process approach is one of the techniques utilized by English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instructors when instructing writing in the classroom. The process approach highlights the significance of a cyclical sequence of pre-writing, drafting, reviewing, and rewriting (Rusinovci, 2015). In EFL classroom writing has always been regarded as an essential skill. It develops one's thinking and compels oneself to concentrate and creates students' ideas.

A kind of strategy named brainstorming is used by EFL teachers to develop the writing skills of their students (Virdyna, 2016; Sa'ban & Hasim, 2019). The main focus of brainstorming is to generate ideas and thoughts (Gogus, 2012). Alex F. Osborn first proposed the term "brainstorming" in 1953 in his book *Applied Imagination: Principles and Procedures of Creative Thinking* and the term "brainstorming" has become widely known since then (Besant, 2016). The utilization of brainstorming as a pre-writing technique greatly enhances the writing proficiency of EFL students and is widely regarded as a beneficial tactic by the majority of learners. The utilization of this instructional tool has a beneficial impact on writing proficiency and fosters favorable attitudes among students. EFL teachers as well as students are becoming more and more concerned with the topic of teaching writing in EFL by beginning with brainstorming. Many EFL learners find writing difficult due to the fact of rearranging their ideas and thoughts effectively.

Therefore, the researchers aim at investigating the perceptions of secondary-level students towards the use of brainstorming to improve their writing in English in the context of Bangladesh. The research questions are:

RQ 1: Does the use of brainstorming in writing processes help English learners improve their writing skills?

RQ 2: What are students' perceptions towards the use of brainstorming to improve their writing in English?

### **Literature Review**

Writing is a very essential skill to be controlled in learning English in an EFL classroom. Writing is not only a means of communication where different types of students can share their thoughts but also it is a pre request to control other language skills. It is the best way of investing ideas and students thought how to express themselves organizing them into paragraphs so that it will be clear to a reader. In recent years most researchers and teachers have been paying attention to the development in writing skills.

According to Handayani and Mantra (2022), writing is a person's ability to express ideas or images in the human mind in the form of written works that can be read, understood and understood by others. This study used a classroom action research design conducted in two cycles of learning activities to develop student's writing skills through a

brainstorming strategy. This study was conducted in an EFL classroom. The results of this study showed that the student's writing skills developed significantly in the first and second learning cycles compared to the pretest result.

ALRababah and Rababah (2019) conducted a study that looked at how Language Center, University of Jordan Arabic language lecturers felt about using brainstorming in their lessons. In order to include ten lecturers in the study, convenient sampling was used. The study used a qualitative design with semi-structured interviews and observations as a data collection method to get a thorough knowledge of this problem. The results showed that ASOL lecturers generally had positive attitudes and used the brainstorming technique in their training. One of the study's main recommendations is that more investigation be done into the causes of some instructors' decisions to forego using the brainstorming technique in their lessons.

Abedianpour and Omidvari (2018) conducted a study that aimed to investigate the effect of utilizing brainstorming as a pre-writing approach on the writing proficiency of advanced EFL students. Additionally, it looks into the participants' perspectives regarding the effectiveness of brainstorming as a tool for improving writing skills. Random assignment was used to place the participants in the experimental (No=30) and control (No=30) groups. The result of this study highlights the efficacy of utilizing brainstorming as a pre-writing technique to enhance the writing skills of EFL students. Malkawi and Smadi (2018) conducted a study that is to determine the impact of utilizing the brainstorming approach in English grammar instruction and to raise the proficiency level of sixth-grade pupils in grammar at Jordanian public schools. Every student in the sixth grade, regardless of gender, made up the study population. The study's sample was selected using a random stratified method, separated into two groups and represented in four schools: two for males and two for females (Control and experimental). The findings demonstrated that, at the level of ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ), there were significant variations in the experimental group performed better on the English grammar achievement test. The outcomes additionally demonstrated notable disparities between the sexes on the accomplishment test, with the females performing better. Among the most one of the main recommendations was to contact persons who deal with school guidance and educational administrators must prioritize addressing pupils' deficiencies in English grammar by emphasizing the application of contemporary teaching techniques, such as the brainstorming method. This study addresses an important topic for people who are interested in education, particularly in the area of the study clarifies the process of brainstorming and how to use it when teaching English, the gap left by conventional methods in English grammar instruction in order to get measurable results that accurately depict students' proficiency in English grammar and the realities of pedagogy and education.

Amoush (2015) conducted a study that was to determine how using a

brainstorming method could help English major students at Jordan's Balqa Applied University write better. Eighty male and female university students made up the study's sample, which was split into two groups: the experimental group, which received traditional instruction, and the control group, which received brainstorming strategy-based instruction. Essay writing served as the data collection tool. The t-test was used to assess the data. The results of the analysis demonstrated that the experimental group's scores were significantly higher than those of the control group, demonstrating the beneficial effects of using brainstorming techniques to enhance writing performance among English majors at Jordan's Balqa Applied University.

The effects of using brainstorming and its subcategories (listing, question and answer, and outlining) as a pre-writing strategy were investigated by Hashempour, Rostampour, and Behjat (2015). Sixty advanced Iranian English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, both male and female, participated in the study. According to the study's findings, there was no statistically significant difference in how men and women used brainstorming and its three subcategories.

Farangi (2014) conducted a study to examine the impact of two different brainstorming techniques on the writing performance of English as a foreign language (EFL) learners. In order to achieve this objective, a total of 60 Iranian English as a Foreign Language (EFL) intermediate learners were selected to take part in this research at a language institute located in Torbat-heydariyeh, Khorasan, Iran. The participants' performance on an essay writing task was assessed as both a pretest and posttest in both the experimental and control groups. The study found that teaching brainstorming tactics had a beneficial impact on the writing successes of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. The second experimental group performed better than the first experimental group, and the first experimental group performed better than the control group in the post-test.

Maghsoudi and Haririan (2013) examined the impact of the brainstorming technique on the writing performance of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. For this purpose, a total of eighty-four Iranian English as a Foreign Language (EFL) intermediate learners were selected to participate in this study. The findings of this study demonstrated that teaching the technique of brainstorming had a beneficial impact on the writing accomplishments of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learner. Additionally, it enhanced their level of engagement, potentially leading to a greater sense of accountability for their own educational progress and a higher likelihood of achieving improved learning outcomes.

Few studies were conducted on the students' perceptions of using brainstorming for writing (Rakasiwi & Listyani, 2020; Shirvani & Porkar, 2021), but in the context of Bangladesh the students' perceptions of using this strategy has not been investigated, though it is known as a useful strategy.

## **Methodology Research Design**

The primary aim of this paper is to explore the perception of secondary level students of Bangladesh on brainstorming process in improving writing skills. To achieve this objective a mixed method approach was employed incorporating both qualitative and quantitative approaches used through open-ended and close-ended questionnaire items.

Utilizing a mixed methods approach offers numerous advantages and builds up the study's overall quality. By integrating qualitative and quantitative methods researchers can obtain a comprehensive perspective on the research topic. The inclusion of qualitative methods provides in depth insights, capturing the richness and complexity of the phenomenon under investigation while quantitative methods offer statistical analysis and numerical data that can support generalizations and identify patterns. This combination allows for triangulation, validating and strengthening the findings by comparing different sources of evidence. The flexibility of mixed method research allows for adaptability to the research questions, incorporating unexpected findings and emerging themes. Overall, the utilization of mixed methods in a research paper ensures a comprehensive, robust and impactful investigation contributing to a deeper understanding of the research problem and facilitating practical applications.

## **Sample of the Study**

The sample of the study consists of one hundreds high school students (50 male, 50 female) who were students of EFL classroom. It is worth noting that these individuals began their academic journey at a very early age in their life. It is also important to note that these students were taught how to develop writing skills.

## **Instrument**

For this research, the researchers chose a questionnaire survey to collect data. Although survey data can be collected by means of structured interviews, the main data collection method in surveys is the use of questionnaires. The popularity of questionnaires is due to the fact that they are relatively easy to construct, extremely versatile and uniquely capable of gathering a large amount of information quickly in a form that is readily processible.

## **Research Site**

The researchers carried out this research in a high school in Bangladesh and

students take their secondary level education there. This school aims to provide quality education which generates students to progress in their life.

### **Data Collection Procedure**

English has a paramount importance, and it mainly serves as a global language facilitating communication, international relations and access to a vast range of educational, professional and cultural opportunities. English writing is crucial as it develops the effective communication allowing students to express their inner thoughts, ideas with strong clarity and precision. This research study involved 100 high school students who were enrolled for EFL classroom where English was taught as a foreign language.

The researchers supported the students while they were answering the questionnaires. Some students felt uneasy, but among them some students seemed motivated, and they asked many types of questions to clarify their confusion.

### **Data Analysis Techniques**

Data Collection instrument employed in this study was a comprehensive questionnaire comprising 21 Likert-scale items and two open ended questions especially designed to investigate student's perceptions towards the use of brainstorming process to improve their writing skills. The analysis of the Likert- scale questions was facilitated through the use of statistical tools, graph chart while the open-ended responses thematically analyzed to derive meaningful insights.

### **Results and Discussion**

The data collection for this study was conducted through a meticulously designed questionnaire incorporating a combination of 21 close-ended and two open-ended items. Specifically, within this questionnaire, five questions (Questionnaire Question No 10,11,15,16 and 20) were crafted with the purpose of investigating the answers to Research Question 1.

The results of Research Question 1 (Does the use of brainstorming in writing processes help English learners improve their writing skills?) are given below using statistical graphs in Figure - 1.

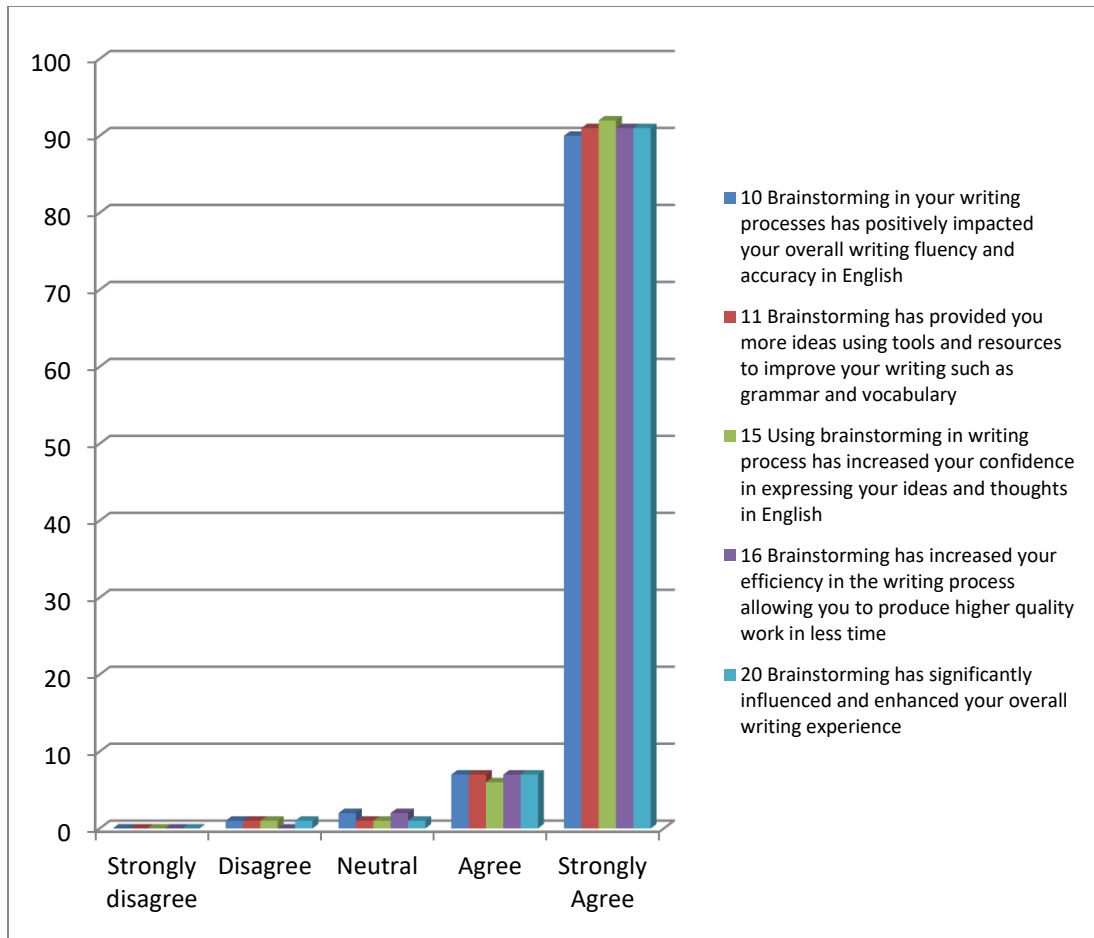


Figure 1: Influence of brainstorming on enhancing writing skills

To address the research question 1 and fulfill the objective "To determine the benefits of brainstorming in improving the writing abilities of English language learners" the graph chart clearly shows that a resounding emerges from the student community with an overwhelming majority of 90% of students firmly believe that using brainstorming into their writing processes has exerted a positive influence on their overall fluency and precision in the English language. Using brainstorming techniques students come up with more unique ideas into their mind. It is heartening to observe that a remarkable 91% of students express their appreciation for brainstorming's pivotal role in enhancing specific facets of writing such as grammar and vocabulary. Additionally, an impressive 92% of students assert that incorporating brainstorming into their writing routines has instilled newfound confidence in articulating their ideas and thoughts in English. Moreover, an equally notable 91% of students report that brainstorming has significantly bolstered their

writing efficiency, enabling them to produce higher quality work in remarkably reduced timeframes. It is gratifying to note that a considerable 91% of students share their positive experience to the profound impact of brainstorming on their overall writing journey. In their questionnaire responses students expressed their enthusiasm improving their writing skills while acknowledging the occasional challenges they face in generating ideas and organizing English sentences. Nevertheless, they firmly believe that brainstorming has made writing more accessible, particularly for individuals who may have encountered difficulties with traditional writing methods. When applied deliberately, brainstorming is an excellent method for coming up with ideas and addressing problems. Most of the students believe that through brainstorming process they develop their writing skills.

Below are the findings from Questionnaire Questions 2, 8,12, 13 and 19 which were analyzed which answer Research Question 2 (What are the students' perceptions towards the use of brainstorming to improve their writing in English?) The results are presented through statistical graphs in Figure 2:

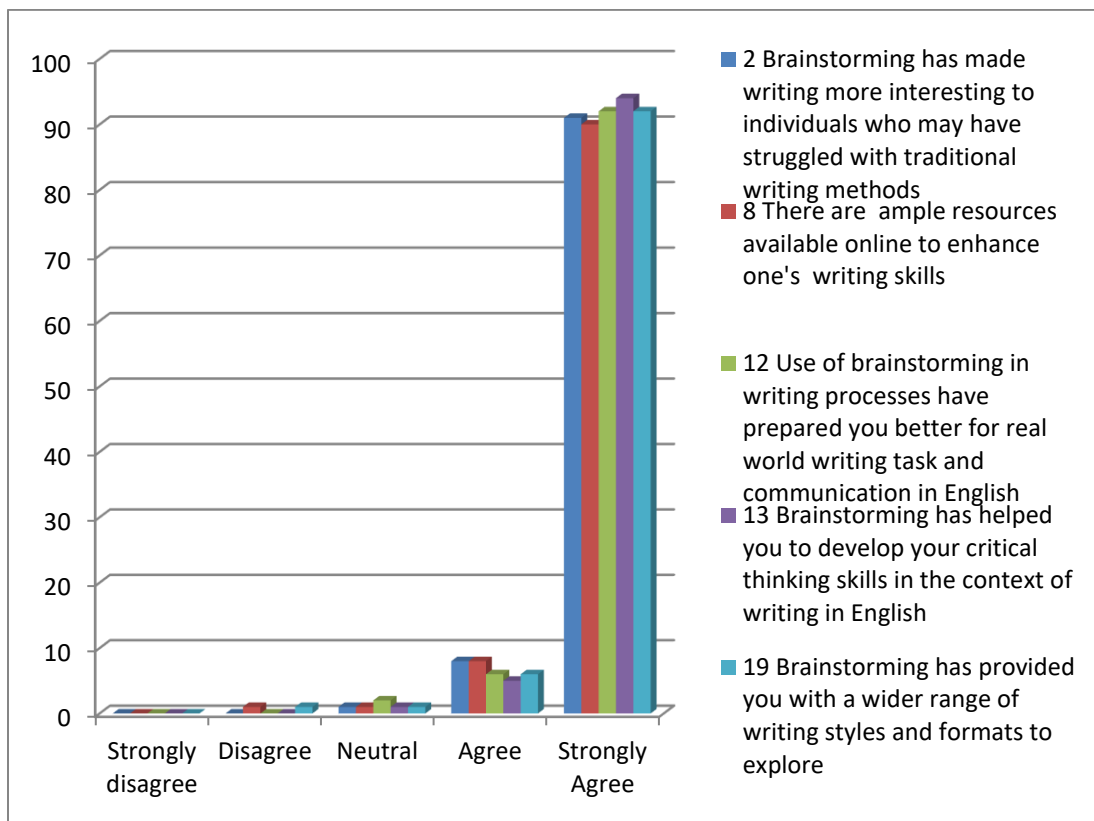


Figure 2: Brainstorming to improve writing in English



To add Research Question 2 and fulfill the objective of investigating students' perceptions towards the use of brainstorming to enhance their writing in English, the graph chart presents highly noteworthy findings. It is particularly remarkable that an impressive 91% of students acknowledged that brainstorming has significantly improved accessibility to writing for individuals who may have faced challenges with traditional writing methods. Moreover 90% of students expressed their belief in the abundance of creative thinking while writing can effectively enhance one's writing skill. Furthermore, an overwhelming 92% of students recognized that using brainstorming process in to the writing process has better prepared them for real world writing task and has notably enhanced their communication skills in English. Additionally, an impressive 94% of students revealed that brainstorming has played a crucial role in developing their critical thinking skills within the context of writing in English. Lastly 92% of students highlighted that brainstorming had provided them with a wider range of writing styles and formats to explore, contributing to their growth as writers.

Students enthusiastically share their experiences, stating that the use of brainstorming has significantly enhanced their ability to incorporate captivating different kinds of brainstorming techniques such as brain writing, rapid ideation, figure storming step ladder technique, mind mapping into their writing processes. They expressed how brainstorming has streamlined the writing process, making it more efficient and time saving. Students also revealed that brainstorming has ignited their motivation to further development into their English writing skills, recognizing the invaluable role it plays in their future growth and learning journey.

In this study, the researchers collected open- ended questionnaire responses from 10 students who already participated in completing close-ended question items for this study. Based on the responses of students' open-ended question- 1 (Does the use of brainstorming in writing processes help English learners improve their writing skills?) showed that:

Five students acknowledged that brainstorming could assist in developing writing skills by using different kinds of brainstorming that can help them catch main findings of their writing and improve the overall quality of their writing. Out of 10 students, 3 students expressed that brainstorming enables a variety of useful insights, many of which are diverse.

- It aids in preventing prejudices against any one point of view.
- It frequently produces more thoughts in a brief amount of time.
- It gives people the chance to investigate one another's concepts.
- It creates a sense of buy-in and strengthens bonds amongst people.

Two students noted that it increases the breadth of concepts examined, allowing them to frequently identify superior solutions to problems they face. Additionally, it may aid in garnering the support of team members for the chosen course of action. One of the

students said members working together to generate ideas can undoubtedly create a synergy that brings everyone together. When executed effectively, group brainstorming can provide ideas and transform businesses more quickly than the sum of the individual contributions. In other instances, not as much. The rest of the students also recognized the role of brainstorming in improving writing skills.

Based on the response of a student's open -ended question 2 (what are your perceptions as a student towards the use of brainstorming to improve your writing in English?) showed that:

Four students emphasized that brainstorming offers a brief and simple classroom exercise. In the classroom, brainstorming sessions can be employed with success. For the best results, they do need substantial preparatory time, though. Two students highlighted the fact that it produces a task that is focused on the pupil. Students lead the group in which they create their own ideas, establish evaluation standards, and manage group dynamics. Additionally, three students praised that brainstorming enhances learning through problem-solving. During a brainstorming session, students might enhance or acquire higher order thinking skills while solving problems. Four students recognized that they could develop a stronger sense of teamwork by participating in brainstorming sessions. Team brainstorming sessions help to create a feeling of cohesion. Brainstorms would not happen without others. One student expressed an overwhelmingly positive perception on brainstorming's role in improving writing skills by saying "As a student my perception of brainstorming in improving writing skills is overwhelmingly positive. Lastly one student mentioned that during a brainstorming session, the students can draw from their prior knowledge and make connections between the material being covered and their prior knowledge. Additionally, it teaches children to respect their fellow students by listening to and considering the opinions of others.

### **Conclusion**

The study aimed to investigate secondary level students' perceptions towards developing writing skills through brainstorming process. This study finds that brainstorming has brought numerous benefits to the world of writing and students hold positive perceptions regarding the integration of brainstorming to enhance their English writing skills. It has significantly improved efficiency by offering various types of brainstorming techniques allowing writers for their smooth work while writing. It allows learners to broaden their critical thinking and share ideas with peers. The task enables students to investigate and develop their capacity for lateral and critical thought. Brainstorming helps the learners in the learning process when students participate actively. It broadens the range of concepts investigated which implies that you can frequently identify superior answers to the issue you encounter.

It can be stated that brainstorming is a helpful process in writing skills. English learners who want to improve their writing skills can benefit from using brainstorming process. Finally, the results of the research highlighted positive effects of brainstorming. Overall, it is apparent that brainstorming will continue to play a significant role in the future of writing.

While the study on the impacts of brainstorming on writing in Bangladesh using a mixed method approach provides valuable insights, it is important to acknowledge its limitations. Firstly, the research had a relatively small sample size which may restrict the extent to which was conducted within a limited time frame which could have affected the depth and comprehensiveness of the research. Brainstorming can only produce a finite number of ideas. Furthermore, with so few concepts, it is impossible to address all the dangers, adverse effects, and repercussions. Another limitation stems from the choice of instruments used to gather data primarily rely on questionnaires and documents. Employing alternative methods like direct observation or interviews might have yielded different perspectives and enriched the findings. Furthermore, the study was conducted exclusively in one high school in Bangladesh. Conducting research in multiple high schools across different districts could have provided a more diverse and comprehensive understanding of the impacts of brainstorming on writing in the country.

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**Appendix-A**  
**Students' Close Ended Questionnaire**

o	Question	Question Total data in percentage				
		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
	You find it difficult to generate new ideas					
	Brainstorming has made writing more interesting to individuals who may have struggled with traditional writing methods	0	0	1	8	91
	Generate new ideas through brainstorming is enjoyable					
	Writing activities through brainstorm helps to improve your writing ability					
	Your teacher thought you techniques to develop your writing through brainstorming					
	Writing tools such as grammarly, quillbot helps to improve your writing skills					
	You feel stressed when you cannot generate new ideas when writing					
	There are ample resources available online to enhance one's writing skills	0	1	1	8	90
	The use of brainstorming has helped you to generate unique ideas and effective feedback on your writing and enabling you to make improvements					
0	Brainstorming in your writing processes has positively impacted your overall writing fluency and accuracy in English	0	1	2	7	90

<b>1</b>	Brainstorming has provided you more ideas using tools and resources to improve your writing such as grammar and vocabulary	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>91</b>
<b>2</b>	Use of brainstorming in writing processes have prepared you better for real world writing task and communication in English	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>92</b>
<b>3</b>	Brainstorming has helped you to develop your critical thinking skills in the context of writing in English	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>94</b>
<b>4</b>	Using brainstorming process has improved your ability to collaborate and receive peer feedback on your writing					
<b>5</b>	Using brainstorming in writing process has increased your confidence in expressing your ideas and thoughts in English	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>92</b>
<b>6</b>	Brainstorming has increased your efficiency in the writing process allowing you to produce higher quality work in less time	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>91</b>
<b>7</b>	Use of brainstorming process has improved your ability quickly and encourages creative thought					
<b>8</b>	Brainstorming has made the writing process more efficient and strengthen problem based learning					
<b>9</b>	Brainstorming has provided you with a wider range of writing styles and formats to explore	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>92</b>
<b>0</b>	Brainstorming has significantly influenced and enhanced your overall writing experience	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>91</b>
	You are motivated to learn					

1	English writing through brainstorming in your future					
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**Appendix-B**  
**Students' Open Ended Questionnaire:**

1. Does the use of brainstorming in writing processes help English learners improve their writing skills?
2. What are students' perceptions towards the use of brainstorming to improve their writing in English?