



## **Depicting and Outlining as Pre-writing Strategies: Experimental Results and Learners' Opinions**

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Pre-writing stage has been considered very significant as it enhances writing performance in that learners can have discussions with the teacher and/or their peers. They can also outline and organize their ideas individually to prepare themselves for writing. This study investigated the effects of using pictures and interactions in the pre-writing stage. A cross-intervention research design was implemented on two experimental groups exposed to either strategy. The data were collected from 8 tests on writing performance, 21 questionnaires and 6 case-study interviews. The findings showed that there was no big difference in the development and organization of ideas between the two groups' writing performances. In fact, the participants' writing performance depended on the assigned topics and required subskills. In detail, depicting was found to assist generating ideas, but outlining was found useful in helping organizing ideas. Regarding the participants' preferences, nearly half of the participants preferred outlining and slightly over one third preferred depicting. A small number liked both strategies equally. An implication from this study is that the choice of pre-writing strategy should depend on the target skill: form (organization) or fluency (idea generation).

Keywords: writing performance, pre-writing strategy, pictorial representation, outlining, learning, learner

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **Background of the Study**

Vietnamese novice EFL learners have difficulties in brainstorming for topic-related ideas and in organizing ideas when they write in English. They also gain less interest and motivation in writing in English than in other language skills, namely listening, speaking and reading. This has subsequently resulted in learners' poor writing performance. Meanwhile, the importance of pre-writing strategies in improving writing performance has been emphasized by a considerable number of researchers, teachers and educators (Graham & Perin, 2007; Holmes, 2003; Shin, 2008 & Zheng, 2012). For

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instance, Shin (2008) and Zheng (2012) confirm that the more time for the pre-writing stage is invested, the better the quality of the writing performance is. Up to the present, a predominant and powerful prewriting strategy widely used in the prewriting stage has been outlining (Thomas, 2004). However, outlining is not a panacea (Sasaki, 2004). Therefore, it cannot work well for all teaching and learning contexts including learning to write descriptive writings. As for the development, more alternatives for prewriting strategies should be developed.

In the meantime, the use of pictorial presentation has proved its effectiveness in several fields. In the field of *EFL learning and teaching*, Pearce (1987) explored that drawing functions as transition to writing and a way of children's communication. In addition, young learners could improve their writings and enhance their motivation in writing thanks to the use of pictorial presentation (Samuels, 2001). Additionally, drawing may help develop creative ideas. A large number of viewpoints confirm the effectiveness of pictorial presentation as it is a need to be visualized since human beings think linguistically and visually. Also, the use of images could help readers make sense of the target language items in a clear and emotional way. In the field of *Literature, art, fashion designing*, pictorial presentation clearly enhanced the quality of performance (Gorman & Eastman, 2010 & Tran Thi Ly, 2007).

However, the conducted studies merely examine the effects of pictorial presentation on young writers and solely in certain fields. No research investigating its effects on EFL adult novice writers in descriptive writing, especially in a context like Vietnam, has been found. In the researcher's beliefs, the use of pictorial presentation can function as a prewriting strategy to help these EFL novices with descriptive writings. Before making use of pictorial presentation as an alternative for prewriting strategies in this oriented teaching and learning context, it is essential to scientifically test its effectiveness in that context. This is the main purpose of the current study.

In this current study, the use of pictorial presentation prompted a different variation, labeled *depicting*. *Depicting* is defined as a pre-writing strategy in which ideas are presented through sketching, depicting or drawing with or without verbal words. Basic lines and basic shapes are examples of the tools student could use while depicting. The student's final product is a depictive presentation that serves as a container of ideas, and comprehensiveness of the depictive presentation to the outsiders is not required.

### **The Aims of the Study**

This study is a comparative investigation into effects of depicting and outlining prewriting strategies on EFL novice adult learners in terms of writing performance and preference. For the first practical purpose, three components were examined: the number of ideas generated the content and the organization of ideas. For the second purpose, learners' preference towards and their viewpoints on the effects of these strategies with regards to the investigated aspects on writing performance were explored.

The current study takes its crucial roles in reinforcing strengths as well as weaknesses of the use of pictorial presentation in general, of the depicting strategy in specific and of outlining. It also helps deepen the features as well as potential uses of these strategies.

Positive aspects of depicting found over outlining brought about a new alternative for prewriting strategies to help EFL learners with descriptive writings. Otherwise, results confirmed the predominant use of outlining. Expectedly, this study would also shed light on future research of interests related to this study.

### **REVIEW OF PREVIOUS STUDIES**

There were a number of studies discovering the importance of writing strategies. The relevant references for this study were the ones by Ansarimoghaddam, Hoon and Yong (2017), Mackenzie (2011), Schweiker-Marra and Marra (2000) and Shi (1998) as they were conducted in contexts where English was used as an additional language.

Ansarimoghaddam, Hoon and Yong (2017) conducted a qualitative case study comparing learner-learner interaction on wiki and face-to-face collaborative writing in completing argumentative essays. 30 students who used English as an additional language were involved in the study. The students were divided into two groups for different treatments. One result was that Wiki was considered to be a more effective platform for drafting and revising, while planning was done more easily through face-to-face interaction. The study implies that social-constructivist approach can be used in the writing classroom.

Mackenzie (2011) carried out a study making drawing central to young learners' writing program. 10 writing teachers and first-year children participated in the study. The results showed that when teachers motivated children to incorporate drawing into their writing, children could create texts which were more complex than those they created with words alone.

Schweiker-Marra and Marra (2000) investigated the effects of pre-writing activities on writing performance and anxiety of students at risk. Fifth-grade students were involving in a writing program taking advantage of pre-writing strategies. Holistic scores on writing were applied to compare the participants' writing performance before and after the study. The experimental group improved from the beginning to the end of the treatment. Also, the writers' anxiety was lowered, which demonstrated the significance of the pre-writing stage.

Shi (1998) investigated if peer discussions and teacher-led pre-writing interactions impacted the students' writing quality. 47 adult students from three different universities were involved in the study. The participants, after selected, were divided into three groups for three distinct pre-writing strategies: peer-talks, teacher-led discussion and no discussion. One conclusion was that students with no discussion before writing were found to write longer drafts, those treated with teacher-led discussion had shorter drafts and those with peer talks produced a greater variety of verbs in their writings. The findings highlighted the pre-writing conditions to generate a variety of thinking type and discourse processes to accommodate adult learners' compositions.

The review of previous studies shows that pre-writing stage is generally very important for writing as it may improve the learners' confidence and writing quality. It was

significant to compare the effects of using pictures and peer interaction in the pre-writing stage.

## **METHOD**

### **Research Design**

This study took quasi-experimental form adopting pretest-posttest between-group design. Bui Phu Hung (2017) believed that this form would assure the validity and reliability of research findings. Ong (2016) also applied this design in a study examining the use of genre-based writing instruction to teaching literacy criticism. This present study was both quantitative and qualitative in nature. The cross-intervention research design was employed as it was believed to facilitate the interpretation of results of a co-interventional study (Chow & Liu, 2013 & Frangakis & Rubin, 1999)). Participants trained with either outlining or depicting were instructed to write 8 descriptive paragraphs in total. For the first 4 writing tasks, the experimental group 1 wrote with outlining training and the experimental group 2 wrote with depicting training. For the last 4 writing tasks, the reversed model was applied.

### **Participants**

Twenty EFL novice adult learners aged from 18 to 27 and taking a variety of majors were randomly selected to participate in the study. The participant selection was based on call for participation. All the participants were found at a comparable level of proficiency and writing competence in the pretest. They were randomly distributed into the experimental group 1 (6 females & 4 males) and the experimental group 2 (7 females & 3 males). Results from the pretest on writing performance indicated that the writing performances of participants of the experimental group 1 and the experimental group 2 were comparable in terms of the number of ideas generated, content and the organization of ideas (Table 1). The pretest on the participants' depicting capability showed that they all capable of using basic lines to present ideas. The *p* values showed that there were no significant differences in the three areas (number of ideas, content and organization) between the two experimental groups.

Table 1  
Pretest Results

	Group 1		Group 2		Independent samples t-test		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	t	df	p (2-tailed)
Number of ideas	6.4	3.2	7.6	3.3	0.75	18	.48
Content	1.5	.7	1.7	.5	0.74	18	.5
Organization	1.8	.8	1.8	.8	0	18	1

### **The Treatments**

To examine participants' writing performance in terms of number of ideas, content and the organization of ideas, 8 writing tests of 8 different descriptive writing topics were administered. The writing tests' administration was similar in terms of instruction and allotted time. Four common test types of descriptive writings subjected for elementary level were covered and specific writing topics were accordingly selected, and each type

with two different topics. They include describing (1) familiar people, (2) nearby locations and (3) local holidays. They can be found in most course books in current practice, including *Mosaic* (Blass & Pike-Baky, 2009) *Interaction* (Pavlik & Segal, 2009), and *Great Paragraphs* (Folse, Muchmore-Vokoun & Solomon, 2014) which were seen with high frequency in most currently official exams for Certificate A organized in Vietnam. A value of .85 was resulted from a Descriptive statistic test indicating a high level of reliability of the writing tests.

A widely-used analytic marking scale is a 4-band scale (1-very poor, 2-fair to poor, 3-good to average, 4-excellent to very good) assessing each component. Whereas content and ideas organization were scored basing on Jacobs' scoring profile, the number of ideas was calculated literally by the raters. Two accredited raters were invited to grade the tests independently. In the grading process, the third and even the fourth rater took part in the grading in case of discrepancies. The correlation coefficients between the two accredited raters indicated a high degree of absolute agreement (.86) between the judges.

### **Instruments**

Three instruments were used. To collect quantitative data, tests on writing performance to examine the number of ideas generated, the organization and development of ideas were implemented. To collect qualitative data, a questionnaire on the participants' preference towards and an interview on the participants' viewpoints on the use of outlining and depicting were administered. Students' drafts served as the unobtrusive instrument assisting the assessing of the investigated aspects. All the instruments were revised according to the pilot study results.

### **Materials**

A series of 8 teaching plans on the 8 selected descriptive writing topics were composed in the light of communicative approach and the integration of the skills, then comments were received from experienced teachers in the field. After that, they were improved and piloted on 30 students who possessed similar characteristics with the accredited participants.

The two groups of accredited participants were trained to write with outlining or depicting after each lesson. For the purposes of the current study, the participants were reminded of the role of the depictive presentation as the container of ideas. Therefore, meticulous care on the appearance of the presentation should not be given, but the participants' ideas for the topics instead.

### **Questionnaire**

A 26-item questionnaire was developed to explore the participants' preference towards outlining and depicting prewriting strategies in descriptive writings. The items are classified into 4 clusters to respectively examine participants' preference towards the strategies with regards to (1) specific writing topics, (2) effects of the strategies on the number of ideas generated, (3) effects of the strategies on content performance, and (4) effects of the strategies on the organization of ideas. Each item consists of 4 choices. Choice number 1 was designated for outlining; number 2, depicting; number 3, Either of

them, meant that the strategies were appreciated equally to the given case; and number 4, Neither of them, meant that the participants would favor neither of the strategies for the given case. The questionnaires collected information on frequency, and the results were reported in percentage. The measurement values indicated acceptable reliability of the questionnaire (.79).

### **Interviews**

An interview sheet of 7 open-ended questions was developed. The first 6 questions, including three reversed questions, aimed to gain deep understanding of the participants' viewpoints on strengths and weaknesses of outlining and depicting. Question 7 collected the participants' recommendations for the improvement of the application of these strategies.

Three participants who achieved the best and other three participants who achieved the least in their writing performance were selected for the 6 independently face-to-face interviews. The data gained was recoded, transcribed and translated into English and analyzed using the interview protocol sheet, which was reported on the interviewees' similar and different viewpoints as well as their key suggestions for improving the strategies.

### **Data Collection**

Students' drafts, on which outlines and depictive presentations dwelled, were observed to identify any evidence supporting the findings on writing performance and the participants' viewpoints towards the application of outlining and depicting. There were 10 weekly two-and-a-half-hour meetings with all participants in total. In meeting 1, the pretests were implemented and necessary consent was reached. Meeting 2 was for illustration and training on depicting and outlining strategies. From meeting 3 to meeting 10, students wrote on the 8 selected descriptive topics with the teacher's instruction and topic-related samples of outlining and depicting each before the students wrote. In the extra meeting 11, questionnaires were delivered. Two weeks after meeting 11, when all the tests were rated, the interviewer and the selected interviewees had meeting 12 in the 6 independently face-to-face interviews.

## **FINDINGS**

### **Participants' Performances**

#### ***Writing Contents and Organization and Development of Ideas***

First, a descriptive statistic tests were run to calculate the mean score of the number of ideas generated with depicting training and the mean score of the number of ideas generated with outlining training according to four types of descriptive topics (describing people, locations and holidays). Next, an independent-sample t test was conducted on the two mean scores to evaluate whether there was a significant difference in the number of ideas generated between the writings with depicting and the ones with outlining. Then, participants' writings of the two experimental groups were merged to calculate whether there was any significant difference between the effects of outlining

and depicting on the number of ideas generated. A paired-sample *t* test was conducted on the sum of ideas generated in all the writing tests with the depicting training and on the sum of ideas generated in all the writings with the outlining training. The purpose was to evaluate whether participants performed a larger number of ideas with one of the strategies. This procedure was adapted to analyze data from the participants' writing performance in terms of content and the organization of ideas.

A statistical analysis revealed that depicting and outlining accommodated different concerns of writing (Table 2). The number of ideas in the participants' writings indicated that depicting, with a mean score of 26.8, helped the participants generate more ideas than outlining, with a mean score of 22.9. The standard deviations also showed that some individual participants were assisted by depicting more than others, but the scores gained by individuals from the outlining strategy was more focused (4.3). On the contrary, outlining was considered to improve the participants' writing content and organization more than depicting. The standard deviations of these areas also showed that some participants improve slightly from depicting. The *p* values from the independent samples *t*-test showed that the differences in performance between the two strategies were significant ( $p < 0.05$ ).

Table 2  
Posttest Results

	Depicting		Outlining		Independent Samples <i>t</i> -test		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	<i>t</i>	df	<i>p</i> (2-tailed)
Number of ideas	26.8	5.9	22.9	4.3	2.5	19	0.02
Content	3.5	.7	3.8	.4	3.1	19	0.006
Organization	3.4	.6	3.6	.6	2.1	19	0.04

Also, with the topics describing locations, the number of ideas generated by the participants when they applied depicting exceeded the number of ideas generated by the participants when they applied outlining (Table 3). In detail, depicting helped the participants generate ideas more significantly (34.8) than outlining (25.5). The independent samples *t*-test indicated that this difference was also significant.

Table 3  
Number of Ideas Generated in Describing Locations

	Depicting		Outlining		Independent Samples <i>t</i> -test		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	<i>t</i>	df	<i>p</i> (2-tailed)
Number of ideas	34.8	6.7	25.5	3.1	0.5	19	0.06

### *Participants' Opinions*

Although participants' preference given to either outlining or depicting varied with regards to the types of descriptive topics, and the effects of these strategies on the number of ideas generated, content and the organization of ideas, overall, the results showed that participants preferred outlining to depicting (with 45% of the participants advocated outlining, and 38%, the depicting). A small number of participants (account for 15.5%) favored both strategies equally, indicating that they could be used whether interchangeably or complementarily. The remaining number of participants accounting

for a negligible amount (1.5%) preferred neither of them. One of the explanations for this could be that they did not find it important to apply prewriting strategies when they wrote.

There are three major themes emerged from the interviewees' viewpoints towards outlining and depicting strategies discussed in the 6 face-to-face interviews: (1) the strategies' strengths, (2) the strategies' weaknesses, and (3) the interviewees' recommendations for the improvement of the strategies. Merely major points of each were discussed in this paper.

Considering the strengths of each strategy in helping them generate for topic-related ideas, perform content and organize ideas in their descriptive paragraph, most interviewees contended that outlining could help them organize ideas more easily and systematically. This made outlining powerful compared with depicting. It also helped save time, was more familiar and applicable to all students. Meanwhile, depicting received positive attitudes from them since it was reported to trigger smooth flows of ideas from the mind, which could consequently create chances for the burst out of a great number of both background and creative ideas. Another powerful point of depicting was that the images dwelled on the draft motivated them to write, and depicting evoked their stronger feelings and awoke more of their senses about the subjects to be described. This could also help them provide a more accurate description on the real subjects.

The content is enough to write, and it saves time because the outline can create good order for the ideas...When the outlines are good, it's brief, clear and understood...It presents the ideas systematically. ...it's easy to apply to everyone since it is more familiar to us. Prewriting helped me become more confident.

Ideas would keep coming from the mind when I depicted. The images could, I mean, I could have one more and then one more idea when I looked at it...The images increased creativity and reality, so I felt interested to write. Depicting... and evoked strong feelings and senses about the subjects I needed to describe. It liked the pre-writing stage. They prepared me for the main writing task.

While depicting was appreciated in helping the interviewees generate a large number of ideas and interested them with the depictive presentation, outlining was criticized for limiting the number of ideas generated and boring the writers with words. To outlining, major negative viewpoints towards depicting were that it appeared challenging to the students since it was unfamiliar; there were ideas supposed to be hard to be depicted; therefore, it could not suit all the descriptive writing topics. Moreover, depicting could confuse the organization of ideas than outlining could. Both outlining and depicting were reported to cause the missing of ideas when students were unable to express their ideas by English words or by depicting.

Not many ideas to write. Sometimes I got almost no ideas about some topics. One word to say: Stuck! No image and no visual aids used limited the ideas

because students got no picture of the topic in mind. No element to trigger the imagination or thinking. I was stuck. The pre-writing step was marvellous. It was necessary for my writing performance.

It can be hard to apply depicting for some topics because some topics contain ideas that cannot be depicted...I got confused organization of ideas in the paragraph because I was confused gazing at the images. I could not decide where to start the paragraph. I knew it...depicting is strange....and it's confusing for those who use it the first time. It is necessary to assign a task to prepare students for the main writing task.

However, the interviewees did not always reach a consensus. For instance, there were disagreements on whether outlining or depicting cost more time or whether depicting caused confusion to the organization of ideas.

'It took time to prepare enough the ideas about the topic when I made outlines...Depicting...it cost less time than making outline.' I liked the pre-writing task much. It made me feel more confident.

Suggestions for the improvement of these strategies were given. The suggestions could be put into three sub categories: suggestions on the application of these strategies, suggestions for jobs to do from the teacher perspectives and from the learner's perspectives.

The interviewees suggested combining the two strategies in many ways. For instance, depicting can be used first to trigger ideas, then outlining to help organize the ideas. To avoid the loss of ideas, depicting can be used in the outlines where students are unable to express their ideas with words, and depicting where students struggle with English words. Also, respondents recommended using outlining and depicting interchangeably.

'When I cannot express ideas with words, I can use depict; and when I can't depict, I should make outlines.' I think my main task was better than expected as a result of the pre-writing task.

In addition, interviewees contributed suggestions for teachers. They suggested that teachers should examine the strengths and weaknesses of these two strategies and clarify them to students. Teachers should also try out a large number of different descriptive topics to find out groups of topics that suit best each strategy, each group of students and each individual.

The teacher should examine the features and characteristics of the two strategies, and which topics can best suit each strategy and which can suit both. The pre-writing step reduced my anxiety for the main assignment.

Respondents also suggested that students need to help themselves to exploit what strategy will work best for them with a specific topic.

‘The students should find out which one is more suitable for them considering the topics and to save time’. The pre-writing task made me more confident to write.

From the participants’ drafts, much evidence was also found about the strengths of depicting on helping generating ideas and of outlining on helping the organization of ideas. However, evidence of students’ confusion, challenging with depicting and students’ poor amount of ideas with outlining.

### **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

In summary, the results from the interview confirm the experimental results and those from the questionnaire. Applying depicting strategy, participants generated a larger number of ideas about the topics to be described. The main reason was due to the use of images that could help the flow of ideas come out. There was no significant difference in level of content development and in level of developing organization of ideas between the groups with outlining training and the group with depicting training. Finally, students preferred outlining to depicting although one strategy proved to be superior to the other depending on types of writing topics and different writing contexts. For instance, when participants wished to achieve high level of organization of ideas, or a systematical outline, they would prefer outlining; however, they would prefer depicting if they wished to brainstorm for more sufficient ideas or overcome communication breakdowns caused by their shortage of vocabulary.

The findings from this study were in line with those of the previous studies by Ansarimoghaddam, Hoon and Yong (2017), Mackenzie (2011), Schweiker-Marra and Marra (2000) and Shi (1998). It can be found from the participants’ feedback in this study and the studies by Ansarimoghaddam, Hoon and Yong (2017), Mackenzie (2011) and Shi (1998) that depicting or drawing made students feel motivated and confident and in turn reduced their anxiety. Also, pre-writing strategies were found effective in preparing students for the main writing task. Regarding the effectiveness of drawing, this present study confirmed the study by Schweiker-Marra and Marra (2000) in that drawing was particularly important, assisting students achieve good writing performances.

One limitation was that this study was conducted on a small sample size, which might have diminished the generalization of the research results. Second, the insufficient training given to the participants on outlining and depicting may have reduced the participants’ writing performance. Besides, since the interviews were carried out after the questionnaires, they had a tendency to be bound with the issues included in the questionnaire. The interview was also administered two weeks after the writing tests; therefore, this may also have limited the number of viewpoints given about the use of outlining and depicting since information could be lost due to a distance in time when participants were asked to answer the interview questions in a retrospective way. Finally, the tests were rated with a 4-interval level marking scale, which was supposed to consequence a less distinctive assessment between the writing performances with outlining and the ones with depicting.

Research validity and reliability were assured in this study. First of all, the participant collection was based on volunteering and participants' competence. Regarding volunteering, there was an investigation into the participants' motivation for joining the study. They all wanted to participate in this study. The measures of the participants' competence was based on their language proficiency and their writing abilities to generate, organize and develop ideas. Secondly, the rating or scoring criteria was based on the participants' competence to generate, organize and develop ideas. That means, the tests reflected the aims of the study. Thirdly, the participants' out-of-class exposure during the study was investigated. Accordingly, the participants revealed that they did not have any access to English language use. Regarding the difficulty of the tasks assigned, all the writing assignments were level-fit. The writing topics were familiar to the students and linguistically adjusted to suit the participants' level as from the results of the pilot study. To avoid the participants' misunderstanding and confusion caused by the questionnaire and interview questions, these two instruments were administered and interpreted in Vietnamese. Finally, the open-ended questions in the interview were applied to collect in-depth information to shed light on the data collected from the questionnaire in a Likert-scale.

A recommendation is that as depicting may require learners' drawing skills, teachers may not need any special training on the application of this strategy apart from a prior practice in using basic lines to present ideas effectively to support students with samples from the outset for their later self-developed manipulation. The implementation of this strategy is not a big challenge to teachers. However, the key principle may lie on the teacher's job. It is simple but needs caution that whether the teacher can make it friendly, fun and comfortable in the classroom. Succeeding in doing this, depicting would become an extremely enjoyable prewriting strategy and a useful tool for brainstorming for a large number of ideas.

Respondents in the interview stated that depicting could not work well for presenting certain ideas. This use of pictorial presentation can be also found everywhere in daily life and other means like media. Therefore, the major problem does not lie on not being able to depict, but rather the way depictees perceive the main purpose of depicting and their acceptance on the pictorial handiwork from the basis of meaning and information. Only when students could consider and use simple symbols as a means to present ideas like when they use words, their focus on the meaning would be remained and depicting would not appear uncomfortable.

Furthermore, the need for visual aids and recalling images of the objects to be described obviously indicates that, in the future, students should be exposed to real experience while they are writing, if there is condition. This method has been common in the teaching of literature or in the art field. For instance, when an artist or a writer would like to accomplish his best work, he needs to be there right in front of the scene to enable strong feelings and to create vivid painting or lively description. This method is assumed to also work well for EFL writers. For instance, if students were asked to describe a quay, a student who writes at the same time experiencing the scene would be supposed to perform better in comparison with the one who does not. This can be

explained that the former can have true emotions and feeling at the same time all his senses are awoken. Depicting has been potential to a broader use and research on depicting can be expanded on a wider range.

“A picture worth a thousand words” (Galbraith, Ford, Walker and Ford, 2005) can be taken as a premise for the purposeful use of depicting. Hope (2000) also contributes that drawing functions as a container of ideas, and drawing help students become more thoughtful when they look at the picture. Whether a practitioner determines whether to use, when to use, where to use depicting depend primarily on practitioners’ purposes and on specific learner’s context. For instance, when students struggle with brainstorming for ideas, depicting can be an appropriate choice. In other cases, when students are from majors enabling their capability of pictorial presentation, depicting can be also a suitable choice to be used. Otherwise, outlining should be used instead.

The current study endeavors to seek more alternative for prewriting strategies in writing descriptive paragraph to fit a wider variety of students’ interest, learning styles and other learner variables (for this purpose, depicting has been discussed over outlining thought out this paper). More importantly, it has been oriented towards the development of descriptive writing. To outlining, its powerful use has been confirmed. To depicting, though there has been the existence of certain drawbacks, the findings have found major benefits in helping students with descriptive writings. Depicting has faced with inevitable challenges at first. Therefore, more effort should be given to refine this new prewriting strategy if teachers plan to take it into practice, using simple symbols to quickly jot down ideas.

### **Implications**

There are a number of key implications for pedagogical practice from this study. First, depicting is found vital to those who do not have sufficient vocabulary for writing. That is, it seems to be more practical and applicable to the students at a low level of proficiency. Also, when the teacher finds that depicting should be applied, training and instruction on depicting should be offered to the students at the beginning to avoid their confusion and frustration in their main practice. Importantly, outlining and depicting have their own strengths and limitations; therefore, a combination of these strategies might assist students more in term of effective writing as one strategy can reduce of the limitations of the other. Future studies can take interest in combining them as pre-writing strategies. Secondly, as this study aimed at adult learners, future studies can test the effectiveness of depicting and outlining on young language learners.

Whist outlining has been a predominant prewriting tool, it is not almighty. Hence, more alternatives should be sought since teaching and learning have been an ongoing process in which educators and learners have always been endeavoring searching for innovation to the development of the pedagogical profession, and when learners are different, complicated and various.

Future research should cover a wider range of descriptive writing topics and with more sufficient sample size. Future research should also exploit the effects of depicting on other types of writing. By nature, this investigation is product-oriented. Therefore,

future research can focus on the process in order to obtain diagnostic information on how students process their writing while depicting. Instead of carrying out interviews, out loud protocol may be more useful to explore the strengths and weaknesses of these strategies authentically and to gain in-depth understanding of the students' cognitive processing while writing. Finally, a 10-point marking scale should be used to gain more diagnostic information about and to better distinguish writing performance.

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