



# **Using Some Web Based Social Learning Applications for Developing EFL Secondary Stage Students' Writing Skills and Self-Esteem**

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## **Using "Wikis" in Developing Writing Performance and Motivation among EFL Students at Majmaah University**

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### **Abstract**

The aim of this research was to investigate the effectiveness of using some web based social learning applications in developing EFL secondary stage students' writing skills and self-esteem. The design of the research was a mixed research methodology. It combined both quantitative and qualitative methods of inquiry. The participants of the study were thirty students enrolled in second year at Met-Kenana Secondary School for Girls, Qalubia Governorate, Egypt .They tested before and after the intervention. They taught through a program based on some web based social learning applications (Edmodo, Facebook, and Twitter). The instruments of the research included an EFL writing skills test, self-esteem scale, and a semi-structured interview. Results revealed a statistically significant difference between the mean score of the study participants in the pre and post administration of the EFL writing skills and self-esteem in favor of the post administration. These results were ascribed to using some web based social learning applications.

**Keywords:** EFL Writing Skills- Self-Esteem- web based social learning applications.

## **Introduction**

Language is one of the most important areas of human development. It is a vital tool for communicating thoughts and ideas. Nowadays, learning English has become a necessity all over the world. It requires mastering the four language skills; listening, speaking, reading and writing. The skills are related to each other by two parameters: the mode of communication: oral skills (listening and speaking) , written skills (reading and writing) and the direction of communication: receptive skills (listening and reading) and productive skills (speaking and writing) (Alodwan and Ibnian, 2014).

Writing is an important communicative language skill that requires a mental effort to think out the sentences and the ways of joining them to be meaningful and communicative. It cannot be learned in isolation from the other language skills. It is a means to express one's needs, feelings, thoughts and experiences. Writing should not be thought as a productive skill only. It is rather a three-stage process that includes (pre-writing, writing, and rewriting) .It is a process through which writers explore thoughts and ideas, and make them visible and concrete. They should make balance for multiple issues such as content, organization, purpose, audience, vocabulary, punctuation, spelling, and mechanics. Moreover, writing encourages thinking and learning, motivates communication and makes thought available for reflection (Al-Haq and Al-Sobh ,2010 ,Jahin and Idrees, 2012).

Ahangari and Samadian (2014),Erdogan (2013) and Sani (2012) clarify that writing is an act of representing a language in a written form through using a set of signs forming the writing system that is used as a means of transmitting information. It is a recursive multiphase process, containing different levels, from low-order ones that generate lexical decisions, to higher-order ones that are responsible for topic relevance and text structure. It is one of the significant skills in people's expressing their views and their effective communication. It is an activity including cognitive, affective, social, and psychomotor processes. In the writing process, the writer needs to realize various cognitive processes coordinately in order to express his/her feelings and ideas effectively and convey meaningful messages to the readers.

Thus, writing requires many processes in terms of cognitive, social and psychomotor point of view. It is a reflective activity that requires

enough time to think about the specific topic, analyze and classify any background knowledge. It stimulates thinking, compels students to concentrate and organize their ideas, and cultivates their ability to summarize, analyze, and criticize. It reinforces learning, thinking, and reflection. It involves a number of cognitive and metacognitive activities, such as; brainstorming, planning, outlining, organizing, drafting, and revising (Ahmed, 2010, Bruning and Horn, 2000).

Because writing is a complex activity, students consider it difficult and makes them bored in the writing class. It becomes a challenge for the teacher to develop their competency in writing. Innovative teaching writing method should be implemented to make the students write well. By implementing innovative teaching method, the students are expected to have good writing ability and attitudes. Thus, various aspects of language skills are affected by self-esteem. Self-esteem is strongly correlated with oral communicative proficiency that students with low self-esteem cannot express themselves confidently. Self-esteem can affect writing success (Chikita, Nyoman and Wayan, 2013).

Self-esteem is an extremely popular construct within the field of Psychology and has been related to every other psychological concepts or domain, including personality. Hence, a person should put a high value for his performance and be confident of his achievement because those judgments he makes are the drive for mastering proficiency. Moreover, the biggest barrier to success is not lack of ability or talent but it is lack of self-esteem. In real situations both self-esteem and language learning are interacting variables, in the sense that language learning can affect the degree of self-esteem and vice versa (Bagheri and Faghih, 2012).

Bagheri and Faghih (2012) clarify that self-esteem is the experience of being competent to cope with the basic challenges of life. In language learning , it refers to evaluations students consciously make of their situations where they use the foreign language. The evaluations focus on individual aspects of specific self-esteem such as language learning ability, their actual language use, in-class relationships, and student behavior toward the foreign language. Self-esteem has two aspects: self-confidence which is the sense of efficacy and self-respect which is the sense of worthiness. So, self-esteem reflects the students' feelings about one's self. Thus, learning is affected by how students feel

about themselves. Self-esteem is considered as the personal judgment, opinion and the internal attitude of one's self. If this judgment is positive, it will lead learners to success. If it is negative, it leads to troubles and low academic achievement. In other words, students who feel good about themselves are the ones who most likely to do better .

In addition Hisken (2011) and Khansir and Abdolahi (2014) indicate that teachers are aware of the levels of self-esteem, their students can develop activities and lessons that lead to success. Students with a positive self-esteem have been shown to have higher levels of reading skills, as well as a higher level of academic achievement. Students with low self-esteem struggle with problems they face in school. If students have a high level of self-esteem, they will be as successful as possible. They do not spend much time worrying about the way they are viewed by their peers. They focus on their learning more than how they are seen by their peers.

Swärd (2013) clarified that students with writing difficulties develop other problems, like low self-image. Concept of self is broad and includes one's self-esteem, self-perception and self-image. Self-esteem can be disengaged from what others opinion and is a general evaluation in different areas like identity, appearance, properties, and the role among peers. It is built through experiences in life and treated in several important theories about motivation and behavior like self-efficacy, perceived competence and explanations about success and failure.

Therefore, self-esteem has always played a crucial role in learning language in general and in writing in particular. Writing as skill is always considered in promoting knowledge of EFL learners in learning English as a foreign language. It is a very difficult skill not only for foreign language learners but also for native language learners. Khansir (2012) argued that writing plays an essential role in language learning. He added that learning writing is one of the most important skills that foreign language learners need to develop their ability to communicate ideas and information effectively in target language.

Weigle (2002) clarified that self-esteem is a crucial cluster in affective factor which will affect the confidence of students in learning language skills especially writing skill. Students who write in the context

of EFL generally encounter problems in concentrating on both the content of the writing and the use of the language.

Brown (2000) claimed that self-esteem is involved in student's writing and oral performance. Also, he defines self-esteem as the evaluation that individuals make and maintain with regard to themselves, expresses an attitude of approval or disapproval and indicates the extent to which individuals believe themselves to be capable, significant, successful and worthy. Thus, self-esteem has three dimensions; global self-esteem, situational self-esteem and task self-esteem. Global self-esteem is general or prevailing assessment one makes of one's own worth over time and across a number of situations. It focuses on students' personal judgment towards themselves which always exist in their daily activity. Situational self-esteem is one's self-appraisals in particular life situations such as social interaction. Task self-esteem is the self-esteem that relates to particular tasks within specific situations. It refers to one's self-evaluation of a particular aspect of the process.

Therefore, writing is considered the most complex and difficult skill to master. This difficulty lies not only in generating and organizing ideas but also in translating these ideas into readable texts. English learners are inducted into writing classes via grammar courses preceding paragraph organization. Students find composing in English difficult because the writing process demands that they utilize many cognitive and linguistic strategies of which they are uncertain. Many students complain that they lack ideas and cannot think of anything interesting or significant enough to write. While most EFL teachers are often faced these problems in their writing classes, they cannot find an efficient way to awaken students' imagination and set their minds working. Some teachers only adopt a product approach, focusing on exemplifying contrast and comparison, description, and classification (Boas, 2011, Bruning and Horn, 2000, Fatemi, 2008, Maghsoudi and Haririan, 2013).

However, the process of writing activity in the classroom is difficult. This difficulty related to several factors such as lack of motivation, anxieties, fear of making mistake or even having no idea to compose a good paragraph. Thus, Harmer (2007) asserted that although some students are always happy to have a go at writing in English, others can be less keen. This unwillingness may derive from anxieties they

have about their handwriting, spelling, or their ability to construct sentences and paragraphs.

Thus, self-esteem is a small part in the affective domain that has a major influence in the success of writing. Students have problems in writing because teachers concentrate on teaching grammar, spelling drills and punctuation rather than involving students in the writing process. In spite of the fact that these are means that help students learn language in general and writing in particular, students need to be taught how to produce language communicatively. Techniques of teaching writing should be enjoyable and interesting to students while helping them to write good compositions. (Agata, 2013, Fang, 2010).

Chartrand (2012) and Fauzi (2015) indicate that writing is considered the most difficult skill for language learners to master. Learners need to pay attention to higher level skills of planning, and organizing as well as lower level skills of spelling, punctuation and word choice. Therefore, within the rapid changes in technology, the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has largely influenced the way learners write. The well-known ICT such social networks also have been widely used by learners to shape their writing. Therefore, the popularity of social networking websites has created new opportunities for language learners to interact in authentic ways .Through the advances in technology , language learners can easily interact with their peers in meaningful practice that fosters language acquisition and motivation. Thus, the tasks that make use of Web 2.0 interactivity can significantly raise students' attention to generate meaningful output and stimulate their interest in language learning.

The use of Web 2.0 technologies in education helps students to develop 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. Blogging, wikis and social networks are excellent tools for allowing learners to clarify concepts, establish meaningful links and relationships. Thus, Web-based learning environment can promote constructivist learning through authentic activities related to the vast amount of information available on the Internet. Instructors can provide students with access to variety of tasks available in a combination of formats, such as text, graphics, audio, and video (Mason and Rennie, 2008).

Consequently, Web 2.0 technologies have been widely used as a supplementary learning tool giving students independence in learning. These technologies allow students to express their interests and work collaboratively with teachers, peers, and authentic audience. Also, Shih (2013) clarified that Web 2.0 technologies (e.g. YouTube, Flickr, blog, and Facebook) enable knowledge exchange in ways such as online meeting and discussion. Through these applications, users are able to exchange, interact, collaborate, and socialize with others in virtual communities.

Therefore, it is known that social networks such as Facebook, Edmodo, Twitter, Ning, MySpace, weblogs and wiki used mostly by teenagers and adults, are seen to be used not for doing research and getting information but for talking with friends, introducing oneself to others and mostly playing games. The concept of societal network which emerges from Web 2.0 means individuals tied one another with one or more social connections and therefore individuals constructing societal connections (Donmus, 2010).

Social media are a collection of Internet websites, services, and practices that support collaboration, participation, and sharing. These technologies have attracted the interest of higher education faculty members looking for ways to engage and motivate their students to be more active learners. Thus, there has been interest in integrating various social media tools (such as blogs, microblogs, video-sharing sites, and social networking) into the learning process. A major category of social media activity is social networking. Social networking websites (SNSs), such as Facebook, Myspace, and Twitter, have become integral to learning. While Facebook has been the most popular social networking site for college students to date, educators have been more willing to try to integrate Twitter as part of the learning process. Twitter is a blog that is restricted to 140 characters per post but that also includes the functionality of social networking (Junco, Heiberger and Loken, 2011).

Social networking tools provide a good environment to support educational activities by providing interaction, collaboration, active participation, sharing information and critical thinking. SNSs such as Facebook, Twitter and Edmodo allow access to more resources in terms of learning and sharing. Through social networking tools, individuals can establish their social networks, share latest news, videos, educational

subjects, interesting stories as well as having the opportunity to be followed by other users. As a result, teachers should use various Web 2.00 tools on SNSs to develop new teaching tools, that help students to improve and practice their language skills (Bicena, Sadikoglubb and Sadikoglub,2015 ,Mali and Hassan,2013).

Therefore, SNSs can be defined as an online computer network through which people interact and bond with each other. It is a virtual society where one can know other people and communicate with them. Social Media create a new community where teachers and students do not have to communicate by means of the traditional face-to-face classroom environment. Thus, SNSs have come to play an important role in developing a person's communication skills. These sites give ample scope to the users to create and edit their profiles , video chatting, write blogs, etc (Kalasi,2014).

Thus, Silius, et.al.(2010) indicate that Web 2.0 based social media services (e.g., Facebook, LinkedIn, Last.fm) have recently become well known especially among young people. In SNSs a user can participate intensively in activities in the service, share contents, debate and share opinions and create different kinds of groups for different needs. Arnold and Paulus (2010) clarifies that web based social learning are also confirmed to be effective teaching tools because most students already have accounts and their platforms are ready-to-use. SNSs provide additional features that are media sharing, tagging, own brand and visual design, real time activity stream, groups, friends, and profile pages. They are not extensively adopted in the education field as much as in other fields. Some social networks tools were applied in teaching and learning such as Twitter, Facebook ,Edmodo and Ning .

Purcell (2012) clarify that students frequently using SNSs are often successful in their learning and they suggest that teachers should create learning opportunities for students to interact with one another on various SNSs. Boyd and Ellison (2007) defined SNSs as web-based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and view their list of connections and those made by others within the system. El-Sawy (2015) clarifies that SNSs go along with social constructivism theory of learning and the

zone of proximal development which emphasizes that learners can learn in association with others much more than what they can learn alone.

Therefore, with web applications on the internet like SNSs , it would be an easy task to encourage students to use them as a medium to learn and improve their writing skills. Students' perceptions on learning writing using the internet should be fully recognized, as it would serve its purpose to revitalize the learning process in class. The internet comprises of web applications that have helped to maintain relationships and individual interests. Applications such as Facebook, Edmodo , Twitter, YouTube, Ning, MySpace and others serve a purpose of communicating with one another, even across distances. These are known as SNSs.

The present research focuses on Edmodo, Facebook, and twitter as examples of web-based social learning applications. They help assist students with their reading and writing skills as well as their collaboration in learning and improving self-esteem.

Edmodo was created by Nic Borg and JeffO'Hara (2008) who realized the need to evolve the school environment to meet the connectedness of the 21<sup>st</sup> century world. It is a safe environment that might enhance students' learning. Teachers post announcements and assignments for their students. Students use Edmodo to communicate with their teachers to ask questions about lessons and homework and collaborate with other classmates on activities and project ideas. Using Edmodo, students and teachers can reach out one another and connect by sharing ideas, problems and helpful tips. A teacher can assign and grade work on Edmodo and students can get help from the entire class on Edmodo (Mills and Chandra, 2011).

Qalaja (2015) indicates that Edmodo is a social networking website used for educational purposes. The Edmodo application is much like the commonly used Facebook website. Like Facebook, Edmodo is a site designed to keep people in touch with those who have similar interests and goals. It creates an online environment for teachers and students to stay connected in an educational setting. This online learning space creates a secure environment for a class to share ideas, files, and assignments through mobile access and messaging. Edmodo is an educational network that has the social and sharing elements of Web 2.0. It lets teachers and students collaborate online, share content, access

homework assignments and join online discussions in a safe environment.

Edmodo is a web-based social learning platform for teacher and students. It provides teachers and students with a closed, private online community to encourage communication and collaboration. It can be incorporated into the classroom through a variety of applications including reading, assignments, and paper-studying. Current uses include posting assignment ,creating polls for student response, embedding video clips, creating learning groups, posting quizzes for students to take, and creating a calendar of events and assignments (Redman ,2012).

Therefore, Redman and Trapani (2012) also reported on how Edmodo, an SNS with strong ties to education, effectively provided a space for communication, virtual collaboration, and organization of pertinent digital resources. Also, Qalaja (2015) indicated that Edmodo has several characteristics such as it offers different levels of interaction; students get to work on educational assignments while using a fun platform; teachers can easily differentiate assignments for students on different achievement levels and students can work individually or cooperatively.

Also , Alfian (2013) clarified that Edmodo is used by students to get collaborative writing activity in which they are doing a writing process like planning, drafting, editing, and publishing. In the planning process, students are engaged in selecting the topic they were going to write. In the drafting process students are asked to write a draft by using a brainstorming in order to help them write in a good sequence. Meanwhile, in the editing process students are asked to work in a group and share their writing draft to be checked by the group members. Finally in the publishing process, students are asked to post their writing on Edmodo. While students are posting their writing on Edmodo, the writer asks another group to check and give the comment on that writing so that students are able to give comment and correction to each other as a revision to their writing.

In addition to Edmodo, SNSs like Facebook have become commonplace in the lives of young adults around the world. Facebook is defined as a social utility that helps people share information and communicate more efficiently with their friends. Originally it started as a medium for college student interaction. It enables peer feedback and can

be a good vehicle to enhance communication in and outside the classroom environment (Mali and Hassan,2013, Mason,2006, Rose,2014, Tartari,2014).

Mazer ,et al. (2007) clarifies that Facebook as a virtual SNSs facilitates computer-mediated communication (CMC), can facilitate interaction between the teacher and his/her students and increase learners' motivation and ability to learn. Wichadee (2013) indicates that among many technologies, Facebook is the most popular social networking website for college students. They usually use Facebook to discuss and share photos among friends.

Reid (2011) confirms that Facebook is a literacy practice within the domain of social networking, which is governed by certain values, such as establishing and negotiating identity, building relationships, staying connected, conciseness and immediacy. Arnold and Paulus (2010) indicate that Facebook has many features such as the "like" button, comment application and sharing button. These features have attracted users to create discussion and share their thoughts instantly. It gives people the power to share and make the world more open and connected, creates space for autonomy and engagement in exchanging ideas and knowledge due to active roles consumed by learners.

As a result , Wichadee (2013) indicates that one possible way of using Facebook for writing development is to make a group to exchange feedback. When compared with face-to-face environment, peer feedback on Facebook provides more opportunities for students to practice communication with their peers. The peer feedback activity on Facebook that blends written and electronic communication can promote student motivation, participation, and collaboration among peers. Thus, Facebook is an interesting learning tool for teaching and learning due to its positive outcomes. It is a valuable tool for students to learn and work together, and the results revealed students' achieving better grades, higher engagement, and greater satisfaction with the university learning experience.

Twitter is described as a social networking and microblogging service that users like to use for short messages of 140 characters in length. The short format is a unique way of communicating that has captivated the creative minds of millions of users and it is an interesting

method for students to keep in touch with each other as well as with the teacher. One possible lesson may start with a teacher telling a story to the learners. Then, the teacher instructs the students to continue the story. Another idea may be for the teacher to ask trivia questions, and the students attempt to answer them in class(Chartrand,2012).

Mork (2009) clarifies that Twitter forces users to be as concise as possible, which is part of the appeal of the system. The rest of the attraction lies in its real-time content that encourages people to befriend each other and interact with each other to a much higher degree than previous SNS models .Twitter users keep track of other users by clicking the "follow" button on the latter's profile page. When individual users are followed, their updates are put together in a "feed" that their followers can easily peruse. These feeds are updated in real time, right in front of the user. Because the posts are so short, people can easily blog about things as they are happening. Therefore, Deyamport (2013) defined Twitter as a microblogging (short postings on a blog or social network), social networking site that allows teachers to connect, collaborate, share, and participate in chats.

Twitter is a social networking application that allows people to microblog about a broad range of topics. Users of Twitter post short text, called "tweets", on a variety of topics as news events and pop culture, to mundane daily events and spam. Recently, Twitter has grown over 200 million active users producing over 200 million tweets per day. It is a popular social communication tool for short and clear expressions which can be produced simply and viewed by everyone with access to the internet (Yavuz,2014).

Cheng (2012) indicates that Twitter's advantages for enhancing social interaction and learning experiences can be described as experiential learning. Experiential learning engages learners in activities in which they have the ownership of learning autonomy and can experience and develop social presence and problem solving abilities. Incorporating Twitter into a class creates a new way of communication that stimulates the learner's cognitive process in perceiving and handling new tasks or information. It contains a constructive and positive learning community that guides students' learning objectives by encouraging them to tweet intellectually or emotionally. Twitter provides users with

the ability to view and comment upon others' tweets. The instructor plays the role of facilitator by observing and offering constructive feedback.

In addition, Mork (2009) indicates that Twitter has main advantages for teachers. Teachers can use the platform to send reminders to students about assignments, tests, etc. Twitter sends a text message when a person they follow updates. Teachers can post links to news stories, relevant websites, or even the Twitter profiles of important people. Assignments on Twitter give students the opportunity to work on this writing skill. Twitter may actually be good for teaching grammar. Many who tweet often abbreviate and abuse grammar rules, developing a unique sort of Twitter shorthand, making messages really difficult for the uninitiated to understand in the process. Hattem (2014) indicates that on Twitter, users interact with tweets through a variety of features by replying to messages using the @ symbol as a form of addressivity, by favoring a tweet (similar to the Like function on Facebook) or by retweeting it so that all of followers can also see it. In order to aggregate the abundance of messages into topics, users attach hashtags to their tweets, which are words denoting topics, preceded by the # symbol.

Therefore, in Twitter, the method of engaging in social interaction, discussion, and collaborative learning is based on an asynchronous form of written communication. Tweets allow instructors to track each learner's writing progress and ideas. Posting comments offers students a chance to practice using the language for situational communication while also giving teachers a chance to observe the actual performance of students' comprehension in their target language. Twitter can facilitate collaborative writing in class and can serve as a platform for idea stimulation among multiple users. Twitterers (i.e., people who use Twitter as a way of engaging social interaction) are able to construct their sentences in the form of tweets and communicate with other individuals and social groups (Cheng,2012).

Tweeting is differing from other forms of communication in that students can only type 140 characters in a tweet including spaces. While texting can be similar to a tweet, a text is only sent to a specific person or group of people and is not posted on the internet. SNSs such as Facebook differ from Twitter in that Facebook does not limit the characters used. While all forms of social media can be helpful to find information quickly, keep in mind that many are biased because a person

wants to specifically share his or her opinion exclusively (Kahler, 2014, Lightle, 2010 cited in Deyamport ,2013 ,Richardson,2006).

In conclusion, it can be said that , using web based social learning applications has an essential role in enhancing language skills, learner motivation, improving learning performance , prompting positive changes in their roles in learning , improving their writing and enhancing their self-esteem.

### **Context of the problem:**

According to the review of related studies (i.e. Hassan (2001); Ahmed (2006); Al-Hamzi (2004) ; Abdel-Maksoud (2007);El-Serafy (2008), Fatemi(2008) ; Okasha (2011) ; Ahmed (2013); Helwa (2013) and Mohamed, Abdel-Hack and Helwa (2014),it could be noticed that students face difficulty in writing as they are required to produce ideas arranged logically, using an active group of vocabulary items and structures including discourse markers. They concentrate on structure rather than the writing process and the current technique they use is not effective. Thus, there are many reasons for students' weakness in writing skills and self-esteem, the most important of which is the technique of teaching. Moreover, teaching aids such as computers and the Internet are very important and may positively influence students' writing. It seems that there is a need to adopt new techniques for teaching writing that may help students become better writers. Thus, teachers probably should start from the vocabulary enrichment, grammar review, planning content by organizing ideas for writing, drafting and then provide students with simple writing tasks such as controlled writing of simple paragraphs. They also should involve students to give feedback to their friends' writing. Peer feedback can facilitate students to be evaluated without being judged, students also may learn from their friends' mistakes and errors in writing.

To document the problem, the researcher conducted a pilot study on twenty students from second year at Met-Kenana secondary school for girls, Qalubia Governorate, Egypt. The pilot study consisted of an EFL writing skills test, and self-esteem Scale. The results of the pilot study reveal that students are afraid from writing because they lose interest. They have low self-esteem for writing. This low self-esteem towards writing hinders their ability to be flexible writers. When writing is taught, teachers emphasize mechanics, spelling, punctuation,

grammar, sentence structure, width of margins, and so on, with little attention to development or style. They also feel that writing is a difficult skill. Therefore, self-esteem can help the students to improve their language. The role of positive self-esteem is used among the students as an aspect of motivation that helps them show their ability to write their papers. Students with high self-esteem have been shown to have higher levels of writing ability and writing skills, as well as a higher level of academic achievement. Students with low self-esteem face many problems in their writing.

Therefore, the positive correlation between the writing and self-esteem implicitly signifies a hint for EFL teachers to be able to take advantage from this correlation to improve the student's writing ability. In order to build the student's self-esteem, a positive learning environment should be created by supporting a non-threatening interaction between teacher and students. In addition, teachers should encourage students to express their needs and expectations while they are learning to write in EFL and develop strategies to overcome the difficulties they encounter. Collaborative and cooperative atmosphere in the classroom which involves students into every interaction in classroom is required to be created to encourage students' self-esteem.

### **Statement of the problem:**

In spite of the importance of EFL writing skills and self-esteem, second year at Met-Kenana secondary school for girls, Qalubia Governorate, Egypt have difficulties in writing and expressing their ideas. They also have low level of self-esteem. The present research aims at examining the effectiveness of using some web based social learning applications in developing EFL writing skills and self-esteem among secondary stage students.

### **Questions of the Study:**

1. What are the features of a program based on some web based social learning applications in developing EFL writing skills and self-esteem among secondary stage students?
2. How far is a program based on some web based social learning applications effective in developing EFL writing skills among secondary stage students?

3. How far is a program based on some web based social learning applications effective in developing self-esteem among among secondary stage students?

### **Review of Related Studies:**

Language is used as a tool for communication and functions as a vehicle for acquiring knowledge . Placing an emphasis on communicating information, students use complex communication skills ranging from receptive skills (e.g., reading) and productive skills (e.g., writing) to processing skills (critical and creative thinking) (Thitivesa and Essien, 2013).

Thus, EFL writing motivates students' thinking, organizing ideas, and develops their ability to summarize, analyze and criticize. It strengthens students' learning, thinking and reflecting on the English language. El-Shafie (2006) and Harmer (2007) clarify that writing is the most difficult skill of all the language skills taught to EFL students . Students cannot develop their ideas when asked to write simple or compound sentences, and certain types of grammar mistakes dominate their writings (e.g. sentence structure, conjunctions, tenses, adverbs, adjectives, voice, prepositions, word-order, spelling, paragraph development, vocabulary choice, and punctuation). Therefore, several researchers conducted studies for developing writing skills as follows:-

Ali (1998) identified the effect of using journal writing on EFL pre-service teachers' writing skills and teaching performance. The participants were 80 students enrolled in the fourth year, English Department, Faculty of Education, Cairo University. They were assigned to the experimental and control group; each consisted of 40 students. The instruments of the study were a writing assessment checklist and a teaching performance assessment checklist. Results indicated that the students of the experimental group outperformed those of the control group in both writing skills and teaching performance.

Al-Haq and Al-Sobh (2010) determined the effectiveness of a web-based writing instructional EFL program on Jordanian secondary students' performance. The participants were 122 students divided into a control group and experimental one .In order to achieve the objectives of the study the researchers used a pre-post achievement test. The results of the study revealed statistically significant differences in the students'

mean scores of the overall English writing achievement post-test in favor of the experimental group.

Moradan and Hedayati (2011) investigated the impact of portfolios and conferencing techniques on Iranian EFL learners' writing skill. The participants were randomly assigned to two experimental groups and one control group. The participants of the first experimental group were asked to provide portfolios of their four paragraphs during the course and after each paragraph they were supposed to assess themselves and answer a self-assessment checklist. The participants in the second experimental group were asked to take part in four whole class and two individual conferences after writing each paragraph. The participants of control group just received their scored writings without any oral and written feedback by the teacher. The result of the study showed that there was significant difference between performance of the two experimental groups and that of the control group on the post test.

Ahmed (2013) investigated the effect of using e-mail on developing EFL writing skills among first year experimental secondary school students. The study followed a pretest-posttest experimental-control group design. The participants were 60 students from Experimental Secondary School and were divided into two groups: 30 students for the experimental group and 30 students for the control group. The instruments of the study were e-mail-writing skills test, free-writing test and a rubric for scoring the tests. Results showed that the experimental group outperformed the control group in the post-test of e-mail-writing skills test and the post- test of free-writing.

Erdogan (2013) explored the effects of the creative drama method on pre-service classroom teachers' writing skills and their attitude towards writing. The participants were 42 pre-service classroom teachers. The design of the study is a mixed research. The writings of the participants at the beginning and end of the study were evaluated through Writing Skill Evaluation Form. Their attitude towards writing was analyzed through Writing Attitude Scale. Interviews were conducted with the participants to reveal their views on the creative drama method. Results indicated that the creative drama method improved the participants' writing skills and attitudes towards writing.

Maghsoudi and Haririan (2013) investigated the effect of brainstorming strategy on EFL learners' writing performance. The

participants were 84 Iranian EFL intermediate learners. As data analysis indicated, the experimental group's performance on the post test was considerably higher than that of their performance on the pre-test. Results revealed that using brainstorm strategy had a positive effect on EFL learners' writing. It also made students more active, which might make them responsible for their own learning and likely to learn better.

Hosseiny (2014) investigated the role of direct and indirect written corrective feedback in improving EFL students' writing skill. The participants were 60 pre-intermediate students in Iranians' institute. They were divided into three groups. Twenty students were in direct-feedback group, 20 students were in indirect-feedback group and 20 students were in no-feedback group. Results showed that there was a meaningful difference between the experimental groups who received corrective feedback and the control group who did not receive any feedback. The direct feedback group significantly outperformed the control group .

Zainia and Mazdayasna (2014) examined the impact of Computer Assisted Language Learning on the development of EFL learners' writing abilities. Forty-four Iranian students majoring in English were assigned into control and experimental groups. The research design was quasi-experimental with a pre-test, post-test control group design. The results of the post-test revealed that the students in the experimental group outperformed their counterparts in terms of using appropriate articles and tense. Results support the claim that computer based instruction helps students to improve their writing skills.

In addition, writing skill is one of the four language skills in learning English language in EFL setting. Self-esteem in learning a foreign language is one of the major important factors. It is very vital because, success or failure of a learner depends mostly on the degree of ones' self-esteem. To confirm the relation between writing skills and self-esteem, Al-Hattab (2006) conducted a correlative study of the three dimensions of self-esteem with writing ability . The results of the study showed that situational self-esteem was correlated with writing ability, but the highest correlation was between the task self-esteem and writing ability. Also, Grodnick (1996) confirmed the relationship between self-esteem and writing. It might be helpful if teachers were given guidance regarding their own behaviors and attitudes which can enhance

achievement. Thus, teachers should develop greater understanding and willingness to seek, encourage, and appreciate their students' efforts. Therefore, several researchers conducted studies for developing writing skills and self-esteem as follows:-

Hassan (2001) determined if both writing apprehension and self-esteem of English as Foreign Language (EFL) university students are related to the quality and quantity of their writing. Instruments of the study included an English Writing Apprehension Questionnaire, a Foreign Language Self-Esteem Scale, and a 40-minute writing task. Participants were 132 third-year students enrolled in the English Department, College of Education, Mansoura University, Egypt. The writing apprehension of the EFL university students negatively correlated with their self-esteem. Low apprehension students wrote better quality compositions than their high apprehension counterparts. In other words, writing apprehension negatively influenced the quality of students' composition writing. Low apprehension students had higher self-esteem than high apprehension students, and low self-esteem students were more apprehensive in their writing than their high self-esteem counterparts.

Fahim and Rad (2012) clarified the relationship between self-esteem and paragraph writing of Iranian EFL learners. The study was conducted on both Iranian male and female senior EFL learners. Then, the Self-esteem Coopersmith inventory was given to the same subjects. The results of the study confirmed the connection between self-esteem and writing skills. Based on the relationship between self-esteem and writing, it should be said if teachers are given more guidance regarding their own behaviors and attitudes to improve students' self-esteem that at the same time is a motivate for developing their writing skills. The more they feel secured in class the more they are encouraged to participate in writing activities. Thus, teachers are required to develop great willingness to appreciate students' efforts in the process of writing because it helps in their writing, and brings them a high level of self-esteem, as well.

Khansir and Abdolahi (2014) investigated the correlation between self-esteem and English writing achievement of Iranian EFL learners. The Iranian learners who participated in the research were 60 male and 20 female students from two English Language Institutes. Findings

showed that the students' writing achievement was significantly affected by their self-esteem. Self-esteem as a psychological factor had a positive relationship with students' English writing. There was a significant correlation between self-esteem and English writing achievement.

Internet can be used in a variety of ways to support process writing as students develop their writing skills in various genres. In addition, teachers who have never used blogs or social media for the development of process writing might feel lost about what steps to take to make the activities interactive and motivating. The instructors can consult widely available and user-friendly online resources to make the technology accessible. For example, Edmodo, Facebook and Twitter networks are three widely used online platforms that can be easily researched and adapted to all stages of the process approach (Boas,2011).

Piriyasilpa (2011) clarified the effects of providing students with opportunities for social networking as a means of using language learnt in the classroom. The participants were 134 first-year students at a university in Thailand. The topics were advised by the teacher and students were asked to make comments or discuss their opinions on the teacher's wall. She found out that such incorporation was useful for students to create their social network and it was also beneficial for supporting language learning.

Dixon (2012) clarified the process of using SNS in teaching English by gathering information on student engagement with Facebook, and describing non-native English speakers' (NNS) expectations and experience when using SNS in learning. He also assessed the relationship this technology has with writing efficacy and compared NNS and native English speakers (NS) groups. Results revealed that the majority of students are on Facebook, and that they tend to spend approximately 30 minutes per day on the site, checking in almost every day.

Leonard (2012) conducted a study to understand how students perceive a combination of three strategies, social networking, the writing process, and cooperative learning may help students to be successful with the prewriting phase of the writing process. Nine students across four sections of writing courses agreed to participate in this qualitative inquiry. Data were collected from semi-structured interviews, social

networking posts, observations, and a researcher-made handout. Results revealed that students perceived a social networking tool to be beneficial to help them learn, and achieve their ideas. It influences prewriting in cooperative groups by generating ideas, representing their contributions, and communications with group members. Finally, the participants' perceptions and observations revealed that working together in cooperative groups to prewrite reflected the five elements of cooperation

Bicena, Sadikoglubb and Sadikoglub (2015) determined how much undergraduate students benefit from SNSs while learning a foreign language. The participants were 85 undergraduate students. Results revealed that students have stated that there is a positive effect of SNSs on learning foreign languages. Students mentioned that they follow professional foreign language teachers and various facilities used for speaking in order to improve their speaking skills. It was also stated that students prefer to use automatic translations in order to decrease the problem of understanding the news that they read on social networking sites.

El-Sawy (2015) investigated students' perceptions of integrating SNSs in language learning. A project integrating SNS (Facebook as an example) was designed to give students an opportunity to use a Facebook group in their language learning process. Fifty seven third year basic education, English department students participated in the project during a complete academic year at Damanhour university, Egypt. A questionnaire was prepared and used to enquire students' perceptions. Results of the study indicated that the majority of participants perceive SNS as beneficial in language learning. The most perceived benefits include improvement in a lot of aspects including self-confidence in writing, all language skills especially writing, increased vocabulary, grammar, motivation, interaction among students and between students and teachers, creative skills, exposure to language, cooperation and thinking in English. Participants also declared that they prefer writing and reading short posts than long ones.

Through using Edmodo, teachers build community, organize communication, collect student work, and disseminate grades. Using technology like Edmodo in writing classes provides opportunities for students to hand their written work to the teacher without the need for any face-to-face interaction. It can increase their self-efficiency and

success and help decrease their anxiety in the process of writing. It is a means of enlivening instruction, improving students' writing skills, and facilitating collaboration and interaction both within and beyond the classroom( Shams-Abadi , Ahmadi and Mehrdad ,2015).

Alfian (2013) investigated the utilization of a micro-blogging, Edmodo in particular, to be used as a tool in teaching writing to the tenth grade students of Al-Azhar. As the instrument, the researcher used triangulation technique. He did the observation, gave the questionnaire to the students, and did an interview with several students. The results revealed that the utilization of Edmodo micro-blogging in which the process approach used in its activity such as writing for an audience, peer review, self-editing and revising impacted the students writing quality.

Fauzi (2015) examined the use of Edmodo to increase the first graders' skill in composing recount text. The study used quantitative approach with pre-experimental design. The participants were 9 students from excellent program. Before starting the treatment, two similar tests were prepared as the pretest/posttest to find out students' writing skill in recount text at the beginning and at the end of the study. The finding showed significant differences between the result of pretest and posttest in favor of the posttest.

McClain, Brown and Price (2015) evaluated how an education-based social networking site affected student engagement with literature in a secondary English classroom. Twenty-two students from an 11<sup>th</sup> grade English class used Edmodo as a tool for role-playing literary characters. Findings revealed that students engaged in meaningful interactions with classmates as well as their respective characters during role-playing activities. In addition, digital tools such as Edmodo can provide a truly collaborative work space for students beyond the classroom walls, promote various avenues for constructive learning, and encourage higher order thinking skills.

Qalaja (2015) investigated the effectiveness of using Edmodo as a teaching and learning virtual class to the product writing approach on enhancing Palestinian 7<sup>th</sup> graders English writing skills and their attitudes towards writing .The participants were 50 EFL female students studying at Al Majda Wasella prep "B" Girls' School in Gaza. The tools of the study consisted of a writing skills test and writing attitudes scale.

Results revealed that there were statistically significant differences between the mean scores attained by the experimental group and that attained by the control group in the post writing skills test and writing attitudes scale in favor of the experimental group. This showed a remarkable improvement in English writing performance and attitudes of the experimental group students .

Shams-Abadi , Ahmadi and Mehrdad (2015) investigated the effect of Edmodo on EFL learners' writing performance. A quasi-experimental design was used in their study. The participants were 40 female advanced-level students attending advanced writing classes at Iranian English Institute. The students were randomly assigned to two groups, experimental and control. Edmodo was used in the experimental group. Results indicated that the use of Edmodo in writing was more effective in EFL learners' writing performance participating in the study.

Facebook is a website that allows users to interact and collaborate within a pre-defined virtual community. Irwin , Ball ,Desbrow and Leveritt (2012) defined it as an online communication tool allowing users to construct a public or private profile in order to connect and interact with people who are part of their extended social network. Also, Eren (2012) indicated that on Facebook, people from all ages can create their own profiles, write each other's walls and share their favorite photos and videos. It also has applications useful for teaching and learning. It is a technological tool which can nurture the student-teacher relationship by creating positive learning experiences for both parties.

Alias, Ab Manan, Yusof, and Pandian, (2012) investigated the effects of Language Learning Strategy (LLS) training using Facebook notes on the students' strategies use during the four stages of their writing process and academic writing performance. Forty students participated in the study. The design of the study was quasi-experimental with non-equivalent experimental and control group pre-tests and post-tests. Results revealed that the use of Facebook Notes as LLS training tool promotes the use of indirect LLS among college students in the study. Results showed that the experimental group learners use the strategies more frequently.

Eren (2012) investigated students' attitudes towards the use of SNS, Facebook in particular, in language classroom. The participants of the study were 48 undergraduate students at a university in Gaziantep,

Turkey. The instruments of the study included questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. Results revealed that students have a very positive attitude towards the use of Facebook activity as a supplement to language classroom, but traditional classroom based language learning still remains a backbone for language education.

Suthiwartnarueput and Wasanasomsithi (2012) explored the effects of using Facebook as a medium for grammar and writing discussions of low-intermediate EFL students. The data were collected from the students' utterances asking for explanations about English grammar and writing that were posted on Facebook, their gain scores in the pre-test and post-test, and interview responses. The findings showed a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the pre-test and the post-test. It was found that English grammar was worth promoting for discussions on Facebook because there were correlations between the gain scores in the grammar and writing parts. The students also had positive attitudes toward using Facebook as a means of learning grammar and writing.

Yunus and Salehi (2012) investigated students' perceptions on the effectiveness of Facebook groups for teaching and improving writing. The participants were 43 third year students, at the Faculty of Education, University Kebangsaan, Malaysia. The students' perceptions were measured through a questionnaire comprising 10 close-ended items and 3 open-ended ones. Students were required to participate in a Facebook group created by the researchers. Results showed that "Facebook group" is an effective tool in improving the students' writing skills, especially in the brainstorming of ideas before the actual writing.

Abdallah (2013) implemented a Community of Practice (COP) design facilitated by Facebook to integrate some new forms of online writing. Participants consisted of seventy 3rd-year EFL student teachers at Assiut University College of Education . Tasks were administered both face to face and online (mainly through Facebook). In response to them, participants contributed with posts and comments, which were qualitatively analyzed to inform the process of evaluating the intervention by establishing some conclusions in the form of design principles and lessons learned to be cycled back into future attempts within the same context.

Mali and Hassan (2013) investigate the level of acceptance of using Facebook as a learning tool among students in a Public University in Kuala Lumpur. The design of this study was a triangulation of quantitative and qualitative methods. A self-constructed questionnaire with (25) items was used to measure the perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness and students' attitude toward using Facebook as a learning tool. The survey was carried out to a purposive sampling where only students who used Facebook in learning were selected. Three students were selected for the interviews. Results indicated that there was no significant difference between male and female in their intention to use Facebook as a learning tool..

Shih (2013) explored the effect of incorporating blended learning with Facebook and peer assessment for English for Business Communication course among college students. The participants were 111 students from a public technological university. They were divided into three Facebook site groups. A mixed method consisting of qualitative and quantitative approaches was employed to analyze the collected data, including the pre- and post-tests, qualitative data of peer assessment on Facebook sites, interview, a student self-efficacy scale, and a self-developed satisfaction survey questionnaire. Results indicated that incorporating Facebook in the English for Specific Purposes (ESP) course can effectively assist college students in learning business communication English.

Wichadee (2013) explored Facebook with peer feedback in groups supports student learning, investigated the nature of feedback students received on their writing, and examined their attitudes towards the use of Facebook for peer feedback. The participants were 30 undergraduate students .. Data were collected from the first and final drafts of writing assignments, written peer comments, a questionnaire and an interview. The results revealed that the nature of students' feedback focused on content more than grammatical errors. However, quantitative analyses of the peer comments and revisions to the drafts showed that feedback given on Facebook had an effect on improving revised drafts. There was statistically significant improvement in the revised drafts which was linked to peer feedback. Finally, the analysis of interviews indicated positive attitude on the use of Facebook for peer feedback in the English class.

Bani-Hani1, Al-Sobh and Abu-Melhim (2014) investigated the perceptions and attitudes of Jordanian EFL students' at Irbid University College-Al-Balqa Applied University towards utilizing Facebook groups in teaching writing. They also investigated the role that Facebook groups play in enhancing the writing performance level and brainstorm ideas at the pre-writing stage. A survey consisting of ten questions was used to assess these factors. The participants were 42 EFL students at the department of English Language and Literature. Results revealed that Facebook groups can be effective in teaching EFL writing. Furthermore, results illustrated that students can develop their vocabulary by being exposed to fellow group members' posts, in addition to checking for misspelled words.

Cheng (2012) explored the potential language learning value of applying Twitter as a tool for reading and writing in a college setting in Taiwan. Participants completed pretests and posttests to assess reading and writing. Both of the groups experienced the same learning materials and teaching methods, but the non-Twitter group engaged in free-writing activities while the Twitter group used Twitter for major course writing exercises. Results revealed that Twitter-assisted learning had a significant positive influence on the experimental group's learning attitude.

Larreta-Azelain (2013) investigated the effects of microblogging on written foreign language learning. Twitter is used to analyze the usefulness of microblogging to improve students' motivation in writing because it enables users to post only short messages limited to 140 characters, so it is more suitable for the initial language level of students. The participants were university students at University of Distance Education. The instrument of the study was a questionnaire to determine student profiles, social networking habits and attitudes towards Web 2.0 tools for learning. Results revealed that Twitter facilitates students' writing processes in a foreign language.

### **Hypotheses of the Study:**

Based on the related studies and research questions, the following hypotheses were formulated:

1. There is a statistically significant difference between the mean score of the study participants in EFL writing skills on the pre-and post-

administration of the EFL writing skills test in favor of the post-administration.

2. There is a statistically significant difference between the mean score of the study participants in EFL writing sub-skills on the pre-and post- administration of the EFL writing skills test in favor of the post-administration.
3. There is a statistically significant difference between the mean score of the study participants in self-esteem on the pre-and post-administration of the self-esteem scale in favor of the post-administration.

## **Methodology :**

### **A. Participants of the Study**

Subjects of the present research consisted of thirty students (N=30). They were chosen randomly from second year students at Met-Kenana secondary school for girls, Qalubia Governorate, Egypt. The participants represented one group which taught through using Web based Social Learning Applications.

### **B. Design of the Study**

In mixed method, qualitative and quantitative methods are used simultaneously to analyze the research problems in detail . The mixed method has three designs of triangulation, explanatory and exploratory. In the current study, that of explanatory is employed. The explanatory design involves two steps. At the first step, quantitative data are gathered. Then, the qualitative data are used to analyze and explain the quantitative data. This design allows for explaining the quantitative data through the findings obtained by the qualitative data (Creswell, 2012). Concerning the quantitative aspect of the study, single group, pre- and post-test design was used. Therefore, the present research is a partially mixed research methodology. It combines both quantitative and qualitative methods of inquiry to help bridge the gap between quantitative and qualitative research.

### **C. Instruments of the Study**

In order to fulfill the purposes of the study, the following instruments were designed.

### **A .EFL Writing Skills Test**

The EFL writing skills test was prepared by the researcher to measure writing skills among second year students at Met-Kenana secondary school for girls, Qalubia Governorate, Egypt. It was used as a pre-post test. The test consisted of three questions (writing three essays) suitable for students' level and background knowledge (see appendix A). The students are required to write three essays. The time of the EFL writing skills test lasted one hour and half .It was counted through getting the mean between the fastest student and the lowest one in answering the test questions. The test was graded by the researcher through using Helwa (2013)'s rubric. The rubric consists of five parts; each part has three items ranging from "3" marks to "1" mark. The students were given "3" marks when their performance is high and "1" mark when their performance is low (see appendix B).

### **B. An EFL Self-Esteem Scale**

The researcher prepared an EFL self-esteem scale based on Rosenberg's standardized questionnaire of self-esteem to account for the degree of self-esteem among foreign language learners. The researcher made some modifications to facilitate the items to the students and the process of calculating the students' responses to the scale items. It consists of twenty (20) items. There is no right answer for any statement. The best answer is what they feel is true of themselves. Items are statements to which students respond are (1 = not at all ,2 = a little bit, 3 = somewhat ,4 = very much ,5 = extremely).See Appendix (C).

### **C .Semi-Structured Interview**

The interview was constructed to examine the importance of Web based Social Learning Applications among second year students at Met-Kenana secondary school for girls, Qalubia Governorate, Egypt and its effectiveness in developing EFL writing skills and self-esteem . The interview took the format of face to face semi-structured interview. The researcher interviewed students one time at the beginning of the study, a second time at the middle, and a third time at the end of the study, to

gain greater insight on their writing skills development and increase self-esteem, throughout the study. The researcher generally asked the pupils about their participation in the program. She used open ended questions to avoid responding with yes-no (See Appendix D). Five pupils participated in the interview and their responses were video recorded. The interview lasted for one hour. At the beginning of the interview, the researcher greeted the students and asked them to give brief self-introduction as a way to set the goal for the interview. Then, she told them the purpose of the interview and their own roles. If pupils did not understand any question, she could simplify it or change it. At the end of the interview, the researcher thanked the pupils for their participation.

### **Determining the Validity of the Research Instruments**

The EFL writing skills test, and self-esteem scale were submitted to a jury members (see appendix E), they were asked to determine the validity of the instruments in terms of clarity of instructions, items and its suitability for the students' level. They indicated that the test and the scale instructions were clear and suitable for students' levels and background knowledge. Therefore, they were considered valid measures of writing skills and self-esteem (Face Validity). To ensure the content validity of the test and the scale, they were developed in the light of a systematic and accurate review of literature and previous studies. This accurate and systematic review determined the general form of the scale and the test, questions and methods of correction. Therefore, the content of the test and the scale was representative of the skills that were intended to be measured. Thus, they were valid and having content validity.

### **Determining the Reliability of the Research Instruments**

The reliability of the instruments was measured by using the test-retest method. The instruments were administered to a group of second year students at Met-Kenana secondary school for girls, Qalubia Governorate, Egypt. Then, they were administered to the same group again after two weeks. The Pearson correlation between the two administrations was (0.88) at the 0.01 level. Therefore, the instruments were reliable.

### **A Program based on Some Web based Social Learning Applications**

For achieving the purpose of the research, the researcher designed a program based on some web based social learning applications. After assessing second year students' at Met-Kenana secondary school for girls, Qalubia Governorate, Egypt writing skills and self-esteem, the study sample attended the program based on some web based social learning applications. (See appendix F).

### **Objectives of Web based Social Learning Applications Program**

The program aimed at developing EFL writing skills and self-esteem among second year students at Met-Kenana secondary school for girls, Qalubia Governorate, Egypt.

### **Content of Web based Social Learning Applications Program**

The topics chosen for the program were selected from books and studies enriched with topics that motivate students. They contained variety of topics , situations and discussions designed for developing writing skills and self-esteem .They were suitable for the second year students' at Met-Kenana secondary school for girls, Qalubia Governorate, Egypt levels such as Al-Hattab(2006); Harmer (2007);Bell (2010); Fahim and Rad (2012);Agata (2013), Krauss and Boss(2013); Khansir and Abdolahi (2014).

### **Framework of Web based Social Learning Applications Program**

The treatment began in October 2015 and continued till 15<sup>th</sup> December 2015. The researcher prepared teacher's manual and trained the classroom teacher .The teacher met the students for two hours per week for twelve weeks and also communicated with them via Edmodo, Facebook, and Twitter. Week (1) was used for pre-testing and week (12) was used for post testing. Each session was devoted to the following: introduction, objectives, procedures, the role of the teacher and student and finally the performance. During the instructional procedures, different sessions had different learning goals and different methods were applied.

The program was taught to students by a teacher at the school through using the manual the researcher prepared. It lasted twelve weeks with eighteen instructional sessions and each session lasted for two hours. At the beginning of the program, the teacher introduced to the

students what they are going to do. First, she told them about the objectives of the program and what they are supposed to gain as a result of their participation in the program (Goal Setting). After that she told them about the importance of writing skills and self-esteem. Then, she began to introduce the concept of web based social learning applications and its importance for language learning and EFL writing skills and self-esteem.

Following the introduction of the program, the rest of the program were instructional sessions through which EFL writing skills and self-esteem were introduced .At the beginning of each session the teacher presented the objectives of the session, the teacher's role, the student's role, the instructional materials that will be used, the activities they will perform and ways of evaluating their progress .At the end of the each session, the teacher gave students some activities related to what they had learned in order to be sure that they mastered the skills in each session (formative evaluation). At the end of the program, the teacher assessed the students' achievement after implementing the program using the EFL writing skills test and self-esteem scale (summative evaluation).

### **The procedures of the Program**

In order to implement Web based Social Learning Applications Program. The program goes through certain steps as follows:-

- 1- The program was conducted in the first semester 2015 at Met-Kenana secondary school for girls, Qalubia Governorate, Egypt. It based on sending and exchanging e-mails, Facebook posts, Edmodo posts and tweets between students and the teacher.
- 2- The purpose was to provide the participants with an opportunity to practice writing skills through web based social learning application.
- 3- The program was divided into three stages: Preparation (two weeks), Collaboration (eight weeks), Presentation and evaluation (two weeks). At the Preparation stage, a short training was conducted regarding the program aims, Edmodo, Facebook and twitter. The participants were divided into six groups of five. They named their five groups as: Sunshine , Wishes, Bright Hope, Honesty and Future.
- 4- Collaboration started right after each group decided on their topics. The students were guided to communicate with their partners via Edmodo, Facebook and twitter from self-introductions to gathering

and providing information for their own writing. They researched their own topics in a step-by-step manner. They analyzed their tasks, distributed roles to each member, and then carried out the investigation with the help of their partners. They surfed the Net, evaluated the information collected and held intra-group and inter-group discussions on issues of common interest. They also helped each other in preparing reports and in constructing webpages or PowerPoint slides for final presentations.

- 5- The presentation week was the climax of the whole program. The multimedia presentation attracted the teacher and students.
- 6- The best work was selected and uploaded to Edmodo, Facebook group and twitter sites.
- 7- Students submitted to the teacher the final outcome .They asked to rewrite their writing until their intended message was clearly communicated. Teacher gave feedbacks on content (teaching approaches and methods), and language (structures and vocabulary). The feedback serves as guidance for correction. Common grammatical errors are listed and correct use of the structures is provided.
- 8- The students were required to post all their writings on Edmodo and Facebook Group or sending emails to their partners to save all their writing essays.
- 9- Teacher gathered students' reflections on the group processing whether or not groups function well in regards of effectiveness in contributing to collaborative efforts to complete the work.
- 10-Evaluation was held. All participants did self-assessment with checklists designed earlier for identifying new writing skills learned through the program. Group comments were given to each member on their participation, collaboration and contribution.
- 11-Throughout the program, the teacher visited students frequently and maintained individual email contact with them. The nature of the teacher's participation varied. She helped the students with their questions and discussed suggestions with them. She also took extensive field notes about what she observed in and outside class (Researcher's role).

## Findings of the Study :

### A . Quantitative Analysis of the Findings

The findings of the present research are presented in the light of the hypotheses of the research using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The findings are stated as follows:

#### Findings of Hypothesis (1)

The first hypothesis states "there is a statistically significant difference between the mean score of the study participants in EFL writing skills on the pre-and post- administration of the EFL writing skills test in favor of the post- administration ". Table (1) presents the students' mean scores, standard deviations, t -value and level of significance of the pre and post assessment of the study sample in EFL writing skills.

**Table (1):"t" test between the mean scores of the study sample in the post assessment of the EFL Writing Skills**

Skill	Assessment	N	Mean	S.D	T-Value	D.F	Sig.
EFL writing Skills	Pre	30	47.233	6.388	26.743	29	0.01
	Post	30	82.300	4.219			

Table (1) showed that the study sample outperformed in the post administration of the overall writing skills, where "t-value" is (26.743) which is significant at the (0.01) level .Thus, the first hypothesis was supported.

#### Findings of Hypothesis (2)

The second hypothesis states "there is a statistically significant difference between the mean score of the study participants in EFL writing sub-skills on the pre-and post- administration of the EFL writing skills test in favor of the post- administration ". Table (2) presents the students' mean scores, standard deviations, t -value and level of significance of the pre and post assessment of the study sample in EFL writing sub-skills (i.e. grammatical skills, mechanics skills, vocabulary choice skills, stylistic skills, organization skills).

**The second hypothesis has the following sub-hypotheses**

- There is a statistically significant difference between the mean score of the study participants in EFL grammatical skills on the pre-and post- administration of the EFL writing skills test in favor of the post-administration.
- There is a statistically significant difference between the mean score of the study participants in EFL mechanics skills on the pre-and post-administration of the EFL writing skills test in favor of the post-administration.
- There is a statistically significant difference between the mean score of the study participants in EFL vocabulary choice skills on the pre-and post- administration of the EFL writing skills test in favor of the post- administration.
- There is a statistically significant difference between the mean score of the study participants in EFL stylistics skills on the pre-and post-administration of the EFL writing skills test in favor of the post-administration.
- There is a statistically significant difference between the mean score of the study participants in EFL organization skills on the pre-and post- administration of the EFL writing skills test in favor of the post-administration.

**Table (2): "t" test between the mean scores of the study sample in the post assessment of the EFL writing Sub-Skills**

Skills	Assessment	N	Mean	S.D	T-Value	D.F	Sig.
<b>Grammatical Skills</b>	Pre	30	8.100	2.107	11.526	29	0.01
	Post	30	14.400	2.283			
<b>Mechanics Skills</b>	Pre	30	12.533	3.501	9.240	29	0.01
	Post	30	23.000	3.274			
<b>Vocabulary Choice Skills</b>	Pre	30	8.400	2.097	12.003	29	0.01
	Post	30	14.500	1.878			
<b>Stylistic Skills</b>	Pre	30	4.700	1.878	4.506	29	0.01
	Post	30	7.400	1.522			
<b>Organization Skills</b>	Pre	30	13.500	3.127	12.691	29	0.01
	Post	30	23.000	3.280			

Thus, table (2) indicated that the study participants were much better in the post application than the pre administration in EFL writing sub-skills where "t" value is (11.526) for EFL grammatical skills, (9.240) for mechanics skills, (12.003) for vocabulary choice skills, (4.506) for stylistic skills and (12.691) for organization skills which is significant at the (0.01) level. Therefore, the second hypothesis was confirmed.

### Findings of Hypothesis (3)

The third hypothesis states that there is a statistically significant difference between the mean score of the study participants in self-esteem on the pre-and post- administration of the self-esteem scale in favor of the post- administration. Table (3) presents the students' mean scores, standard deviations, t-value and level of significance of the pre and post assessment of the study sample in self-esteem.

**Table (3): "t" test between the mean scores of the study sample in the post application of the Self-esteem**

Item	Assessment	N	Mean	S.D	T-Value	D.F	Sig.
Self-Esteem	Pre	30	29.800	9.859	17.102	29	0.01
	Post	30	61.0667	1.2576			

Table (3) indicated that the mean scores of the study sample on the pre application are lower than that of the post administration, where "t-value" is (17.102) which is significant at the (0.01) level. Thus, the third hypothesis was supported. Before implementing the program most of the students were not confident enough and avoided writing. They did not have enough vocabulary, grammar and organization. After the implementation, they became motivated, confident and enjoyed writing. Therefore, the third hypothesis was confirmed.

### B . Qualitative Analysis of the Findings

At the beginning of the program, the students were afraid of writing and presenting their ideas and their writing was full of grammar mistakes, and the ideas were disorganized. After participating in web based social learning applications, students gained more confidence and began to write in a better way. They used suitable vocabulary and expressions while presenting their ideas. In the interview data, five

students had similar positive reaction towards using web based social learning applications. They clarified that in web based social learning applications everyone is contributing to move forward in a clear direction. Everyone works to achieve common, shared goals. They also worked together, collaborating and co-operating to make progress.

In a traditional writing class, students always feel afraid and inferior because they tend to assume that their audience is the teacher, who usually knows far more and pays more attention to students' grammatical errors. Therefore, they write with fear. Now, with a real and varied audience in this program, many participants reported: "I'm not afraid of writing anymore, sometimes even eager to write down what I'm thinking about", "I'm actually writing or typing my thoughts out faster and smoother". They even believed this program had "enhanced the clarity and creativity" in their writing. The students took over the responsibility for their own learning and for producing their writing essays. Thus, they became more active and autonomous learners.

To understand how students perceived the importance of web based social learning applications in developing writing skills and self-esteem, some interview questions were asked. Examples from the researcher's transcripts provided insight into the students' perception about the activities in web based social learning applications. Students stated that their writing skills were improved because of the various activities that increased the desire to write were developed. Therefore, it can be suggested that the steps of the web based social learning applications included activities that are effective in improving the writing skills and self-esteem. The view of student (1) in this regard is as follows:

**Student (1): "My writing improved. The activities in the program are well prepared. They made writing very easy and enjoyable.**

The students found web based social learning applications, helpful in improving their self-esteem in writing, since the process was enjoyable, the activities evoked curiosity, and the activities were different and original. Therefore, it included activities that are effective

in improving self-esteem towards writing. The example of student (2) in this regard is as follows:

**Student (2): "Before participating in the program, I did not like writing. But the activities were very enjoyable. I played games and cooperated with my peers. After participation, I liked writing".**

Thus, the students emphasized that they had the opportunity to learn from their own experiences and learn by doing.

**Student (3):" Using Facebook and twitter helped me a lot in writing. I can cooperate with my teacher easily without being afraid from anything.**

The students often expressed that they enjoyed many things related to the process. Their statements showed that their enjoyment stems from satisfaction about producing something and the entertaining nature of the activities themselves. The following is an example:-

**Student (4): "It was funny to use Facebook, Twitter and Edmodo for publishing my writing. Thus, my parents and all friends will see it.**

**Student (5): "I feel more self-confident than before. I can write without hesitation".**

### **Discussion of the Results:**

The primary purpose of this study was to develop EFL writing skills and self-esteem among second year students at Met-Kenana secondary school for girls, Qalubia Governorate, Egypt through using web based social learning applications program. The program included variety of tasks and activities for helping students to enhance their EFL writing skills and self-esteem .The results of the study revealed that the program proved to be statistically and educationally significant in developing EFL writing skills and self-esteem among second year students at Met-Kenana secondary school for girls, Qalubia Governorate, Egypt.

In order to get students engaged, the teacher asked them to free write about difficult challenges they have experienced. After that, they were drawing on their own life experiences. Once students started sharing their free writing; they noticed common themes in their classmates' stories. Students formed teams around shared challenges,

such as making new friends. Then, the teams had a mutual reason to work together and to listen to each other's ideas. It takes a safe, respectful classroom for students to feel comfortable sharing their writing with peers, especially when topics get personal .

Before the teacher asks students to open up in their writing, she has to make sure they feel comfortable, they respect one another, and they will not be put down if they honestly share ideas. The teacher started building this collaborative environment well .Then, teams were ready to start collaboratively writing their own stories. To engage creativity, teacher introduced a variety of visual thinking tools to help students generate original plots. In her class, she makes regular use of storyboarding, plot diagramming, and other methods of capturing ideas in quick sketches. Then, the students shared their reflections on Facebook and Edmodo. Before they moved on to their final drafts, each group took time to invite critique from their peers. The teacher relied on comments to polish their writing, improve clarity, and fine-tune their illustrations. Their attention to detail shows in the final product. Both students and teacher made an important discovery. The process of writing and revising based on feedback is similar to the way visual artists work. Teams had to evaluate multiple suggestions and come to consensus about the best way to convey their ideas, drawing on their expertise in two disciplines. These results are consistent with the results of the study conducted by Krauss and Boss (2013).

Also, the previous results are consistent with results of a study conducted by Leonard (2012) who clarified that social networking tools become purposeful to the writing process because they significantly change and add to the process itself. Regarding prewriting, the use of the social networking tool changed and added to the process. The tool was used asynchronously to post brainstorming. Asynchronous online posting significantly changes the brainstorming stage of prewriting because students can post at any time and their posts can be viewed by others. Therefore, students can share each other's ideas and gain direction for their own ideas from the posts.

From the results, Facebook, Twitter and Edmodo, as means for language learning, effectively enhanced the writing abilities of the EFL students. The students had a higher mean score in the post-test.

Facebook, Twitter and Edmodo built positive self-esteem of students in language learning. The students' grammatical and writing competence was enhanced when they were given opportunities to use Facebook for discussions. They wrote better using more meaningful contents within a well-organized paragraph in the post-test. Other than such improvement, the students also had positive self-esteem toward this social networking site. In their opinion, Facebook was an alternative and up-to-date learning tool which was easily accessible. It provided convenience and more choices for students to study English grammar, thus developing their writing competence. They overcame their shyness and began to ask people questions on Facebook. They could leave messages for the teacher or other Facebook users. They could practice their English writing before they took the writing test. Thus, Facebook is an effective medium for language teaching and learning. The present study found that most of the students had discussions about sentence structure on Facebook, Twitter and Edmodo, and this is possibly one of the reasons that helped them improve their writing. This is because sentence structure is an important part of effective writing.

### **Conclusions:**

The results of the study revealed that the participants' EFL writing skills developed after the implementation of web based social learning applications. In addition, their self-esteem increased, they became much more motivated and encouraged to express their own confidently without fearing. The effectiveness of web based social learning applications may be due to the various activities, tasks and strategies the researcher presented to the students. Through the implementation of web based social learning applications, major findings of the study were considered as the students' chances for learning by doing and experiences, their belief for better learning and development of learning skills with fun and enjoyment. Moreover, their emphasis on certain personal developments such as thinking, self-confidence, communication skills and team spirit and their consideration of instructor as a guide for learning. In conclusion, in spite of some limitations expressed by the students, when considering the advantages and positive outcomes of the program, it is clear that the program has the potential to develop intended personalities. It was proved that teaching writing skill to the students by the help of web based social learning applications was more successful than the

traditional teaching .It showed progress in students' essay writing skills in terms of content and organization, mechanics of writing, considerable changes in strengthening the learners' cooperation to write their essays and their self-esteem improved .

Using SNSs such as Facebook is widely used all over the world by people including students. Facebook is currently the fastest growing and the most preferred social networking site in the world. It is thought that adding educational games in such a popular social site can substantially contribute to ease the communication of students and increase students' motivation for learning. Students continuously interacting in Facebook will possibly benefited from educational games for their learning. With Facebook, more meaningful learning environment can be created and comment feature makes the learning process more easy and fun. Also ,Facebook, Twitter and Edmodo allow students to discuss with peers, give feedback and comment on the writing activities either synchronously or asynchronously.

Therefore, it can be concluded that using technology in writing classes provide opportunities for students to hand their written work to the teacher without the need for any face-to-face interaction. Therefore, it can be observed that access to the online tools can provide opportunities to improve the writing ability, as it provides easy access to online sources and enables learners to compare their written essays with other classmates in their group and other groups, to have collaborative activity, and to keep in touch with the teacher and other learners any time they wish. Collaborative learning can increase students' interest in learning, especially when the students are actively exchanging and negotiating ideas, engaging in discussion and taking responsibility for their learning.

### **Recommendations of the Study:**

In the light of previous results, the following recommendations could be presented:

- Teachers of English language should be trained on using web based social learning applications, while teaching English to their students in different educational stages.
- English language teacher should emphasize the development of the students' writing skills in the early educational stages to develop them in the following stages.
- Curriculum designers should make use of web based social learning applications when designing English language courses and overcoming any teaching or learning problems.

### **Suggestions for Further Research:**

Based on the findings of the present research, the following implications for further research are suggested:-

- Investigating the effectiveness of web based social learning applications in English language learning among students teachers at University level.
- Clarifying the influence of web based social learning applications on other language skills such as speaking.
- Investigating the effectiveness of web based social learning applications in decreasing students' speaking anxiety.
- Clarifying the effect of using other strategies on developing students'

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## المستخلص باللغة العربية

### استخدام بعض تطبيقات التعلم الإجتماعى القائم على الإنترنت فى تنمية مهارات الكتابة والتقدير الذاتى فى اللغة الإنجليزية لدى طلاب المرحلة الثانوية

يهدف البحث الحالى الى توضيح فاعلية استخدام بعض تطبيقات التعلم الإجتماعى القائم على الإنترنت فى تنمية مهارات الكتابة والتقدير الذاتى فى اللغة الإنجليزية لدى طلاب المرحلة الثانوية. ويعد هذا البحث من البحوث المختلطة / المدمجة التى دمجت أساليب البحث الكمية والكيفية معا. وتكونت عينة الدراسة من ثلاثون طالبة تم اختيارهم عشوائيا من طلاب الصف الثانى الثانوى من مدرسة ميت كنانة الثانوية للبنات بمحافظة القليوبية , جمهورية مصر العربية. هذا وقد تم اختبار عينة الدراسة قبل اجراء المعالجة وبعد تطبيق البرنامج القائم على تطبيقات التعلم الإجتماعى القائم على الإنترنت. واشتملت ادوات الدراسة على اختبار فى مهارات الكتابة ومقياس فى تقدير الذات ومقابلة شبه منظمة. وأشارت نتائج البحث الى وجود فروق ذات دلالة احصائية بين درجات الطلاب (عينة الدراسة) فى القياس القبلى- البعدى فى مهارات الكتابة والتقدير الذاتى فى اللغة الانجليزية لصالح القياس البعدى . وترجع هذه النتائج الى فاعلية استخدام تطبيقات التعلم الإجتماعى القائم على الإنترنت فى تنمية تلك المهارات.

### الكلمات المفتاحية :

تطبيقات التعلم الإجتماعى القائم على الإنترنت - مهارات الكتابة فى اللغة الإنجليزية - تقدير الذات.