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In Teaching English as a Foreign Language

**Investigating the effect of choice and interest on EFL learners' writing
performance on Curriculum-Based Assessment: Written Expression
(A Case of Iranian EFL Learners)**

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Abstract

Despite the growing popularity and utilization of Curriculum-Based Assessment for assessing students' academic skills and progress monitoring, little attention has been devoted to the area of choice and interest on EFL learners' writing performance. The purpose of this study is to explore whether choice and interest level in a story starter topic have an effect on students' writing performance. The participants of this study were 100 EFL learners (50 male and 50 female) among EFL students of Zabol University. The data was collected through interest and choice CBM-WE probes. Six CBA-WE story starters appropriate for EFL learners from AIMSweb (2008) were used as materials using production-dependent, production independent, and accuracy scores. Then the data was analyzed through data analysis procedures. The mean score for each gender specific or gender neutral story starter and for each interest level showed that as expected, choice of a story starter and Interest level in story starter topic were effective on EFL learners' writing performance. It was observed that there were differences between male and female in using CBA-Written Expression probes. The results indicated that when no choice was given, girls performed better than boys. However, when given a choice of story starter topics, boys' performance on the CBA measures was almost the same as girls' performance. For each one of the effects of gender interaction and type of story starter and also for the effect of gender interaction and interest level, a two way Anova was conducted . The result showed that the interaction between gender and type of story starter were not significant. In addition, higher interest in story starter topics leads to higher scores as well. Moreover, frequency of story starter selected by participants showed gender differences in the choice of story starter.

Key words: Curriculum-based measurement, writing performance, writing probe