Rubrics-based Revision as an Indicator of EFL Writing Quality

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Abstract
Given the heightened significance attached to revision as a feature of the writing of achieving students and expert writers, this study attempted to integrate it into an advanced Saudi EFL writing classroom as an instructional intervention to improve the composing of 15 female students enrolled for the course ENG312: Advanced Essay Writing at Majma‘ah University. At the beginning of the first term of the academic year 2016/2017, a pretest was administered to the participants to determine their current performance level. For nine weeks to follow, the participants were introduced and trained to use 6 rubrics pertaining “cause and effect” essay. At the end of the term a post-test was conducted to measure the participants’ progress based on the use of rubrics to revise their texts. Analysis of pretest and post-test scores showed no significant improvement in the participants’ performance. However, evidence from qualitative data indicated that the intervention remarkably succeeded in reducing the participants’ writing fears and, thus, positively affected their attitudes towards writing and towards themselves as writers.

Keywords: revision, intervention, novice writers, professional writers, pre-writing, draft.

Introduction
That writing is the most demanding academic activity is a widely accepted and well substantiated view. It is a predicament that not only afflicts normal and underachieving students, but also gives nightmares to professional writers (Widdowson, 1983; Harris et al, 2002; Harris et al, 2003; Troia & Graham, 2003; Santangelo et al, 2008). However, while expert writers use self-regulation strategies such as planning, revising and drafting, to manage their writing, student writers, specially struggling ones, suffer from negative physiological reactions to writing (e.g., unpleasant feelings, nervousness and tension) and behavioural anxiety as evidenced by their tendency to avoid, withdraw and procrastinate in completing writing tasks (Troia & Graham, 2003, p. 78). Troia & Graham also assert that such writing challenges occur in “classrooms that do not effectively incorporate best practices” which might result in creating “anxiety, avoidance and frustration for those who teach it” (ibid). Moreover, teachers’ frustration at their students’ failure to make progress in their writing ability can persuade them to “succumb to the old thinking that writers are

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born, not taught” (Kirby & Liner, 2013, p. 11). Contrary to the teachers’ frustration argument is the position that “students have unique thoughts and language in their minds, that they have personal experiences and ideas worth sharing” (ibid). Indeed, the relevant literature abounds in a variety of instructional interventions devised to address writing challenges that have subsequently been proved to be effective in producing fluent, independent, self-regulated and goal-oriented student writers (Harris, 2002).

Characterization of literacy challenges occurring across the globe typically applies to writing pedagogy at Majma’ah University (MU). All things considered, a recent study has made strong claims that MU instructors were unaware of theories underlying writing pedagogy, and could not therefore be expected to provide appropriate support to enhance students’ composing skills (Ezza, 2017). Such a critical stance can function as an early warning system to draw the attention of decision making circles to EFL writing crisis. Fortunately, there is a growing interest in introducing best instructional practices into MU writing classrooms. For instance, Al-Huqail (2016) conducted a study on the impact of the use of MU learning management system, known technically as Desire to Learn (D2L), on the students’ performance in a writing course. The study findings indicated that students who had received blended instruction outperformed their peers in the traditional classroom. Also, Ezza et al. (2019) investigated the effect of three online instructional interventions, i.e., self-revision, track changes feature and multiple drafting, on the quality of the students’ writing, which resulted in significant writing gain. The current study is a follow-up of these MU-based studies. It intensively employs and integrates self-revision into mainstream teaching to measure its effect on the students’ writing. In that connection, the study seeks to achieve three objectives: to popularize writing culture among the students, to produce self-regulated community of student writers and to encourage writing instructors to provide more instructional support to their students. In line with these objectives, there are two questions that the study intends to answer:

i. How effective is self-revision in enhancing students writing at Majma’ah University?

ii. How do the students perceive of the use of rubrics-based self-revision as a writing strategy?

**Conceptual Background**
Of all writing processes, i.e., planning, drafting, editing and publishing, revision is held to be the most significant task as evidenced by the huge scholarship devoted to it. Equally indicative of the central role that revision plays in the production of texts is the view that writing is fundamentally revising and vice-versa (Anzidei, 2002; Allal et al, 2004). Thus, viewing writing and revising as two facets of the same literacy truth persuaded Cashdan et al (1996, p.260) to assume that each writer has two personalities: A and B; corresponding to the writer and reviser respectively. So, while A is “creative, impetuous, willful, emotional and sloppy”, B is “argumentative, self-righteous, cautious, rational, reflective, perfective and ambitious.” If this analysis is correct, it would be plausible to maintain that revision embodies most of the complexities inherent in the composing process.

Generally speaking, “revision” is conceived as a process whereby a writer introduces changes into a written product to improve it (Kobayshi & Rinnert, 2001; Piolat, 2006; Haar, 2006; Barkaoui, 2007). However, “revision” is not as simple and straightforward as the definition suggests. Although it was introduced as part and parcel of the writing process in the 1960s, it currently seems to have developed into an independent field of enquiry that amounts to a “belief system” with its own problems, hypotheses, methodology and discourse that might not always be directly related to the writing classroom. For the most part, revision research has moved away from classroom environment to focus on the writing of professionals who are not originally classified as writers (Murray, 1982; Sommers, 1980a & b; Horning and Robertson, 2006).

The revision process is partially reflected in the several antonyms that researchers used to discuss the scope of revision. The use of such antonyms as local vs global, surface vs substantive and linear vs recursive informs of the nature of revision and whether it is conducted by novice or expert writers. More precisely, novice writers revise to eliminate local or surface errors of grammar, vocabulary and mechanics in their completed texts. Revisionists, just cited, conceive of such textual modification as mere editing, which results from a composing model that approaches writing as a three-stage activity, consisting of pre-writing, writing and re-writing. As the last stage indicates, revision is conducted after completing a first draft. Sommers (1980a, p. 379) contends that separating revision from the writing process reduces it to an afterthought and “makes the study of revision impossible.” By contrast, revision proper characterizes the writing of professionals, which is widely conceived to attend to global features of the text in a recursive manner. These include
purpose, audience and organization of the text (Wallace & Hayes, 2001; Kobayshi & Rinnert, 2001; Haar & Horning, 2006; Barkaoui, 2007). Also, unlike revision conducted by novice writers, this type of revision is recursive in nature. That is, it consists of a series of activities where “details are added, dropped, substituted or reordered according to their sense of what essay needs for emphasis and proportion.” (Sommers, 1980, p. 385). Moreover, professional revision is recursive in the sense that it takes place at all writing stages as writers "generate, evaluate, reformulate and refine their writing goals, ideas, plans and texts in their attempt to discover and appropriate intended meanings." (Barkaoui, 2007, p. 84). According to Horning (2006, p. 117-119) such sophisticated practice of revision is given rise by three types of awareness that professional writers have: metarhetorical awareness (awareness of themselves as writers), metastrategic awareness (awareness of writing strategies that work for them to complete a task) and metalinguistic awareness (awareness of features of the written text (e.g., phonological features, structural issues, tone and formality).

Apparently, novice writers cannot handle professional revision for several reasons. First, research asserts that novice writers are not sufficiently informed about revision task definition. In other words, they are not aware of revision as conceived by professional writers (Wallace and Hayes, 2006; Haar, 2006). Evidence from classroom research ensures that there were instances of instructional practices that could not assist students to grasp and thus apply such revision concept. For instance, Petrosky (1977); as cited in Guslain (1988, p.9), reports that “freshmen seldom or never meet with their teachers in conferences or even submitted a working draft for reaction or advice.” Also, Sommers (1982) maintains that teachers’ comments on the students’ writing were found to be confusing and in most cases conveyed contradictory message to the students.

Second, even if novice writers are aware of what constitutes revision, they would lack knowledge of linguistic conventions and how texts are structured to convey intended information (Barkaoui, 2007, p. 84). Third, Kietlinska (2006, p. 68) observes that ESL students in the US “do not fully understand the academic audiences and writing conventions, so it is hard for them to revise in a way that would conform to these conventions.” Fourth, novice writers are widely conceived to be unfamiliar with multiple drafting since they have not been taught to do so. Thus, they tend to view revision as an institutional punishment to complicate their attempt to acquire higher grades (Murray, 1982; Kietlinska, 2006; Al-Hazmi & Schofield, 2007).
Yet, novice writers can overcome these revision challenges so that they can not only introduce major modifications into their texts, but also reconsider their view of revision as punitive, instructional measure, provided they receive appropriate apprenticeship to acquire revision skills. According to Horning and Robertson (2006, p. 54), acquisition of revision skills may result from explicit instruction and/or “extensive writing experience.” Also, Scardamalia & Bereiter (1983), as cited in Wallace & Hayes (1991, p. 55), developed “procedural facilitation” to help students to evaluate their composing attempts, and, thus, revise where necessary. It consisted of a number of statements including “people may not believe this”, “I think this could be made more clearly”, and “I would better give an example.” Harris et al (2003, p. 9) use the term “self-instruction and error correction” to refer to a similar process employed to improve students’ texts. It consists of three statements: “have I used all my parts? Oops I missed one; better add it in!”

Word processing is also proposed as a powerful revision strategy that students can be trained to apply to their writing. Eyman & Reilly (2006, p. 102) report that meta-analysis of research about the impact of word processing on the students’ writing indicated that research published between 1992-2002 revealed that the use of computer in writing produced more changes than the use of pen and pencil on a paper. All things considered, word processing can enable the students to revise globally by cutting a text of any length and pasting it in a new position in the document being composed. Students can also be equipped with track changes feature which is particularly useful in peer revision. In other words, “the reviewer can insert recommendations directly into a text” that the writer may “accept” or “reject” (p. 105). Finally, and most importantly, students should receive instruction in writing with a given reader in mind. While the writing audience is one of the major components of global revision, researchers seem to attach heightened significance to the role it plays in the revision process. It is conceived as a partial reflection of the writer and “functions as a critical and productive collaborator (Sommers, 1980, 385). Researchers concern with the audience has resulted in the formulation of the concept of “reader-based prose” which, unlike “writer-based prose”, i.e., writing for oneself, implies the writer’s willingness to revise (Flower, 1981, p. 62).

Robert Cormier (n.d.) is widely quoted reflecting that “the beautiful part of writing is that you don’t have to get it right the first time, unlike, say, brain surgery. You can always do it better, find the exact word, the apt phrase, the leaping simile.” Indeed, multiple drafting abstain writers from sending and/or printing a document “before attending to possible errors in form, content and
organization” which can be “a source of embarrassment for the writers or annoyance for their readers” (Kasule & Lunga, 2010, p. 62). To date, extensive, groundbreaking research has been undertaken to inform of the best revision practices. Researchers have even investigated the revision habits of professionals, e.g., secretaries, lawyers, doctors, etc., to decide if they could benefit instructional practices in the writing classroom. However, despite their insightful pedagogical implications, there are certain revision trends that this paper warns against. First, research findings may outrun lower level writing courses in which revision concepts such as “development” and “organization” mean nothing more than adding a few sentences to support a topic sentence. Needless to say, at such a level, most revision activities will focus on the local features of the paragraph. Second, revision can be investigated by academics who had no previous writing experience. In other words, such researchers might not have taught or researched writing; but have chosen to investigate revision because its literature has appealed to them. Third, texts produced in different disciplines are maintained to be rhetorically different (Bazerman et al, 2005; Nesi & Gardner, 2012). Therefore, it is doubtful whether revision studies conducted in various professions could serve writing pedagogy.

**Method**

**Participants**

The study participants were 15 Arabic-speaking, fifth level female students, enrolled for the course ENG312: Advanced Writing offered by the Department of English at College of Education. They had already successfully completed two writing courses: ENG125 (Writing 1) and ENG221 (writing 2), which functioned as prerequisites to the current course. The participants have been in the EFL classroom for about twelve years, starting as from grade four of the primary education. As English majors, the participants should successfully complete 142 credit hours that pertain to three different branches of knowledge: English language (98 credit hours), College requirements (32 credit hours) and University requirements (12 credit hours) to graduate with a bachelor of Arts and Education in English. It should be noted that the participants were trained in four English language teaching domains: English language skills, English linguistics, English literature and translation (English/Arabic translation and vice-versa).
Instruments

Two instruments were used to collect data for the study: a test and an interview. A pre- and post-test were conducted at weeks 4 and 11 of the second term of the academic year 2016/2017 respectively. Pre-test was administered to determine the current composing skills among the participants while the post-test was administered to assess the effect of the intervention on the students' performance; the intervention consisted of explicit instruction in the use of 6 rubrics that formed the rhetorical focus of Unit 3 (Cause and Effect) of Davis & Liss (2006): mechanics, grammar, cause-and-effect signal words, short quotations, layout and conditionals. The rubrics were posted on the University learning management system after they had been approved by referees. The participant could write on the topic selected from the textbook, i.e., “happiness” or choose their own topics but they should attend to the rhetorical focus of the unit. After the first draft, they were required to revise their own texts, using the rubrics. The post-test was scheduled on week 14 but owing to the national change of study plan, it was shifted to week 11. Although the test question was selected from the same course textbook, and can for this reason be considered valid, writing rubrics were listed and emailed to five independent referees along with a copy of the unit to ensure that all the rubrics were included in the unit. Inter-rater reliability was calculated to measure the consistency of the scores assigned by (two) raters, resulting in agreements of 73% and 80% for pre-test and post-test respectively. As to the interview, it was meant to collect qualitative data for the study. It was administered in week 9. It particularly targeted the participants' reaction to the intervention. Several open-ended questions were used for this purpose.

Procedure

Given the fact that the study was conducted as within-subjects design, the participants were introduced to the intervention, i.e., the assessment rubrics, in week four to determine the degree to which they could affect the students’ composing competence by the end of the course. Administration of the intervention took 8 weeks, i.e., from week 4 to week 11. The rubrics were introduced in week 4, sufficiently discussed and then posted on the University learning management system so that participants can study in and off campus. Participants were regularly reminded and closely supervised in their use of the rubrics in three darfting stages.
Results

Paired t-test was used to analyze the quantitative data of the study despite the small size of the sample and thus its relevance to non-parametric tests such as Mann Whitney and Kruskal-Wallis tests. However, unlike these tests, which operate on independent samples, paired t-test typically compares mean scores of the same sample calculated before and after intervention. Table 1 details the participants’ performance in pre-test and post-test while table 2 compares mean scores obtained from both tests.

Table 1: Pre-test and Post-test results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Pre-test</th>
<th>Post-test</th>
<th>gain</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>81</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>17</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 shows slight gain for all participants, but it does not inform about the magnitude of the effect of intervention on their performance. Thus, need arose for the application of t-test to compare mean scores of the sample before and after intervention.
Table 2: T-test Paired Two Sample for Means

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Var. 1</th>
<th>Var. 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>63.53333</td>
<td>69.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variance</td>
<td>162.4095</td>
<td>133.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>0.94784</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesized Mean Difference</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Df</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t Stat</td>
<td>-5.73571</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P(T&lt;=t) one-tail</td>
<td>2.58E-05</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t Critical one-tail</td>
<td>1.76131</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this table, Var.= variable; df = degree of freedom; t Sta= test Statistic; p=p-value; t Critical= Test Critical Value.

Table 2 reveals that both p-value and t critical value are greater than the hypothesized mean difference; so, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected. This result indicates that there is no significant difference between the two mean scores (63.5 & 69.6) obtained from pre-test and post-test. Therefore, it is obvious that intervention was not successful in improving the participant's performance despite the slight performance gain reported in table 1.

Regarding quantitative data, the participants were interviewed to know their reaction to the instructional intervention and assessment method. Below is their feedback classified into four categories:

1. Appreciation of instructional transparency

   Participants expressed their admiration for transparent instruction; they were particularly highly satisfied with the lecturer’s choice to share her assessment criteria with them. As a result, some participants voiced their enthusiasm for adopting the same teaching and assessment method in their future career:

   i. “It has been a new experience; I never knew how teacher evaluate me.”
   ii. “It is really my first time to know why I missed a mark here or there; I have always felt sad about how writing teachers cut marks when I don’t understand why?”
   iii. “I will use the rubric system in my future career as a teacher.”
2. Positive attitudes

The participants reacted positively to both intervention and rubric-based assessment:

iv. “I think, yes, it is a successful way to teach us this way, thank you for it.”

v. “I learned more from rubrics, because I know the teacher gives specific marks for, for example punctuation; I try to practice about it or go online and read about it”

vi. “I don’t prefer writing because I knew I was not good enough for it; every time I take a test, I don’t pass it; this time I know how marks are divided, so it is easy for me to know how to study, what points to focus on”

3. Confidence

Rubrics-based instruction and assessment helped the participants to be more confident in themselves as writers:

vii. “It is more interesting to know the teacher’s expectations; I’m more confident now.”

viii. “I think I gained confidence, I didn’t expect to write a long essay.”

4. Overcoming writing fears

The high degree of instructional transparency enabled the participants to overcome their writing fears:

ix. “I made me less stressed to read about division of marks.”

x. “knowing my mistakes made me stressed at first, then when I talked to you teacher and you explained to me my mistakes, I felt released”

Discussion

The decision to use a one-tailed test to analyze the study data was grounded on the theories and findings of revision research. Indeed, the literature review section extensively reported that revision was not only an effective tool employed by expert writers, it also revealed that explicit instruction in revision strategies could positively affect students’ composing skills. However, there were at least two reasons that revision was not significantly successful in enhancing the participants’ writing.

First, the unit used for teaching and testing the students’ composing skills was not a natural extension of the same unit in the previous writing course, i.e., cause and effect. It was reported in the method section that the participants had previously studied a short essay course that functioned as a prerequisite for the current course. However, it did not include “cause and effect”, which could have otherwise enabled the participants to employ their familiarity with its rhetorical focus to acquire more advanced composing skills. Transfer of previously acquired writing skills are widely conceived to develop the students’ writing (DePalma&Ringer, 2010; Driscoll & Wells, 2012).
What is more, it is convincingly maintained that learning to write “without transfer of what has been learned is almost, always unproductive and inefficient” (Goldstone & Day, 2012, p. 1). Both forms of transfer; i.e., static and active transfer, as detailed by Slomp (2012, p. 82) could have improved the participants’ composing skills, if they had been sufficiently trained in “cause and effect” in the previous writing course.

It is unfortunate that the MU English syllabus suffers from similar writing-specific complications that has been negatively complicating the instructional attempts to enhance the students’ composing competence. For instance, Ezza et al (2019) maintain that vocabulary, grammar and reading courses do not directly provide appropriate input for the writing courses. In other words, MU English departments prescribe textbooks from Interactions Access to teach grammar, vocabulary and reading courses, but use textbooks from a different series, i.e. Effective Academic Writing, to teach writing courses. For the most part, the language focus sections in the latter are entirely irrelevant to the content of the former; thus, complicating the students’ job in using previously acquired knowledge to enhance their performance in current tasks.

Second, the writing course consisted of five units that could not virtually be taught in 45 hours unless the participants were exempted from doing writing assignments. This situation directly affected the need to sufficiently produce multiple drafts of the topic chosen for the test. Indeed, the fact that the writing process is an open-ended activity often results in failure to complete prescribed components before or at the end of the term. As a result, many MU students repeatedly complained in orientation classes that they had not practiced writing in a way that could qualify them for the subsequent writing course. This interpretation relates to the ongoing debate regarding instructors’ choice to teach the syllabus or teach the students. It particularly relates to the distinction made by Darling-Hamond (1997) between institutional teaching (i.e., literal commitment to the course plan regardless of whether the students have mastered the relevant skills) and professional teaching (i.e., focus on the students’ understanding of the course content). The issue was then posted on researchgate.net in mid 2017 to explore the preference of teaching professionals. Ian Kennedy, an independent researcher contributed the following insightful remarks:
Yes, we assume that the lecturer has enough time to lecture to the average student all the topics in the course plan before the final exam. This will be the case generally in an established course (one that has had time to settle down and has no rough edges). The design of the curriculum packs in material to meet the capability only of the average student. Usually no textbook matches the course plan perfectly, and it is the job of the lecturer to omit material that is irrelevant, interpret material that is ambiguous, augment the textbook with Web and other resources, and explain difficult parts. Still the curriculum is packed. However, there are some brighter students who are bored by the seemingly slow pace of the lecturer. They hopefully read more deeply, to fill their recommended study hours for the subject…

In an attempt to partially respond to Kennedy’s contribution, El-Sadig Ezza (a co-author of this paper) agreed that students' education should always be a top priority. However, in the Saudi context, institutions do not seem to be much concerned about learning outcomes (LOs) although LOs themselves are a quality assurance standard. At the end of each term, faculty will be required to submit course reports to detail the extent to which they have taught all contents the textbook prescribed as a main source for the course at hand, indicating whether or not LOs have been achieved. Usually faculty tends to please their superiors by reporting completion of all course items. Because there is much to teach in the syllabus, classes do not provide enough practice for acquisition to take place. Students also add to the instructional dilemma. Because most of them care only for obtaining high grades, they usually discourage teachers’ attempt to proceed with course items. Often whole sections would decide to sacrifice about 20% of the classes each term to slow down the delivery of the course.

An alternative interpretation is to maintain that intervention functions maximally with underachieving students. By MU standards, the study participants could not be so classified as their performance in the pretest was above average. In fact, the participants’ mean performance in the same test is greater than the minimum pass mark of the official final exams, i.e., 64% vs. 60% respectively; and MU instructors would consider their mission successful if their students could achieve similar results. This interpretation receives a strong support from the findings of a recent study conducted at MU. That is, Alhuqail (2016) compared the performance of the underachieving Community College students (experimental group) with their more achieving counterparts at the College of Education (control group) based on the integration of online instruction into mainstream teaching of a writing course at Community College. Posttest results indicated that experimental group significantly outperformed the control group; thus, confirming the positive effect of intervention in enhancing the performance of underachieving students.
However, some writing instructors might wish to argue that given the satisfactory performance of the participants in the pretest, it would be pointless to introduce the instructional intervention, which only resulted in wasting the students’ time; that could have otherwise been used to enrich other activities. This argument can be refuted on two grounds. First, the phrase “functions maximally” used in the previous paragraph should be interpreted cautiously because the success or failure of intervention cannot always be determined by quantitative measures. In other words, as a form of best instructional practices, the intervention can positively result in changing the participants’ attitudes towards the composing process and themselves as writers (Harris et al, 2002; Troia & Graham, 2003; Graham, 2008; Santangelo & Olinghouse, 2009; Martinez et al, 2011). Moreover, Rahman (2017, p. 106) reports that the quantitative data does not always account for “how social reality is shaped and maintained, and how people interpret their actions”. Thus, because the statistical accuracy of the tool used to analyze the data of this study failed to capture the participants’ feelings and experience with the intervention, there arose the need to interview the participants to elicit facts that could not be handled quantitatively. Responses to the interview question (listed in the results section) indicate that the intervention was successful in producing positive attitudes towards writing. Also, it enabled the participants to overcome their writing fears and, therefore, increased their confidence in themselves as writers:

Similar results are not hard to find in the Saudi context. For instance, Jahin (2012) attempted to reduce writing apprehension among Saudi EFL students through peer review process. Comparison of the written product of the experimental and control groups demonstrated significantly less writing apprehension and, thus, better writing performance of the participants in the experimental group. Also, Al-Hazmi and Schofield (2007) investigated the effect of enforced revision with a checklist and peer feedback in the writing Saudi students at tertiary level. Although post-test scores did not show significant improvement, the participants reported considerable satisfaction with the intervention.

Second, revision skills can equally improve assignments and final exam answers of courses that involve extended composing. For instance, courses in linguistics and literature require students to write essays that can be enhanced by revision skills transferred from writing courses. Thus, acquisition of these skills is advantageous not only to the writing courses where they were originally introduced but also to most of the courses in the English syllabus.
Conclusion and Implications

This study drew on the belief that acquisition of revision skills could remarkably improve students composing abilities. The main purpose of the study was to assist the participants to become autonomous writers who could independently employ rubrics to revise their own work. However, analysis of pre-test and post-test scores showed little gain in the participants’ writing. Although many reasons were given to explain the participants’ performance, it was also argued that failure and success of the intervention could not be determined by quantitative measures only as those could not capture the participants’ feelings and attitudes towards writing and towards themselves as writers. Advocates of self-regulated strategy development (SRSD) maintain that such attitudes are essential components of best instructional practices that teachers could bring in the classroom to enhance their students’ writing (Harris et al, 2002; Santangelo & Olinghouse, 2009).

To conclude, the implications to derive from the huge revision literature are so myriad that they could not be accommodated into 39-45-hour writing courses planned to cover numerous writing genres with a variety of rhetorical structures. Thus, it is legitimate to propose an introduction of revision courses that can serve both writing and other courses that involve extended composing.

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