The Effects of Using Blended Learning Approach on EFL Students' Essay Writing at Shaqra University, Saudi Arabia

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Research

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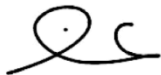Macquarie University

Jun, 2019

Statement of Candidate

I certify that the work in this thesis entitled "**The Effects of Using Blended Learning Approach on EFL Students' Essay Writing at Shaqra University, Saudi Arabia**" has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of the requirements for a degree to any other university or institution other than Macquarie University.

I also certify that the thesis is an original piece of research and it has been written by me. Any help and

assistance that I have received in my research work and in the preparation of the thesis itself has been appropriately acknowledged.

In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

The research presented in this thesis was approved by Macquarie University Ethics Review Committee, Reference Number: (**5201836454844**) on **26/10/2018**

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Contents

Abstract

Blended learning approach has become an emerging trend in the field of education and has caught the attention and interest of many educators and researchers as a new approach to encourage students in their learning process. Although there have been some studies on the effectiveness of blended learning in teaching and learning of English writing skills in ESL and EFL contexts, yet the exploration of this important topic has been scarce in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. To fill in this gap, the study reported in this thesis attempted to examine the impact of blended learning approach on improving Saudi EFL students' English essay writing skill at Shaqra University-Saudi Arabia. The sample of the study consisted of 70 EFL English major students. They were purposely chosen from the English department, Shaqra University. In order to study the effect of blended learning, an experimental research design was deemed appropriate. The experiment was conducted for six weeks (November-December 2018). The experimental group was taught using the blended learning approach whereas the control group was taught through conventional method. A pre- and post-essay test was used to measure the effect of the blended learning approach on essay writing skills. Results of the study revealed that there were significant differences in the scores of the control and the experimental groups in favour of the experimental group. The results and implications for teaching writing to Saudi students and similar English language learners are discussed.

Chapter One: Introduction to the Study

1.0 Introduction

This chapter first introduces the context of study. Next, it addresses the statement of the research problem, aims of the study, and its significance. Finally, it previews the chapters of the thesis.

1.1 The Context of the Study

Saudi Arabia is an English as a foreign language context, where teachers of English mostly focus on the grammar-translation method for teaching English. That is, teachers of English in Saudi universities focus on the teaching of subskills such as grammar and vocabulary (Albesher, 2012; Al Haysony, 2008). Writing has received less attention than of grammar and vocabulary knowledge. When teaching writing, instructors in Saudi universities focus on words and grammar, and mechanics, rather than content and structure (Alhojilan, 2015). As Albesher (2012) puts it, "Teaching English writing [in Saudi Arabia] is based on the belief that the students who learn more vocabulary will be good writers. Therefore, students are required to memorize a great deal of vocabulary in order to speak, read, listen, and write in English, but little emphasis is placed on other important writing techniques, such as planning" (p. 16).

The way writing is taught in schools is not different from that of colleges, especially for college students who major in English (Alhojilan, 2015; Alnofal, 2003). Saudi students who study English as their major are inducted into the language based on the traditional approach—that is, teachers assign them textbooks to build vocabulary and grammar knowledge (Ahmed, 2010; Ezza, 2010). In their courses, these students listen most of the time, whereas the teacher does most of the talk without using technology, even though most Saudi higher education institutions are equipped with computers connected to the Internet (Ahmed, 2016; Al-Besher, 2012). According to the Saudi Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (2018), the government of Saudi Arabia has promoted the use of modern technology and learning management systems such as Blackboard into the educational system since 2007.

The present study was conducted in the English Language Department at Shaqra University, Saudi Arabia. The department was inaugurated in 2009. The main aim of the department is to provide the labour market with graduates whose major is English so that the students' cultural capital could be converted into economic capital (Bourdieu, 1990). The present researcher is a teaching assistant in the English Language Department at Shaqra University. The researcher's observation has been that Saudi EFL students found it difficult to improve their academic writing skills during their writing courses. In the English Language Department at Shaqra University, students are required

to take three writing courses. First, all first-year students must take a paragraph writing course in their second semester of the four-year English teaching program. Second, all of the students must also take a writing (Essay Writing Course I) course in their first semester of the second year. In the second semester of the second year, they must take Essay Writing Course II (see Appendix 6). This study was conducted in Essay Writing Course II, in which the textbook assigned is "Effective Academic Writing 2: The Short Essay" written by Alice Savage and Patricia Mayer (2006). In the Essay Writing Course II, students learn how to write different types of essays, including narrative essays, opinion essays, descriptive essays, and comparison and contrast essays, and cause and effect essays.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Writing in English seems to be a challenging task to students and teachers of English as a foreign language (EFL). Considerable research (e.g., Ahmed, 2010; Ahmed, 2016; Bacha, 2002; Ezza, 2010; Manchón, 2009; Tang, 2012) examined students' English writing in EFL contexts and found writing in English as a foreign language to be a complex task. Other researchers have indicated writing depends on several factors including student linguistic proficiency (Cumming, 2001) and therefore requires strategic teaching instruction (Myles, 2002). Students using English as a second or foreign language are expected to write correct sentences, use specific and accurate words, and meet specific purposes for the type of writing they are doing. Indeed, writing is a complex activity in which the writer needs to have linguistic and orthographic knowledge as well as content knowledge about what he or she intends to write for a given objective in a particular context so that his/her wiring is cohesive and coherent and meets the contextual requirements (Nunan, 2006).

Students learning English in EFL contexts encounter several challenges in producing different types of writings: including argumentative narrative essays, descriptive essays, and expository essays. Undergraduate Saudi students are among EFL students who try hard to generate ideas, maintain coherence apt for correct grammatical structures, choose the proper words while writing assignments, namely essays (Ahmed, 2016; Al-Besher, 2012).

Therefore, many researchers have given great attention to study the reasons for EFL and L2 learners' unsatisfactory performance in academic writing skills. For example, Yoon and Lee (2010) and So and Lee (2012) have examined the reasons behind the unsatisfactory performance of students in EFL writing. They attribute that phenomenon to the inadequacy of the traditional offline or face-to-face instruction. The same finding is also reiterated in Ezza (2010) who maintained that the old approaches (i.e., the product approach, the process approach, the

collaborative group work approach and so on) have failed to provide adequate opportunities for practicing English academic writing.

Thus, some researchers (e.g., Al Besher, 2012; Alhojailan, 2015; Al-Jarf, 2004; Almalki, 2011) have suggested the inclusion of online technology in teaching EFL writing in the Saudi context. However, studies about the effectiveness of blended learning in Saudi Arabi universities are too scant. Therefore, the present investigator decided to resort to the blended learning approach which aims at combining traditional in-class writing with some new facilities such as e-mail and Facebook. That is, this study aims to contribute to the literature about the effectiveness of blended learning in Saudi student writing.

1.3 Aims of the Study

This study aims at investigating the effect of blended learning in teaching English writing skills at Shaqra University, Saudi Arabia. Its guiding questions are as follows:

1. Would blended learning affect essay writing of undergraduate Saudi students majoring in English?

2. Would blended learning affect all or particular elements of the scoring rubric (organization, content, language use, vocabulary, and mechanics) the students' writing performance in terms of?

1.4 Significance of the Study

The main challenge, but also motivation for this study was the dearth of research studies on the use of blended learning approach in instructing essay writing in the Saudi instructional settings. To fill in this gap, the current study aims to examine the impact of blended learning approach on improving Saudi EFL students' English essay writing and examine students' perceptions toward utilizing blended learning approach to develop English essay writing. Therefore, this study may offer EFL teachers with a suitable way that they can use modern technology and language learning systems to teach writing. Findings may also be used to modify the current blended learning approaches to facilitate the writing process.

The significance of this study is threefold. At the outset, the study findings will contribute to the little literature on blended learning in Saudi EFL university settings. Second, the findings may motivate the use of technology in Saudi EFL classrooms. Finally, the results of the study can contribute to current theories that suggest blended learning approach may influence academic writing in English.

1.5 Organization of the Thesis

This thesis comprises five chapters. The researcher continues now from the introduction to Chapter Two where he examines research literature on the teaching and learning of writing in EFL contexts, and the use of blended learning in EFL writing courses. In Chapter Three, the researcher describes the research design and methodology, including the data collection, participant recruitment, instructional procedures, and data analysis. Chapter Four includes a detailed explanation of the findings of the research study. Chapter Five is the conclusions and suggests implications of the study and opportunities for further research. This origination is presented as follows:

1.5.1 Chapter Two: Literature Review

This chapter reviews relevant research on academic writing, including an examination of various approaches to writing such as the genre, social, sociocultural and rhetorical approaches. It also contains a detailed discussion on the role of blended learning approach in improving EFL students' skills in academic writing and some empirical studies related to the impact of blended learning on students' writing ability. The chapter concludes with a brief justification and significance of this study in the light of the previous literature.

1.5.2 Chapter Three: Methodology

This chapters discusses the study methodology and methods, including research questions, recruitment of participants, sampling, research context, and the implementation of the experiment study. It also explains the data analysis.

1.5.3 Chapter Four: Results and Discussion

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the findings of this study. In this study, the quantitative method of data collection was employed. The principal approach was quantitative. The presentation of findings will be followed by a discussion of the findings that offers a satisfactory answer for the research questions.

1.5.4 Chapter Five: Conclusion

The last chapter of the thesis presents a summary of the study results. It also presents the study implications, limitations, and suggestions for future research.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

The current chapter reviews the relevant literature on the effect of using blended learning approach on EFL students' essay writing. A review of previous research and theories relevant to this study can provide a better understanding for the nature of academic writing and the role of blended learning approach in improving EFL students' skills in academic writing. This chapter is thus organized into six sections: 1) the college-level academic writing in English as an additional language contexts; 2) approaches to teaching and learning of academic writing, 3) the role of technology in education and how it is used in teaching academic writing to students; 4) the blended learning approach in teaching and learning academic writing; 5) a review of the empirical studies related to the impact of blended learning on students' writing, and 6) previous studies in the Saudi Arabian context. The chapter ends with a synopsis of the contributions of the recent empirical studies and the implications for the current study.

2.1. College-level Academic Writing in English as an Additional Language Contexts

Students in higher education institutions are expected to engage in different academic activities including academic writing. Academic writing assignments or projects include writing answers to exam questions, writing essays and research articles, dissertations, and lab or business reports, to name only some. However, academic writing in this thesis refers to 'essay writing' as a distinct form of academic writing. The general purpose of academic writing is to demonstrate an understanding of a particular topic through using other sources (Bailey, 2011; Dehkordi & Allami, 2012). When writing academically, students need to think and write critically and analytically (Ramoroka, 2012). Indeed, the purpose of academic writing, according to Irvin (2010, p. 8) is to "demonstrate knowledge and show proficiency with certain disciplinary skills of thinking, interpreting, and presenting". That is, academic writing is a complex and multidimensional activity. In addition to thinking, interpreting, and presenting, students need to pay attention to language including vocabulary, grammar, mechanics, and academic conventions in terms of structure and style (Ahmed, 2016; Al-Besher, 2012; Baily, 2010). On this account, academic writing is demanding and challenging to students, particularly non-native students (Nunan, 2006) because they need to learn not only the writing skills but also the language (Casanave, 2003).

In principle, writing has been broadly explored from two perspectives: the cognitive and the social. Scholars in New Literacy Studies (NLS) (Gee, 2008; Street, 2003), which views reading a social practice, explains that the cognitive perspective views academic writing as a decontextualized set of skills that can be acquired in one context and applied to an academic task in another context.

On the other hand, the social perspective claims that academic writing is a socially constructed practice in specific academic contexts (Gee, 2008; Street, 2003). It is important to note that NLS does not overlook the cognitive process of writing that (Barton & Hamilton, 2000). Writing in EFL contexts has been extensively approached and examined from the cognitive perspective (e.g., Al Fadda, 2012; Baily, 2010). For example, teachers in EFL contexts, including Saudi Arabia, focus on subskills such as grammar and vocabulary to teach essay writing (Al Badi, 2015; Albesher, 2012; Alhojilan, 2015). With regards to teaching academic writing, Ivanič (2004) discusses different approaches to teaching academic writing as discussed in the next section.

2.2. Approaches to Teaching Academic Writing

Many researchers proposed approaches to the design and implementation of English as a Second Language (ESL) and EFL writing courses. For instance, Ivanič (2004), highly recited research, has introduced and tried various approaches to the teaching of academic writing, of which the most significant are the process approach, the rhetorical approach, the genre approach, the social practice approach and the socio-cultural or contextual approach.

First, writing as a process approach involves three steps of planning, drafting, and revising (Ivanič, 2004). In this approach, teachers pay attention to processes of writing instead of the text as a final product (Hyland, 2003). Here, the focus is on style and content, rather than accuracy (Behizadeh & Engelhard, 2011). Second, the rhetorical approach to academic writing focuses on teaching students how to convey meaning or persuade readers by using rhetorical devices such as metaphors and similes (Hyland, 2003; Ivanič, 2004), which can evoke emotion on the part of the reader or listener. For example, ESP writing researchers and teachers focus on rhetorical functions such as descriptions, narrations, comparison and contrast, cause and effect, and others (Hyland, 2003). Third, the genre approach to academic writing focuses on teaching specific features of a genre. ESP researchers define genre as different types of texts that have particular linguistic structures in terms of structure, style, and content recognized by a specific discourse community (Swales, 1990). Genres of student writing can be organized according to their purposes including narrative, descriptive and argumentative. Teachers can explicitly teach students how to write the introduction, body, and conclusion of each genre. Finally, the social practice approach to academic writing focuses on the idea that writing is a purposeful situated practice, meaning that each context may have different writing purposes (Street, 2003). That is, writing is not independent of context. Johns (1990) stresses the fact that the writing output is inseparable from the society, and thus writing should be taught according to the shared ways of student thinking and values (Newell et

al., 2015). A socially-oriented approach to writing also means that it involves social relationships between the teachers and students and among students (Barton & Hamilton, 2000; Gee, 2008).

2.3. The Use of Technology in Teaching

The late 20th century and early 21st century have no doubt come up with what can be called a revolution in technology. Most people, young and old, are engulfed with using technology day and night. This atmosphere has caused university students to be less interested and less motivated in traditional teaching and learning methods. According to Prensky (2005), the present university students "are native speakers of technology, fluent in the digital language of computers, video games, and the Internet" (p. 8). University teachers, therefore, should not distance themselves away from this revolution. They should seize the opportunity to use technology in lecture rooms during face-to-face instruction and outside lecture rooms to maintain educational contact and feedback. This may help their students to be more motivated and interested to learn.

Moreover, integrating technology in the teaching process can provide a collaborative environment, in line with a social perspective of writing, that influences student learning and critical analytical thinking. Costely (2014) points out that the use of technology can impact student learning because it "causes students to be more engaged; thus, students often retain more information. Because of the arrival of new technologies rapidly occurring globally, technology is relevant to the students" (p. 2). It also provides meaningful learning experiences. It is very good at providing a wide range of exercises and drills, which, in turn provides ample practice of the basic skills. In this view, technology provides opportunities to peer work. These affordances combined explain the positive effects on student learning. In addition, Christen (2009) indicates that modern technology helps students develop critical and analytical thinking and get used to collaborative work, again in line with a social perspective of writing. It gives students opportunities to collaborate with their peers which helps all the individuals to learn. This suggests that writing instruction through online learning approaches can be important in a university context, where teachers can combine in-class instruction with online technology to enhance students' ability to develop their academic writing (Witte, 2007). A representation of the use of technology in teaching academic writing is blended learning, which is discussed in the next section.

2.4. Blended Learning Approach in Teaching EFL Writing

This section discusses the definitions of blended learning and the application of blended learning in teaching writing in an EFL context.

The definition of blended learning has evolved along with the development of information and communication technology (Poon, 2014). Broadly speaking, various researchers define it as a combination or fusion of face-to-face and online learning (e.g., Garrison & Vaughan, 2008; Jordan, 2004; Thorne, 2003).

Even though some researchers (e.g., Graham, 2006; Oliver & Trigwell, 2005) have problematized this definition as as it does not provide details about how teachers can or should incorporate online learning tools, this research uses blended learning to refer to both learning and teaching. Indeed, Darrow (2012) argues that the use of blended learning can be used by teachers to combine traditional and modern technology for students to have some control over their learning with an access to these online boards any time. Teachers can create modern online tools include emails and social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, among others.

Blended learning can be a pedagogical approach in EFL classrooms. This combination of offline and online teaching of academic writing is preferable to the one-sided traditional approach in that it provides more time for practice, more information to make use of beside a wonderful venue for students-students and students-teacher interaction and collaboration (Ferriman, 2013; Yoon & Lee, 2010).

Blended learning is a much-needed approach since it is an innovative way to overcome the problem of the noticeable low proficiency of non-native English language learners in general. Blended learning has the advantages of providing students with more time to learn and practice as the time of in-class instruction is obviously not enough (Ahmed, 2016; So & Lee, 2012). Pennington (2003) indicates a number of ways in which the use of computers can help students and teachers to develop the academic writing skill, drafting, interactions, genres, and access to written texts and materials. Moreover, Stanley (2005) argues that using blending learning in the teaching of academic writing can motivate students, provide students a venue to read and share their writing and receive feedback, and encourage informal communication. These advantages of blended learning show the important role blended learning plays in teaching writing to EFL students. It also suggests that blended learning or teaching make teaching more student-centered (Kim & Kim, 2010; Oravec, 2002; Yoon, 2011). Furthermore, blended learning or teaching can help student develop some writing skills. Yoon (2011) argues that the students develop argumentative and persuasive skills when they are involved in the blending learning approach. They learn through the collaboration and sharing of ideas with each other. Oravec (2002) also argues that blending learning helps students to develop their analytical and critical skills. When a student writes a blog, he/she assesses

before and how to be convincing and how to get ideas across unequivocally through the target foreign language. This process of two-way communication helps students to develop self-confidence while at the same time they improve their writing skill of the foreign language.

However, adopting a blended learning approach can be detrimental. According to Almalki (2011), due to some individual peculiarities, some students have some kind of phobia when using computers and this bound to leave them frustrated and cause them to feel inferior. Such students may lose their written work because of their anxiety and inexperience before they post it. This makes them more frustrated. In addition, due to excessive duties at home teachers and peers may not have time for reading and commenting students' essays. Such problems may, more or less, diminish some of the positive outcomes of the use of the blending learning approach in teaching academic writing.

Although blended learning as a pedagogical approach has positive impact on teaching essay writing, it may create challenges for both students and teachers. According to Campbell (2004), students may have a feeling of anxiety using word processing software that they have not used before, which in turn may create technical issues in terms of uploading or posting their work. Teachers, too, may struggle to use modern technology in classroom.

Practically, teachers can build or design a blended earning writing course. In a weekly two-hour academic writing course, students will have the opportunity to discuss their ideas about the key aspects of the topic they want to write about. The students may be given some exercises on how to practice different stages of the writing process. They may also take part in peer feedback tasks by reading and reflecting on each other's writing. The students can also prepare their essay layouts. They can then post their complete or incomplete work to the course's Facebook channel where each student has a folder of his/her own. Students can get access to their folder before the next lecture. They can discuss their drafts with peers and their teacher. They can post their final drafts 24 hours before the upcoming lecture. Meanwhile, they can be asked to provide feedback on one another's work. The students' online access makes it possible for further feedback and revision. This makes the learning process in the blending learning approach an ongoing one (Yoon & Lee, 2010). Thus, blended learning seems to be an ideal approach, especially in the field of academic English writing teaching since it facilitates all the stages of the writing process that range from the generation of ideas, drafting, editing, assessing and sharing of final and non-final versions.

2.5. Related Studies on Using Blended Learning in Teaching Academic Writing in EFL Contexts

Teaching writing in a blended learning environment has been discussed in several studies (see, Ahmed 2016; Al-Haq & Al-Sobh, 2010; Arslan, 2014; Barr, Bostanci & Çavuşoğlu, 2018; Behjat, Yamini, & Bagheri, 2011; Eydelman, 2013; Ferriman, 2013; Kaoud; 2007; Yoon and Lee, 2010). The above studies unanimously report that integrating modern technology and social media into the traditional classrooms can positively contribute to the teaching and learning of language skills including writing. The impact of various learning management systems and online tools in the teaching of language have been explored in several studies including Moodle (e.g., Gilbert, 2013), Blackboard (White et al., 2013), Mobile phones (Kern, 2013), Email (e.g., Keedwell, 2013), Wiki (e.g., Fleet, 2013), and Blogs (Arslan, 2014). These studies have concluded that modern technology and online tools can lead to significant outcomes in the learning and teaching of language skills, including academic writing.

Permanda and Gede (2017) studied the relationship between the use of the blended learning approach and writing competence. The study investigated 28 students, which were grouped into control and experimental groups. The control group was taught through the traditional method. The experimental group was taught through the blended learning approach. A writing test was administered to the two groups. The average score for the control group was 76% and the average score for the experimental group was 84%. In this way, the experimental group did better than the control group. The investigators concluded that the group taught through blended learning showed better writing performance compared with the group taught through the traditional method.

 McCall (2017) studied the effect of microblogs through Facebook on the development of the writing and reading skills of university students. The investigators using both quantitative and qualitative data collection of classroom observation, interview and survey. The teacher posted pictures or written texts for students to comment on. The study reports remarkable enthusiasm on the part of the students who welcomed the Facebook as a venue for doing and learning writing. Thus, this study concludes that based on the positive reaction of both teachers and students, blended learning will be useful in teaching reading and writing specifically.

The study by Sulisworo et al. (2016) attempted to find out the effect of blended mobile learning activity using Facebook on improving students' writing skill. The students were taught writing for one term through blended learning. Four aspects of the writing skill were considered during the study (i.e. ideas, organization, wording and flavor). Blended learning proved to be effective in the

first two aspects as showed some improvement in shaping ideas and organizing them within the written text.

Abdul Rahman (2018) also studied the effect of blended learning on university students' English language writing performance. A questionnaire was administered to the students to gauge their views of the traditional teacher- centered approach and blended learning approach. The students had a writing test at the end of the semester. In his analysis of the results, the investigator used Kendall's correlation as an instrument to analyze the result. The findings of the study indicated that the experimental group did better than the control group. The test results came in consistent with the results of the questionnaire.

Lam, Hew, and Chiu, (2017) studied the effects of using blended learning approach and gamification on students' writing in a Hong Kong secondary school. This was a 7-week study of three classes. Two classes were used as experimental groups. The first class consisted of 22 students and was taught through blended learning and gamification. The second class consisted of 30 students who were taught through blended learning only. The control group of 20 students were taught through the traditional teacher- centered approach. The data analysis consisted of pre-test and post-test written essays, students' posts on *Edmodo*, and interviews with the students and teacher. The results of the students' written essays came in a descending order: the first class combining blended learning and gamification was the best, the second class was the second and the control group was the lowest.

Adas and Bakir (2013) studied the effects of blended learning on university students' writing performance in Palestine. Using a quasi-experimental research with pre- and post-tests with 60 undergraduate students in their second and third year, the researchers found an increase in student achievement score in the experimental group. The researchers used Moodle as a platform for students' online writing assignments. Shih (2011) studied the impact of blended teaching approach on teaching English academic at university level in Taiwan. Writing instruction through a blended teaching approach included the use of Facebook. Shih concludes that this blended learning approach had positive effect on students' writing skills particularly due to the interactive and motivating-learning environment that the blended learning mode provided to students.

Bataineh (2010) studied the effect of use of the internet on enhancing their 62 Saudi students' writing skills from the English language Department at Al-Isra' University. They were divided into two groups: The first group which comprised the experimental group was taught by the blended

learning approach. They sent the teacher their assignments to a special e-mail address, then the teacher would send them with comments back to students. The second group was the control group who were exposed to the traditional learning, created their articles via paper and pencil. Finally, a post test was conducted for both groups. Students were asked to write on the same topics as the pre-test and were given 50 minutes to do so. The findings indicated that the students of the experimental group who used the internet had more motivation to write and more competence in their writing.

Yoon and Lee (2010) studied the effect of a blended learning on students' second language writing. Forty-seven university students participated in two L2 writing classes. They were divided into two groups. The first class was the experimental group and was taught through blended learning and gamification. The second class was the control group and were taught through the traditional teacher- centered approach. The data for this research was collected for 16 weeks. Data sources included questionnaire, pre-test, midterm examination, and post-test. Students were enthusiastic to interact through online media. The findings of the study indicated that blended learning had positive impacts on L2 writing, and there was an overall increase of test scores. Writing output of the experimental group was better than that of their peers in the control group. Moreover, blended learning in L2 writing was found to be effective in mechanics, content, organization, and structure.

The above-mentioned studies stress the positive effects of using the blended learning in teaching writing. They also indicate a lack of studies on blended learning for EFL classrooms (Miyazoe & Anderson, 2010; Yoon, 2011). In particular, there seems to be a dearth of studies that investigate the effect of the blended learning on the students' writing performance in Shaqra University, Saudi Arabia. Therefore, this study attempts to fill the gap reflected in the literature review. The EFL teachers will be able to use technology for teaching the writing skills effectively. Based on the findings, the blended learning could be modified to facilitate the writing process.

Generally speaking, past studies have advocated the use of blended learning for its positive attributes, such as its ability to foster interaction and peer collaboration supported by online and offline communities (Kim, 2010; Rovai & Jordan, 2004; Twigg, 2003; Yoon, 2011; Yoon & Lee, 2009, 2010). Blended learning was also found to foster highly both students' and teachers' perspectives (Dziuban, Moskal, & Hartman, 2005; Yoon, 2011; Yoon & Lee, 2009, 2010). In addition, classes with blended learning has high course completion rates and participation rates in comparison to online or offline courses (Yoon, 2011). Considering its positive outcomes, blended learning, seems promising to address the five dimensions of writing suggested by Camps (2009)

and Clark and Ivanič (1997). According to Clark and Ivanič (1997), there are four dimensions to writing as a social practice: 1) dynamic and recursive writing process; 2) revision throughout the writing process; 3) personal variations practice of writing; and 4) technological influence. Camps (2009) approved of Clark and Ivanič's (1997) four dimensions to writing process as a social practice and suggested a fifth dimension to the list, assistance from external factors. If properly implemented, it can facilitate the writing process while providing the environment for writing as a social practice, using CMC tools in an online environment in conjunction with offline classes. (Yoon & Lee, 2010).

To sum up, in all these studies, blended learning approach proved to be effective in teaching and learning all the English language skills, including the writing skills. The use of online learning has made easier for students to move from one stage of writing to another.

However, existing studies tend to focus on the effectiveness of multimedia tools and learners' perspectives with a lack of studies on blended learning models for EFL classrooms (Miyazoe & Anderson, 2010; Yoon, 2011). A study conducted by Yoon and Lee (2010) investigated the effectiveness of a blended learning model for L2 writing, and blended learning was found to be effective for L2 writing with learners showing positive perspectives. In addition, it was found that students considered blended learning helpful in providing opportunities to engage in autonomous and interactive learning activities (Yoon & Lee, 2010).

2.6. Previous Studies in the Saudi Arabian Context

The following table contains a summary of previous studies conducted in Saudi context on the utilization of blended learning in the educational environments. The table presents the aims of the study, numbers of participants involved, instrument of data collection, design of the study and the findings of the study.

Table 2.6.1. Summary of Previous Studies on Blended Learning in Saudi Arabia

Study Aim	Participants	Instrument of data collection	Design of the study	Findings
Alferaihi (2003) To examine the perception of undergraduate Saudi learners at King Saud University in Riyadh	326 students; 178 males and 148 females;	A questionnaire was employed as the main tool of the study.	This study uses a qualitative design. Qualitative methods were used to obtain thick-descriptive data.	(1) the results showed that the learners have slightly positive attitudes toward utilizing online courses (2) there was a small

toward using online courses based on gender and geographical location.				difference in the perception of students toward using online courses based on gender, (3) finally, there was no significant interaction between the gender and geographical location in the perception of students towards online courses.
Al-Jarf (2004) To explore the effect of blended learning on developing the writing skills of low ability EFL college students.	The study sample comprised of 113 EFL female freshman students in two groups.	A Pre-test and Post-test in writing	This study adopts an experimental design. The experimental and control groups received the same traditional teaching methods. In addition to the conventional instruction, the experimental group used an online technology.	The research results showed that the use of online technology at home as a supplement to in-class techniques motivated and improved students' writing skills.
Alebaikan (2010) To explore how Saudi female teachers and undergraduate students perceive blended learning and its future at King Saud University in Riyadh in Saudi Arabia.	20 Saudi teachers and female students participated in the study	Five tools of assessment: observations, diaries, reflective essays, focus groups and in-depth interviews were used in this study.	This study uses a qualitative approach. The students shared their views of the integration of blended courses, while reducing in face-to-face instruction, at a tertiary level.	The results showed that the students had positive attitudes towards blended learning. Another finding was that a blended learning approach provides Saudi females the flexibility to resume their university education.
Al-Shehri (2010) To explore present and future developments and challenges of e-learning in KSA.	30 senior academicians participated in the study.	A questionnaire was used in the study.	A quantitative approach was adopted to explore views of 30 participants involved in E-learning during their attendance at a two-week course on the subject.	The participants had control over their e-learning by considering themselves as decision makers. They felt that e-learning is indispensable and can address issues in organization and management.

Almalki (2011) To examine the students' and their instructors on the adoption of the blended learning.	The sample of the study include nine instructors and 504 undergraduate students from eight colleges	Two tools were used in the study; a questionnaire and an interview.	This study used a mixed research method, including interviewing teachers and examining students' perceptions through questionnaires.	The results indicated that teachers and learners have positive views towards blended learning design in terms if accessibility and flexibility. The use of blended learning promotes interaction between teachers and students.
Farooq & Javid (2012) To check out whether the use of e-learning encourage the students to learn English as a foreign language at Taif University, Saudi Arabia.	The sample consisted of 100 undergraduate students enrolled in different programs	A questionnaire was utilized in the study.	This questionnaire survey collected data from participants and analysed the data using percentages and mean.	The data indicated that majority of the learners had access to computer and internet respectively and they were aware of the fact that technology has played an important role in the teaching-learning process and classroom.
Al Zumor et al (2013) To explore King Khalid University English majors' attitudes regarding the advantages and disadvantages of blending Learning.	The sample consisted of 160 male students.	One tool was used in the study; a questionnaire.	This study adopts a quantitative approach.in which a questionnaire to was used to measure EFL teachers' attitudes towards blended learning.	The study findings showed that the blended learning approach has positive influence in broadening students' reading opportunities and enriching their English vocabulary. There were some disadvantages such technical problems, and lack of providing proper training to students.
Khan (2014) to find out the possible effect of the blended learning approach-	Teachers and 34 students	One tool was used in the study, a questionnaire.	This study adopts a qualitative approach. Both the teachers and students were asked to fill questionnaires to evaluate the blended learning effectiveness.	The results indicated both the instructors and students enjoyed the blended learning as a novel technique.
Alasraj and Hael (2014). To compare the effectiveness of blended learning strategies with traditional classroom-based approaches in learning Arabic as a	62 participants	Two tools were used in the study; questionnaires and quizzes	Two classes were selected using case study methodology.	Findings showed that there is a difference in the learning outcomes and that using a blended learning approach is a more effective way of imparting knowledge.

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second language at the Islamic University in Madinah.				
Qahmash (2014) To evaluate the effectiveness of using the online course on students' performance.	71participants Took part in the study.	An achievement test was used as a data collection tool.	This study adopts an experimental design. It focuses on the performance of students' using traditional and online learning approached in a course taught by their instructor at King Khalid University.	The findings showed significant performance in online section compared to performance in the traditional approach.
Alaidarous and Madini (2016) To explore Saudi female students' views of learning English though the use of blended learning approach in technical education colleges.	109 students participated in the study.	Two tools used in the study; a questionnaire and an interview.	The whole participants were asked to complete an online questionnaire, whereas 10 participants agreed to be interviewed.	The study findings showed that the participants have positive perception toward learning English in a blended environment.
Al-Saleh (2018) To examine secondary stage EFL teachers' attitudes towards Blended Learning (BL) in Tabuk city.	50 EFL teachers	A questionnaire was used as the main study tool.	This study adopts a quantitative method in which a questionnaire was used to measure EFL teachers' attitudes towards blended learning.	The findings indicated teachers had positive views towards Blended Learning and referred the need to provide them with proper training sessions.

The above table indicates that the issues investigated in most of the previous studies regarding blended learning in Saudi Arabia dealt with the teachers and the students' perceptions towards the utilization of blended learning at schools and universities. However, no attempts had been made to investigate its effectiveness in teaching English language skills, particularly writing skills in Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, most of the previous studies have focused on EFL learners in different majors, but none of them considered EFL English majors as participants. There are similar studies conducted in other contexts, but the variables and environment are different. For illustration, Ibrahim (2014) investigated the effect of Blended Learning on Fourth year students′ achievement in EFL methodology at the Department of English, Faculty of Education, King Khaled University. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, no attempts had been made to investigate the effectiveness of blended learning in teaching and learning English academic writing skills in K.S.A. So, the main challenge, but also motivation for this study was the dearth of research studies

on the use of blended learning approach in instructing essay writing in the Saudi instructional settings. To address this gap, the current study will attempt to examine the impact of blended learning approach on improving Saudi EFL students' English essay writing. Therefore, the above literature review heightens the importance of the present study and it is expected that the current study will offer EFL teachers and students with a suitable trajectory that they can employ technology in teaching and learning writing skills effectively. Findings may also be used to modify the current blended learning approaches to facilitate the writing process in a fruitful manner.

In conclusion, we can refer to Stanley (2005) who stated good reasons for using blended learning in learning and teaching of second and foreign languages. These reasons are: providing a real audience for students' writing, increasing the students' reading practice, benefiting from the process approach to writing, increasing students' participation and encouraging students to have online portfolios of their writing output.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a discussion of the methodology of the study. Firstly, it describes the research context including research design and rationale for methodology. Then, it explains the sample of the study followed by the instruments used for collecting the required data. In addition, it provides the research procedures, and data analysis.

3.1 Research Context

The current research was undertaken to explore the effects of using blended learning on English academic writing skills of Saudi EFL students. It was conducted at Shaqra University, Saudi Arabia from the 4th, November 2018 to the 14th, December 2018. A quantitative approach to research was deemed appropriate for collecting the required data for this research. Within the quantitative approach, an experimental design was used.

The experimental design was used so that the researcher could observe the effects of relevant variables under certain conditions (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). That is, experimental studies keep the conditions in which research is conducted under control to demonstrate the cause-and-effect relationships between the variables. However, challenges to conduct experiential studies include finding a way of making the control group as similar to the treatment group as possible (Dornyei, 2007). Indeed, it is important for the researcher to ensure that both the control and treatment groups were same in terms of size and the time devoted to treatment (Albesher, 2012). In addition, it was important to ensure that both group members had almost the same writing proficiency at the beginning of the experiment and that they had the same or very similar backgrounds at the beginning of the research study. As such, the participants were recruited from those who were studying in the same year and the same class.

The experimental design was, therefore, deemed compatible with the primary goal of the present study, which intended to investigate the impact of blended learning approach on the academic writing skills of the students of Shaqra University. The experimental group was taught writing using blended learning approach. This included the use of a Facebook group and personal computers in addition to the conventional teaching which was used in the control group. The independent variable was the mode of instruction, which included the blended learning in the experimental EFL writing class and the conventional essay writing in the control group. The dependent variable was students' scores on pre- and post-writing essays.

3.2 Sample of the Study

The sample of the present study consisted of 70 Saudi undergraduate students studying in the second year in the English language department at Shaqra University, Saudi Arabia. The participants' age ranges between 19-20 years old. They were enrolled in the Writing Course (II) (see Chapter 1: Context of the Study). The study sample was equally divided into two separate classes. The first class included 35 students and it was called the control group and was subjected to the conventional face-to-face teaching and learning approach. The second class included 35 students and was called the experimental group and was subjected to the blending learning approach. Both groups were taught by the same teacher and received academic writing instruction for two hours weekly for six weeks. While experimental group students had access to personal computers, students of the control group were not allowed to use any type of technology in their essay writing during the study. Students were informed about this research study and they signed a consent form to participate in it. They were also informed that they could withdraw from this research study whenever they wanted to without penalty. The study participants were ensured that their information was considered confidential and they were told that this study was conducted for research purposes and to improve essay writing instruction at Shaqra University.

3.3 Recruitment of the Participants and Data Collection

Following the University regulations, the researcher received ethics approval from Macquarie University Ethics Committee (See Appendix 1) and then he received a similar approval from Shaqra University to conduct the study.

After getting the approval letter from the head of department at Shaqra University to facilitate the implementation of the experimental study (See Appendix 2), the researcher had a meeting with the Dean of the Faculty and later with the head of English department for seeking their support for the implementation of the experimental study. Then, the data collection methods are as follows:

- The head of English department gave the researcher a list of the two groups studying Essay Writing Course II and the name of the teacher of both groups.

- A meeting was carried out by the researcher with the teacher of the two groups for one hour. The objectives of the meeting were to" 1) introduce the researcher to the teacher; 2) know about the teacher's past experience teaching the course; and 3) ensure the teacher understand the research objectives and design. The teacher demonstrated his understanding of his role in teaching both the control and experimental groups, even though he had not taught Essay Writing Course II using the blended learning before. The teacher informed the researcher that he had a personal email and was a user of Facebook. The teacher also informed the researcher that he knew how to create

Facebook groups and that he had training sessions on how to use the learning management systems of Blackboard before.

- The teacher accepted to teach the two groups by himself for 6 weeks between 4/11/2018 and 14/12/2018. The experimental group studied the writing content using Facebook and emails, whereas, the control group studied the same content without the use of any online tool. The teacher taught different types of essay to both groups. In the control group, the teacher did most of the talk (lecturing) and the students were listening to his instructions. The teacher, after lecturing, gave insufficient time for students to write.
- The selection of the control and experimental groups was based on random selection.
- The researcher met with both groups separately to introduce himself and the research objectives, methodology, and ethics.
- An achievement pre-test- was administered to the two study groups on 4/11/2018 to assure equality of the control experimental group students' writing ability.
- At the end of the experiment on 14/12/2018, the researcher administered the writing post-test to both groups.
- The period between pre-test and post-test was six weeks to reduce any possible effect of pre-test on students' responses in post-test.

3.3.1 The Implementation of the Experiment Study

Every week at the end of the lesson, the lecturer would select the specific topics for students to write on and upload them on Facebook Group. Each student wrote with the certain criteria and posted them on the Facebook (FB) Group. The teacher and students provided comments on posts related to essay writing and all students were encouraged to post comments on posted writing.

In contrast, the control group was taught by using the traditional method (board, pen and paper). Both experimental and control groups were taught academic English writing by the same teacher. The study was conducted in November 2018 and lasted for six weeks.

Before the beginning of the treatment, both groups underwent a pre-test to determine, if they had the same level of proficiency. The pre-test of both groups was conducted on the same day. Then, the experiment was carried out for six weeks by two sessions a week for both the experimental group and the control group. Both groups received 12 teaching sessions in 6 weeks. In respect to the English writing lessons, the first-class period was on Monday and the last class period was on Thursday for the experimental group, whereas the opposite was for the control group.

Participants of both experimental and control groups were asked to write five paragraph essays in six-week experiment and submitted them to the teacher to obtain feedback. The experimental group wrote their essays on their accounts; they were also asked to comment on their classmates' posts. The teacher checked students' posts and the feedback. Additionally, participants of the experimental group could ask about writing or technical problems of the FB group in the comment section. Although participants of the control group did exactly what participants of the experimental group did, the instruction was conducted in the classroom via using the traditional method of teaching (board, paper, and pen), while the instruction of the experimental group was done in the computer lab via using blended learning. The two groups were received the essays and handed over to them face-to-face.

Below is a description of the implementation of the study from week 1 to week 6:

Week 1. In the first week, introduction of the course was given to both the experimental and the control groups. The teacher used the traditional method of teaching essay writing with the control group, while he adopted blending learning via the Facebook technology for teaching the experimental group. After that, the teacher explained what the experiment was about and asked students of the experimental group to fill out the consent form. The Facebook group was created to serve as an E-mail project that the teacher administered and maintained. Afterward, the teacher showed the way of joining the Facebook group and showed a YouTube video on the way of uploading the work on Facebook. In this regard, students were encouraged to post their writing on the Facebook group's wall post and share their thought of writing essays, and to message or chat with their teacher or e-mail partners for any E-mail project concern via the Facebook group. They were also instructed to engage in the Facebook topical discussions with their partners on weekly topics provided.

Week 2. During the second week, two types of essay writing that were the argumentative essay and the descriptive essay are presented in the class. The teacher initially clarified the argumentative essay and explained its writing process and steps. In respect to the control group, the teacher wrote on the board the topic 'Why do you study math? Give reasons and examples to support your answer'. The students were then asked to write the essay draft, and this was corrected by the teacher. All the explanation related to the paragraphs were explained on the board and then it was advised for rewriting the essay in their notebooks.

On the other hand, the teacher explained for students of the experimental group three main writing steps of the argumentative essay. Firstly, the teacher explained the step of layout that concerned about organization and the structure of five or six paragraphs, two of them support the argument

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and one paragraph against it. These paragraphs were divided as the introduction paragraph, the first two body paragraphs that supported the argument, the third body paragraph that was against the argument, and the final paragraph was the conclusion paragraph. Secondly, the teacher referred to the step of question analysis to explain how to analyze. Thirdly, the teacher referred to the planning step by writing the following topic on the board. The teacher also asked students about their ideas and opinions; he also explained to the students the important role of the unity that lied in forming logical and well-organized structure of the paragraph. Subsequently, the relationship between the unity and coherence in making well- structured and well-written paragraph are explained in class. The teacher discussed the topic with students and posted it on the Facebook group. Students were asked to write their essays and upload the first essay draft on the Facebook group; the online feedback would be given during the two days post the topic presentation and in this process the students also got the chance to receive teacher's online feedback and make the changes. The students uploaded their second essay draft on the Facebook group. Thereafter, the teacher corrected and commented on students' uploaded writing on the Facebook group. Based on the online and offline feedback from both peers and the teacher, students were given two days to make review and submit their final online essay draft on the Facebook group prior the class meet again.

During this week, the teacher also defined the descriptive essay and explained its writing techniques in the class for the control group and via the Facebook group through the YouTube video for the experimental group. The teacher provided students of the control group with an example of descriptive essay by writing it on the board. This essay lacked organization and students were asked to correct and rewrite it in their notebooks by using pen and paper. In respect to the experimental group, the teacher followed multi steps to write a descriptive essay. Firstly, students selected an essay topic as they might write about some person, thing or place and explained in detail the topic to be covered in the next paragraph. Nevertheless, the teacher asked students to use suitable adjectives for description. Then, the teacher posted on the FB group via the YouTube video for the experimental group an example of the descriptive essay that included some mistakes in its organization; then, students were asked to correct and rewrite it. Finally, students in two days were asked to upload their final essay draft, after they fixed errors and mistakes.

Week 3. In the third week, the teacher defined the narrative essay and considered a story telling using a narrator. The teacher explained for both of the control and the experimental groups how using catching word and phrases was important. The teacher explained how the layout consisted

of three parts that were the introduction, the body and the conclusion. In respect to the part of introduction, the characters were introduced, while the body paragraphs showed the problem or conflict. However, the conclusion part included resolution or solution of the problem. In respect to the experimental group, the teacher uploaded a YouTube video and explained an example of narrative essay on the FB group. Then, the teacher and students of the experimental group discussed all uploaded details and the posted narrative essay. These students were asked to write narrative essay about personal experience by concentrating on the coherence, clarity, and logical sequencing of their essay; then, they posted it on the FB group. After the teacher that the teacher has given feedback on the essay posted by them.

Week 4. During the fourth week, the teacher defined the comparison and contrast essay and explained similarities and dissimilarities of both. The teacher also presented an essay example about the comparison between tea and coffee even students learnt how to compare and contrast. The teacher wrote such information on the board for the control group, while he posted a YouTube video on the Facebook group for the experimental group. At the end of the session, the teacher selected a specific topic for students to write about and posted it on the Facebook group and provided a few key words. The first draft of the essay uploaded in Facebook and commented by the peers.

One day was given for online peer feedback through the Facebook group. During this time, students were given opportunities to receive the teacher's online-feedback and that helped in changing the contents. Based on the online and offline feedback of peers and the teacher, students were given one day to make revision and submit their final essay draft on the Facebook group prior the class met again. This gave the teacher the time to review final essay drafts of students and critique them for further explanation or correction. Then when the class met again, students shared their final draft reasons. They also provided justifications behind inserted changes in their respective groups and resolve existing conflict prior the new cycle begin with the presentation of another topic. The students received feedback on the final draft submitted.

Week 5. During the fifth week, the teacher defined the cause and effect essay. The teacher asked students to examine a situation or event along with thinking about its outcomes or results. The teacher wrote a question on the board asking students of the control group to explain causes and effects of overeating on board and they commented on notebooks. In contrast, the teacher posted a YouTube video in Facebook group the topic 'Why do people tend to overeat? Think about causes and what happens as a result of overeating' and ask them to share their views on Facebook.

Students of the experimental group wrote a paragraph paying attention to accuracy and posted it; the teacher corrected and commented on their writing.

Week 6. During the sixth week, the teacher defined the classification essay type that was a formal piece of writing designed to present writing skills in categories and providing examples for each. The teacher clarified three steps to effective classification making sure that all categories followed a single organizing principle and giving examples that were proper into each category. The teacher first introduced the introductory part that explained what the writer was going to categorize, the essay purpose and reasons along with including thesis statement. Secondly, the body part included more than two paragraphs. Each paragraph dealt with a different category that explained the weakness and the strength and there is a need for examples. Thirdly, the conclusion part is the final one that brought together all examined categories in the body part and it included a brief summary on them. At the end of the session, the teacher gave an example of the classification essay. The teacher delivered such information to the control group via the board and via the YouTube video uploaded in the Facebook group for the experimental group.

Then, the teacher selected a specific topic and wrote it on the board for the control group, while he used the YouTube video to post it in the Facebook group for the experimental group. However, students of the experimental group were asked to write the first essay draft and post it on the Facebook group. After that they uploaded their second essay draft on the Facebook group. When the class met again, students brought printed copy of their second essay draft for giving quality offline feedback and was given one day for reviewing and submitting on Facebook Group. This gave the teacher more time to review and critique for further explanation or correction. After the completion of the essay, the student got feedback on the essay.

After conducting the experiment for six weeks, the post-test was administered to both groups on the same day. After collecting the essays from the participants, two raters assessed the pre- and post-tests by using a scoring rubric adapted from Jacobs et al. (1981) ESL Composition Profile (Appendix 7). Many researchers (e.g., Bacha, 2001; Hamp-Lyons, 1990) consider Jacobs et al.'s scoring rubric to be best-scoring rating for English as additional language students' writing. The original scoring rubric is divided into five major writing components: content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics with each one having four rating levels of very poor, poor to fair, average to good, and very good to excellent. In each component and level, there are numerical and descriptive labels. For example, very good to excellent organization has a minimum rating of 18 and a maximum of 20 indicating essay writing which is ''fluent expression; ideas

clearly states/supported stand out; succinct; well-organized; logical sequencing; cohesive," while very poor organization has a minimum of 7 and a maximum of 9 indicating essay writing that ''does not communicate; no organizations; Or not enough to evaluate'' (Jacobs et al., 1981). In the present study, the raters followed the five main writing components of the Profile, however, they used equal rating. That is, each level of each component was rated on a 1-10 point scale. That is, the rating scale include very poor (1-2), poor to fair (3-5), average to good (6-8), and very good to excellent (9-10) in each component.

3.4 Data Collection Instrument

For the purpose of this study a pre- and post-test writing essay was designed based on the researcher's experience in teaching English writing. The essay writing test was administered to participants before and after the instruction. It should be noted that the tests had two different but similar topics but are similar to the topics of TOEFL iBT.

At the beginning of the treatment, the students of the control and experimental groups were asked to write a 5-paragraph essay on the following topic:

> Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? It is better to use printed material such as books and articles to do research than it is to use the internet. Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer?

At the end of the experiment, both groups were also asked to write an essay on the following topic:

> Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? "Universities should give the same amount of money to their students' sports activities as they give to their university libraries. Use specific reasons and examples to support your opinion?

To ensure the test validity, a jury of two experts in the field of applied linguistics and teaching English as a foreign language at Shaqra University (English Department) was chosen by the Head of the Department to ensure the appropriateness of research instrument (pre- and post-test) and to approve its content and form. In addition to teaching at the University since 2009, these two teachers have experience in research. The teachers agreed that the topics are acceptable and appropriate to second-year students.

To ensure reliability of the assessment of the tests, two raters scored the students' essays. In the present study, intra-rater and inter-rater reliability were assessed. While the intra-rater reliability refers to the consistency of assessment recorded by a single rater at different points in time, inter-rater reliability is the degree of agreement between two raters of the same test (Brown, 2010;

Wang, 2009). To assess the intra-reliability, 10 test essays were marked by a single rater. After a week, the same rater was asked to mark the same 10 test essays. And to assess the inter-rater reliability, two raters marked 25 essays according to the scoring rubric adapted from Jacobs et al. (1981).

3.5 Data Analysis

The data obtained from the essays of the participants in the writing course were quantitatively analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Science, version 17) to determine if students had any significant change in marks for the essays produced during the treatment. A paired sample t-test was carried out to compare the mean difference between pre- and post-test scores of each group. An independent sample t-test was also used to obtain the mean difference between the two groups' pre- and post-test scores. According to Ary et al. (2002), the established levels of significance normally used in the field of education is between .05 and .01. In this study, the significance level of p-value $<.05$ was used.

The data obtained from the essays of the participants were also used to answer the second question of the study which dealt with the effect of the blended learning on the students' writing performance in terms of elements of rubric a score (content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics).

Chapter Four: Results and Discussion

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of the pre-and post-tests of the control and experimental groups in four major sections. First, the results of pre-test of both groups will be presented. This will include the overall results of both groups as well as the writing components, namely, organisation, content, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics. Second, the results of both groups on the post-tests overall and in terms of the writing components will follow. Third, a comparison of the mean scores on the pre- and post-tests within each group is presented. Finally, a comparison of the mean scores on the pre-and post-tests of both the control and experimental groups overall and in terms of each writing component will be presented.

4.1 Pre-test Results of the Experimental and Control Groups

The pre-test of both experimental and control groups was administered on the same day. The goal was to assess the level of essay writing skill of the students before conducting the experiment and to test whether there is any statistically significant (Sig.) difference at $p< .05$ level between the mean gain scores of the two groups. An independent sample t-test was used (see Table 1).

Table 1. The mean (M) performance and standard deviation (SD) of the pre-test of the control and experimental groups

Components	Group	M	SD	t-test	Sig.
Organization	Control	4.00	.874	-.2404	.128
	Experimental	4.54	1.010		
Content	Control	3.97	1.248	-1.595	.643
	Experimental	3.51	1.147		
Vocabulary	Control	3.63	1.395	-.180	.392
	Experimental	3.69	1.295		
Language use	Control	4.31	1.231	-.1561	.730
	Experimental	4.80	1.368		
Mechanics	Control	2.94	1.413	-1.519	.757
	Experimental	2.43	1.420		

	Control	18.31	3.660	-.241	.699
Overall					
	Experimental	18.53	3.788		

Table 1 shows although there are slight differences in the mean scores between control and experimental groups in terms of each writing category, there is no significant difference between the experimental group and the control group before the intervention in terms of organization, content, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics. Overall, the findings showed that the mean score of the control group was 18.31 with a standard deviation of 3.66, and the mean of the experimental group was 18.53 with a standard deviation of 3.78. Thus, it can be implied that the participants of both groups (experimental and control) were approximately at the same level of writing performance before the experiment.

4.2 Post-test Results of the Control and Experimental Groups

An independent-samples t-test was used to test whether there is any statistically significant difference at *p*<.05 level between the post-test mean gain scores of the experimental and control groups.

Table 2. The mean (M) performance and standard deviation (SD) of the post-test of control and the experimental groups

Components	Group	M	SD	*t*-test	Sig.
Organization	Control	4.54	.950	-13.913	.911
	Experimental	7.71	. 957		
Content	Control	4.11	1.586	-3.182	.034
	Experimental	5.51	2.063		
Vocabulary	Control	4.43	1.650	-3.596	.074
	Experimental	6.03	2.051		
Language use	Control	4.74	.950	-13.528	.622
	Experimental	7.89	.993		
Mechanics	Control	2.43	1.632	-3.446	.829
	Experimental	3.77	1.629		

Overall	Control	20.73	4.551	-8.413	.000
	Experimental	30.86	5.801		

Table 2 shows that the post-tests mean scores of the experimental group on each writing component are higher than their counterparts in the control group. For example, the students' organization post-test mean score in the experimental group is (M= 7.71), which is higher than that of the control group (M= 4.54). However, the result of an independent *t*-test showed different statistical significance. Even though organization, language use, and mechanics showed no statistically significant, content showed a significant (p< 0.05) result and vocabulary was marginally significant at p= .074. Moreover, the overall scores of the post-test in both groups show statistically significance at p< 0.05.

4.3 Comparison of the Mean Scores Between Pre-and Post-test of Control and Experimental Groups.

A paired t-test was conducted to show whether there is any statistically significant difference at *p*< .05 level between the pre- and post-test of each group. Table 3 shows the overall mean scores (M), standard deviation (SD), degree of freedom (df), and significance of pre- and post-test of the total number (N) of each group.

Table 3. Mean (M) and standard deviation (SD) of pre-and post-tests of control and experimental groups

Group	Test	N	M	SD	df	*t*-test	Sig.
Control	Pre-test	35	18.31	3.660	34	-4.071	.000
	Post-test	35	20.37	4.551			
Experimental	Pre-test	35	18.53	3.788	34	-20.094	.000
	Post-test	35	30.86	5.801			

Table 3 shows that students in both groups did significantly better on their post-tests. The results show a statistically significance difference between pre-and post-test of each group with a p value <.05. It also shows, as discussed in Table 1, no significant difference between the mean scores of the overall writing performance on the pre-test of the control group (M=18.31) and experimental group (M=18.53). However, the mean scores on the post-test of control group (M=20.37) and of experimental group (M=30.86) show a significant difference.

4.4 Comparison of the Pre- and Post-test Mean Scores of the Experimental Group in Terms of Writing Components

Table 4 below shows the pre- and post-test results of the experimental group. A paired-*t* test was conducted to show whether there is any statistically significant difference at *p*< .05 level between the pre- and post-test of each writing component of the experimental group.

Table 4 Pre- and post-test mean scores of aspects of writing performance of the experimental group

Components	Test	N	M	SD	df	*t*-test	Sig.
Organization	Pre-test	35	4.54	1.010	34	-14.246	.000
	Post-test	35	7.71	.957			
Content	Pre-test	35	3.51	1.147	34	-5.873	.061
	Post-test	35	5.51	2.063			
Vocabulary	Pre-test	35	3.69	1.255	34	-7.710	.002
	Post-test	35	6.03	2.051			
Language use	Pre-test	35	4.80	1.368	34	-9.768	.000
	Post-test	35	7.89	.993			
Mechanics	Pre-test	35	2.34	1.420	34	-4.379	.082
	Post-test	35	3.77	1.629			

Table 4 shows that the mean scores of writing components of post-tests are higher than those of the pre-tests. For example, the mean score of language use on the post-test (M= 7.89) is higher than that on the pre-test (M= 4.80). As can be seen in Table 4, except for mechanics, there was a statistically significant difference in almost all the other language components.

4.5 Discussion

The results of the study indicate the effectiveness of the use of blended learning as an approach to teach academic writing. As can be seen in Table 1, students in both the control and the experimental groups did not show any major score differences in terms of each writing component (i.e., organization, content, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics), or their overall writing performance. After six weeks of instruction, both groups' overall writing performance improved as shown in Table 3. However, the difference of mean scores of pre-tests (M=18.31) and post-tests

(M=20.37) of the control group is not high. On the other hand, the difference of mean scores of pre-tests (M=18.53) and post-tests (M=30.86) of the experimental group is significantly high. Looking at Table 4, it is clear that the mean scores of experimental groups on the post-test are greater than those on the pre-tests. However, statistically speaking, it seems blended learning has a more positive impact on students' content, organization, vocabulary, and language use, and less effective on students' improvement of mechanics.

Hence, the use of a blended mode of instruction compared to traditional in-class writing instruction seems to be effective on improving Saudi EFL learners' writing performance. This finding is in line with previous studies (e.g., Ezza, 2010; So & Lee, 2012; Yoon & Lee, 2010). In this study, the blended mode of instruction enhanced EFL students' writing ability and resulted in improvement in every writing component of the rating scale on the post-test. In essence, the experimental group who used Facebook obtained higher scores compared to the control group who used offline face-to-face instruction.

Also, using social media platforms such as Facebook seems to be effective in improving students' writing and help them perform better using authentic language interaction compared to face-to-face method. This result is consistent with previous research (e.g., Abdul Rahman, 2018; Al-Haq & Al-Sobh, 2010; Al-Jarf, 2004; Shukor & Noordin, 2014; Sulisworo et al., 2016). Indeed, Sulisworo et al. (2016) emphasize that authentic language interaction through social media such as Facebook can improve their English language skills, including writing. Similarly, this finding is in line with the results of Johnson's study (2002), which showed the online communication of the experimental students increased when the course content and authentic materials were uploaded online. This may explain the reason why the experimental group's results in the post-tests were significantly better than the pre-test results.

This improvement in the performance of the experimental group in academic writing can, moreover, be attributed to the fact that students were more motivated to learn when they are offered a learning opportunity in different ways such as the use of online technology (Cameron, 2003). Another possible explanation of the improvement is the teacher's use of more writing exercises as all the online tasks were additional to the tasks already used in the traditional classroom instruction. In fact, Adas and Bakir (2013) found that online tasks and use of additional online exercises resulted in significant improvement in students' overall writing performance.

In sum, the blended learning mode of instruction seemed to present an easy and interesting way of improving writing for this cohort of Saudi students. Blended learning does not require students' high technical and computer skills. Thus, the students who have the least experience of dealing with the new technology get maximum benefits of the blended learning approach. Also, the direct feedback given to students could have helped students to be motivated irrespective of their general level of English proficiency or their writing level.

Therefore, the improvements in the scores show that appropriate blending of online and offline resources and activities such as using chat programs, instant messengers, and having face-to-face feedback sessions had positive effects on the overall essay writing ability of the Saudi university students who participated in this study. Overall, the results of the present study are congruent with previous research on blended learning and writing skills of Saudi students (e.g., Ahmed, 2016; Al-Haq and Al-Sobh, 2010; Al-Jarf, 2004) and of EFL students (e.g., Hockly, 2018; Pacheco Salazar, 2016; Geta & Olango, 2016; Yoon and Lee, 2012). These studies revealed the outstanding impact of blended learning on EFL students' overall writing performance.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of the study results. It concludes with theoretical and pedagogical implications of the study, followed by the limitations of the study and suggestions for future research.

5.1. The Summary of Results

The present study investigated the use of blended learning in an Academic English Writing course in a Saudi university in terms of organization, content, language use, grammar, and mechanics. The results suggest that online learning approaches including blended learning play a vital role in writing teaching and learning. The study results are in line with previous research on the positive impact of blended learning on EFL students' writing. Indeed, blended learning led the students to move towards a more independent practice towards English writing rather than considering direct instruction (Ahmed, 2016). That is, teaching writing can be meaningful and student-centered through an online learning environment such as Facebook. Admittedly, the students in experimental group showed better results in terms of the writing components than their peers in the control group. Overall, it can be said the differences in the students' post-test scores, which are in favor of the experimental group, are due to the use of an online learning environment in which students receive access to online materials using their personal computer. In such an environment, student may feel confident and encouraged to practice and improve their writing (Al Besher, 2012; Ezza, 2010).

Therefore, the success of the blended learning as an innovative tool for developing academic essay writing can be ascribed to two main factors. The first factor is the learning atmosphere presented in the present study. This learning atmosphere made students more confident; the results may explain that the participants were motivated to correct their own mistakes as well as the mistakes of their classmates'. Furthermore, they felt free in their practicing and learning of writing. The second factor lies in the combination of online learning activities with traditional learning activities of EFL writing. This combination provided learners with more flexibility in the learning setting in such a way as to accommodate for individual differences among students in learning habit and styles.

5.2 Pedagogical Implications

Based on the results of the study, the following implications can be drawn:

1. The blended learning approach could be useful in the teaching of English skills in general, and of writing in particular.
2. The blended learning approach could be a good means for helping shy learners to participate in online technology by interacting with peers and teachers through online discussion boards.
3. The blended learning approach could help students in the learning process as it facilitates communication, interaction, and direct feedback.
4. Teaching programs could be computerized and taught via the blended learning approach to help learners develop an efficient composing process that enhances the development and competence of the writing skill.
5. Teachers should be familiar with their students' individual differences and needs.

The following are indeed required to design and implement a blended mode of instruction.

1. Teacher should be trained to teach writing via blended approach at schools and universities.
2. Teachers should be preoccupied with the development and competence of writing rather than keep hunting for tiny mistakes.
3. Universities should incorporate the blended learning approach in their courses in general and in their academic writing courses in particular.
4. Universities should train both teachers and students so that they can use the Internet in their courses in general and in their academic writing courses in particular.
5. Training teachers on the strategies, types and implementation of the blended learning approach should be a pre-requisite for university students.

5.3 Limitations of the Study

Several limitations exist in the study. One limitation of the study was time. The study was conducted in six weeks. Future research should consider a longer study period of one semester, in order to allow more exposure to writing skills using Facebook. Another limitation is related to gender. The study subjects are all male students due to the nature of the context of Saudi Arabia. Third, the subjects of the study are all EFL students majoring in English; therefore, the results cannot be generalized to other Saudi EFL students in other domains. Finally, this study used only a quantitative research method of quasi experimental. To triangulate the data and results, a future study using a mixed method approach. In particular, a mixed method design is called for to assess

the impact of this blended learning mode on academic writing English and the student and teachers' perspectives on the use of blended learning.

5.4 Suggestions for Further Research

Based on the findings of the current study, more researches are needed to examine the empirical effect of the writing in blended learning approach designed for learners with different proficiency levels and over a longer period of time.

The present study recommends that the process of teacher preparation should take into consideration the present findings and try to incorporate blended learning in future training programs. Teacher training institutions should also include computers and internet technology in their teaching and training programs.

The present study also recommends that similar future studies should include larger number of participants in such a way as to ensure more solid evidence for the effectiveness of using blended leaning approach on improving learners' academic essay writing. Besides, similar quantitative and qualitative studies should be conducted to investigate the impact of blended learning on improving other kinds of essays.

It is also recommended that use of blended learning should be extended to students in other levels and to other EFL courses and skills taught at campus such as speaking, listening, reading, spelling, grammar, and vocabulary building.

In the end, similar wide-scale studies should be performed to investigate the effect of blended learning English language skills other than academic writing skills. using effective practices and intensive training especially. similar wide-scale studies should be conducted on the effect of blended learning on English language skills in pre-university educational stages.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Ethics Approval

Human Sciences Subcommittee Macquarie University, North Ryde NSW 2109, Australia

26/10/2018

MACQUARIE
University

Dear Professor Riazi,

Reference No: 5201836454844
Project ID: 3645
Title: The Effects of Using Blended Learning Approach on EFL Students' Essay Writing at Shaqra University, Saudi Arabia

Thank you for submitting the above application for ethical review. The Human Sciences Subcommittee has considered your application.

I am pleased to advise that ethical approval has been granted for this project to be conducted by Professor Abdolmehdi Riazi, and other personnel: Mr Omar Alrouji.

This research meets the requirements set out in the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research 2007, (updated July 2018).

Standard Conditions of Approval:

1. Continuing compliance with the requirements of the National Statement, available from the following website: https://nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/national-statement-ethical-conduct-human-research-2007-updated-2018.

2. This approval is valid for five (5) years, <u>subject to the submission of annual reports</u>. Please submit your reports on the anniversary of the approval for this protocol. You will be sent an automatic reminder email one week from the due date to remind you of your reporting responsibilities.

3. All adverse events, including unforeseen events, which might affect the continued ethical acceptability of the project, must be reported to the subcommittee within 72 hours

4. All proposed changes to the project and associated documents must be submitted to the subcommittee for review and approval before implementation. Changes can be made via the Human Research Ethics Management System.

The HREC Terms of Reference and Standard Operating Procedures are available from the Research Services website: https://www.mq.edu.au/research/ethics-integrity-and-policies/ethics/human-ethics.

It is the responsibility of the Chief Investigator to retain a copy of all documentation related to this project and to forward a copy of this approval letter to all personnel listed on the project.

Should you have any queries regarding your project, please contact the Faculty Ethics Officer.

The Human Sciences Subcommittee wishes you every success in your research.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Naomi Sweller

Chair, Human Sciences Subcommittee

The Faculty Ethics Subcommittees at Macquarie University operate in accordance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research 2007, (updated July 2018), [Section 5.2.22].

Appendix 2: Letter from the Head of the Department of Shaqra University

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Ministry of Education

Shaqra University

(045)

المملكة العربية السعودية
وزارة التعليم
جامعة شقراء
(٠٤٥)

Shaqra University
جامعة شقراء

المرفقات: .... التاريخ: / / ١٤٣هـ الرقم: ....

28/9/2018

Dear Sir,

This letter is to confirm that Mr. Omar Obaid Alrouji is authorized to conduct the research project entitled:

"The Effects of Using Blended Learning Approach on EFL Students' Essay Writing at Shaqra University, Saudi Arabia " at the Department of English Language at Shaqra University, College of Education in Afif during the first semester of the current 2018/2019 academic year. The study will include pre-writing test, experiment and post writing test.

Please do not hesitate to contact me for any further enquiries.

Dr. Khalid Tag Eldin

Head of English Language Department

+966502829746

khalidmogadam@su.edu.sa

www.su.edu.sa

الهاتف : ١١٦٤٧٥٠٧٥ – ١١٦٤٧٥٠٧٢ – الفاكس : ١١٦٤٧٧٧٦٢ – ص. ب ٣٣ شقراء ١١٩٦١
Tel.: 0116475075 - 0116475072 - Fax: 0116477762 - P.O.Box 33 Shaqra 11961

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Appendix 3: Participant's Consent Form (Students)

Department of Linguistics
Faculty of Human Sciences
MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY   NSW   2109
Phone: +61298507951
Fax:
Email: Mehdi.riazi@mq.edu.au
Supervisor's Name & Title: Prof. Mehdi Riazi
Participant Information and Consent Form
Name of Project:
The Effects of Using Blended Learning Approach on EFL Students' Essay Writing at Shaqra University, Saudi Arabia
Dear student,
You are invited to participate in a study which will investigate the mode of instruction (blended learning vs. conventional) on students' learning to write in English. The purpose of the study is to examine how the mode of instruction might impact Saudi English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students' English essay writing.
The study is being conducted by Omar Alrouji (student No.: 0434342376), Department of Linguistics, Omar.alrouji@students.mq.edu.au This research is being conducted to meet the requirements of Master of Research in the Faculty of Human Sciences under the supervision of Prof. Mehdi Riazi, telephone number: +61298507951, email address: Mehdi.riazi@mq.edu.au, of the Department of Linguistics.
If you decide to participate, you will be asked to take a part in the experimental (blended learning) or control (conventional) mode of learning to write essays. Before the study, you will be asked to write a five-paragraph essay on a given topic. Then, you, as participants of the study, will take part in group you have chosen: the experimental or the control group. If you are a member in the experimental group, the writing course will be taught based on the use of Facebook group outside the class and receiving feedback through computers. In the control group, the course will be taught based on conventional classroom teaching methods, materials, and instructions will be only presented in classroom. The study will run for six weeks. By the end of the study, you will be asked to write another five-paragraph essay on a given topic similar to the pre-test.
Any information or personal details gathered in the course of the study are confidential, except as required by law. No individual will be identified in any publication of the results. Only the researcher will access the data for the purpose of the study. A summary of the results of the study can be made available to you on request. You can contact the researcher on his email to have the result of this study.
Participation in this study is entirely voluntary: you are not obliged to participate and if you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without having to give a reason and without consequence.

I, ……………………………………………………. have read and understand the information above and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this research, knowing that I can withdraw from further participation in the research at any time without consequence. I have been given a copy of this form to keep.

Participant's Name:__
(Block letters)
Participant's Signature: Date:__
Investigator's Name:_
(Block letters)
Investigator's Signature: Date:__
The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in this research, you may contact the Committee through the Director, Research Ethics & Integrity (telephone (02) 9850 7854; email ethics@mq.edu.au). Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated, and you will be informed of the outcome.

(INVESTIGATOR'S [OR PARTICIPANT'S] COPY)

Appendix 4: Participant's Consent Form (Teacher)

Department of Linguistics
Faculty of Human Sciences
MACQUARIE   UNIVERSITY   NSW   2109
Phone: +61298507951
Fax:
Email: Mehdi.riazi@mq.edu.au

Supervisor's Name & Title: Prof. Mehdi Riazi
Participant Information and Consent Form
Name of Project:
The Effects of Using Blended Learning Approach on EFL Students' Essay Writing at Shaqra University, Saudi Arabia
Dear teacher,
You are invited to participate in a study which will investigate the mode of instruction (blended learning vs. conventional) on students' learning to write in English. The purpose of the study is to examine how the mode of instruction might impact Saudi English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students' English essay writing.
The study is being conducted by Omar Alrouji (student No.: 0434342376), Department of Linguistics, Omar.alrouji@students.mq.edu.au This research is being conducted to meet the requirements of Master of Research in the Faculty of Human Sciences under the supervision of Prof. Mehdi Riazi, telephone number: +61298507951, email address: Mehdi.riazi@mq.edu.au, of the Department of Linguistics.
If you decide to participate, you will be asked to:
- sign the consent form
- administer a pre-writing test (an essay) to students at the outset of the study
- use one of the Writing II classes as the experimental (blended learning) and the other as the control group (conventional). As for the experimental group, the writing course will be taught based on the use of Facebook group outside the class and receiving feedback through computers. In the control group, the course will be taught based on conventional classroom teaching methods, materials, and instructions you usually do. The study will run for six weeks, and then:
- administer a post-writing test (an essay) at the end of the study.
Any information or personal details gathered in the course of the study are confidential, except as required by law. No individual will be identified in any publication of the results. Only the researcher will access the data for the purpose of the study. A summary of the results of the study can be made available to you on request. You can contact the researcher on his email to have the result of this study. Your Participation in this study is highly appreciated.

I, ……………………………………………………………. have read and understand the information above and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this research. I have been given a copy of this form to keep.
Participant's Name:__
(Block letters)
Participant's Signature: Date:__
Investigator's Name:__
(Block letters)

Investigator's Signature: Date:

The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in this research, you may contact the Committee through the Director, Research Ethics & Integrity (telephone (02) 9850 7854; email ethics@mq.edu.au). Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated, and you will be informed of the outcome.

(INVESTIGATOR'S [OR PARTICIPANT'S] COPY)

Appendix 5: Participant's Consent Form (Experts)

Department of Linguistics
Faculty of Human Sciences
MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY   NSW   2109
Phone: +61298507951
Fax:
Email: Mehdi.riazi@mq.edu.au

Supervisor's Name & Title: Prof. Mehdi Riazi
Participant Information and Consent Form
Name of Project:
The Effects of Using Blended Learning Approach on EFL Students' Essay Writing at Shaqra University, Saudi Arabia
Dear Expert,
You are invited to participate in a study which will investigate the mode of instruction (blended learning vs. conventional) on students' learning to write in English. The purpose of the study is to examine how the mode of instruction might impact Saudi English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students' English essay writing.
The study is being conducted by Omar Alrouji (student No.: 0434342376), Department of Linguistics, Omar.alrouji@students.mq.edu.au This research is being conducted to meet the requirements of Master of Research in the Faculty of Human Sciences under the supervision of Prof. Mehdi Riazi, telephone number: +61298507951, email address: Mehdi.riazi@mq.edu.au, of the Department of Linguistics.
If you decide to participate as an expert rater in this study, you will be asked to:
- sign the consent form
- participate in a brief instruction on the rating rubric, and
- assess the pre-and post- writing tests using the selected rubric

Any information or personal details gathered in the course of the study are confidential, except as required by law. No individual will be identified in any publication of the results. Only the researcher will access the data for the purpose of the study. Your participation in this study is highly appreciated.

I, …………………………………………………………. have read and understand the information above and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I have had an opportunity to ask questions, and agree to participate in this research study. I have been given a copy of this form to keep.
Participant's Name:__
(Block letters)
Participant's Signature: Date:__
Investigator's Name:_
(Block letters)
Investigator's Signature: Date:__
The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in this research, you may contact the Committee through the Director, Research Ethics & Integrity (telephone (02) 9850 7854; email ethics@mq.edu.au). Any

complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated, and you will be informed of the outcome.

(INVESTIGATOR'S [OR PARTICIPANT'S] COPY)

Appendix 6: Writing 2

Topics to be covered	Methods of teaching	Assessment tasks	No. of hours	Textbooks
Course Orientation	1. Lectures		2 Hours	Effective Academic Writing 2 by Alice Savage & Patricia Mayer
Unit: ONE: Introduction to the course	Class discussion		2 Hours	
Unit: TWO Descriptive Essays	1.Collaborative learning/Team work 2. Peer Editing 3. Regular homework	1.Class participation 2. Quizzes 3. Home Assignments	2 Hours	
Unit: THREE Narrative Essays	1.Collaborative learning/Team work 2. Peer Editing 3.Regular homework	1.Class participation 2. Quizzes 3.Home Assignments	2 Hours	
Unit: FOUR Opinion Essays	1.Collaborative learning/Team work 2. Peer Editing 3.Regular homework	1.Class participation 2. Quizzes 3.Home Assignments	2 Hours	
Midterm Exam			1 Hours	
Unit: FIVE Comparison & Contrast Essays	1.Collaborative learning/Team work 2. Peer Editing 3.Regular homework	1.Class participation 2. Quizzes 3.Home Assignments	2 Hours	
Unit: SIX Cause & Effect Essays	1.Collaborative learning/Team work 2. Peer Editing 3.Regular homework	1.Class participation 2. Quizzes 3.Home Assignments	2 Hours	
Final Exam		Final written exam	1 Hours	

Appendix 7: Jacob et al. (1981) ESL Composition Profile

ESL COPMESTION PROFILE

STUDENTS   DATE   TOPIC

SCORE   LEVEL   CRITERIA

COMMENTS

CONTENT
9-10 EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD: knowledgeable. substantive. thorough development of thesis. relevant assigned
   topic.
6-8 GOOD TO AVERAGE: some knowledge of subject. adequate range. limited development of thesis. mosey
   relevant to topic, but lacks detail
3-5 FAIR TO POOR: limited knowledge of subject. little substance. inadequate development of topic
1-2 VERY POOR: does not show knowledge of subject non-substantive. not permanent. OR not enough to evaluate

ORGANIZATION
9-10 EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD: fluent expression. ideas clearly started/ supported.   Succinct. well organized. logical sequencing.
   cohesive
6-8 GOOD TO AVERAGE: somewhat choppy. loosely organized but main ideas stand out. limited support. lodged
   but incomplete sequencing
3-5 FAIR TO POOR: non- fluent. ideas confused or disconnected. lacks logical sequencing and development
1-2 VERY POOR: does not communicate. no organization. or not enough to evaluate

VOCABULARY
9-10 EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD: sophisticated   range. effective word/ idiom choice and usage. word   form
   mastery. appropriate register.
6-8 GOOD TO AVERAGE: adequate range. occasional errors of word/idiom form, choice, usage but   meaning not abraded
3-5 FAIR TO POOR: limited range. frequent errors of word/ idiom form choice, usage. meaning confused or obscured
1-2 VERY POOR: essentially translation. little knowledge of English vocabulary, idioms word form. OR not enough to evaluate

LANGUAGE USE
9-10 EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD: effective complex constructions. few errors of argument, tense, number, word
   order/functions articles, pronouns, prepositions
6-8 GOOD TO AVERAGE: effective but simple constructions. minor problems in complex constructions. several
   errors of agreement, tense, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns prepositions but meaning seldom
   obscured.
3-5 FAIR TO POOR: major problems in simple/complex constructions. frequent errors of negation, agreement tense,
   number, word order/function, articles, pronouns prepositions and/or fragments run-ons deletions. meaning
   confused or obscured.
1-2 VERY POOR: virtually no mastery of sentence construction rules. dominated by errors. does not communicate.
   or not enough to evaluate

MECHANICS
9-10 EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD: effective complex constructions. few errors of argument, tense, number, word
   order/functions articles, pronouns, prepositions
6-8 GOOD TO AVERAGE: effective but simple constructions. minor problems in complex constructions. several
   errors of agreement, tense, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns prepositions but meaning seldom
   obscured.
3-5 FAIR TO POOR: major problems in simple/complex constructions. frequent errors of negation, agreement tense,
   number, word order/function, articles, pronouns prepositions and/or fragments run-ons deletions. meaning
   confused or obscured.
1-2 VERY POOR: virtually no mastery of sentence construction rules. dominated by errors. does not communicate.
   or not enough to evaluate

TOTAL SCORE   READER   COMMENTS

Figure 6.3 Jacobs et al. 's (1981) scoring profile

Appendix 8: A sample of Student's Pre&Post Test Essay (Control Group)

Shagra University	Lang use (L.S)	3	Con. 23	total 18
College of Education	Organ. (org)	3	Pre. ↑	
English Department	Content (Co)	3	Time: 1 hours	
Subject: Writing 2	Vocab. (voc)	4		
Date/ 23 /3/1440	Mechanics (M)	5		

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? It is better to use printed material such as books and articles to do research than it is to use the internet. Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer?

There are many ways to do research (*es*) L.S.

^ Some people still use the ~~the~~ traditional *suchas?*
way which ↑ the ~~&~~ Printed material. and

(con)? ~~the~~ some use new technology like internet. *to do what? (con)*
(org)? — Where is your own opinion?

People use Printed material such as book (s) *L.S*
and articles. it is take time *good* and alot time
and hard work because you will find good book *org.* *cont.*
org.? and libraliy. *who?*
Transition?

People who useing new technology to do reserch by use *L.S.*
Intrnet website and regorces, ~~thes~~ will find it
easy because they will save time *repetition of the idea*
example, you can find anything by one click. *like?* *this should be earlier*

sequence (con) In the end, I think useing tecnology for *should be comparative*
reserch is the best thing to doing this
reserch becaus it is very easy
and you can find every thing at any
time *good to summarize this idea.*

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Lang use (LS)	7	
organ. (org)	6	Con 23
content (con)	4	Post. T
Vocab. (voc)	4	Time: 1 hours
Mechanic (M)	5	

total 26

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? "Universities should give the same amount of money to their students' sports activities as they give to their university libraries. Use specific reasons and examples to support your opinion."?

All the universities around th world offer their students _[con]_ a variety of activities such as sports and libraries. _not an activity_
good transition However, some _incorrect wording_ of universities give a lot of money to libraries's activities and give a small amount of money to others activities. _use minimal expressions such as "may"_

good, you're taking a position In my opinion, I think universities should give the same amount of money to all activities because there are many reasons. _inappropriate (LS). briefly say the reason here._

good for org The first reason all universities have to take care about all activities because if they only _what are they?_ focus on libraries's activities they _will_ _. may? might?_ ignore the other activities like sport and trips. _more details needed here_ _(con)_

✓org The second reason is about students. there are _[m]_ alot of students who _don't_ like activities which _may/might not_ are related to libraries and try prefer other activities like trips or football. So _one transition can do!_ as result of that the intake of student _meaning?_ in the activities will decrease.

Conclusion?

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Appendix 9: A sample of Student's Pre&Post Test Essay (Experiment Group)

Shagra University	Lang use (LS)	6	
College of Education	Organ (org)	5	Exp 33
English Department	Content (con)	4	Pre. T
Subject: Writing 2	Vocab (voc)	4	Time: 1 hours
Date/ 23 /3/1440	mechanics (m)	2	total 21

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? It is better to use printed material such as books and articles to do research than it is to use the internet. Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer?

Research is important for all fields. They helps other people to read your work. Research can be perform in science and literature. When someone do research S/he will need to use references to help him for write his research.

I think internet is better than printed books for writing research. Anyone can use internet and search for the information he need. Give reasons briefly as part of the thesis!

There is many disadvantages of using printed books for writing research. Books will need more time to find the information. Also, they will cost a lot of money. May be some books are not available near to you. another good point

Using internet for writing research is better for many reasons. First, internet is available everywhere. It is cheap and it does not take time to find the Information you want. it depends on what are

In conclusion, my generation is used to use internet to find any information they want where I think it's faster and easier way to do your research.

Lang ur (L.)	6	
Organ (org)	6	Ex 33
Content (con)	10	Post. ʃ
Vocab. (voc)	10	Time: ½ hours
Mechanics (M)	8	total (40)

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? "Universities should give the same amount of money to their students' sports activities as they give to their university libraries. Use specific reasons and examples to support your opinion."?

I agree strongly with this statement that the same amount of money should go to university sports activities as to university libraries. Playing sports is a wonderful way to learn about teamwork, strategy and reaching your goals, it should be as important focus of a university as libraries. what are key points are you discussing below?

Students need to recreate as they need to get the most up-to-date books to have a balance between mind and body. Libraries are the food of minds and sports are the food of bodies. Therefore, universities should make computerized programs and access to Internet research databases available, and at the same time make all types of sports handy to students to share and practice them in any time.

Students always young and can stay up all night studying, and they need to recreate, through which they may acquire soft skills, such as making friends and working in a team. This will be very beneficial during spare time and vacation periods.

Finally, students at universities are not only going to benefit from their education, but to practice and exercise sports activities. For students, both libraries and sports are essential and can't be separated. For this reason, libraries should always be funded as equal as sports activities.