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REFLECTIVE WRITING IN COMPOSITION:

A QUESTION OF WELL-BEING

by

Bushra Khaliq Khan

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American University of Sharjah

College of Arts and Sciences

in Partial Fulfilment

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for the Degree of

Master of Arts in

Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

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## **Declaration of Authorship**

I declare that this thesis is my own work and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it does not contain material published or written by a third party, except where permission has been obtained and/or appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.

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*To my parents, and my sister-in-law*

## **Abstract**

This study investigates the use of reflective writing for ESL learners in academic writing, with a particular focus on student writers' well-being and attitudes toward writing. Previous research suggests that reflective practices boost students' morale and enhance language learning as students are able to reflect on their experiences and challenges in writing, which may remain unaddressed otherwise. Thus, through reflection, learners are encouraged to use their metacognitive skills in relation to both their learning and psychosocial experiences, resulting in individual growth and well-being. This supports the premise that the ability to reflect indicates effective experiential learning, thus facilitating learners' positive emotional well-being while increasing the quality of output. Against this background, the study explored the role of reflective writing in connection with student writer's well-being and attitudes towards writing in an L2 English academic writing course. Participants were 31 students enrolled in academic writing classes (WRI 102) at American University of Sharjah and received a total of 11 treatments of reflection journals throughout the semester. Their well-being and writing attitudes were evaluated by two surveys conducted at the beginning and at the end of the semester. Results showed that the ESL learners reported significant improvement in their well-being and writing attitudes following reflective writing practicing reflective writing. This suggests that reflective writing can be considered an effective pedagogical tool.

**Search Terms:** reflective writing, learner well-being, writing attitudes, anxiety, enjoyment, comfort

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

The COVID-19 outbreak was first reported in December 2019 in Wuhan, China (Li et al., 2020). By January 29, 2020, the UAE had confirmed its first case of COVID-19 (Turak, 2020), and the first death was recorded on 21 March 2020 (UAE Confirms First Two-COVID-19 Deaths, 2020). What followed was a global pandemic that saw the closure of schools and universities worldwide, leading to a transition of all educational platforms to online teaching and learning. With this abrupt and unplanned shift to online learning platforms, learners all over the world were left to face the challenges of dealing with the fear of the unknown, having to stay at home under lock-down for an unspecified period, and adapting to a whole new style of learning, all within the span of a few days.

The gradual shift from online back to face-to-face learning after an extended period of lockdown did not make things any easier. Orders for lockdown lifted when the world had just begun getting used to stay-at-home life with COVID. These massive changes following the outbreak of COVID-19 have had serious consequences on learners' personal as well as educational experiences in terms of their social, emotional, psychological, and academic well-being. Such circumstances have reinforced the need for educators to draw attention to and address learners' well-being as a central goal of classroom instruction.

To address this issue, the current study aimed to enhance learner well-being in academic writing classrooms through reflective writing. The purpose of conducting a study in an academic writing setting was to draw attention to the process of writing with a focus on writing to be well as opposed to only writing well. In exploring the concept of 'writing to be well' in classrooms, much of the research emphasizes incorporating reflective practices in writing classrooms to address learner needs (Chu et.al, 2018; Dewey, 1910; Rodgers, 2002; Yagelski, 2010, 2022). However, rather than prioritizing learner well-being, these studies primarily target improving attitudes towards writing, such as reducing anxiety and improving motivation and confidence (Abbas, 2016; Al-Jarrah et al., 2018; Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014; Feiz, 2016; Wolff, 2016). In contrast, the current study stands out by prioritizing reflective writing practices in writing classrooms, with a central focus on enhancing learners' well-being rather than solely emphasizing the final written product. By exploring themes like learner identity, value, and achievement within the context of writing, this study aims to identify actions that promote the safeguarding and support of our well-being.

In doing so, the study seeks to develop both learners' well-being and their positive attitudes toward writing.

By integrating reflection, modern teaching approaches enable learners to shift from passive reception to active engagement, departing from traditional one-sided teaching methods. While traditional approaches, akin to the banking model (Freire, 1973), predominantly featured teachers depositing information to learners, contemporary pedagogies embracing reflection afford learners a more participatory role. By inviting learners to engage in a dialogic process to examine their learning and experiences (Hallman, 2011; Yeşilbursa, 2011), current approaches empower learners to take ownership of their learning journey. Thus, by discouraging passive reception and promoting active involvement, modern teaching methods effectively transform the learning experience.

The term *reflective practice* or *reflection*, first addressed by John Dewey (1910), is described as an “active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge”. That is, reflection is a process that facilitates the integration of knowledge, experience, and action. Since its conception, reflective practice has widely been used in higher education and professional development in a variety of fields such as sociology (Olson & Burns, 2016; Purcell, 2013; Tsekeris, 2010; Welsh, 2024), vocational education (Boldrini & Cattaneo, 2014; Cattaneo & Boldrini, 2016; Cattaneo & Motta, 2021), medical education (Chen & Forbes, 2014; Shapiro et al., 2006; Wald et al., 2012; Wald & Reis, 2010), psychology (Bruno & Dell’Aversana, 2017; Cisero, 2006; Knowles et al., 2007; Marsh, 2014), and Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) (Cirocki & Farrell, 2017; Farrell, 2013, 2016, 2017; Huang, 2021) as a way to enhance formal learning and address learners’ psychosocial needs. Given that, Boud (2001) suggests that reflection as part of learning is important as “All learning builds on existing perceptions and frameworks of understanding”, which is why “links must be made between what is new and what already exists” (pp.11-12). However, this focus on using reflection to enhance formal learning is a more traditional approach to reflective practice. In contrast, modern approaches to reflective practices focus on promoting self-efficacy, referring to “an individual’s belief in their capacity to execute behaviors necessary to produce specific performance attainments” (Bandura, 1977). As self-efficacy is closely tied to one's self-perception, it significantly influences overall well-being (Siddiqui, 2015; Yagelski & Collins, 2022). Therefore, it is crucial to emphasize the

importance of enabling learners to recognize, explore, and utilize the relationship between their self-efficacy, self-perception and well-being through reflective practices. By doing so, learners can promote their well-being and also facilitate more effective learning outcomes. Considering that the central premise of the study was to improve learners' well-being and their writing attitudes, the current study adopted the modern approach to reflective writing.

Reflective practice done through writing is called *reflective writing*.

Reflective writing is a process that allows the communication of thoughts and ideas by integrating experience, knowledge, belief, and action (Rodgers, 2002). Although there are many ways to incorporate reflection in learning such as verbal reflections on learning and critical evaluation of learning experiences, research suggests that reflective writing is the most common pedagogical strategy used in classrooms to encourage reflection (Chretien et al., 2008; Hume, 2009). Through reflective writing, learners can produce better content when they are allowed to explore the micro and macro concepts of a writing task while relating these concepts to experiences and emotions that affect the task at hand (Levin & Wagner, 2005). The ability to reflect indicates effective experiential learning, thus enhancing learner's well-being while also increasing the quality of output.

Reflective writing practices have psycho-emotional benefits. Yagelski (2011) suggests that reflective writing practices shift the focus away from "the writer's writing" to focus on "the writer writing," directing attention to the psychological aspects of writing. That is, reflective writing practices address learners' social and emotional needs by drawing attention to the act of writing by the learner, as opposed to focusing only on the end product. Thus, the process of reflection encourages the use of learners' metacognitive skills in relation to their learning and psychosocial experiences, resulting in individual growth and well-being.

Research on reflective writing has also been investigated in relation to writing attitudes in the field of second language acquisition (Abbas, 2016; Al-Jarrah et al., 2018; Feiz, 2016). Reflective writing practices provide learners with both academic and affective benefits, allowing them to explore personal connections in their learning and develop their writing fluency, thus building positive attitudes toward writing (Eastman, 1997). It is reported that reflective writing can reduce the writer's anxiety and increase their confidence in writing, thus positively affecting their writing attitudes. In addition, their motivation and engagement in the writing

process are positively affected.

Despite its acknowledged benefits, especially in improving well-being, reflective writing remains relatively overlooked in academic settings. The incorporation of reflective writing into academic writing classes is still uncommon. Very few studies have embraced such practices within classroom settings. Instead, the majority of the research on reflective writing predominantly highlights its usefulness in enhancing formal learning outcomes or positively influencing learners' attitudes toward writing. Rodgers (2002) analyzes, "Reflection has suffered from a loss of meaning. In becoming everything to everybody, it has lost its ability to be seen" (p. 843). While educators include reflections in the curriculum, they often fail to utilize them to their fullest extent and frequently resort to quantifying them. Little research has been done to investigate the impact of reflective writing on promoting learners' social-emotional well-being in L2 academic writing classes. As such, the present study focuses on prioritizing the enhancement of learners' social-emotional well-being while fostering a positive shift in their attitudes towards writing in a post-COVID academic setting. Promoting well-being in a writing class through reflective practices does not challenge the conventional belief that emphasizes the development of academic writing competence, but rather proposes that by combining academic writing with reflective writing, educators can promote both learners' well-being, and improve their writing attitudes (Yagelski & Collins, 2022). Thus, the current study aimed to investigate the impact of reflective writing practices on both L2 learners' well-being and their writing attitudes.

The thesis is organized as follows: Chapter 2 explores two key concepts: well-being and writing attitudes. It proceeds to examine these concepts in connection with reflective writing. Chapter 3 introduces the current study and methodology. Chapter 4 reports the results of the study. Finally, Chapter 5 discusses the results, limitations, pedagogical implications, and future directions of the study.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

### **2.1 Well-Being**

For many years, traditional approaches in education focused only on the end product of learning. However, recent years have seen a growing shift in focus away from the end product by prioritizing the process, where the central focus is on the learner. By drawing attention to the process and the learner, educators were able to extend their focus beyond learners' academic needs and pay attention to learners' social, emotional, and psychological needs. As such, acknowledging these different learner needs inside and outside the classroom led to the development of a variety of pedagogical practices that began focusing on and addressing learner well-being.

Well-being can be described as a multi-dimensional concept that encompasses social, emotional, and psychological dimensions. Cohen (2006) proposes that incorporating a blend of cognitive, emotional, and psycho-social competencies lays the foundation for an enhanced quality of life. As such, well-being, "grounded in the intent to live a purposeful, meaningful life, working toward one's aspirations with available resources," (Dodge et.al, p.230) is more than a temporary emotion. It refers to "a person's cognitive and affective evaluations of his or her life" (Diener et al., 2002, p. 63). Similarly, student well-being is grounded in exploring the self in a social and academic context for opportunities for meaningful engagement within their learning (Yagelski & Collins, 2022). Thus, prioritizing well-being as a learning outcome offers learners the chance to not only pursue academic growth but also cultivate agency, foster a sense of purpose, nurture their social connections, and navigate emotions like imposter syndrome.

### **2.2 Learner Well-Being in Reflective Writing**

Reflective writing practices differ from academic writing in that they are informal and personal. Despite this distinction, they are sometimes used in formal writing classrooms. However, such practices are generally incorporated in classrooms as end-of-semester reflective assignments where learners are asked to reflect on their learning experiences during the course. While such practices allow learners to practice reflection on their experiences, they do not contribute to improving learners' social-emotional well-being as the reflections are more focused on aspects of formal learning. Rather than focusing on learners' needs, reflective writings are treated like any other academic writing task completed as a class assignment for students to adhere to a specific format and organization, following a more traditional approach to

reflection. For example, learners are asked to think about their learning experiences and how they can improve their performance in the classroom.

Recognizing and addressing learners' social and emotional needs is crucial, given their substantial impact on the learners' overall well-being. (Bar-On, 2005; Compton, 2005; Khramtsova et al, 2007; Salami, 2008). Reflecting on Wells' (1925) assertion that human history is a struggle between catastrophe and education, it becomes evident that the intricate connection between mind and body cannot be ignored without suffering dire repercussions. According to Brand (1999), "We make a serious mistake by not helping students to address their psychological lives, to continually humanize themselves" (p. 14). By adapting elements of the therapeutic process into educational frameworks through activities like reflective writing, learners can reconcile their experiences and gain deeper insight into their surroundings fostering their personal growth.

Prioritizing psychological well-being and integrating it into educational objectives is essential, given that the purpose of writing and learning revolves around meaning-making activities. These activities afford learners the opportunity to engage in critical thinking, reflection, and expression of ideas. It is through this process of reflection that meaning emerges. As such, reflective writing serves as a vehicle for learners to add significance to their experiences by connecting their thoughts and emotions with their academic and personal journeys, both within and beyond the confines of the classroom. However, current educational institutions view reflective writing through a narrow lens.

Institutions either marginalize reflective writing practices altogether or, on the rare occasions when they do incorporate them, limit the reflections to aspects of formal learning. These reflections are also often quantified by assigning grade values which makes it difficult to judge whether students were engaged in honest reflections, or engaged in writing what their teachers want them to write. As Tyler (2001) says, "Doing so [assigning grades to reflections] necessarily marginalizes, isolates, and alienates the writers who create those texts, valorizing our own illusions of academic sanctuary over their invitations to engage in the complex material, cultural, and socio-personal worlds of actual and virtual experience that dominate the lives of late twentieth-century human beings" (pp. 2-3). Hence, it is important that institutions not only prioritize learner well-being in classrooms, but also recognize the potential of reflective writing in addressing such learner needs.

While reflective writing is inherently subjective, it provides learners with an opportunity to critically examine their own perspectives and biases, fostering self-awareness and metacognition. By acknowledging and interrogating their subjectivity, learners can develop a more nuanced understanding of complex issues and engage in more empathetic and inclusive dialogue (Metz, 2020; Nobutoshi, 2023; Rusche, 2013). Allowing learners to reflect on their experiences through reflections improves their self-efficacy, which in turn improves their ability to manage stress and enhances self-esteem. Thus, self-efficacy contributes to overall well-being (Milam et al., 2019; Salami, 2010; Siddiqui, 2015). On the other hand, low self-efficacy is linked to depression (Kashdan & Roberts, 2004) and lower well-being (Bandura et al., 2003). Given that reflective writing fosters self-efficacy in learners, and self-efficacy is linked to improving well-being, we can conclude that reflective writing has a positive impact on learners' well-being and development as a whole.

In addition to addressing learners' socio-emotional needs, reflective writing practices also focus on dealing with learners' psycho-social needs (Chu et.al, 2018; Mlynarczyk, 2013). Involving learners in practices that engage them in reflection on an individual level and also on a social level through reflection journals allows them opportunities to build positive relationships with their teachers and peers (Gardener-Baasch, 2016). Considering that reflection is being done as a social activity where learners share their reflections in conversations with their teachers and peers, reflective writing allows learners a safe environment where they are engaged with creating meaning between their reflections, their self, their peers, and their learning. As such, learners develop an emotional attachment with those involved in and those that contribute to their learning process. This affective commitment between learners and their institution, based on positive feelings and experiences during learning promotes their positive well-being.

Free-writing is crucial to reflective writing as it offers learners an unrestricted space to express their thoughts, emotions, and experiences without the constraints of formal structure or predetermined topics. This unstructured approach encourages spontaneity and creativity, allowing learners to explore their thoughts and feelings freely. However, such practices are not always encouraged in academic writing classrooms due to their strict adherence to writing standards. Yet, by bypassing the inhibitions that often accompany structured writing tasks, free-writing enables learners to explore ideas, make connections, and uncover insights that may otherwise

remain unexplored. Moreover, the absence of judgment or evaluation during free-writing sessions fosters a safe and supportive environment for learners to experiment with language, voice, and style. This process of uninhibited self-expression not only stimulates critical thinking and self-reflection but also fosters an improvement in learners' writing abilities. Overall, free-writing serves as a valuable tool in reflective writing, empowering learners to engage deeply with their thoughts and experiences and facilitating personal growth and development.

### **2.3 Writing Attitudes**

With the learner-centered approach gaining popularity in recent years, educators have been able to analyze different learner attitudes present in the classroom, especially when it comes to writing. Studying learners' writing attitudes is important because they affect learner's writing performance (Ni'mah et al., 2016; Sarkhoush, 2013). Considering that writing is a complex task that requires expressing ideas without compromising content or organization, teachers need to ensure that learners do not develop negative attitudes toward writing. Learners often feel anxious before or during the process of writing because of the quality of output they are expected to produce (Cheng, 2002; Karlina & Pancoro, 2018). This may lead learners not to enjoy the process of writing. Disengagement with their writing process may negatively affect learners' attitudes and beliefs about themselves as writers, and the effort they put into any writing task. It may also negatively affect their willingness to improve and develop as a writer thus making them less receptive to instruction and feedback.

Writing attitudes can be both positive and negative, affecting confidence with writing. Positive writing attitudes like comfort and enjoyment are directly linked to learners' confidence in writing. Studies on positive writing attitudes suggest that positive experiences with writing enhance comfort and enjoyment with writing. Learners who are comfortable with writing tend to produce longer and higher quality texts, highlighting enjoyment in the writing process (Bruning et al., 2013; Clark & Douglas, 2011). As such, learners' positive attitudes toward writing lead to enjoyment with writing and enhanced writing performance.

On the other hand, negative attitudes towards writing, such as anxiety and stress, are also closely tied to learners' confidence in their writing abilities. Previous research on writing attitudes indicates that negative experiences with writing can heighten learners' anxiety and stress, consequently undermining their confidence in

writing (Karlina & Pancoro, 2018). This anxiety surrounding their writing inhibits learners from fully engaging with the writing process, often leading to the production of shorter and lower-quality texts, ultimately resulting in poor writing performance. As a result, learners experience stress regarding their writing performance, leading to a decrease in their self-confidence.

Furthermore, studies suggest that there is a direct link between learners' self-efficacy and their writing attitudes (Bruning et al., 2013; Piniel & Csizér, 2015). Learners with higher self-efficacy are more motivated to improve and develop as writers. Accordingly, they set higher goals for themselves which results in increased writing performance (Sun & Wang, 2020; Teng et al., 2018; Zimmerman, 2013). On the other hand, learners with lower self-efficacy are often demotivated and rarely take the initiative to develop their writing skills. This lack of both motivation and initiative to improve acts as a setback that leads to poor writing performance (Piniel & Csizér, 2015; Woodrow, 2011). As such, developing writing self-efficacy has a positive impact on learners' attitudes regarding their writing competence while also contributing to improved writing performance.

#### **2.4 Writing Attitudes in Reflective Writing**

The primary aim of reflective writing is to allow learners to focus on content development by taking away the pressure to conform to writing standards. Rather than thinking too much about the “how” and “why,” the focus should be on the “what,” that is, the content of the writing. Worrying about writing conventions in the initial writing stages hinders the writing process because the focus shifts from the content of writing to the organization and structure. As such, before they even start writing, learners are overwhelmed because they are worried about how to conform to writing standards (Bruning & Horn, 2000; Hinkel, 2002; Jun Zhang, 2001; Karlina & Pancoro, 2018). Reflective writing practices focus on content, with no restriction on structure or organization, thus allowing learners to and think about what they want to write by taking note of their ideas before they begin to organize them in a way that makes sense. Hence, reflective writing reduces the pressure of conforming to writing standards and allows learners to focus on the purpose and content of their writing, resulting in learners producing quality output while also developing positive attitudes toward writing.

In writing classrooms, stress is often a pervasive issue, hindering learners' ability to express themselves freely and creatively. Reflective writing practices,

however, offer a promising solution by providing students with stress-free environments (Abu Hussein et al., 2020; Stevens & Cooper, 2023). By encouraging reflection and introspection, teachers can encourage learners to explore their thoughts and ideas without the anxiety typically associated with writing tasks. This shift towards stress-free writing environments not only enhances students' comfort and confidence but also fosters a deeper connection to the writing process. As such, reflective writing practices effectively address the all-too-common issue of stress in classrooms, paving the way for more meaningful and fulfilling writing experiences. Thus, reflective writing practices not only enhance learners' writing skills but also cultivate a healthier and more constructive approach to writing, ultimately contributing to their overall academic success and well-being.

Research suggests that reflective writing promotes learners' self-confidence and makes them more likely to take initiative with their writing (Estrada & Mariam Rahman, 2014; Farrah, 2012; Liao & Wong, 2010). Reflective writing allows learners to gain new perspectives that build on their understanding of the self, allowing learners to explore and communicate their thoughts and ideas more logically through their writing (Colomer et al., 2020). By actively engaging in reflective practices, learners develop a sense of ownership and agency over their writing, empowering them to take an initiative in exploring new ideas, experimenting with different writing styles, and tackling challenging topics. This proactive approach to writing strengthens learners' writing skills and also cultivates a sense of autonomy and self-assurance in their abilities to express themselves effectively through written communication.

Reflective writing allows learners to share their ideas and feelings in writing, giving them a chance to reflect on their learning experiences. Reflective reminiscences, as outlined by Chandler and Ray (2002), consist of narratives shared in a written or spoken form, open to exploration and discussion. Although such reflections often undergo multiple revisions without reaching clear conclusions, they still yield positive outcomes by fostering transformation and offering ways to navigate uncertainty without necessitating a definite resolution. Furthermore, despite their inability to always offer solutions, reflections positively impact learners by validating and acknowledging their emotions. Engaging in regular reflections allows learners to set realistic goals for themselves while also engaging in positive self-evaluations of themselves and their writing (Abu Hussein et al., 2020; Amirkhanova et al., 2016). This continuous engagement with reflections helps learners develop a more positive

attitude toward their writing.

Reflective writing is beneficial not only for learners, but also for teachers. For instance, teachers can better understand their students' perspectives and experiences by reading their reflections. This insight enables educators to tailor their teaching methods to suit individual needs, fostering a more supportive learning environment (Liao & Wong, 2010; Wolff, 2016). Learners can engage in reflective practices independently or collaboratively, either with their teachers or peers. Allowing learners to express their positive and negative writing attitudes in their reflections lets teachers understand and address the learners' needs in a way that reduces anxiety and increases confidence and enjoyment with writing. As such, reflective writing builds a more effective student-teacher relationship and allows learners to participate in engaging and thought-provoking reflections that foster the development of positive learner-writing attitudes.

In conclusion, the analysis highlights the transformative potential of reflective writing in promoting learner well-being and fostering positive writing attitudes. By acknowledging the complexity of writing processes and embracing reflective practices, it becomes a transformative process capable of influencing individuals and communities collectively. Students are naturally drawn to writing classrooms for the opportunity they provide to engage in this transformative work. As they participate in this process, students not only find a platform for self-expression but also discover the healing power embedded within their narratives. Indeed, writing in the moment emerges as a potent tool for fostering both individual and collective transformation, highlighting its crucial role in redefining the objectives of writing instruction with a focus on well-being. Yet, previous research on reflective writing has traditionally been utilized to enhance formal learning or improve writing attitudes with minimal focus on promoting well-being. To bridge this gap, the current study was set to investigate the impact of reflective writing on both learners' well-being and their writing attitudes.

## Chapter 3: The Current Study

### 3.1 Research Questions

The current study aimed to investigate the role of reflective writing in English as a Second Language (ESL) learners' well-being and writing attitudes. The learners' writing attitude was explored in terms of both positive aspects such as comfort and enjoyment, and negative aspects such as anxiety and stress. The study had two research questions, summarized below.

RQ1: Does reflective writing increase ESL learners' well-being?

RQ2: Does reflective writing increase positive writing attitudes and reduce negative writing attitudes?

It was hypothesized that consistent engagement in reflective writing among ESL learners could lead to an enhancement in their overall well-being. In addition, regular engagement in reflective writing could enhance the overall attitudes of L2 learners towards writing, potentially increasing more positive attitudes while diminishing negative attitudes in time.

### 3.2 Participants

The study included a total of 31 students (10 male and 21 female) enrolled in a 100-level writing course called *Academic Writing II* during the spring semester of 2023 at the American University of Sharjah (AUS). During the spring semester in 2023, 38 sections of the course were offered, which were taught by 17 instructors. Participants were selected from three sections of the course taught by the same instructor, which allowed the study to limit any potential variation available across these sections. The instructor maintained all course materials and writing assignments including reflective writing consistent across all these sections. There were a total of 58 students enrolled in these three sections of the course, however, only 31 students consented to participate in the study. Consenting and non-consenting participants took the course together, and the course was designed such that the intervention was part of the regular syllabus.

This 100-level writing course serves as an introduction to critical writing and information literacy skills. Learners develop the essential skills necessary for analyzing and evaluating texts, constructing coherent arguments, and utilizing sources effectively. The course covered various writing genres, including argument/persuasion essays, evaluation essays, and short research essays. Through a combination of readings, discussions, and writing assignments, learners were

expected to learn how to critically engage with texts, synthesize information, and present well-supported arguments.

### **3.3 Instruments**

#### ***3.3.1 Well-Being Survey***

To investigate the first research question, “Does reflective writing increase ESL learners’ well-being?,” a *Well-Being Survey* was used, which was adopted and modified from the Post-Traumatic Growth Inventory by Tedeschi and Calhoun (1996). The original survey by Tedeschi and Calhoun was designed to assess post-traumatic growth by focusing on one’s appreciation of life, relationship with others, new possibilities in life, personal strength, and spiritual change (See Appendix A). While a post-traumatic growth inventory is a reliable and valid instrument for measuring well-being (Cann et al., 2010; Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1996), the current study did not focus on assessing growth from severe trauma, which was irrelevant to the scope of the study. Instead, the present study focused on learner’s well-being and the survey was renamed as the *Well-Being Survey* (See Appendix B). While all questions of the Post-Traumatic Growth Survey were included in the *Well-Being Survey*, the wordings of the answer choices were slightly modified. The Post-Traumatic Growth Inventory had 21 questions with a 6-point Likert scale scored from 0 to 5. The answer choice of “I did not experience this change as a result of my crisis” scored 0, for instance, whereas the answer choice of “I experienced this change to a very great degree as a result of my crisis” scored 5. Since the present study did not focus on trauma but on the writer’s well-being, the answers were rephrased in the following way.

- 0 implies – I do not feel this way.
- 1 implies – I feel this way to a very small degree.
- 2 implies – I feel this way to a small degree.
- 3 implies – I feel this way to a moderate degree.
- 4 implies – I feel this way to a great degree.
- 5 implies – I feel this way to a very great degree.

The current study utilized the five-factor analysis from the original survey to assess learners’ well-being, comprising relating others, new possibilities in life, personal strength, spiritual change and appreciation of life are valid and reliable categorizations (Taku et al., 20008; Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004). These factors were segmented based on specific question categories: Factor 1, *Relating to Others*,

comprised 7 questions; Factor 2, *New Possibilities*, comprised 5 questions; Factor 3, *Personal Strength*, comprised 4 questions; Factor 4, *Spiritual Change*, comprised 1 question; and Factor 5, *Appreciation of Life*, comprised 3 questions. While the number of questions across the five factors varied, this discrepancy did not adversely affect the results, as the factors were not analyzed correlatively. Of the 21 questions, the original survey did not categorize question 18 (*I have a stronger religious faith*) as part of any factor. Consequently, the current study adopted to do the same. Moreover, due to Factor 4 having only one question, it was omitted from the analysis to prevent skewed results, given the insufficient number of questions to compute the mean significance.

### **3.3.2 Writing Attitude Survey**

To investigate the second research question, “Does reflective writing increase positive writing attitudes and reduce negative writing attitudes?,” the *Writing Attitude Survey* (WAS) was adopted from Shaver (1990). Shaver’s WAS was originally developed by Daly and Miller (1975a) as the Writing Apprehension Scale. The Writing Apprehension Scale was designed to measure anxiety with writing. However, Shaver used this survey to go beyond measuring anxiety but also measuring writing attitudes such as the writer’s self-perception, affective performance reaction, reaction to evaluation, and computer appreciation. As such, he retitled the survey as a Writing Attitudes Survey (WAS) to suit the purpose of his study, while making no changes to the questions in the original survey. Daly and Miller tested the validity of their survey and subsequent studies also verified and confirmed the validity and test-retest reliability of the survey (Daly, 1977; Faigley et al., 1981; Daly & Wilson, 1983; Shaver 1990).

The WAS contained 26 questions, 13 of which measured positive writing attitudes and 13 measured negative writing attitudes (See Appendix C). All 26 questions were presented together in the survey, yet the analysis was different from Shaver’s where 13 items on the survey were positively coded and 13 were negatively coded. However, in the present study, the positive and negative test items were divided as *WAS Positive* and *WAS Negative* and separately analyzed. This was done on purpose to answer the second research question. This meant that a higher score on the WAS Positive test items indicated a more positive attitude toward writing while a higher score on the WAS Negative test items suggested a more negative attitude towards writing.

### **3.3.3 Reflection Journals**

To investigate the impact of learners' reflective writing practices on their well-being and attitudes toward writing, the study introduced reflection journals as the intervention. Participants were engaged in a total of 11 reflective writing activities throughout the semester, each of which was done every week. For each reflective journal, the instructor provided a prompt and the participants were asked to write freely in response to the prompt. The first ten prompts were general and broad, which allowed learners to reflect on their experiences and write down their thoughts (see Appendix D). At the beginning of class, participants were given 5 minutes to complete the task and were asked to write a minimum of 5-6 sentences. The final reflective journal was more comprehensive and in the form of a letter to the instructor detailing their experiences during the semester, encompassing both personal and academic aspects, and extending beyond the scope of the writing course (See Appendix E). This approach was adopted to distinguish it from an end-of-course evaluation.

The reflections were assigned scores as credit/no credit on the syllabus to provide learners with an incentive to complete their reflections. Rather than assessing the content, the reflection entries were evaluated based on student engagement with the task, allowing students to write comfortably without concern for grading. In fact, the instructor actively encouraged learners to overlook comma splices and run-on sentences in their writing. Furthermore, they were instructed not to edit their work even after completion. Throughout the reflection process, the instructor prioritized content-focused discussions with learners, deliberately avoiding attention to grammatical issues as they were not the primary focus of the reflections.

### **3.4 Procedures**

Before the study began, an Institutional Review Board Approval (IIRB) was obtained from the American University of Sharjah. Upon obtaining IRB approval, the researcher, who also served as a Teaching Assistant for the course and attended classes regularly, communicated the overall goals of the study to the classroom. After addressing any inquiries from the students, consent forms were subsequently distributed. Once consent was obtained, the two surveys—the *Well-Being Survey* and the *Writing Attitude Survey*—were administered twice: once at the beginning of the semester before the participants initiated their first reflective writing activity and again at the end of the semester upon completing the final reflective writing exercise. This facilitated the analysis of data using a pre-test and post-test design, allowing for

the examination of the impact of reflective writing practices on ESL learners' well-being and writing attitudes throughout the semester. Additionally, 11 treatments of reflections were completed by every student in each of the three sections. The reflections were mandatory assignments, graded based on completion. However, data from non-consenting participants were excluded from the study. All surveys were conducted in a paper-and-pen format during class sessions, under the supervision of both the instructor and the researcher.

### **3.5 Coding**

The data collected from the *Well-Being Survey* and the *Writing Attitudes Survey* was organized into an Excel sheet. Each question on both the surveys was assigned a numerical value ranging from 1 to 5 based on students' responses using the Likert scale. However, on the *Well-Being Survey*, responses ranged from 0 to 5 on the Likert scale. To ensure consistency in analysis and to avoid skewing the results due to the absence of a value for 0, the responses were recoded on a scale of 1 to 6. This recoding involved replacing 0 with 1, 1 with 2, and so forth, up to 5 being replaced with 6. This adjustment aimed to maintain the balance in analysis, as assigning a zero value could suggest a non-response, potentially distorting the results. In contrast, no adjustments were made to the values on the *Writing Attitudes Survey*, as the scale ranged from 1 to 5 with no zero values present.

The data analysis for the *Well-Being Survey* entailed totaling the scores of the answers for each question within each of the four factors for every student, then computing group means for both the pre-test and post-test data. For the *Writing Attitude Survey*, individual learner means were calculated for both positively coded questions in *WAS Positive*. Similarly, individual means were computed for negatively coded questions in *WAS Negative*.

### **3.6 Analysis**

To determine the appropriate statistical analysis for measuring the pre- and post-means of the two groups, we opted for paired t-tests to analyze the data. However, to validate this choice, we initially conducted assumption tests for normality and homogeneity on all variables in both the *Well-being Survey*, as shown in Table 3.1 and Table 3.2, and the *Writing Attitudes Survey*, as shown in Table 3.3 and Table 3.4. This procedural step was undertaken to confirm the appropriateness of employing t-tests for our dataset.

**Table 3.1**  
*Shapiro-Wilk's Test for Normality for Well-Being*

Factor	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
	W	p-value	W	p-value
Relating to Others	.94	.102	.97	.184
New Possibilities	.96	.353	.97	.394
Personal Strength	.96	.314	.96	.331
Appreciation of Life	.94	.107	.94	.076

**Table 3.2**  
*Levene's Test for Homogeneity for Well-Being*

Factor	df	Mean Square	F-Statistic	p-value
Relating to Others	1	10.080	1.968	.165
New Possibilities	1	0.580	.204	.652
Personal Strength	1	0.064	.031	.860
Appreciation of Life	1	2.725	1.131	.291

*Note.* The researcher chose to omit Factor 4 from the analysis because it comprised of only one question. This decision was made to prevent skewed results, as there were not enough questions to accurately calculate the significance of the mean.

**Table 3.3**  
*Shapiro-Wilk's Test for Normality for Writing Attitudes*

Factor	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
	W	p-value	W	p-value
WAS Positive	.97	.438	.94	.070
WAS Negative	.94	.102	.97	.566

**Table 3.4**  
*Levene's Test for Homogeneity for Writing Attitudes*

Factor	df	Mean Square	F-Statistic	p-value
WAS Positive	1	0.023	.158	.692
WAS Negative	1	0.007	.034	.852

The results from both surveys, *Well-Being* and *WAS*, indicated that the variables exhibited normality and homogeneity. As a result, all the necessary assumptions for conducting a parametric test were fulfilled. Therefore, paired t-tests were used for the statistical analysis.

## Chapter 4: Results

### 4.1 Well-Being Survey

Paired t-tests were conducted to compare the effect of reflective writing on learners' well-being. As shown in Table 4.1, results from the *Well-Being Survey* were as follows: the difference between Factor 1 pre-test ( $M = 20.9$ ,  $SD = 3.49$ ) and post-test ( $M = 24.8$ ,  $SD = 3.8$ ),  $t(31) = 6.4$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and Factor 2 pre-test ( $M = 16.2$ ,  $SD = 2.7$ ) and post-test ( $M = 19.3$ ,  $SD = 2.9$ ),  $t(31) = 6.8$ ,  $p < .001$ ) showed significant increase; similarly, the difference between Factor 3 pre-test ( $M = 13$ ,  $SD = 2.5$ ) and post-test ( $M = 15.7$ ,  $SD = 2.4$ ),  $t(31) = 7.2$ ,  $p < .001$ ), and Factor 5 pre-test ( $M = 10.3$ ,  $SD = 2$ ) and post-test ( $M = 11.3$ ,  $SD = 2.3$ ),  $t(31) = 2.5$ ,  $p = .020$ ) indicated significant increase. Hence, these results confirm the first hypothesis that practicing reflective writing enhances learners' well-being in all four factors.

**Table 4.1**  
*Paired t-test results for Factors in Well-Being Survey*

Factor	Pre-Test		Post-Test		t-value	p-value
	M	SD	M	SD		
Relating to Others	20.9	3.49	24.8	3.8	6.4	<.001
New Possibilities	16.2	2.7	19.3	2.9	6.8	<.001
Personal Strength	13	2.5	15.7	2.4	7.2	<.001
Appreciation of Life	10.3	2	11.3	2.3	2.5	.020

### 4.2 Writing Attitudes Survey

A paired t-test of *WAS Positive* was conducted to compare the effect of reflective writing on learners' positive writing attitudes. As shown in Table 4.2, results indicated that there was a significant difference between the mean frequency of the pre-test ( $M = 3.1$ ,  $SD = 0.6$ ) and the post-test ( $M = 3.9$ ,  $SD = 0.5$ ),  $t(31) = 9.3$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Similarly, a paired t-test of *WAS Negative* was conducted to compare the effect of reflective writing on learners' negative writing attitudes. Results indicated that there was a significant difference between the mean frequency of the pre-test ( $M = 2.7$ ,  $SD = 0.8$ ) and the post-test ( $M = 2.4$ ,  $SD = 0.8$ ),  $t(31) = 2.1$ ,  $p = .045$ ).

The scores of *WAS Positive* increased while the scores of *WAS Negative* decreased, suggesting that learners' attitudes towards writing were positively impacted, leading to a reduction in their negative attitudes. Hence, these results

confirm the second hypothesis that practicing reflective writing improves learners' writing attitudes by increasing confidence and enjoyment of writing and reducing anxiety.

**Table 4.2**  
*Paired t-test results for Writing Attitudes Survey*

Factor	Pre-Test		Post-Test		t-value	p-value
	M	SD	M	SD		
WAS Positive	3.1	0.6	3.9	0.5	9.3	<.001
WAS Negative	2.7	0.8	2.4	0.8	2.1	0.45

One thing to note is that the increase in positive attitudes was bigger than the decrease in negative aptitudes after reflective writing (from 3.1 to 3.8 in the former and from 2.5 to 2.1 in the latter). This implies that reflective writing may help learners promote positivity more than diminish negativity. A possible explanation for such difference can be found in the fact that items that solicit learner's positive and negative attitudes were mixed and presented in the survey and the participants were presented with both positive and negative words while answering all the survey questions. This means that the participants may have leaned towards positivity over negativity.

## Chapter 5: Discussion

The present study investigated the impact of reflective writing practices on ESL learners' well-being and writing attitudes. Because well-being and learners' writing attitudes both contribute to promoting learners' performance in the classroom, the current study analyzed both of these variables in relation to reflective writing. As such, results from the present study add new findings to the topic and highlight the positive influences of reflective writing on both ESL learners' well-being and their writing attitudes.

The major findings of the study are summarized twofold: (a) L2 learners' well-being increased after reflective writing experiences and (b) reflective journal writing helped L2 learners develop positive writing attitudes while simultaneously reducing their negative writing attitudes. The results showed a significant increase in all four factors of learners' well-being as well as their positive writing attitudes. Despite practicing reflective writing for the first time as part of the course syllabus at the university level, our ESL writers testified that they enjoyed the process of reflection especially when they were asked to reflect on their well-being in addition to or in relation to their learning experiences. Learners also reported that they gleaned new perspectives from these reflections thus motivating them to make meaningful connections between their personal experiences and their learning. As discussed in Chapter 2, reflective awareness increases both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation which enhances learner participation. As one student reports, "I think the journal aspect of Writing 102 really made me more engaged and in tune with the course." Although learners were initially hesitant with the idea of reflection journals as they did not know what to expect, practicing regular reflections helped ease them into the process. With every reflection, learners' engagement increased significantly as they began sharing personal anecdotes, connecting them to the reflection topic of the day. This could also be seen in the quantity of text produced in each reflection. Compared to the initial entries, learners' later reflections increased in quantity and quality once they became familiar with the idea of reflection. Furthermore, learners reported that these reflections also developed their self-efficacy, enhancing their ability to manage stress and improving self-confidence, thus promoting overall well-being. One student reports,

"I thoroughly enjoyed writing the journal entries as ironically, they would always be on par with how I was emotionally feeling that day. I was able to come into writing and type everything I was feeling or thinking, and it was the

most relieving thing ever. They were really insightful as it forced me to be honest with myself at that moment. I have the tendency to stay in my head and get away with things but this journaling experience really enabled me to take accountability almost in some respects.”

Similarly, learners’ attitudes towards writing improved significantly as a result of practicing regular reflections. Learners reported that they found the reflective writing journals interesting as the writing allowed them the freedom to think and write about what was relevant and important to them. One student said, “To be honest, the reflective writing and the [...] [was] my favorite to work on. [...] I think a part of that was because I had a bit more freedom to find a topic that I truly resonate with and would benefit from.” Furthermore, allowing learners to talk about their writing and the factors that contribute to their writing apprehension was key to reducing said apprehension as it provided them with opportunities to write in stress-free environments. As such, these reflections enhanced learners’ motivation and developed enjoyment with writing. As one student reflects,

“Although it was hard for me to express my emotions, this course helped me express my feelings and thoughts just by writing them down on my reflection journal without thinking if there’s perfect grammar or punctuation, it kind of felt like a diary which I loved. However, I used to hate going to my writing 101 class because not only was it early in the morning but because it was one of the most depressing courses I’ve taken. It was unfairly graded and boring but my feelings about the course have changed completely this semester, I’m always excited to attend this class since I find it fun even doing the essays is fun because I get to write without having the fear to have my work unfairly evaluated or even feeling like it’s a chore I have to finish.”

The factors, *Relating to Others* and *New Possibilities*, showed a significantly higher increase, suggesting that reflective writing not only enhanced their capacity to understand others empathetically but also encouraged them to embrace new challenges and opportunities for growth. Learners described how these writing activities provided a structured opportunity for introspection and self-exploration, encouraging them to confront their fears and embrace new experiences developing more positive attitudes towards writing. As a result, many learners found themselves socializing more with their peers, forming meaningful connections, and expanding their social networks. Moreover, participants noted that stepping out of their comfort zones not only enhanced their personal lives but also contributed to their professional development. They described how overcoming challenges and embracing new opportunities led to increased confidence, skill development, and career advancement. One learner stated,

“I really liked the short reflective writings. [...] I like to reflect on things it makes me look at things differently. I think this semester a grew as a person by going out of my comfort zone. I started socializing more with other people and started making new friends. I also danced on global day which is something I would never imagine myself doing before. I think I grew as a person professionally as well.”

The factors, *Personal Strength* and *Appreciation of Life* also showed improvement suggesting that engaging in reflective writing fostered learners’ personal empowerment and heightened their appreciation for life’s experiences. Engaging in self-reflection allowed learners to discover and highlight their personal strengths. These reflections also helped learners draw conclusions about themselves and their work, contributing to their personal and professional development. Moreover, reflecting on past experiences not only developed their writing skills but also cultivated an enhanced sense of gratitude for life, encompassing both past and present experiences. As one student reports,

“...during this semester, I have been able to appreciate the effort that writers put into their work. I've learned that the ability to write properly doesn't have to be so time-consuming, but you just have to know how to work smarter, not harder. I also really appreciated the short writings we did in class as they made me reflect back on my past experiences and appreciate all that I have.”

Learners also reported a notable reduction in their apprehension with writing and attributed this positive change to the reflections addressing underlying factors contributing to their anxiety. Furthermore, learners expressed that the creation of stress-free writing environments facilitated the development of enhanced confidence and enjoyment in their writing endeavors. Additionally, the study revealed an increase in learners' motivation to participate in writing tasks following their engagement in reflective writing activities. These results emphasize the importance of integrating reflective writing practices into educational contexts to support learners' emotional well-being and academic growth.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The current study demonstrated that reflective writing positively impacted learners’ well-being and improved their writing attitudes. However, it also revealed several limitations. Firstly, the study's participant pool consisted of 31 students enrolled in *Academic Writing 102*, spread across three sections. While the results yielded statistical significance, the convenience-based sampling method introduced a potential bias, as participants were not selected with equal probability. Data collection relied solely on participants who consented to the study. Consequently, this may limit

the generalizability of the findings to the broader population. The nature of the research, which involved analyzing personal reflections, may have deterred some individuals from participating, leading to a potential source of selection bias.

The second limitation is the absence of a control group. Having a control group that did not engage in reflective writing alongside an intervention group that did would have strengthened the study's conclusions. With a control group, it would have been possible to determine whether the observed results were indeed due to the intervention of reflective writing and not influenced by other variables.

The third limitation pertains to the absence of background information about the participants. Having detailed background information could have provided valuable insights into factors that may have influenced the effectiveness of reflective writing on learners' well-being and attitudes toward writing. Information such as prior writing experience, academic background, language proficiency, and socio-economic status could have helped in contextualizing the findings and understanding any potential variations among participants. Additionally, background information could have facilitated the identification of specific subgroups within the participant pool, allowing for more targeted analysis and interpretation of the results. Without this contextual information, it becomes challenging to fully discern the extent to which reflective writing impacted different groups of learners and to what degree external factors may have influenced the outcomes of the study.

### **Pedagogical Implications**

Despite several limitations, the findings of this study further inform language teachers how reflective writing practices can be used as a pedagogical tool in L2 classrooms to enhance learners' well-being and their writing attitudes. Introducing reflective journals in writing classrooms and encouraging learners to reflect on their well-being develops their awareness of the self in relation to their experiences. As such, learner wellness improves (Mete, 2020; Nobutoshi, 2023; Rusche, 2013). For example, incorporating reflection journals as a weekly activity in writing classrooms will allow learners the space to address their positive and negative emotions allowing them opportunities to improve their well-being. In addition, reflective writing can be used in content and task-based writing classrooms to promote learners' well-being. That is, teachers can use reflective writing as a warm-up or follow-up activity by providing learners with prompts that relate to their well-being, learning experiences, and writing attitudes. As such, providing learners with continuous opportunities to

engage in writing not only promotes well-being but also helps reduce anxiety toward writing (Abu Hussein et al., 2020; Stevens & Cooper, 2023). Furthermore, by allowing learners to write in stress-free environments on ungraded assignments, learners can focus on themselves as writers by developing comfort and enjoyment with writing rather than worrying about the finished product they need to produce (Alfaki, 2015; Al-Khairi, 2013). For example, since reflection journals do not adhere to writing conventions, they can be used in writing classrooms to encourage students to develop comfort with writing by focusing on expression of ideas and content. Hence, allowing learners to practice reflection in terms of their well-being, writing attitudes, and learning stresses the importance of and promotes learner well-being in classrooms.

### **Future Directions**

There is very little research on the impact of reflective writing practices on promoting learner well-being in L2 language classrooms. As such, future studies can analyze the impact of such writing practices on learners' academic writing development. Correlational studies between reflective writing practices that focus on well-being and writing proficiency would also reveal interesting results. Considering that the body of research on this field is limited, future studies can also focus on investigating the impact of such practices beyond just academic writing classrooms to explore the potential of reflective writing practices to promote learner well-being in all aspects of learning.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A

#### Well-Being Survey

Participants indicate their scores on a 6-point scale where:

- 0 implies – I do not feel this way.
- 1 implies – I feel this way to a very small degree.
- 2 implies – I feel this way to a small degree.
- 3 implies – I feel this way to a moderate degree.
- 4 implies – I feel this way to a great degree.
- 5 implies – I feel this way to a very great degree.

1. I have priorities about what is important in life.

0      1      2      3      4      5

2. I have a great appreciation for the value of my own life.

0      1      2      3      4      5

3. I develop new interests.

0      1      2      3      4      5

4. I have a feeling of self-reliance.

0      1      2      3      4      5

5. I have an understanding of spiritual matters.

0      1      2      3      4      5

6. I clearly see that I can count on people in times of trouble.

0      1      2      3      4      5

7. I have a path for my life.

0      1      2      3      4      5

8. I have a sense of closeness with others.

0      1      2      3      4      5

9. I am willing to express my emotions.

0      1      2      3      4      5

10. I know that I can handle difficulties.

0      1      2      3      4      5

11. I can do better things with my life.

0      1      2      3      4      5

12. I am able to accept the way things work out.

0      1      2      3      4      5

13. I can appreciate each day.

0      1      2      3      4      5

14. New opportunities are available.  
0    1    2    3    4    5
15. I have compassion for others.  
0    1    2    3    4    5
16. I put effort into my relationships.  
0    1    2    3    4    5
17. I am likely to try to change things that need changing.  
0    1    2    3    4    5
18. I have strong religious faith.  
0    1    2    3    4    5
19. I am stronger than I thought I was.  
0    1    2    3    4    5
20. I have learned a great deal about how wonderful people are.  
0    1    2    3    4    5
21. I better accept needing others.  
0    1    2    3    4    5
- 

### **Post Traumatic Growth Scale Information**

[https://www.google.com/url?q=https://positivepsychology.com/post-traumatic-growth/%23inventory&source=gmail&ust=1673944421666000&usg=AOvVaw1VCYjvrgZ0mXfEetpw4r\\_C](https://www.google.com/url?q=https://positivepsychology.com/post-traumatic-growth/%23inventory&source=gmail&ust=1673944421666000&usg=AOvVaw1VCYjvrgZ0mXfEetpw4r_C)

## Appendix B

### Writing Attitudes Survey

**Instructions: Please circle the numbers that best describe your answers to each item.**

(5) Strongly agree (4) Agree (3) Uncertain (2) Disagree (1) Strongly disagree

1. I avoid writing.

1 2 3 4 5

2. I have no fear of my writing being evaluated.

1 2 3 4 5

3. I look forward to writing down my ideas.

1 2 3 4 5

4. I am afraid of writing essays when I know they will be evaluated.

1 2 3 4 5

5. Taking a composition course is a very frightening experience.

1 2 3 4 5

6. Handing in a composition makes me feel good.

1 2 3 4 5

7. My mind seems to go blank when I start to work on a composition.

1 2 3 4 5

8. Expressing ideas through writing seems to be a waste of time.

1 2 3 4 5

9. I would enjoy submitting my writing to magazines for evaluation and publication.

1 2 3 4 5

10. I like to write my ideas down.

1 2 3 4 5

11. I feel confident in my ability to express my ideas clearly in writing.

1 2 3 4 5

12. I like to have my friends read what I have written.

1 2 3 4 5

13. I am nervous about writing.

1 2 3 4 5

14. People seem to enjoy what I write.

1 2 3 4 5

15. I enjoy writing.

1 2 3 4 5

16. I never seem to be able to write down my ideas clearly.  
1      2      3      4      5
17. Writing is a lot of fun.  
1      2      3      4      5
18. I expect to do poorly in composition classes even before I enter them.  
1      2      3      4      5
19. I like seeing my thoughts on paper.  
1      2      3      4      5
20. Discussing my writing with others is an enjoyable experience.  
1      2      3      4      5
21. I have a terrible time organizing my ideas in a composition course.  
1      2      3      4      5
22. When I hand in a composition, I know I'm going to do poorly.  
1      2      3      4      5
23. It is easy for me to write good compositions.  
1      2      3      4      5
24. I don't think I write as well as most people.  
1      2      3      4      5
25. I don't like my compositions to be evaluated.  
1      2      3      4      5
26. I am no good at writing.  
1      2      3      4      5
-

## Appendix C

### Reflection Journal Prompts

1. Write about/ make a list of what you want to do/achieve in the next 24 hours.  
**AND**  
Free write about the song “Pie Jesu” you just heard. Did you like it? Why or why not? What associations came with it? What did you notice about its structure, the voices, the instruments, or the tempo? Why did the professor pick this song as the first one to listen to? Are there social implications to this music? What genre is it?
2. Free write about how it feels to be attending class online today. Does it trigger any kind of emotional responses and/or associations?
3. Free write about a time that music had an impact on your life.
4. Free write about the best version of yourselves. How do you work towards/achieve that goal?
5. Free write about safety.
6. Free write about feedback.
7. Free write about what your situational best today looks like.
8. Free write about well-being.
9. Free write a reflection on the ad critique experience
10. Free write a reflection on things you are grateful for.

## Appendix D

### WRI 102 - Final Reflective Assignment

**Nuts & Bolts:** Please submit a Microsoft WORD document that contains the following elements:

1. Reflective Cover Letter (1 page, double-spaced): (17 points)
2. Reflective Journal Entries 1 – 11: (3 points per entry = 33 points)

Total: 50 points

**Reflective Cover Letter Prompt:** Throughout the semester, you have been writing short reflections exploring your experiences as students, as writers, as thinkers, as humans living in unique times. This final cover letter is meant to serve as an overall reflection on your experiences this semester. The following is a list of questions you can use to GUIDE your response; they are not meant to be answered like test questions. This is a letter and should read like one. It needs to be roughly 1-page double-spaced (longer is fine). Like the reflections you have already written, you will be graded based upon engagement with the assignment and not the ideas/opinions you express. In other words, you will receive full credit for the letter if you write it according to expectations outlined here. Please aim for honesty in the letter rather than what you may or may not think I want to hear.

**Guiding Questions:**

- a. Have your feelings about writing changed since the beginning of the semester?
- b. What did you think about the short reflective writings? Were they helpful, insightful, and engaging? Or the opposite? Or something in between?
- c. What types of things/experiences made being a student challenging this semester?
- d. What types of things/experiences made being a student easier/more engaging this semester?
- e. How have you grown as a person this semester (professionally and/or personally)?
- f. What were some challenges this semester (professionally and/or personally)?

### **Vita**

Bushra Khaliq Khan was born in Sharjah, United Arab Emirates, and has lived in the UAE all her life. In 2017, she graduated from Sharjah Indian School (SIS). She obtained her Bachelor's degree in English Language and Literature with a major in Literature, from the University of Sharjah (UOS) in 2021, graduating with Highest Honors. In 2022, Bushra began her Master's program in TESOL at the American University of Sharjah. She currently works as a Graduate Teaching and Research Assistant at AUS.