



Exploring Habits of the Mind for Successful and Unsuccessful Writing Learners: A Case Study

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Abstract

This study explored habits of the mind for eight successful and unsuccessful writing learners who were taking intermediate writing skills. Researchers' phenomenological reflection was employed to supplement the exploratory case study design. Three writing tasks and in-depth interview were mainly used to collect data which were analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings depicted that successful and unsuccessful writing learners have similarities and differences in habits of their mind. In thinking and practice related habits of the mind, four unsuccessful and two successful learners failed to properly implement in the process of composing. However, successful learners are more curious and open to explore opportunities in dispositional orientations. It was hence inferred that habits of the mind attribute to success in learning writing. Performance differences between these groups and within each group of students imply that habits of the mind are indicators of writing success in settings where learners' writing has undergone serious failure.

Keywords: habits of the mind; learners' success; learning to write; writing.

1. Introduction

Writing pedagogy has undergone paradigm shifts as controversies recur on giving priority to surface and discourse features of texts, composing process and learners' strategies or reader-writer interaction [13].

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Certain theories of writing principally focus on learners and the acquisition of strategies that help them to be creative thinkers in generating ideas, organizing and composing meaningful texts other than linguistic accuracy. The learners' endeavor to generate as many ideas as possible and their tendency of converging the most relevant ones has been taken as vital attempt of creativity in learning to write as thinking and processing are confirmed to be pertinent aspects of writing [4,8,16]. Tasks in learning to write require individual learners to develop creative and cognitive processing skills linked with habits of mind. The latter are taken as ways of approaching learning that learners need to implement and improve writing [6,7]. Investing and getting involved persistently in the process with a sense of responsibility and implementing creative and metacognitive thinking strategies are vital facets stipulated in the framework. Flexibly using steps of composing and making adjustments with university writing expectations and becoming open and curious to explore new ideas are vital aspects in the process of successful writing [20]. In the Ethiopian context of teaching English as a foreign language, English is used as a medium of instruction and studied as a field at undergraduate level for three years. A minimum of three writing courses are designed to develop learners' writing proficiency. University students who are studying English need to be competent in writing as it is one of the most critical skills [9]. Most writing instruction requires learners to accomplish tasks by engaging in cognitive and creative processing of production. This calls for the importance of developing habits of the mind explained in the framework for success in college composition pedagogy [6]. This framework describes habits of the mind that are critical for college writing success. Based on the current global research and teaching of writing, the framework was developed and endorsed by three parties: the Council of Writing Program Administrators, the National Council of Teachers of English, and the National Writing Project in 2011. At the basis of the framework, thinking, practice and disposition related habits of the mind are stipulated as ways of approaching learning. Our experience in teaching writing that range from basic to advanced courses for over a decade reveals that many learners who are studying English language as a field in most Ethiopian universities failed to communicate appropriately through written discourses. The practice of teachers and students in improving writing defects focuses on the surface and mechanical features of the language. Unsuccessful learners of writing struggle to use the structural components of English accurately because they believe that inappropriate structure is assumed to complicate the content and comprehension of their texts [4]. Reference [20] also posits that difficulties inherent to writing skills are mainly due to the lack of acquisition of the code and inefficient composing process. The content of texts produced seemed shallow due to the problem they had in idea generation. The tension in the practice of writing relies on giving priority to idea generation and using accurate language [10]. Though the possible solutions for those who fail to acquire the code need to concentrate on idea and delay language editing until the last draft [20], learners often attempt to make use of accurate grammar and vocabulary at the outset. The learners were observed to rely mainly on the teacher and the teaching rather than exerting independent efforts. Let alone developing habits of writing by themselves every day, learners seemed reluctant to do home take and classroom writing tasks. Due to these and other related problems, the learners have become unsuccessful in writing. With all these common problems and a similar exposure almost all learners have, however, there are still a few writing learners who are differently successful as compared to the unsuccessful majority. Studies have attempted to relate success in writing to teachers' incompetence [4], students' lack of interest and methodological inappropriateness as factors influencing writing ability. Most studies, however, seem to disregard students' responsibility as one major aspect of teaching writing. Research in the area of habits of the mind, from the perspective of developing

learners' writing skills, has been a recent development following the design of the framework for success in postsecondary writing pedagogy. There are still few studies conducted to explore the contribution of habits of the mind for learners' success in writing. Reference [1] systematically investigated the contribution of using habits of mind to improve students thinking in class. By investigating the proposed habits of mind and comparing them to externally verified critical thinking skills they explored that the formation of habits of mind improved student thinking in class and it was confirmed that habits of mind are related to the development of critical thinking skills. According to [15], the frameworks for failure among Chinese international students in L2 writing revealed that students' failure was not only due to lack of these habits of the mind but also due to various systemic issues. It is, therefore, suggested to re-examine some institutionalized assumptions about L2 writing along with the assessments regarding habits of the mind. Reference [6] also investigated that habits of the mind are associated with students failure in writing. Though few studies investigated the association of habits of the mind with failures in writing and critical thinking, they overlooked inclusive exploration from the perspective of successful and unsuccessful learners. The current study explores the thinking, practice and disposition related orientations of approaching learning writing stated as habits of the mind among eight successful and unsuccessful writing learners. This aims to add insights to the theory of writing relevant to EFL settings where most learners fail to write irrespective of different efforts exerted. As the writing pedagogy values practices which give emphasis to the learner's efforts, it is hence insightful to consider the role of habits of the mind in learning to write and designing writing tasks across the curriculum.

2. Methodology

2.1 Research Design and participants

Exploratory case study research design typology supplemented with researchers' phenomenological reflection was employed [22]. The purpose was to explore habits of mind for eight successful and unsuccessful second year English language students who were taking the course Intermediate Writing Skills at Debre Markos University, Ethiopia. The focus of the analysis was on the question that it was intended to answer whether the writing performance disparities between successful and unsuccessful learners' are due to habits of the mind or not. Implications were drawn to the writing pedagogy that might be implemented in designing tasks and investigate the institutional supports to be rendered in the process of enhancing students habits of taking responsibilities for their own learning. English is taught as a foreign language in Ethiopia and studied as a profession at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Undergraduate learners are expected to take at least three writing courses which range from basic to advanced writing skills. As far as our experience is concerned, there exist critical problems observed year after year. Though many writing learners have crucial drawbacks in the process of composing paragraphs and essays, a few others have comparative success differences. There are some students who are better in writing as compared to the majority. Given three writing tasks in the form of home take assignment, classroom writing task and home practiced and classroom administered direct writing tests, the researchers grouped writing learners as students with extreme problems (n=8), average writing defects(n=7) and relatively good writers (n=6). Thus, four learners who have good writing ability and four with defects were purposively selected to comparatively explore experience variations in applying habits of the mind to learn to write.

2.2 Procedures of Data Collection and Analysis

Data were collected using writing tasks, unstructured questionnaire and in-depth interview. This was according to what [11] suggests for learner focused writing researches to use longitudinal observations of writing settings, interviews, recursive analyses of students' writings and administering questionnaires. Three written texts were used to check the consistency of their writing task performance. To avoid topical knowledge gaps and conditional task performance variabilities authentic writing prompts in timed, partially timed and untimed writing conditions were designed [2]. The first task required students to write a paragraph about phases of writing an essay. The second is given in the form of assignment which they were ordered to write a paragraph on authentic issues. The last task gives five optional prompts for students to practice them all at home and later they were asked to randomly write on one prompt. All these writing tasks were analyzed using holistic descriptive scoring methods so that categorize writing learners were categorized as successful and unsuccessful ones. Through unstructured questionnaire, learners introspectively evaluated their writing ability, anticipated the most important tasks of writing and difficulties they had in these respects. In addition, the overall exploration of the learners' orientations towards habits of the mind and priorities that learners give in developing their writing skills were addressed. The in-depth interview was also aimed to explore detailed differences successful and unsuccessful writing learners possess so that the exploratory association between writing performance and the implementation of habits of the mind was investigated. As failure in writing tasks is often associated with the learners' feeling and emotion, their writing track and effectiveness in learning writing were parts of the in-depth investigation. The data collected from all these instruments were analyzed through transcribing, translating the audio data and interpret. The researchers' experience of teaching writing courses for over ten years in general and in offering intermediate writing skills course for target groups of learners for four months was used to explore dispositional aspects of habits of the mind. The study principally explored differences in habits of the mind between successful and unsuccessful writing learners. The data collected through various instruments were analyzed applying multiple stages. The three direct writing tasks used were implemented first to describe the writing performance differences successful and unsuccessful learners of writing possessed. Eight students were then asked to complete an open ended questionnaire designed to make preliminary exploration on students' habits and practices of writing paragraphs in general. Using the insights from such data, four learners from each group was finally interviewed in detail for about two hours. The data collected using these protocols was coded and thematically analyzed. The very purpose of the writing tasks was to reliably categorize learners as successful and unsuccessful writers. As students were from different linguistic backgrounds, the interview and the questionnaire were designed and administered in local languages and translated into English. They were presented according to the codes given to unsuccessful learners [A1, A2, A5 and L1) while the responses for successful ones were given [G1, G2, G3 and G4]. All the results of the analysis were synthesized into themes using grids (Appendix A and B).

3. Results

The exploration focused eight habits of the mind categorized as thinking (creativity and metacognition), habitual practice (engagement, responsibility, consistency and flexibility) and disposition related orientation of learning to write (curiosity and openness). The data were in general thematically presented, analyzed and interpreted

synthesizing with related empirical evidences. The learners' writing experience as can be seen from their background at high school, Table 1 above, highly contributes in making adjustments to higher level university writing. The data collected from open ended questionnaire also revealed that almost all unsuccessful learners have no exposure to write. They consider as if writing tasks designed in their textbooks were less useful. Learners who were relatively successful presume as those writing tasks had little to do and just practice for the sake of completing assignment and homework writing tasks. It is rather at university level that learners attempt to write with the intention of enhancing their performance.

Table 1: successful and unsuccessful learners writing experience and feelings

Code	Group	sex	Writing Exposure		Feeling about their writing Performance
			High School	University	
A1	Unsuccessful	F	not concerned to write	now trying to write	feel failure and thinking to improve
A2	Unsuccessful	M	Thought he is good at writing	Trying but failed to adjust	a sense of failure to write
A5	Unsuccessful	M	have little or no writing experience	do not have any experience to write	feel failure and discouraged
L1	Unsuccessful	F	Assumed writing is useless	now knows the benefit of writing practice	feel already failed but in need of improvement
G1	successful	F	did not give any emphasis to writing	recently I started to write	still feel I have to do a lot and have problems
G2	successful	F	sometimes write in doing some of their home works and assignments	doing the same like what was at high school	feel failure but hopefully I can improve
G3	successful	M	beginning from high school, he attempts to write by himself	Practice writing at university too	feel positive and success
G4	successful	M	Had little exposure to write	trying to improve	feel failure, but on way of making improvement

3.1 Successful and unsuccessful students' Writing Tasks performance

The purpose of categorizing writing learners as successful and unsuccessful was to further investigate their respective habits of the mind that could help to draw implications to the writing pedagogy through qualitative associations. Out of the objectively selected eight sampled students, four were unsuccessful while the rest four were successful in their performance measured using three direct writing tasks. The data collected from three writing tasks was aimed to holistically group students as successful and unsuccessful learners of writing. According to the analysis of written texts, A1, A2, A5 and L1 had defective writing performance. The contents of the three texts that all unsuccessful learners wrote were inadequate as they were superficial and details were not well explained. Regarding the organization of their texts, there were problems in using appropriate cohesive devices and the structure of texts in relevant topic sentences, details and conclusion had flaws in almost all learners as they were missed, poorly written and unrelated. With respect to the learners' performance in using grammar, vocabulary and mechanics properly, many fragments, unparallel structures, faulty agreements, inaccurate and redundant use of words and wrong verb forms were common in the writings of unsuccessful

learners (A5, A1, A2 and L1). There are also some mechanical errors allied with punctuation and capitalization in most of their texts. All in all, the analysis of the three writing tasks revealed as these learners' grouped as unsuccessful writers had serious failures in paragraph writing. According to the analysis which describes the writings of three successful learners', the adequacy of idea in writings was good as the contents were sufficient and rich though there were some inadequate and shallow ideas in texts written by one learner (G2). In organizing ideas clearly using relevant devices and structural units, three of the learners were successful. There are few organizational problems and few errors in developing topic sentence and conclusion in the texts written by G3 and G2. Irrespective of these problems, both learners are relatively good at writing a well-organized paragraph. The rest of the learners' were much effective to write structured texts (G1 and G4). The use of correct grammar and vocabulary in writing has been the criteria to assess performance. Different from unsuccessful learners of writing, successful learners (G1, G2, G3 and G4) most of the time used linguistic features accurately. But there were still erroneous sentences which had problems in passive and active forms, fragments, run-on, un-parallel structures, faulty pronouns, wrong prepositions and redundant vocabularies. These errors were rarely observed in the writings of G2, G3 and G4. Moreover, very few punctuation and capitalization errors are infrequently observed in all writings. Hence, different from some of the errors analyzed in all the writings of these four learners, the performance of these students were by far better as compared to the former unsuccessful groups so that they were identified as successful learners.

3.2 Thinking related habits of the mind

Thinking related habits often attribute to developing creativity associated with idea generation and reflective thinking. Learners were asked through open-ended questionnaire to introspectively reflect on their thinking habits while writing. According to their reflection on prioritizing various attributes of writing, three successful students replied as generating idea and critical thinking in this regard were vital attributes to writing performance. Irrespective of some differences, poor students perceived as generating ideas had importance while two students from this category revealed as both language and idea generation were equally important. Asked their perception regarding the crucial problem they have, two unsuccessful learners stated that they had a problem of generating ideas while two of them associated their failure with lack of grammar and vocabulary knowledge. In the case of students with relatively successful writing performance, all of them (4) believed that using vocabulary and grammar accurately was a challenge that affected their writing ability. These learners replied as if they had little problems in generating and organizing ideas. In creative thinking, one unsuccessful learner replied that he often generates and evaluates ideas and continued writing a paragraph. The remaining three of them had problems in this regard and they often think in their first language other than in English. Successful learners also think and generate ideas in the same way, but they rarely evaluate their outlines and converge them after generating and outlining. Thinking habits are considered as some attributes to the framework for success in writing for postsecondary writing. These inculcate creativity that can be explained in divergent and convergent thinking habits and reflective metacognitive facets which require the learner to make judgments about their thinking too. Accordingly, unsuccessful writing learners were interviewed to explain their creative thinking habits they accustomed to develop their idea in texts. I make an outline, select and write... (A1) I generate ideas, select and write a paragraph... (A2). Generating ... and write based on my outline (A5)... I freely write after generating... (L1). generate all what comes to my mind and select the relevant ones to

use for writing (G1)... I first generate all ideas and make edition after drafting (G2) ... after generating, I choose the relevant ones and write a paragraph (G3) ... I divergently generate and use to write finally I edit the draft not the outline (G4). The results presented so far showed as successful and unsuccessful learners had different convergent and divergent thinking habits in writing paragraphs. According to A1 and A2, they were most of the time divergent to list out as much ideas as possible and be convergent to select the most appropriate ones. The rest two (A5 and L1) just attempted to make use of their outline after they generated possible ideas. Based on the responses unsuccessful learners put forwarded through questionnaire, most of them believed as their major problem was on using accurate language not generating ideas. This, however, contradicts to the actual evaluation of their writings in that the contents of written paragraph by these students were shallow and related ideas were not sufficiently included. This mainly emanated from poor creative thinking which requires aggressive divergent and convergent thinking practices before drafting. The habits of successful students principally focused on divergent attempts of generating many ideas and they mostly used their outlines to draft their text other than evaluating and organizing ideas ahead. These learners critically evaluated the relevance of ideas listed out and incorporated them in their writings after drafting. The learners habit of thinking which they aligned it with editing the content created the erroneous inclusion of irrelevant details in most of their texts. The reflection of most successful learners of writing stated as they had critical problem in thinking and generating ideas supports this. The habit of the most successful writing learner (G1) entails how far the integrative use of divergent and convergent thinking attributes to composing performance. The explanation successful learners put forward regarding the difficulty they had in generating ideas bi-implies their level of proficiency as highly proficient learners apply higher order analytical skills. Thinking plays pivotal role in learning to write as the major emphasis is on the process that a learner has to pass through. The habit of thinking to improve thinking is one aspect of the framework that learners are supposed to develop. Unsuccessful and successful learners were asked to expound their metacognitive habits: ... I sometimes ask what is wrong with my thinking, but I do nothing (A1). ... I always think on how I can improve my thinking ability, but I do not know and take any measure (A2) ... I do not know (A5) ... I think about it and found no solution to be critical(L1). ... I need to improve my thinking so that I often read to improve my knowledge as it helps me (G1)... I know my criticality is poor but I do not know how to improve it (G2) ... I do not have any experience and never thought of it (G3) ... thinking about thinking is what I heard today I do not know if improving critical think (G4). From the above interview results, it is drawn that almost all respondents from both groups have not any good habits and even lack awareness about evaluating and developing their thinking. In metacognitive habits, both successful and unsuccessful writers have problems and are not different despite their performance in writing.

3.3 Habitual practices in learning writing

The framework for success (2011) which associates habits of the mind with the day-to-day practices and endeavors in improving writing are used as a framework for failure to investigate negative outputs and emotions associated in no child left behind notion of learning language[17,7]. The practice with the essence of ownership to the success or failure, and to consistently engage and endeavor flexibly in the process of learning to write are points of exploration in the framework. Results from unstructured questionnaire revealed that three unsuccessful students' perceive as the ownership to writing actions there are given to the support of teachers and friends while the rest one felt as he is responsible for the failure to learn writing. Almost all (3) successful learners

replied as they felt more responsible for their writing performance and one of course blamed friends and teachers for absence of support in learning writing. The practice of learners to take ownership associated with success and failure in writing and the respective actions they need to take as a result influences ones writing performance. In addition to the response of learners from the open-ended questionnaire, successful and unsuccessful learners of writing felt that they were responsible to the writing performance they had at that juncture. ... I am responsible for my failure as the weakness is mine (A1)... I am the number one responsible person as the problem is because of my effort and lack of motivation (A2) ... the teachers' responsibility is to show. (A5)... I am responsible (L1)... I am more responsible (G1)... I feel I am responsible to my failure... the teachers support is enough (G2)... I know I amso that I try to write mostly by myself (G3) ... I take a lion's share and the teachers' support is needed (G4). Investing a lot of time and energy by involving in different writing tasks inside and outside the classroom significantly attributes to the development of writing performance. Due to this benefit, the framework for success and failure recommend learners to foster such habits of the mind. I just write when to do assignments (A1)... I write when I am given assignments and make few drafts (A2) I try to write always but my writing is still poor (A5)... I just write for the sake of assignment and often make single drafts (L1) I write and edit my own work now engaged (G1)... I do not engage myself. I just do it when I am given assignments and one draft only (G2)... write...I make the edition and make multiple drafts (G3) just write when given assignments (G4) According to three unsuccessful and two successful learners of writing, they had habit of writing outside writing classes unless home take tasks are given. The rest (two) successful learners have the habit of practicing writing outside their classroom by themselves. This revealed that both groups of learners still have limited habits of writing with the essence of owning responsibility at any occasion. The habit of writing should not be an overnight agenda rather learners need to work constantly with a sustain interest in and attention to short and long term tasks (Gross and Alexander, 2016).The success and failure in learning writing are mainly associated with this habit that the learners are accustomed to aggressively engage in writing -rewriting multiple drafts. I sometimes write and make just a single draft (A1)... it is sometimes during summer that I consistently write, but I never do this on campus (A2)... I always enjoy writing, but I cannot (A5) ... write consistently and with commitment...the improvement is negligible (L1)... I started writing by myself every day (G1)... sometimes I write I am not as such committed (G2) ...I always write poems and paragraphs. I got this experience from my friend (G3)... I am not committed to develop multiple drafts, write just single drafts (G4) These results imply that most unsuccessful learners (A1, A2 and A5) totally lack consistency to engage in writing texts at any condition. The most successful learner (G1 and G3) started to consistently write everyday whereas the remaining two successful learners lack commitment and interest to write daily so that their improvement in the period of my observation is minimal. Thus, the performance of most effective learners (G1 and G3) implies the contribution of consistent engagement for improved proficiency. The learners' habit of practicing writing and using diverse approaches in composing and their ability to adapt to situations as per the expectations of tertiary education influence success in writing. Regarding the way learners use flexible stages of writing, from unsuccessful learners, two of them employ neither of the stages of composing process, one despite implements linearly approach. The rest one flexibly uses stages while successful learners apply flexibility in the process of writing. The overall observation of the researcher implies as adapting to the new university writing situations and the practices expected in this respect revealed that many unsuccessful learners and some with good writing abilities

have adjustment problems so that they feel failure and become desperate to make improvements (Table 1).

3.4 Dispositions in learning writing

Dispositional components of habits of the mind are intellectual virtues intertwined with the overall characteristics of learners. From the framework for success in writing, openness, the willingness to consider new ways of being and thinking in the world and curiosity - the desire to know more about the world are included as important attributes. Assessing these qualities of an individual at a spot might be impractical unless it is supplemented with close observation while engaged at different classroom writing tasks and related interactions. From our close observation for over three months, G1, G3 and G4 qualify the criteria so that they are open to receive and give ideas during generating ideas and gathering information for their writings. Their desire to explore more is also relatively better for these students. The rest of the learners totally lack this aspect of the framework.

4. Discussion

The purpose of this study was to explore the differences successful and unsuccessful learners of writing have with respect to habits of the mind which are vital aspects of success and failure in learning writing at tertiary level. The investigation was hence to imply how these habits have influences on the writing pedagogy. The results from the analysis of the data collected from open-ended questionnaire and in-depth interview were substantiated with the researchers close observation and reflection, and the findings are discussed from the perspective of other empirical sources. The difficulties most learners experienced in learning to write influence their perception, practice and focus of emphasizing either on idea generation or using surface features accurately. The exploration done so far in the current study referred whether successful and unsuccessful learners have similar problems in their texts or not. According to the introspective responses from interview and open ended questionnaire, unsuccessful learners associated their failure with lack of linguistic knowledge disregarding problems in idea generation. Successful students replied as their weaknesses are related with limitations in thinking and idea generation to enrich the content of their text. The actual analysis of texts written by both learners, however, imply that unsuccessful learners have serious problem as their texts have superficial and disorganized contents and some language use problems. These results are consistent with the finding of [4] that reveal students who had failures in writing often struggle with the structural elements. Lack of acquisition of the code is the cause for the failure in learning to write [20]. Though successful learners revealed that they had problems in generating ideas, the quality of texts they produced imply as the content of texts has sufficient and organized details with some language use and mechanical problems. Expounding that these dichotomy in the writing pedagogy has been inconclusive, References [12,8,3] consistently confirmed as the primary factor for the failure or success in writing is idea generation while grammatical and vocabulary use are secondary issues in learning writing. Krashen's finding as cited in [20] supports this idea by giving priority to idea enrichment first delaying the improvement of language. Thus, unsuccessful learners perceive as linguistic features are vital to develop writing while successful learners demand idea generation as the primary focus. This implies as orientations to primarily improve idea generation reveals that the tendency of success and rudimentary emphasis to linguistic features other than idea enrichment is a mechanical habit of unsuccessful

learners. The present study inter-relates subjective aspects of writing theories, the creative and expressionist practices of learning to write and the habits of mind proclaimed for success and failure in postsecondary writing programs. The link in this respect centers the learner, the independent cognitive and creative practice to process learning writing and strategies that should be implemented as habits of their mind. It has been confirmed as the problem in creative and metacognitive thinking has been common. Successful and unsuccessful learners had different convergent and divergent thinking habits in writing paragraphs. Better students also think and generate ideas in the same way, but they rarely evaluate their outlines and converge them after generating and outlining ideas. The finding in the study conducted by [21] supports that convergent tasks encourage learners to reach consensus in order for a reasonable solution to be produced. Reference [18] posit as divergent tasks engage learners to produce more ideas and greater complexity and convergent tasks led to selective production and structuring ideas in understandable manner. This generally implies as creativity which requires aggressive divergent and convergent thinking practices before drafting should be integrated in learners thinking practices. The habits of successful and unsuccessful learners principally focus on divergent attempts of generating as many ideas as possible and they mostly used their outlines to draft their text other than evaluating and organizing ideas ahead. The habit of taking convergent thinking aligned with editing the content has been observed including irrelevant details in most of their texts. In addition, both groups of learners think and generate ideas in their first language and translate into English. These learners also proved as this thinking habit has been helpful. Reference [20] study also persistently support the idea that the interaction of first and second languages in L2 writing has become most promising and valuable in the L2 composing process. Reference [15] confirm this mentioning that composing process in both languages is effective as L1 attributes to L2 writing. Thinking is believed to be the most important element in learning to write and one component in the framework for success in college writing pedagogy. To make improvements in their thinking, learners need to think of how to enhance their criticality. From the in-depth interviews conducted with both successful and unsuccessful learners, it is drawn that almost all respondents have not any good habits and even lack awareness about evaluating and developing their thinking. The learners have similar problems in creative thinking and metacognitive habits to learn writing. This finding is consistent with what I concluded regarding the effect of selected habits of mind on critical thinking among students in the classroom. The result of the interview and open ended questionnaire revealed as almost all learners perceive as the successes and failures in writing were due to their problems in taking ownership and initiatives to engage. Though they make themselves responsible for the failure in writing, they were found taking any ownership to practice writing by their own. The interview result from three unsuccessful and two of successful learners of writing showed as they failed to write in whatever writing tasks they were given by their teachers or not. Irrespective of the responsibility and related habit two successful learners have to practice writing outside their classroom, most of the respondents revealed that both groups still have limited habits of writing at any occasion. Reference [20] study confirms that, in EFL contexts, the learning of writing is influenced by the institutional system. The education system in such settings is highly structured, teachers monitor grades and the academic performance of students heavily rely on the teaching which gives little responsibility to acclimate learners' responsibility. Sustaining interest and attention to write, as a habit, influences ones success in learning writing. The results presented so far in the interview imply that most unsuccessful learners (A1, A2 and A5) totally lack regularity to write texts at any condition. What can be inferred from the habit of persistency of G1 and G3 who started to consistently write every day, different from

their high school experience, reveals as the development of such habit of mind results in successful learning of writing. This can be viewed from the writing performance of two less successful learners [G1 and G3] who lack commitment and interest to write daily so that their improvement in the period of my observation is minimal. The learners' habit of processing and practicing writing using diverse approaches to adapt to the different situations and expectation of tertiary level composition influences their success in writing. Two unsuccessful learners had no habits to apply stages of writing, but one of this groups use flexible approaches. All successful learners are also flexible to apply various procedures of writing and to adapt themselves with the pedagogy and level of writing required at tertiary education. This is consistent with what [23] found that the expressionist point that writing is a process of discovering, and making meaning, and cognitive recursive, nonlinear, and complex process [3]. From the researchers overall observation and learners' response Table 1, almost all respondents feel as they failed to write and adjust themselves, but G3 feel successful in making adjustments with writing at university. Most successful writers, however, have higher desire to make improvement and are less desperate as compared to unsuccessful ones. Habits of the mind stipulated in the framework for success can also be related with intellectual virtues developed as characteristics of learners of writing. The learners are supposed to develop the desire to know more about the world and think of new ways of thinking. The most successful learner (G1) replied in the interview as she is attempting to know and explore more to develop her thinking habit which has significant role to her writing performance. The close observation I have had for over three months, G1, G3 and G4 were open to share ideas and were curious to take new insights from peers and their instructor. The opposite holds true among most unsuccessful learners. Reference [5,10] also delineated as dispositional characteristics are linked with expressivity composition pedagogies of learning to write. Another study confirmed that students who come to college writing with disposition of curiosity and openness experiences will be well positioned to meet the writing challenges in the full spectrum of academic courses and later in their careers [7,14]. Thus, it is implied that the learners' success in writing can be due to the dispositions they developed in their experience of learning writing.

5. Conclusions

Writing performance can be determined based on effectiveness of strategies used to enrich the content of texts, use accurate surface features and mechanical elements. The two aspects of writing, idea generation and language use, are empirically explained as points of departure between successful and unsuccessful writers. Excelling in divergent and convergent ways of developing texts has been given remarkable attention to improve proficiency as the characteristic of successful learners of writing while primary endeavors to improve mainly language by merely associating failure with lack of grammar and vocabulary knowledge are implications for unsuccessful learning. Thus, it is concluded from the findings of this study that the writing instruction and learners' and teachers' related perceptions require to harmonize the balance between the relevance of content and language use by giving integral emphasis to content development, and later language use could be eventually improved. Successful and unsuccessful learners have challenges pertaining to their limited habits of creative and metacognitive thinking. The ineffective ways of divergent and convergent thinking habits of most learners from both groups implies the proficiency level of learners. The difference that one most effective learner (G1) in this respect depicts how far these thinking related habits of the mind impacted ones writing performance. Such creative and metacognitive higher order thinking habits theoretically imply advancements in proficiency. Thus,

it is drawn from the study that thinking related habits between individual students, though the groups show little differences, are causes for performance variations among learners. Habits of the mind which imply the practices of consistently and flexibly engaging in doing and owning writing tasks are assumed to affect success in learning writing at tertiary level. Unsuccessful students ideally claim as they feel responsible to their own writing, but they practically fail to practice writing in occasions whereby tasks are not given by their instructors. They are also found reluctant to do writing assignments and homework and often write single drafts. This shows the learners' failure is due to lack of commitment in developing an independent culture of perseverance as the system is exam driven which completely rely on teachers. The slight differences observed among successful and unsuccessful learners in applying such habits of the mind in general and particular variation those two successful learners (G1 and G3) above all leads to conclude that such habitual practices of the mind attribute to the success and failure of learning to write in tertiary composition classes. Similarities in the failure to accustom these habits among least successful and unsuccessful learners imply the proximity they have in composing proficiency. Intellectual dispositions are personal virtues developed as habits infused with personal characteristics. The overall intellectual development of an individual on openness to share ideas and curiously exploring knowledge and new information or skills indicates one's personal state and its contribution to improve creative potentials. From the longer observation in most processes of composing, almost all successful learners are different from unsuccessful ones in sharing ideas and being curious to explore opportunities. Thus, it is suggestive to draw that the remarkable variations observed between the two groups of students are due to dispositional orientations more aligned to successful learners.

6. Recommendations

The conclusions drawn so far imply that the role of habits of the mind for success and failure in composition classes has been pivotal. Thus, the failures that teachers attempted to support such poorly performing learners who failed to cope up with university composition classes are mainly associated with problems in flourishing habits of the mind which are recent insights in the writing pedagogy. Therefore, teachers, material developers and the university system should give special emphasis to acculturate these habits of the mind with in the learners' day-to-day practices. Thinking and feeling are vital aspects of success in education. The practice of teaching writing should give primary emphasis to these important components as writing which disregard idea generation through divergent and convergent thinking is mechanical and ineffective. Teachers and learners need to give time to creative thinking and metacognitive habits in designing tasks and assessment tools. This can be effective if too much focus is given to untimed tasks rather than timed writing practices. Learning extended writing cannot be accomplished over a short period of time. It would be much more challenging for learners with chronic writing defects. Thus, departments should provide further resources like writing center and conversational hours to realize independent learning to write.

Ensuring the productive use of this framework merely in writing classes may be difficult to enhance learners' proficiency to the required level. It is hence mandatory to implement it in writing across the curriculum, create opportunities for motivational revision activities, listening to students and incorporate their status before implementing the framework across the board.

7. Limitation Of The Study And Suggestions For Research

The focus of this study is on an in-depth investigation of writing learners habits of the mind which applies holistic approach of exploring components of habits of the mind. Critical investigation on the major categories by narrowing down to the habits related to practice, thinking or disposition oriented ones would make the study more focused. The mere reflective responses of learners about their habits of the mind may not accurately practically speak out. Thus, engagement oriented observations with practical writing tasks are much more effective.

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