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The American University in Cairo

School of Humanities and Social Sciences

University Students' Perceptions of Writing Assessment

A Thesis Submitted to

The Department of Applied Linguistics

In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for

The Degree of Master of Arts in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

Under the Supervision of

Dr. Atta Gebril

By

Hanan Alaa Hegazi

May 2021

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“And the close of their request will be: Al-Hamdu Lillahi Rabbil-Alamin.”

”وَأَجْرُ دَعْوَاهُمْ أَنْ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ“

(Quran 10:10, p.209)

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Dedication

To my wonderful mother, who always provided me with love and care, believed in me and stood by me in all the hard times, thank you!

Abstract

Instructors and students are the pillars of higher education. There is substantial interest in teachers' beliefs, preferences, and perceptions in language assessment research, with an emphasis on writing assessment. Additionally, there is a growing body of research investigating students' perceptions of assessment. However, research that examines how students perceive writing assessment is limited. Therefore, this study investigates two aspects: (a) students' perceptions of their writing ability and (b) their perceptions of writing assessment in an English-medium private university in Cairo. This study adopts a mixed-methods approach for data collection, which involved distributing student questionnaires, conducting semi-structured interviews, and collecting writing samples from the participants. The participants were selected through convenience sampling, in which L2 participants were randomly selected from two English programs at the American University in Cairo. A sample of participants (n=73) responded to the questionnaire. The questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Six semi-structured interviews were conducted to gain a deeper understanding of students' perceptions of writing quality and writing assessment. The interviews were textually analyzed through coding using content analysis by two coders. These interviews were conducted based on the participants' interest. The writing samples were analyzed quantitatively; they were first scored by two raters using a holistic rubric for grading the participants' overall L2 writing quality, and the average score of both raters was calculated. These samples were then analyzed utilizing the descriptors included in the holistic rubric. The results of this study indicated that students perceived themselves to be either mid-range writers or professional ones. Most of the participants enjoyed writing and believed it to be one of the easiest, most crucial skills in higher

education. Furthermore, a connection was found between the writing prompt and the students' writing quality. If the topic addressed the students' interest, they become motivated to work on their writing tasks. They also perceived writing assessment as a determining, and substantial factor in developing their writing quality. Moreover, writing quality was found to be higher than their perceptions as writers. The students' writing quality shaped their perceptions of academic writing and writing assessment. The study also involved messages from students to writing instructors. The implications of the current study addressed different educational stakeholders, such as students, teachers, textbook designers, teacher educators and university administrators. Students are required to manage their time to produce the best possible written work. Teachers are recommended to provide students with clear instructions on how to conduct different feedback types, such as peer-feedback and self-assessment. Textbook designers are required to design interesting writing prompts, which address students' preferences. Teacher educators are responsible for delivering professional development (PD) events to train teachers on how to incorporate writing assessment activities with writing instruction. University administrators are required to reward teachers who successfully deliver writing assessment activities for university students.

Keywords: second language writing, academic writing, writing quality, assessment, writing assessment, students' perceptions, students' perceptions of writing, students' perceptions of writing assessment, undergraduate students, writing teachers, writing programs

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List of Abbreviations

AUC: American University in Cairo

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ELI: English Language Instruction Department

ESL: English as a Second Language

ETS: Educational Testing Service

IELTS: International English Language Testing System

IEP: Intensive English Program

L2: Second Language

LOA: Learning-Oriented Assessment

M: Mean

RHET: Rhetoric and Composition Department

SD: Standard deviation

TOEFL: Test of English as a Foreign Language

WA: Writing Assessment

Chapter 1

Introduction

As a student's writing reflects their comprehension of knowledge (Hyland, 2011; Hyland, 2013), academic writing is a crucial feature in each student's learning experience, making it a core skill in most institutions. Writing is critical for three main reasons. First, it allows students to understand and communicate within their academic disciplines. Second, improving their writing helps students succeed in their careers (Hyland, 2013), which highlights the lifelong impact of writing. Third, academic writing is considered one of the most pressing learning needs that should be addressed for students (Shrestha, 2020). This need is particularly significant due to the increasing number of English-medium universities and the increasing demand of the job market in several countries, especially Egypt.

Writing is a fundamental skill that students are required to develop in higher education; it is considered an intellectual skill necessary for academic success (Lee, 2013; Lee et al., 2014). Furthermore, writing allows students to become engaged in a language by facilitating the expression of their ideas (Abdelsamad et al., 2020). Written communication skills should be cultivated within the academic setting as students need to be sufficiently competent to handle the workload of English-medium universities (Bacha, 2010). For instance, students must comprehend the novel information in written texts to succeed in their studies (Cummins, 2014). Students' writing competency is most significantly measured based on the quality of the required writing assignments at a university (Shrestha, 2020). These assignments entail specific conventions that can be categorized into five aspects:

- the target audience, whom the students need to be aware of while writing;
- the writing context through which students reveal their learning;

- the message, referring to the knowledge gained from studying a specific subject;
- the purpose, i.e., how the writing assignment is fulfilled, which affects students' grades accordingly; and
- the writing genre, with different types of essays being the common genres taught at universities (Lowe & Zemliansky, 2010).

Literature Review

The literature review has three main themes. First, it provides a review of L2 students' academic writing quality. Second, it explains the significance of assessment, focusing specifically on key aspects of writing assessment. Finally, a discussion on students' perceptions of writing assessment is presented.

Several studies have investigated the teachers' perceptions of L2 academic writing quality. Ismail (2011) examined students' perceptions of ESL writing in the United Arab Emirates University. This study involved 64 female students enrolled in different programs. Using questionnaires and focus-group interviews, Ismail (2011) found that the students were aware of the significance of writing skills and their impact on their careers. Furthermore, the students analyzed the strengths and weaknesses of their writing quality. Besides, Cai (2013) also carried out a research project on students' academic writing perceptions in China. The participants— first-year postgraduate students from different universities and cultural backgrounds —comprised a representative sample of students who needed to improve their writing quality for both their academic and career purposes. Cai (2013) also utilized questionnaires and focus-group interviews. The findings revealed that despite being required to improve their academic writing, the students had little interest in developing this. The results also showed that the students' writing difficulties involved challenges regarding expressing their

ideas rather than making language errors. However, these studies explored the writing perceptions and difficulties of female students and postgraduate students without addressing male and female undergraduates. Moreover, few studies have investigated students' writing quality, learning preferences or perceptions of academic writing courses, as illustrated in the studies by Ahmed (2016) and Ismail (2011), respectively. To bridge this gap, the present study addresses undergraduate students' perceptions of their writing ability.

Another line of research has investigated several studies focusing on teachers' perceptions of writing assessment (Crusan et al., 2016; Matsuda et al., 2013). Students' perceptions of writing assessment have also received considerable attention (Entwistle & Entwistle, 1991; Ismail, 2011; Marton & Saljo, 1997). However, to the best of the author's knowledge, no research to date has investigated Egyptian students' perceptions of writing assessment, an area that this study attempts to address.

The Egyptian Context

The Egyptian assessment system, in both schools and universities, mainly depends on exams, which have a substantial influence on educational systems (Gebriel & Brown, 2014). Exams comprise the sole tool for assessing students' writing quality in different educational contexts. Furthermore, high-stakes exams play a vital role in students' lives because passing or failing them shapes their future. This is similar to the Egyptian context in some public universities, where students memorize a set of phrases or sentences that can be used in any writing prompt given in the exam. However, students do not benefit from imitating a limited number of phrases for passing exams. Ahmed (2016) reported that several factors could negatively influence the development of students' writing quality, including sociocultural factors, language transfer, and the inability to understand the L2 sociocultural background.

Essay writing instruction in Egypt prioritizes form over content, as revealed by Ahmed (2016). His study provides a comprehensive view on writing in the Egyptian academic setting by investigating students' and teachers' perceptions of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) essay writing instruction, focusing on one of the Egyptian faculties of education. Ahmed (2016) found eleven elements of writing, categorized under three main aspects: mechanics, content, and structure. Grammar and punctuation were categorized under mechanics. The analysis from this study showed that eight out of fourteen of the students interviewed clarified that their teachers prioritized teaching grammar over all other aspects of language. Moreover, the teachers believed that teaching grammar explicitly was significant, as it would help students enhance their grammatical skills. However, two other teachers expressed their preference for contextualizing grammar rather than decontextualizing it. Through classroom observations, Ahmed (2016) realized that these two teachers explained grammar rules in an essay writing course when needed. One of the teachers selected some grammar exercises and assigned them as homework after explaining specific grammar rules in the class. In the context of academic writing, it is believed that grammar can be explained within a specific context to address the students' needs. It may not be useful to decontextualize grammar in writing classes due to the students' inability to appropriately apply grammar rules in their writing tasks, given their limited grammatical knowledge. Ahmed (2016) also found that the teachers felt a need to explain punctuation in class due to the students' insufficient knowledge. Moreover, the students reported that they were not given opportunities to practice punctuation before joining university. Both the teachers and students agreed on the importance of practicing punctuation. The researcher emphasized the teaching of different writing strategies to generate and develop ideas, as opposed to focusing on writing mechanics.

With regard to model paragraphs, the data analysis of Ahmed (2016) showed that the teachers thought it was useful for the students to be given prior knowledge about the topic, as students were often unwilling to read on a specific topic; they were not even keen on reading in L1. Therefore, when the students were required to complete some sentences in model paragraphs, reading model paragraphs helped inform them of a specific topic prior to writing on it.

Regarding idioms, seven student interviewees stated that the teachers paid due attention to teaching idioms in their essay writing course. The students were given some handouts that included idiomatic expressions and collocations to work on during class. However, the students perceived these tasks as useless. In contrast, the teachers thought it was important to teach students idioms due to their low writing proficiency. One teacher stated that she would dedicate a question in the exam for collocations and idioms to ensure that the students studied them. According to the researcher's classroom observations, the teacher would read each idiom aloud and ask the students to answer the handout afterward. Thus, idioms and collocations were given considerable focus in an essay writing course, but in a decontextualized manner at an Egyptian university.

The final writing aspect includes the essay structure, types of essays, and coherence. The students perceived the structure of paragraphs and essays to be one of the most emphasized elements in teaching writing. They learned how to write the main components of an essay: introductory paragraph, developmental paragraphs, and conclusion. The students' perceptions aligned with the teachers' responses. The teachers taught students how to write topic sentences and use transitional signals as well as introductory and concluding sentences. Hence, paragraph and essay structures were essential learning outcomes for teaching writing at the university.

Through observations, it was found that the students understood different writing genres, such as expository, descriptive, and argumentative essays. Moreover, the teachers perceived the students' knowledge of writing genres to be sufficient. This can be seen in the researcher's observations; a teacher gave the students a specific writing genre and asked them about the title of the writing genre and how they could develop the genre theoretically. However, the teacher never read the students' writing. Therefore, the students did not receive feedback. Moreover, the teachers did not monitor the students while writing to address the challenges they faced. Reflecting on Ahmed (2016), it is recommended that students take the time to practice writing. Moreover, they should be given feedback instead of being taught theoretically. Ideally, students should be able to produce and develop their writing rather than merely learn the rules of writing as creation is the highest level; whereas the lowest level of the revised Bloom's taxonomy.

Significance of the Study

Written language communication is of paramount importance in academic contexts. Therefore, students' productive skills — mainly writing— need to be developed in university classes. It is thus crucial to understand what students think about their writing quality and how they self-assess their abilities. Furthermore, Brown (2021) called for the substantiality of capturing the student voice in assessment literature; Brown et al, (2009, p.5) even emphasized that the student voice has been “remarkably absent” for the past decade. Therefore, the current study sought to fill this gap as a response to Brown's call. This study contributes to academic writing research by providing insights into L2 learners' perceptions of writing quality and writing assessment in the academic domain. The findings of the present study will also allow different stakeholders — such as students, teachers, textbook designers, teacher educators, and university administrators — to comprehend students' perceptions of writing assessment. This, in

turn, may help them effectively implement their educational practices and influence their decisions in instructional settings.

Context of the Study

The data for this study was collected from the American University in Cairo (AUC), where English is the medium of instruction and the students are exposed to developing their writing quality in an academic setting. AUC students find writing to be one of the most challenging skills that they are required to develop, not only for their academic life but also for their professional life. English instructors at AUC ensure that they deliver specific learning outcomes relevant to the writing courses. They also provide either written or oral feedback to the students through conferencing.

Statement of the Research Problem

In the context of higher education, students' learning is more significantly affected by their beliefs regarding their learning environment than by actual educational practices (Entwistle, 1991) cited in (Brown & Hirschfeld, 2008). Furthermore, students' perceptions of assessment are particularly important because assessment has a significant impact on the quality of learning (Entwistle & Entwistle, 1991; Marton & Saljo, 1997). According to (Lea & Street, 2000), it is important to investigate the students' perceptions regarding writing assessment. Recent research has highlighted the difficulty of understanding assessment from the perceptions of the students . Some studies have focused on students' perceptions of assessment in higher education, while others investigated students' perceptions focusing on only one aspect of writing assessment. For instance, (Dhindsa et al., 2007; Segers et al.2006; Struyven et al.,2002; Watering et al., 2008) examined students' perceptions of assessment. Siow et al. (2018) focused on investigating students' perceptions of self-assessment and peer feedback. Teacher's written feedback was

investigated by Kim et al., (2020). First-year students' perceptions of source-based writing was examined by Wette (2018). The purpose of the present study is to delve into the students' perceptions regarding writing quality and writing assessment. The methodology utilized differs from those of previous studies, which employed think-aloud protocols with students' interviews and questionnaires; instead, authentic writing samples of students are used for assessing their writing quality.

Rationale for the Study

Previous research on academic writing, including Egyptian studies, has focused on graduate students' perceptions of their writing quality and writing instruction using questionnaires and focus-group interviews. Other research projects have focused on students' perceptions of different writing genres, such as collaborative and argumentative writing. In contrast, this study investigates students' perceptions of writing quality and writing assessment in the Egyptian academic domain in Egypt using a mixed-methods approach. This line of research could substantially contribute to professionals' understanding of how students perceive writing assessment. Moreover, it could help shape and guide instructional practices. In addition, gaining insights into students' perceptions may bridge the gap between the respective expectations of teachers and students, thereby potentially enhancing students' writing quality in instructional contexts. This can then motivate students to carry out the required academic writing tasks more efficiently

Research Questions

- What are the students' perceptions of their academic writing quality?
- What are the students' perceptions of writing assessment?

Delimitations of the Study

As this study focuses solely on students' perceptions of writing assessment in the instructional context of two English programs; ELI and RHET at AUC, it does not include teachers' perceptions of writing assessment. Furthermore, since the study is limited to AUC students, the results cannot be generalized. This study is significant for investigating writing assessment via the students' perceptions to bridge the gap between students and other educational stakeholders in writing quality and writing assessment.

Theoretical and Operational Definitions of the Constructs

Theoretical Definitions of the Constructs

Academic Writing. There are three definitions of academic writing. The first describes it as a cognitive process that occurs as a mental production (Fadda, 2012). The second states that it is a means of expressing one's ideas through the logical organization of written paragraphs in the units of discourse (Abu-Ghararah & Hamzah, 1998). The third views academic writing from a social dimension rather than from an individual one (Bruke, 2010). Therefore, Albadi (2015) concluded that "writing could be a complex process" (p. 65), with an emphasis on other sub-skills, such as synthesizing information and paraphrasing, that students need to develop to enhance their academic writing.

Writing Quality. Beaufort (2007) defined writing quality through discourse community knowledge, which is defined as the expectations and values that the discourse community contributes to the criteria of "good writing" in the community context. She emphasizes that the good or positive learners' quality is developed through analyzing and responding to their writing, according to the expectations of their audience in particular communities. Therefore, she prioritizes discourse community knowledge over other domains such as writing process

knowledge, rhetorical knowledge, genre knowledge, and subject matter knowledge. Nunan (2003) defined writing as the process of generating ideas, emphasizing the need for the efficient organization of ideas.

Writing Assessment. According to Huot (2002), writing assessment comprises the procedures used to address the merits and demerits of a writer while communicating in the specific rhetorical, linguistic, and sociocultural context of higher education. In this case, writing assessment also means assessing students' quality to communicate discipline-specific knowledge while applying it to their language in the context of academic writing (Shrestha, 2020).

Perceptions. The word "perceptions" has been defined by several researchers, including Fodor (1998), Kelly (1991), and Lakoff and Johnson (2003). Perception is a mental representation of the real world, which can be comprehended through language or metaphors that encompass beliefs, attitudes, preferences and meanings. For instance, people perceive the aim of a specific phenomenon by understanding the phenomenon itself (Fodor, 1998). Moreover, White (1994) included the term "perceptions" when alluding to several complex experiences such as assessment.

Writing Assessment Perceptions. According to Brown and Gao (2015), perceptions are the "ideas, values and attitudes people have toward what something is". Knowledge and beliefs are synthesized to formulate assessment perception, which was defined earlier by Brown as a "general structure" (Thompson, 1992, p.141).

Operational Definitions of the Constructs

Academic Writing. In the present study, academic writing refers to L2 academic texts written by the students in two English language programs at AUC. The academic writing texts refer to the genre of the essays based on the learning outcomes of the writing courses.

Writing Quality. In this study, writing quality entails coherence, cohesion, lexical sophistication, syntactic complexity, fluency, and organization. It also encapsulates how well the students performed in their writing, as determined by the scores. A two-rater-specific holistic rubric was used to score the writing quality in the collected samples.

Perceptions. Perceptions, in the present study, refer to how students think of their writing quality, the received writing assessment quality, and how they view the rubrics as well as teachers' feedback compared to the peer feedback and self-assessment. Furthermore, it tackles how they interpret their grades and the extent of their agreement or disagreement with their teachers. This construct was measured using interviews and questionnaires.

Perceptions of Academic Writing Quality. This refers to utterances that reveal the meaning of how students “do” academic writing, to what extent they are aware of how they learn to write, how they perceive themselves as writers, and how they think of “meaningful” academic writing.

Perceptions of Writing Assessment. This refers to utterances that show how students think of their writing evaluation, which constitute their academic progress.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Introduction

This project focuses on two main research questions:

- What are the students' perceptions of their writing quality?
- What are the students' perceptions of writing assessment?

The purpose of this chapter, which includes six sections, is to examine recent literature that addresses the two aspects of this study: students' perceptions of writing quality and writing assessment. The first section of this chapter centers on the theoretical background of writing quality. The second section examines the actual significance of writing, followed by a discussion of the challenges encountered by university students while developing their writing quality. The third section reviews writing approaches and common writing strategies, with specific emphasis on the Egyptian instructional context. As for the fourth section of the review, it addresses assessment conceptions and practices, with particular emphasis on writing assessment. The fifth section covers students' perceptions of their writing quality. The sixth and the final section focuses on students' perceptions of writing assessment, emphasizing multiple dimensions such as feedback, including teacher's written feedback, peer feedback, self-assessment, rubrics, and grades.

L2 Academic Writing Quality

Theoretical Background of Writing Ability

Writing is one of the most intriguing areas for both professionals and researchers (Mohammadi, 2018). It is described as a "thinking tool" for developing language and improving critical thinking skills across disciplines (Bjork & Raisanen, 1997, p.8). Despite its complexity,

writing is also a critical factor in students' L2 development. This is due to how writing is interconnected with other variables, such as proficiency, knowledge and literacy, as well as the diversity of educational settings. Therefore, there is no existing theory that single-handedly addresses the multi-tiered nature of writing. In recent decades, however, researchers and educators have scrutinized four specific L2 writing theories: contrastive rhetoric, cognitive models of composing, genre theory, and sociocultural theory (Cumming, 2016), which are discussed in the following sub-sections.

Contrastive Rhetoric

It is one of the controversial theories related to L2 writing. Kaplan (1972) created an analytic framework of contrastive rhetoric for two main reasons. First, to provide writing instructors with pedagogical practices to help enhance university students' writing proficiency level. However, this theory has been criticized in light of the notion of communicative competence as well as Chomsky's transformational generative grammar. Furthermore, the application of the contrastive rhetoric theory has posed challenges given that neither grammar-focused teaching methodology nor behaviorist learning aligns with this theory; moreover, its addition can be problematic for the increasing number of international students whose academic progress depends on enhancing their L2 academic writing quality. More recently, Connor (1996, 2011) built on Kaplan's views by introducing the notion of "intercultural rhetoric" in order to emphasize the study of written discourse among individuals with different cultural backgrounds (p.2).

Cognitive Models of Composing

This writing theory developed in the early 1980s. Its essence is based on providing people with novel insights on their mentality and production while writing. The cognitive models of composing seek to interpret and explain the behavior and mental activities revealed in an

individual's writing, emphasizing the required skills for students to produce high-quality written texts (Cumming, 2016). In this sense, writing can be perceived as a psychological problem to be solved, such as solving mathematical equations or deciphering complex texts. By and large, writing challenges originate from the writers' attempt to transfer their own thoughts into written texts, while fulfilling the readers' expectations. These writing challenges could be represented in difficulty in generating irrelevant ideas, lack of organization, producing meaningful sentences utilizing correct grammar, applying appropriate mechanics, and using the right tone and word choice to the target audience. Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987) suggested that advanced writers often perceive a writing task as a challenge, adopting a strategy called knowledge transforming. Advanced writers are capable of achieving their goals related to problem-solving such as content and rhetorical goals. On the other hand, novice writers utilize simple approaches in which they generate content by linking between ideas, applying a knowledge-telling approach. In contrast, advanced writers could smoothly transfer from telling knowledge to transforming knowledge, representing a key difference between both levels of writing.

Problem solving has been defined in terms of processing information. In their comprehensive model, Hayes and Flower (1980) combined certain aspects that are based on the writers' cognitive skills; such as long-term memory represented in the knowledge of the topic, audience and brainstorming, in addition to task environment represented in the topic, cues and writing production. Also, they categorized multiple activities which take place while writing and their linkage to the writer's knowledge; encompassing the aforementioned knowledge types and task environment. The same researchers tend to differentiate between writing assignment including the writing prompt, motivation and audience and the written production. They stated four main writing processes: planning, reviewing, translating and monitoring. Planning, which is

the first writing process consists of two elements: input and output. Input is represented in the long-term memory and the writing assignment. Also, brainstorming, organization of ideas and achieving goals are categorized under planning. Reviewing a text entails improving its quality through editing and proofreading, whereas translating creates texts which describes the content previously planned. The fourth writing process, which is monitoring entails metacognitive processes that connect the previous processes altogether. Hayes and Flower (1980) illustrated that these processes could not be separated during writing. For instance, writers could actually produce a written text, while planning for the upcoming one. Also, they may pause after writing a specific section and start editing it. In brief, the researchers found that writing is a complex challenge, in which it is processed through a system of specific components of functions.

In his revised model, Hayes (1996) prioritized three main cognitive processes over the differences related to task environment such as the difference between the first draft and the editing process. The first cognitive process is text interpretation, while the second is reflection and the third is text production. It is worth noting that such complex processes are included while working on any writing task, which emphasizes the writing ability of competent writers.

A competent writer is the one who is capable of efficiently applying a set of rules, knowledge to fulfil specific writing tasks successfully. Writing competence is defined by several researchers as acquiring the important writing skills to create a well-organized, coherent text, which entails meaningful ideas, utilizing language efficiently (Arkle,1985; Education Northwest,2013, Rice, 2011). (Book report) illustrated that the more competent the writer is, the more spontaneous the sophisticated productive processes are, and the necessity of problem-solving arises.

Overall, theories are of paramount importance for different stakeholders such as researchers and professionals. These theories include a number of concepts, principles and realms to tap into several aspects of L2 academic writing.

Role of L2 Academic Writing in Higher Education

Writing quality is crucial for university students' academic success. In academic settings, students utilize their writing quality to express thoughts and share insights, such as research findings, which could be discussed in global contexts. Regarding writing quality, Hyland and Lyons (2002) illustrated that learning English in the academic domain is imperative since students require English writing proficiency to succeed in various subjects. This goal can be achieved using English as a medium of instruction in study groups, lectures, and textbooks. Furthermore, students need to achieve progress in English language skills to facilitate their overall learning. Developing students' writing skills is essential, as writing not only helps students share their ideas about specific knowledge but also serves as a means of expanding their knowledge (Hyland, 2011). Students are required to develop their writing quality within the academic domain because the instructional setting requires them to participate in debates closely relevant to their disciplines (Hyland, 2013; Raoofi et al., 2017). Using their writing quality in various contexts outside the English classroom maximizes students' opportunities to enhance their writing skills, thereby aiding their academic progress (Raoofi et al., 2017). Thus, students view writing as a communication tool in several academic contexts. This concept aligns with Hyland's (2013) notions regarding the importance of writing on the basis that it integrates with other learning areas. According to Anastasiou and Michail (2013), writing is a challenging skill for learners of any language. For EFL learners, in particular, writing is perceived as the most challenging skill across all the language skills (Zhang & Guo, 2012) since the writing process

involves less scaffolding than the other language skills (Bruning & Horn, 2000). Writing is a multidimensional task that encompasses numerous factors such as motivation, working memory, task environment, and cognitive processes (Hayes, 2000). According to Cumming (2001), L2 writers prioritize the form of the language, such as finding the appropriate words over crafting sophisticated ideas.

Raofi et al. (2017) stated that academic writing is a vehicle for transmitting knowledge, culture, and ideas among generations, demonstrating that writing influences different facets of human life, including educational, socio-cultural, and anthropological aspects. Accordingly, writing is not only a means of receiving knowledge but also reinforces knowledge in different aspects of human life. Canagarajah (2002) categorized the significance of writing on the basis of five features: (a) writing and its relationship with reality and reflection; (b) writing is a social interaction between the reader and the writer within a specific frame regarding time and space; (c) writing is produced through the dynamics between the reader's thoughts and the resources available in a particular context; (d) writers express both themselves and their ideological perceptions through writing; and (e) writing is a "historical dynamic process" in which the contradictions and concepts of the text are conveyed to the readers through the writers' stances and arguments (Raofi et al.2017,p.2). In essence, a high level of writing competence refers to the learners' ability to develop academically and, later on, professionally.

Writing Challenges

A number of researchers and scholars have identified several reasons for the writing difficulties experienced by L2 students. For example, Weigle (2005) argued that L1 writers could access grammar repertoire and lexis unavailable to L2 writers, particularly those with very low proficiency levels, as such L2 writers struggle to focus attentively on these aspects of writing.

Rao (2007) mentioned that L2 writing is particularly challenging due to multiple linguistic and cognitive strategies that may be inaccessible to L2 students. Given these challenges, it is critical to identify successful L2 writing techniques that can be used by students and applied by instructors while teaching writing.

Another aspect of writing is content, which includes three elements: writing prompts, model paragraphs, and idioms. Ahmed (2016) found that teachers perceived writing prompts as a significant interactive element. For instance, when they assigned a specific writing prompt, teachers encouraged students to link the prompt to their everyday life, making the students more engaged with the writing task, particularly while brainstorming their ideas and sharing personal experiences. Thus, one of the teachers highlighted the necessity of assigning interesting writing prompts, implying that student interest is of paramount importance while assigning a writing prompt. That is, unless they are motivated to write on a specific topic of relevance to their lives, students will not be able to produce a meaningful piece of writing.

Both teachers and students agreed on the significance of coherence. The teachers reported that the students were required to answer questions relevant to coherence, such as the topic sentence and its relevance to the writing prompt. Moreover, the students were asked to find the main ideas and linking words in a paragraph.

Writing Prompts

Writing prompts are crucial for both aspects of writing: assessment and pedagogy (Crusan, 2010; Weigle, 2002). Moore and Morton (2005) argued that writing prompts with a rhetorical function provide learners with the “spontaneous expression of opinion” (p. 64), which encourages them to express their insights and ideas smoothly. Moreover, according to Liu and Stapleton (2018), such writing prompts could encourage washback to occur in the writing

classroom, where instructors may prioritize specific types of writing over others. Liu and Stapleton (2018) conducted an exploratory study investigating the impact of writing prompts on students' writing quality and critical thinking skills. This study included two groups comprised of 129 Chinese undergraduate students who responded to different writing prompts. While the comparison group was required to respond to a traditional prompt similar to those of high-stakes English tests, the experimental group responded to a problem-solving writing prompt as the main rhetorical function. This study found multiple differences in the students' writing quality, with a specific focus on the differences in the linguistic features used in these essays —metadiscourse, essay organization, and specific lexical items. The researchers concluded that writing prompts impacted classroom pedagogy and instruction within the domain of high-stakes language exams. Therefore, these scholars emphasized the importance of broadening the scope of writing genres and topics so that students could better respond to them. They also suggested that further research should target the need for diversifying the writing topics to enhance multiple thinking processes, raising the need to switch from high-stakes tests to new text types and topics.

Bonyadi and Zeinalpur (2014) investigated students' perceptions toward self-selected and teacher-assigned topics in EFL writing classes. They adopted a qualitative approach to their study, depending on the self-written reports of 30 students to reflect on their perceptions of writing topics. The findings revealed that student motivation was heightened when they selected the materials themselves; as a result, they gained a deeper comprehension of the content. Moreover, other factors would likely improve in parallel, such as students' confidence, willingness to write, sense of responsibility, and writing fluency.

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Writing Strategies

A number of studies have investigated specific approaches to teaching L2 writing due to their significance in developing L2 writing skills. Such approaches allow students to monitor their progress not only in the writing process but also in their overall learning (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990). In this regard, a significant body of literature focusing on L2 writing strategies establishes a clear link between writing strategies and writing competence (Roca de Larios et al., 2008; Sasaki, 2002, 2007; Victori, 1999; Whalen & Menard 1995; Wong, 2005). Students exhibiting higher writing quality utilize more writing strategies than those exhibiting lower writing quality (Sasaki, 2002; Victori, 1999). In a similar vein, Manchon (2001) highlighted that the difference between successful writers and less successful writers mainly results from the differing techniques— such as social, cognitive, metacognitive, and rhetorical— employed by the former. For example, cognitive strategies refer to the mental processes related to an individual's background knowledge, including their ability to make inferences and assumptions (Khaldieh, 2000). Similarly, L2 writers use social strategies while interacting with others, such as peers or teachers, to heighten their motivation and reduce anxiety levels.

Writing Assessment

This section begins by introducing the concept of assessment, including assessment types and practices. Next, it discusses the writing assessment tools used in writing classes, such as feedback, highlighting the different types and their efficacy in the instructional context. Afterward, it focuses on grades, particularly in the classroom, and their role in improving learning. Finally, this section examines scoring rubrics as important assessment tools.

According to Andrews (2004) and Shohamy (2007), considerable attention has been paid to the substantial role of assessment inside the classroom. EFL professionals perceive assessment as the process of combining multiple sources of evidence, such as the means of assessment, whether it be an exam or one that supports a specific decision or action related to students' progress (Burns & Richard, 2009, p.78). Linn and Gronlund (2000) identified four types of assessment: placement, diagnostic, formative and summative. The role of the placement assessment is to identify the language ability of students at the start of a new course. Meanwhile, diagnostic assessment is primarily used for identifying the strengths and weaknesses in students' writing quality for overcoming the weaknesses. Formative assessment is utilized to monitor the students' progress during a specific course, while summative assessment measures the extent to which students have achieved the learning outcomes of the course. As stated by Coniam and Lee (2013), assessment has undergone a change in perspective from assessment *of* learning to assessment *for* learning. This shift requires professionals to redefine their view of assessment as instruments of accountability and certification in favor of a less rigid model that empowers learner interaction and involvement through self-assessment and peer assessment. This de-emphasis on traditional views of assessment also requires students to raise their critical awareness through formative feedback, in addition to bridging the gap between their current

performance and the target performance; this is represented in the zone of proximal development by Vygotsky (1980). The following sub-sections tap into several aspects of writing assessment, such as feedback, including peer assessment, self-assessment, and grades.

Feedback

Feedback is integral to assessment as it promotes better communication between the teacher and the student or among the students (Evans, 2013). From a socio-constructivist perspective, feedback promotes learning because it creates opportunities for students to share their learning experiences and knowledge. Thus, addressing the comments received through feedback makes students feel more responsible for their own development (Carless et al., 2011). When students are encouraged to share their learning experiences, they become more motivated, leading to higher achievements. Bennett (2009) highlighted that the learning process is actualized when the teacher and the student interact; similarly, when students become involved with each other in formative assessment, learning occurs through scaffolding and assistance. Hence, the role of feedback relies on scaffolding learners to decrease the gap between the learners' actual level of development and potential level of development. The actual level of development is identified through individual problem-solving, whereas the potential level of development is determined through collaborating with more qualified peers or through guidance provided by authority figures. Furthermore, Mohammadi (2018) conducted some research on communication in L2, encompassing interactive feedback on language mistakes to help learners recognize the gap between their inaccurate forms and the target language forms. Moreover, students are encouraged to correct their production in response to the specific feedback received (Rassaei, 2013).

Mohammadi (2018) illustrated that the purpose of feedback is to fill the gap between the students' actual level of development and the level of achievement possible through interaction with peers. Thus, feedback can be a valuable component in formative and summative assessment; this is in line with Hyland's (2013) view of feedback as one of the influential elements in students' learning. Hyland (2013) elaborated on the importance of feedback due to its role in informing students of their strengths and weaknesses as well as its accountability in scaffolding cognitive development. Diab (2011) proposed the assumption that peer feedback is related to a constructivist writing because during the peer-feedback process, students interact socially with their peers and are provided with sufficient time to reflect and analyze their work; during this phase, cognitive processes such as criticism and verification, are enhanced. These cognitive abilities develop through students' engagement and interaction in these writing activities. Despite these findings, scholars such as Hattie and Timperley (2007) found that the full scope of feedback has still not been achieved on a professional level.

It is worth noting that the significance of feedback relies on promoting students' learning and improving their quality of writing, according to the Quality Assurance Agency's (QAA) Code of Practice on Assessment of Students. Prior research has examined the quality of teachers' written feedback, focusing on its function and form (Hyland & Hyland, 2001), with several earlier studies showing that teachers' comments were vague and likely to confuse rather than enlighten the students (Cumming, 1985). However, more recent studies have demonstrated that some teachers consider additional factors, such as individual traits and institutional requirements, while providing feedback to the students. Accordingly, teachers have begun to find opportunities for building rapport with the students through written feedback (Hyland, 1998; Hyland & Hyland, 2001).

Self-assessment

Self-assessment is one of the formative assessment tools that students use to reflect on the quality of their work, and to monitor their progress (Nilsen, 2012). Self-assessment allows students to focus, think and reflect on their work instead of gauging progress solely by grades. Students assess their work by using self-assessment checklists, which creates opportunities for students to reflect on their production while simultaneously enhancing their critical thinking skills and building their confidence (Orsmond et al., 1997). Self-assessment possesses a number of benefits. Students can assess their work against a specific rubric or checklist, allowing them to reflect on their work using these assessment criteria. Engaging in this process gives students a deeper understanding of the task and helps them monitor their work to ensure the efficient completion of the task (Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Little & Perclova, 2001; Noonan & Duncan, 2005; Stiggins, 2001). Consequently, students will be more committed to adjusting their writing errors in forthcoming writing tasks. Another advantage is that self-assessment emotionally influences the students by lessening their feelings of anxiety, fear, and depression (Little & Perclova, 2001).

Peer Feedback

Peer feedback is useful for students' engagement in terms of the task criteria and specifications. Flower et al. (1986) mentioned three specific processes that occur when students read a text: identifying errors, diagnosing the problem, and utilizing revision strategies. Peer feedback allows students to actively identify errors, enabling them to recommend solutions when encountering problems; this in turn, raises awareness of the kind of problems they may encounter while writing. Moreover, students can experiment with different revision strategies that address the challenges encountered (Patchan & Schunn, 2015). Tenorio et al. (2016) reviewed 44 articles

and determined that peer assessment in collaborative writing had a positive impact on students' writing quality since peer assessment enhanced the students' writing production. Coombe (2010) emphasized that peer assessment "eases the marking burden on the teacher" (p.94), explaining that peer assessment enhances students' learning opportunities through assessing the products of other students.

Grades

Alongside feedback, grades are another means of collecting information about students' achievements or progress. Grades can occur on a letter range from A-E; they can also be a percentile number or a rating. Most students consider the grades received from their instructors to be of significant importance as they indicate the students' quality of work and progress in a certain subject. Therefore, researchers have turned to investigating students' perceptions toward grades. Evans and Engelberg (1988) found that primary school students aged from 4 -11 years old had positive attitudes towards grades. In contrast, older students indicated a lack of satisfaction with their grades. Their findings also revealed that younger students with lower grades tend to assume that these grades are due to external factors, such as the task difficulty or teacher disposition. In contrast, high achievers in older age groups tend to connect their high grades to themselves and their efforts (Baker et al., 2002).

Rubrics

Rubrics are helpful tools for both instruction and assessment (Andrade, 2005). The relevant literature has emphasized the importance of rubrics in learning and teaching (e.g., Osana & Seymour, 2004; Reitmeier et al., 2006). Moreover, several studies (Boettger, 2010; Crusan, 2015; Crusan, 2010; Dempsey et al., 2009) indicate that rubrics enhance validity and reliability in assessment. One main purpose of rubrics is to assess the quality of different writing genres for

undergraduate students (Crusan, 2010; Knoch, 2009a, 2009b; Polio, 1997). In the context of assessing academic writing, rubrics are employed for large-scale standardized tests to analyze students' needs at the beginning of the course (Educational Testing Services, 2005; Knoch, 2009a). There are two main types of rubrics: holistic and analytical. Holistic rubrics provide the students with an overall score on their writing, while analytical rubrics provide a detailed score for each descriptor.

Students' Perceptions of Writing Quality and Writing Assessment

This section begins with a discussion of the students' perceptions of writing quality, followed by students' perceptions of writing assessment. Upon investigating students' perceptions of their writing quality, Chou (2011) found that students view writing as a crucial tool for publishing their research projects and ensuring that others can communicate with them. Litterio (2018) investigated how first year students perceived an online writing course, and presented three main findings. First, the students perceived writing as a non-threatening method of expressing their own thoughts, due to their discomfort with sharing these reflections in a face-to-face setting. Reflecting on this point, it can be said that some students tend to be too inhibited to express their ideas; in addition, they may be hindered by interruptions such as peers' comments or insights. Second, the students viewed writing as a "recursive process." This indicates that students are motivated when they learn from their peers, which also entails mastering the skill of critiquing their own and others' work as they discuss and navigate their errors. The third finding concerned how the students perceived their writing in terms of distinguishing the difference between the responsibility of others and their own accountability. To illustrate, one student mentioned identifying the need to work on the organization of ideas, while another student highlighted the importance of peer feedback, which helped raise her

awareness of the importance of developing her organizational skills. Yet another student admitted that peer feedback provided allowed her to accurately address the writing prompts and learn how to write information relevant to the specific topic. Overall, the students reported producing work that was richer in content and linguistically stronger after making modifications in response to their peers' comments, questions and suggestions.

Ferreira and Santoso (2008) examined the relationship between students' perceptions and writing quality in the field of accounting. They found that the students' negative perceptions influenced their quality. This notion closely aligns with Isen's (2004) explanation that students' negative perceptions toward learning lower motivation and undermine quality; they become demotivated as their negative feelings affect the quality of their production. Interestingly, the same pattern emerged regarding positive perceptions; students' positive perceptions of accounting could positively affect their quality. Therefore, these findings suggest that students' perceptions play a key role in determining either a negative or positive performance.

Classroom Assessment Practices

In recent years, classroom assessment has been receiving considerable attention. Black and William (1998) illustrated that "assessment" refers to all the activities conducted by teachers to gather information about the students' language abilities, enabling them to provide feedback to their students. Classroom assessment has been receiving considerable attention in recent years.

Instructors are mainly responsible for assessing students' performance and delivering appropriate instructions to students. This means that teachers must be capable of analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of multiple assessment tools used in the class, as mentioned in Zhang and Burry-Stock (2003)'s research which investigated teachers' assessment practices and self-perceived assessment skills in relation to teachers' experience, grade level, content area, and

measurement training. The researchers of this study utilized an Assessment Practices Inventory (API) to create 67 items on different rating scales: a skill scale (for measuring teachers' self-perceived assessment skills), and a use scale (for measuring teachers' assessment practices). Teachers, who taught different subjects, were asked to mark their responses twice on each scale for the 67 items. According to the results of this study, the researchers emphasized the significance of formative assessment, especially in the selection of assigned tasks, in developing students' level of achievement. Different subjects and results showed that Black and William highlighted (1998) shed light on the significance of formative assessment that develops the students' level of achievement.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Introduction

The present study examined how university students perceive academic writing quality as well as writing assessment. This chapter describes the methodology used in this research study to address the research questions. Furthermore, it presents the detailed procedures utilized in this research project, including the procedure for recruiting participants, the data collection instruments employed, and how the data obtained by each instrument was analyzed. In the following section, the research design is discussed first, followed by a description of the instructional context, study participants, data collection instruments, and data collection procedures. This is followed by a description of the theoretical frameworks used for analyzing the data. This chapter is concluded with a summary of the sections covered.

Research Design

This research project examines students' perceptions of their writing quality and writing assessment. A mixed-method approach including both quantitative and qualitative data collection was used to answer the aforementioned research questions. Creswell and Clark (2006) found that a mixed-method approach is preferable when a single approach cannot provide a complete picture. Moreover, according to Fraenkel et al. (1993), a mixed-method approach facilitates an in-depth examination of the relationship between people's quantified rating of issues and their perceptions. The current study began with data collected from questionnaires; this was followed by interviews, and then writing samples were holistically scored. A sequential explanatory design was used to analyze the results of the questionnaire in the context of interviews and

students' writing samples. These samples were designed to resemble the writing tasks that students receive in their language classes. The participating students were asked via email to answer the questionnaire and, those interested in continuing their participation in the study were asked to voluntarily participate in interviews and write an essay. The interviews were semi-structured and consisted of seventeen questions. Several points have been covered in one question to encourage the participants to elaborate so that the researcher could understand writing assessment from the participants' perspectives. For the writing task, the students were required to write on a specific topic based on the themes and the writing genre they would be practicing simultaneously in their writing courses.

Instructional Context

This study was conducted in the spring semester of 2021 at the AUC. Data was collected from two English programs—English Language Instruction (ELI) and Rhetoric and Composition (RHET). Both programs prepare undergraduate students for academic study in different disciplines. Students enrolled in these programs mainly develop their academic English skills and enhance their critical and reflective thinking as sub-skills. Content-based instruction is employed to promote independent and collaborative learning, which requires a commitment to academic integrity and community engagement. ELI provides two levels of intensive academic English programs that target two proficiency levels: intermediate and advanced. Students are placed in either of these levels based on their scores on the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) or Test of English as a Foreign Language Internet-Based Test (TOEFL-iBT). The RHET program promotes students' research ability and rhetorical skills in several multi-modal, discipline-specific, and inter-disciplinary genres. Moreover, basic human values and research methods are taught to ensure personal growth and academic development. In the

RHET program, writing is an intellectual tool, which is culturally contextual and socially transformative. The significance of developing dialogue across academic and civic communities through the meaning, purpose, and function of writing is emphasized. The courses use a letter grade system (Table 3.1). The students' GPA is calculated based on these grades. The teachers are responsible for assigning grades and are well-trained for this task. The validity and the fairness of the grades are ensured by the use of uniform rubrics for assignments. Furthermore, the teachers provide detailed feedback on the development of the students' writing quality throughout the semester. These two programs were selected to investigate students' perceptions of writing assessment and writing quality because they provide the academic contexts for students' exposure to and interaction regarding acquiring L2 academic language skills. The following table shows IELTS and TOEFL test scores and corresponding grades.

Table 3.1

TOEFL iBT/IELTS Cut-off Scores as Required by Both English Language Programs

(Extracted from the university official website)

https://documents.aucegypt.edu/Docs/admissions_grad_req/Grad%20Language%20Requirements.pdf

Placement	TOEFL iBT	TOEFL iBT	IELTS	IELTS	CEFR
	score	writing	score	writing	
RHET 1010**	83 or above	22 or above	6.5 or above	7 or above	C1
ENG 0210***	76- 82	20 – 21	6	6 or 6.5	B2

ELIN	62 – 75	17 – 19	5.5	5.5	B2
0102****	48- 61	14- 16	5	5	B1
ELIN 0101					

*English Language Instruction Department encompasses English 0210, ELIN 0102 and ELIN 0101

**RHET 1010 stands for Rhetoric and Composition

***ENG 0210 stands for English 0210 level

Participants

The participants of this study were undergraduate students of the ELI and RHET programs at AUC. They were all native speakers of Arabic. A group of male and female students participated in the study. Table 3.2 presents the demographics of the participants. As shown in this table, 56% of the female students and 44% of the male students filled out the questionnaire. Their proficiency level ranged from pre-intermediate to advanced. Students join either these two programs after finishing high school. The students are 19 – 20 years old, as shown in Table 3.2. The interviewees were six students enrolled in two English language programs at AUC— two ELI students from 0210, and four RHET students. These participants were recruited once they expressed interest in volunteering for the interviews after finishing the questionnaire. Some of their quotes, extracted from the interview transcripts, are utilized below for illustrating the results. Pseudonyms are used to maintain anonymity.

Table 3.2

The Demographics of the Students (Participants)

Total	Gender	Age	Educational Background
Number of Participants			
73	Male = 32 Female = 41	19-20	Freshmen, ELI and RHET students

Validity, Reliability and Trustworthiness of Data Collection Instruments

In this section, the validity, reliability and trustworthiness of data collection instruments, which are, questionnaires, interviews and writing task are discussed.

Validity of the Questionnaire Items

To ensure the validity of the questionnaire items, they were pre-tested through the piloting phase. Furthermore, the questionnaire items were reviewed several times by the expertise of the field.

Reliability of the Questionnaire Data

As shown in Table 3.3, the SPSS software version 27 was used in order to calculate the reliability coefficient of the questionnaire, which was 0.909, indicating that the questionnaire data was very reliable, since the acceptable calculation ranges from 0.6 – 0.7, and 0.8 means a higher level of reliability, and 0.9 is the highest level of reliability according to Cronbach's alpha test.

Table 3.3*Reliability Coefficient of the Questionnaire*

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.885	41

Trustworthiness of the Interview

Since the purpose of this study is to provide key stakeholders with educational insights to be put into practice, it is important that readers and stakeholders could convince themselves that the research findings of the current study are of added value. Trustworthiness is one of the tools used to persuade researchers and readers could truly rely on the results of this study. Several scholars (e.g., Braun and Clark, 2006; Elo et al, 2014; Lincoln and Guba, 1985, Nowell et al., 2017) introduced the concept of trustworthiness by setting specific criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, authenticity in addition to validity and reliability. These criteria are used to present the thematic analysis of qualitative data. Thus, thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke; 2006) is used for ensuring the trustworthiness of the interview data. As revealed in table 3g, there are six main phases for conducting thematic analysis, which were applied for the present study. At the start, the researcher familiarizes herself with the data gathered from the interviews, including transcribing the data, reading it several times, and writing first impressions. Then, generating initial codes for the entire data set. The third phase is searching for themes; categorizing the codes under each relevant theme. Next, a thematic map of analysis is created based on a two-level data review. The first level is a data review in relation to the codes, while the second level is reviewing the themes in relation to the

entire data set. Afterwards, defining themes and refining them occurs. The final phase is producing the report, when the researcher finds the relationship between the analysis, research questions and the literature review to craft the final report.

Table 3.4

Phases of Content Analysis

Phase	Description of the Process
1. Familiarizing yourself with your data:	Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.
2. Generating initial codes:	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collecting data relevant to each code.
3. Searching for themes:	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.
4. Reviewing themes:	Checking the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic 'map' of the analysis.

5. Defining and naming themes: Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells; generating clear definitions and names for each theme.
6. Producing the report: The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis

Extracted from Braun and Clarke (2006)

The Writing Task

The writing task was selected from a list of writing tasks of TOEFL iBT provided by Educational Testing Services (ETS), which is one of the largest organizations all over the world, which provides nonprofit testing and assessment services in the educational field. The writing tasks produced by ETS are highly reliable due to the multiple variables that are considered while designing a writing task, such as the appropriateness of task design, relevance and task representativeness (Alderson, 2009).

Data Collection Instruments

To address the research questions of this study, triangulation was used by applying three tools: questionnaires, interviews, and writing samples. Questionnaires were used to examine the students' perceptions of their writing quality and how they viewed writing assessment.

Interviewing the students provided an in-depth understanding of how they viewed themselves as writers and how they perceived writing assessment within the academic setting. However, this study did not rely only on self-reported data, i.e., the questionnaires and interviews. Writing samples were collected to correlate the students' self-reported data with their writing quality, and these were later assessed using holistic rubrics.

Questionnaire

A questionnaire was developed to investigate the students' perceptions of their writing quality and their views on writing assessment; which entails the two research questions of the current study. Questionnaires, which is the first instrument employed in the study, provide evidence of patterns within a larger population than interviews, while interview data collects a deeper understanding on participants' ideas and behavior (Kendall, 2008).

The questionnaire was divided into four sections. The first section included the consent form, in which the participants were required to sign prior to their voluntary participation in this research project. The second section addressed the demographics of the participants. The third and the fourth sections comprised the items of the questionnaire. A total of 61 items were developed, out of which 41 remained after being filtered to avoid redundancy. The 41 items were divided into two sections, each of which addressed one theme of the study using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). These items were

statements that tapped into two main themes: students' perceptions of their writing quality and students' perceptions of writing assessment. The third section consisted of 23 items that tap into the students' L2 academic writing quality. The fourth section consisted of 18 items and targeted different aspects of writing assessment, such as types of feedback. Moreover, it considered the impact of grades on learning, i.e., learning-oriented assessment. There are several steps when designing the questionnaire.

Regarding writing assessment items, the initial process involved reviewing articles that separately addressed each aspect of writing assessment. For instance, initially, articles discussing some aspects of writing quality and writing assessment — such as grades, LOA and feedback, including feedback types — were collected. Next, the researcher collected articles relevant to grades and how assessment results could improve students' writing in the future. Furthermore, the literature concerning teachers' perceptions, was considered, and the items were adapted to fit the scope of the present study, i.e., the university students (Crusan et al., 2016; Hunter et al., 2006; Kamasak et al., 2021; Kleij, 2019; Litterio, 2018; Lizzo & Wilson, 2008; Melekhina & Levitan, 2015; Plakans & Gebril, 2012; Wang et al., 2020). Table 3.5 shows how each item was adapted to themes related to writing quality and writing assessment and how it was adapted to best fit university students. For instance, Crusan et al. (2016) included an item in their questionnaire that tackles the teacher's perception: "I consider myself a good writing instructor." This item was adapted to suit the students in the following manner "I consider myself a good writer." After collecting the items of the questionnaire, they were filtered to avoid redundancy. To ensure the validity of the results obtained from the questionnaire, the piloting phase took place once the Internal Review Board (IRB) approval was granted. As shown below, Table 3.4 (questionnaire themes) clarifies the category and its corresponding factor or the main and the

sub-themes of the questionnaire as well as the number of questions that are categorized under each theme.

Table 3.5

Questionnaire Item Categories of Students' Perceptions of Writing Quality and Writing Assessment

Category	Item
Writing features (organization, content quality, synthesis, coherence, cohesion, unity, and mechanics)	7. I can write the main parts of the essays such as introduction, body, conclusion appropriately
	8. I can produce relevant content to the writing task required.
	9. I can write using correct grammar.
	10. I can use an appropriate academic writing style.
	11. I can organize my ideas while writing in coherent paragraphs.
	12. I can support or refute arguments/claims while writing.

Category	Item
	<p>18. I express my ideas clearly in writing.</p> <p>19. I go back to my writing to revise the content and make my ideas clearer.</p> <p>20. I go back to my writing to edit my language.</p> <p>21. I give almost equal attention to both the language and the content while writing.</p> <p>22. I enjoy working on writing tasks.</p> <p>23. I can develop my writing skills.</p>
Writing strategies	4. I usually brainstorm and outline before and during writing
Writing prompt	3. I find the topics of my writing classes interesting to work on.
Source-based writing	13. I can summarize ideas from sources.

Category	Item
	<p>14. I can paraphrase ideas from sources.</p> <p>15. I am confident that I can format references accurately using APA.</p> <p>16. I use ideas and examples from external readings in my writing.</p> <p>17. Due to workload pressure, I sometimes copy from external texts without giving credit to authors.</p>
Writing task requirements	<p>1. I understand the requirements of the writing tasks assigned by professors.</p> <p>2. I usually achieve what I have been asked while writing.</p>

Category	Item
Feedback	<p>26. I go back to my writing to edit my language.</p> <p>27. I give almost equal attention to both the language and the content when writing.</p> <p>28. I enjoy working on writing tasks.</p> <p>29. I can develop my writing tasks.</p>
Self-assessment	<p>34. My teacher shows me how to critically assess my work.</p> <p>41. I can organize my ideas while writing in coherent paragraphs.</p>
Peer assessment	<p>33. Feedback I receive from my colleagues is usually negative.</p> <p>39. Feedback given by other students is useful for me.</p>
Grades	<p>29. I focus on feedback from my teacher not the grade.</p>

Category	Item
	36. I think more grades should be assigned to the content of the essay rather than to correct language.
LOA	35. In my opinion, writing errors are valuable learning opportunities. 40. Feedback improves my writing ability.

Table 3.6

Studies and the Corresponding Questionnaire Items

Study	Questionnaire item	Was this item adapted?
Wang et al. (2020) and Waldrip et al. (2006)	1. I understand the requirements of the writing tasks assigned by professors.	Yes Original item: I help students to understand the learning purposes of

Study	Questionnaire item	Was this item adapted?
		each writing assessment task.
		I understand what is needed to successfully complete a science assessment task (Waldrip et al., 2006)
Crusan et al. (2016)	2. I usually achieve what I have been asked while writing.	Yes Original item: I know how to design good writing tasks.
Ismail (2011) and Diab (2011)	3. I find the topics of my writing classes interesting to work on.	Yes Original item: I do not feel comfortable during a writing

Study	Questionnaire item	Was this item adapted?
		activity (Ismail, 2011) Original item: We wrote in class (Diab, 2011)
Sun and Wang (2020)	4. I usually brainstorm and outline before and during writing.	Yes Original item: I can plan what I want to say before I start writing.
Wang et al. (2020)	5. My professor guides me to overcome my writing challenges.	Yes Original item: I help students to find ways of addressing problems they have in their writing.

Study	Questionnaire item	Was this item adapted?
Crusan et al. (2016)	6. I consider myself a good writer.	Yes Original item: I consider myself to be a good writing instructor.
Sun and Wang (2020)	7. I can write the main parts of the essays such as introduction, body, conclusion appropriately	Yes Original item: I can write an expository paragraph in English.
Osgerby (2018)	8. I can produce relevant content to the writing task required.	Yes Original item: I can produce relevant content.

Study	Questionnaire item	Was this item adapted?
Sun and Wang (2020) and Osgerby (2018)	9. I can write using correct grammar.	Yes Original item: I can correctly use verb tenses in English writing (Sun & Wang, 2020) I can produce grammatically correct text (Osgerby, 2018)
Osgerby (2018)	10. I can use an appropriate academic writing style.	No
Sun and Wang (2020)	11. I can organize my ideas while writing in coherent paragraphs.	Yes Original items: a. I can organize sentences

Study	Questionnaire item	Was this item adapted?
		<p>into a paragraph to express an idea.</p> <p>b. I can write a paragraph in a cohesive way.</p>
<p>Banerjee and Wall (2006)</p>	<p>12. I can support or refute arguments/claims while writing.</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Original item: I can support or refute argumentation in academic texts.</p>
<p>Banerjee and Wall (2006)</p>	<p>13. I can summarize ideas from sources.</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Original item: I can write concisely.</p>

Study	Questionnaire item	Was this item adapted?
Banerjee and Wall (2006)	14. I can paraphrase ideas from sources.	Yes Original item: I can use proper conventions to acknowledge sources when paraphrasing.
Wette (2018)	15. I am confident that I can format references accurately using APA.	Yes Original item: I am confident that I can reference accurately (in text and end of text) using APA
Saglam (2020)	16. I use ideas and examples from external readings in my writing.	Yes Original item: I used examples and ideas from the readings to support my

Study	Questionnaire item	Was this item adapted?
		argument in my essay.
Wette (2018)	17. Due to workload pressure, I sometimes copy from external texts without giving credit to authors.	Yes Original item: Due to workload pressure, I sometimes copy from source texts without acknowledgement.
Sun and Wang (2020)	18. I express my ideas clearly in writing.	Yes Original item: I can put my ideas into writing.
Lee (2008)	19. I go back to my writing to revise the content and make my ideas clearer.	No
Lee (2008)	20. I go back to my writing to edit my language.	Yes

Study	Questionnaire item	Was this item adapted?
		Original item: I go back to my writing to edit the grammar, vocabulary, spelling, and punctuation.
Lee (2008)	21. I give almost equal attention to both the language and the content while writing.	Yes Original item: I give almost equal attention to both the language (e.g., spelling, grammar, vocabulary) and the content (e.g., ideas, organization)
Ismail (2011)	22. I enjoy working on writing tasks.	Yes Original item: I enjoy writing in English.

Study	Questionnaire item	Was this item adapted?
Wang et al. (2020)	23. I can develop my writing skills.	Yes Original item: My assessment practices help students to learn English writing independently.
Crusan et al. (2016)	24. Assessment plays an important role in writing classes.	No
Brown (2006)	25. Assessment informs me with my writing needs.	Yes Original Item: assessment feeds back to students their learning needs.
Brown (2006)	26. Assessment helps me improve my writing ability.	Yes

Study	Questionnaire item	Was this item adapted?
		Original item: Assessment helps students improve their learning.
Brown (2006)	27. Assessment results are trustworthy.	No
Crusan et al. (2016)	28. Writing is best integrated with other skills such as reading and listening.	No
Brown et al. (2016)	29. I focus on feedback from my teacher not the grade.	Yes Original item: I pay attention to feedback from my tutors and/or markers.
Lee (2008)	30. I understand the comments I receive from my teacher.	Yes Original item: After reading my teacher's written

Study	Questionnaire item	Was this item adapted?
Wang et al. (2020)	31. The teacher informs me how to improve my writing ability.	<p>feedback (marking, corrections and comments), I understood the feedback/the problem indicated (if any).</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Original item: I advise students on how to further develop their strengths in writing.</p>
Melekhina and Levitan (2015)	32. I can evaluate my writing.	<p>Yes</p> <p>Original item: students should assess their own works.</p>

Study	Questionnaire item	Was this item adapted?
Brown et al. (2012)	33. Feedback I receive from my colleagues is usually negative.	Yes Original item: Students are able to provide accurate and useful feedback to each other and themselves.
Brown et al. (2012)	34. My teacher showed me how to critically assess my own work.	Yes Original item: Students can be critical of their own work and can find their own mistakes.
Wang et al. (2020)	35. In my opinion, writing errors are valuable learning opportunities.	Yes Original item: I encourage students to view mistakes in

Study	Questionnaire item	Was this item adapted?
		writing as valuable learning opportunities.
Crusan et al. (2016)	36. I think more grades should be assigned to the content of the essay rather than to correct language.	Yes Original item: when scoring writing, I believe content should receive more weight than accuracy (grammar)
Melekhina and Levitan (2015)	37. Feedback should be given only by the teacher.	No
Brown et al. (2016)	38. Feedback motivates me to exert more effort in my writing.	Yes Original item: Feedback makes me try harder.

Study	Questionnaire item	Was this item adapted?
Melekhina and Levitan (2015)	39. Feedback given by other students is useful for me.	Yes Original item: peer assessment is very helpful.
Ndalichako (2015)	40. Feedback improves my writing ability.	Yes Original item: Assessment feedback is useful in enhancing students' performance.
Wang et al. (2020)	41. The instructor usually shares the scoring criteria/rubric with me before working on the writing task.	Yes Original item: I discuss with students assessment criteria of English writing tasks in ways they understand.

Interviews

The primary aim of the interviews was to capture the students' voices and interpret them to give them a meaning corresponding to the research questions of this study. Six semi-structured interviews were conducted with the participants. Two participants were enrolled in the ELI program while the other four participants were enrolled in RHET program. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, these interviews were conducted online via Zoom using the researcher's personal meeting ID (PMI: 562 063 3675). Several researchers (e.g., Mann, 2016; Nunan, 1992; Richards, 2003; Whiting, 2008) have used semi-structured interviews to gain deeper insights by allowing the interviewees to sufficiently elaborate on their responses (Robin & Rubin, 2005).

Each interview lasted for 25-30 minutes. The interested students participated in the interviews after finishing the questionnaire. Each interview consisted of 17 questions (Appendix B), which questions had been selected and combined from those in previous studies. Similar questions were gathered to form one question. The rationale behind merging similar questions was to allow the participants to sufficiently elaborate on their responses to each point. The first four questions addressed several themes related to the students' perceptions of L2 academic writing quality, while the remainder of the questions addressed some of the aspects of the students' writing assessment perceptions. The first question consisted of three parts that investigated how the students thought of themselves as writers. The second question tackled the students' perceptions regarding the writing tasks assigned to them. The third question examined how the students viewed meaningful academic writing. The fourth question explored the students' writing strategies and how they monitored their writing development. The fifth question was related to learning-oriented assessment, intended to explore how students viewed the role of assessment in improving their writing quality. The sixth question consisted of several

parts that examined what the students thought of feedback, be it teacher's feedback or peer feedback, and how they comprehend the feedback received. The seventh and the eighth questions investigated another learning-oriented assessment related to peer feedback. The ninth question addressed the students' perceptions of self-assessment. The tenth question focused on the students' opinions of scoring rubrics. The eleventh question probed what the students thought of grades. The twelfth question investigated how students perceived the influence of writing assessment on their writing quality. The thirteenth and the fourteenth questions addressed the students' views regarding integrated writing. The fifteenth question provided the students with an opportunity to reflect on their L2 academic writing courses, drawing out their beliefs and how they changed in light of the writing courses at the university. The sixteenth question examined the students' interpretations of "successful" assignments and the elements that contributed to this success in their opinion. The seventeenth and final question encouraged the participants to mention any comments or reflections worth sharing. Thus, each question addressed one of the themes of this study (Table 3.7). Prior to conducting online interviews via Zoom, the researcher illustrated the rationale behind the study to the participants.

Table 3.7

Themes and Question Numbers

Themes	Question Numbers
Students' Perceptions of Academic Writing Quality	1,2,3,4

Students' Perceptions of Writing 5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16

Assessment

Writing Task

The participants were asked to write an essay of at least a 250-word essay. The writing prompt was similar to the prompts given to the students in their classes. To ensure that the writing prompt was convenient for all the participants from both language programs, the writing genres and themes were reviewed to ensure that the writing prompt addressed themes similar to those the students had been exposed to. Care was also taken to select a topic the students would find authentic. Moreover, the students could easily elaborate on and address their interest at the same time. Accordingly, the writing prompt was an independent writing task, and the students were required to write an argumentative essay on whether they agreed or disagreed that face-to-face communication is better than other types of communication (Appendix D). A holistic rubric was used by two raters, who are experienced ESL writing teachers, to assess the quality of the students' writing. The first rater was the researcher. The second rater was informed of the study purpose and discussed the descriptors of the holistic rubric TOEFL IBT at Educational Testing Service (ETS) (Appendix I), which was selected because the rubric addresses the global essay characteristics (such as content, organization of ideas, and development) more than the local essay features (such as mechanics, sentence structure and punctuation).

Despite the literature favoring integrated writing tasks over independent ones, an independent task was used in the current study because it is less complex and requires less time than the integrated ones. The argumentative writing genre was chosen to give the students an opportunity to express their points of view by taking a specific stance based on reasoning.

Furthermore, this writing topic was authentic since it represented people's present-day circumstances; thus, the students could truly reflect on and thoroughly present their arguments. The writing quality of the meaningful argumentative writing produced by the participants was considered an indicator of achieving academic success at the university, as shown in some studies (Gesier & Studley, 2002; Korbin et al., 2008). Twelve writing samples were collected, six of them were from the interviewees and the other six were collected from questionnaire respondents.

Piloting Results

The researcher selected three students who represented both language programs at AUC. During the piloting phase, all three students mentioned that the "writing task was interesting and enjoyable, and they could easily write and elaborate on such a topic." With regard to the interview questions, the students stated that all the interview questions were easy to comprehend and discuss. They also thought that the interview questions could encourage them to elaborate on their views and conceptions easily. The students were asked if they thought the interview had too many questions, but they responded that the questions were quite interesting and confirmed they did not feel bored while reading the questions. The students also expressed that they were excited to respond to these questions because they were "very engaging". Therefore, these instruments did not require any amendments. In contrast, these students stated that four items of the questionnaire were not easy to comprehend. Therefore, two items were modified, and the other two items were eliminated from the questionnaire. The piloting phase is significant because it provides the researcher with valuable insights from the participants to refine the data collection instruments used in the study. Also, piloting provides the researcher with an opportunity to

assess the tools before using them in the research project. Based on the feedback received from the participants of this study, the following lessons were learnt from the pilot study:

- The researcher had the opportunity to rehearse and develop her interviewing skills.
- The participants of the pilot study suggested eliminating few items as they were not fully understood by the participants
- There was a possibility that the interview might be of long duration for the participants. However, they mentioned that the interview questions were interesting
- It was crucial to pilot the writing prompt to ensure that participants have not responded to the same exact prompt before in their writing courses

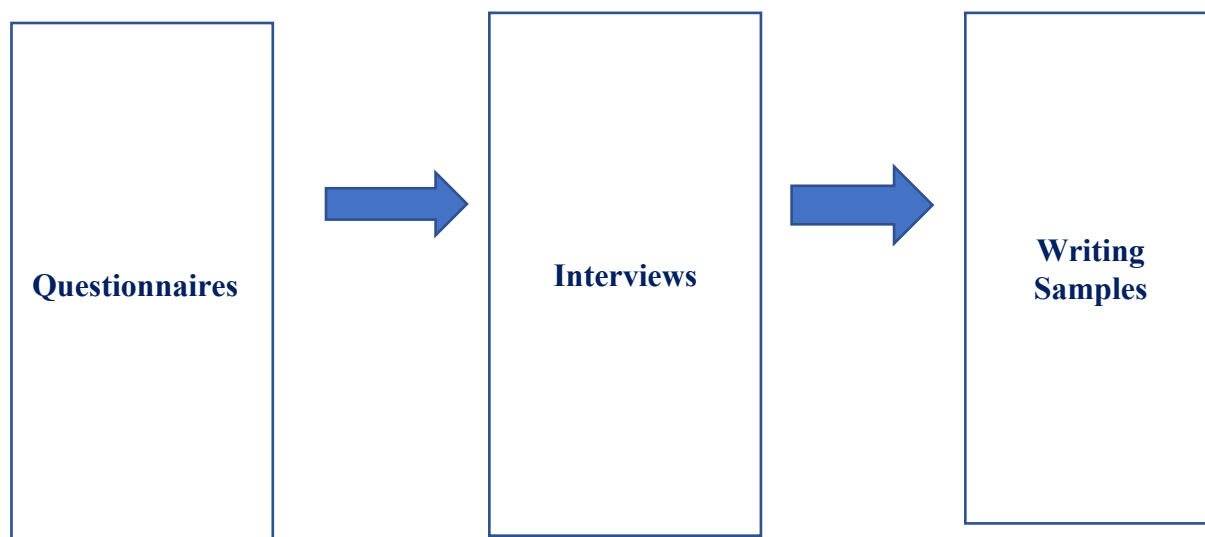
Data Collection Procedures

Upon gaining IRB approval, the data collection occurred during the middle of the spring semester of 2021. First, the researcher initiated a piloting phase by giving a draft of the questionnaire and the writing task to the students; then the required amendments were implemented in response to the students' feedback to ensure the validity of the instruments. Second, the participants were asked via the consent form included in the questionnaire if they were interested in being interviewed, and in writing on a specific writing topic. Finally, the researcher collected the writing samples from the participants. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the questionnaire was administered online via Google Forms and sent to the participants via emails. They were then uploaded on the university's Facebook group, entitled "Rate AUC Professors," in which students from different disciplines exchange their academic experiences. Unfortunately, very few responses were received even after sending several gentle reminders and

uploading it several times on this group. Therefore, the researcher started to send each participant a separate email. Although this was a time-consuming process, the responses increased from 32 till 73 responses. Regarding the writing task, there were no responses at the beginning of the process; therefore, the researcher created an online research flyer to be sent to each student individually (Appendix J). This was also a time-consuming task, but 12 writing samples were eventually collected: six writing samples were from the participants who previously participated in the questionnaires and the interviews, and the remaining writing samples were from those who had participated earlier in the questionnaire, but not the interviews.

Figure 3.1

Data Collection Procedures



Ethical Considerations

The IRB ethical considerations were applied in the current study. First, the researcher illustrated the purpose of the study to the participants via emails. Afterward, the interested participants were asked to sign the consent form to indicate their voluntary participation. Second, the researcher ensured the confidentiality, privacy and anonymity of the participants using

pseudonyms and by keeping all their data in protected files. Furthermore, the researcher did not persist in obtaining data from the participants, especially as the data collection phase occurred in the middle of the participants' mid-term exams and other academic commitments. With regard to the participants, some of them have did not sign the consent form, while others sent their writing samples using a different writing prompt, which has been one of the required graded assignments of their writing courses. The researcher apologized politely to these participants and informed them that they could not participate in this research project with these writing samples. Consequently, the data of these participants was eliminated from the sample of the study.

Data Analysis Procedures

The entire data analysis process was divided into three phases including: (a) descriptive statistics for the questionnaires, (b) qualitative analysis of the interview transcriptions, and (c) scoring the collected writing samples. Each data collection instrument was analyzed separately and then synthesized together to answer both research questions. In order to analyze the data obtained from each instrument, specific theoretical frameworks were used. They are described below.

Questionnaires

IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 27 — a software program that is utilized for analyzing statistical data in social sciences (Bala ,2016) — was used for analyzing the data obtained from the questionnaires through descriptive statistics represented in the mean and the standard deviation (SD).

Interviews

This study employed multiple frameworks. The first followed Strauss and Corbin's (1998) analysis of interview transcriptions. The second followed the methods of Creswell and Clark

(2006, 2011). The rationale behind selecting these two frameworks was that the first framework could analyze the students' perceptions, while the second could assess the remainder of the questions addressing the writing quality and writing assessment. According to the literature, Zhang (2020) used the former framework to investigate how L2 Chinese students perceived the impact of automated writing evaluation (AWE) on their revision, showing that the students focused on AWE's merits rather than its pitfalls. The latter framework was previously used by Mazgutova and Hanks (n.d.) for analyzing their interviews to investigate undergraduate students' perceptions of L2 academic writing strategies in a British university.

Content analysis was applied to the interview transcripts using Braun and Clarke's (2006) framework. These researchers claimed that content analysis is a useful tool for investigating different research interviewees, and for identifying the similarities and differences between the respondents' views. Since the scope of this study mainly concerned students' perceptions, this framework was applied while analyzing the interviews' transcripts. During the first phase, the interview data was read line-by-line and assigned different patterns. In the second phase, these patterns were then analyzed and categorized into groups. For example, a primary code "I prefer" or "it helps me" or "it is useful" was identified in the students' interviews; this revealed the students' perceptions, categorized as "positive perceptions" while examining the students' perceptions of writing quality and writing assessment. The analysis (Creswell & Clark, 2011) was used for coding the interviews through the application of thematic analysis by applying the following procedures. First, the pawing or eyeballing technique (Bernard, 2000) which required reading the transcripts at least two to three times to become familiar with the data and highlighting the themes and subthemes with different markers, underlining keywords, and drawing arrows and lines to refer to several meanings (Bryman, 2003; Ryan & Bernard, 2003).

Subsequently, searching for patterns and trends took place (Appendix C contains an example of what was employed in this study). The criteria for selecting themes were as follows: repetition of phrases and keywords, unexpected responses, themes contrary to expectations, and themes opposed to previous literature.

Writing Task

Having collected the writing samples, the initial step involved identifying all the errors in these samples. These writing features will be evaluated from raters, by removing feedback types and focusing on “error type” for the purpose of coding the participants’ errors according to the holistic rubric used in the study. The writing samples (Appendix I) were assigned an average score by two raters according to the ETS TOEFL iBT holistic rubric of independent task. A Ph.D. candidate at Cairo University volunteered to be the second coder for the interview transcripts as well as scoring the writing samples.

Conclusion

This chapter presented the research design, participants, data collection procedures, and instruments employed in this study as well as the participants of the study. The following chapter presents the results of the data analysis obtained via the instruments used in the study: questionnaires, interviews and writing samples. They reveal the students’ perceptions of L2 academic writing quality and their perceptions of writing assessment.

Chapter 4

Results

Introduction

The data analysis of this project aimed to address the following research questions:

- What are the students' perceptions of L2 academic writing quality?
- What are the students' perceptions of writing assessment?

Therefore, this chapter reports the results of the study in light of the order of these research questions.

First Research Question: What are the students' perceptions of their academic writing quality?

The first research question of the study investigates how university undergraduate students perceive their academic writing quality. To answer this question, the results of the questionnaire, interviews and writing task addressing the participants' perceptions of academic writing are discussed in the following section.

Quantitative analysis was used in this study in the form of questionnaire data to answer the first research question. Seventy-three respondents participated in the online questionnaire administered via google forms. Qualitative data analysis was employed in this study through six semi-structured interviews and 12 writing samples. The questionnaires were analyzed through descriptive statistics, including the mean and the SD of the questionnaire items. The interview data was categorized into themes. Meanwhile, the writing samples were assigned average scores after being graded by two raters following the rubric descriptors of the TOEFL

iBT independent writing rubric. The issues addressed in this rubric include task fulfilment, organization, coherence, and language use.

Several questionnaire items tapped into the students' perceptions of different themes, such as the fulfilment of task requirements, writing topics, writing strategies and the development of writing skills. Furthermore, there is a specific emphasis on paraphrasing, summarizing, appropriate academic writing style, the extent of the participants' thoughts about good writers, and whether they enjoyed working on writing tasks, which were entirely categorized under L2 academic writing quality.

Figure 4.1

Data Triangulation

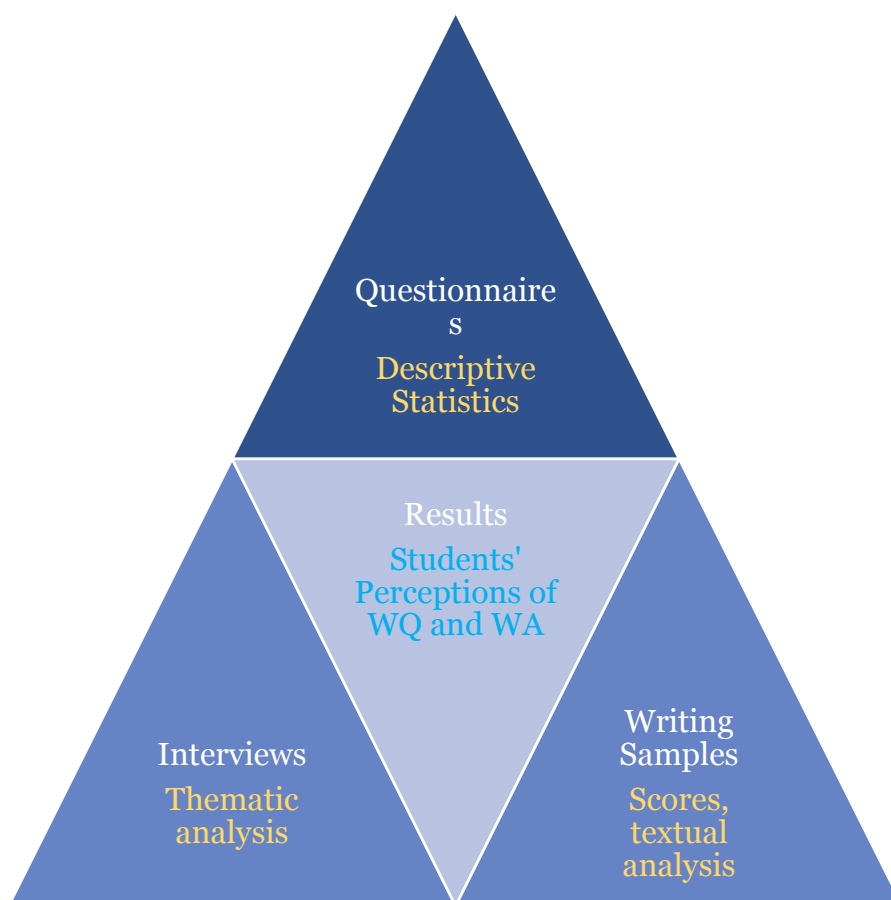


Table 4.1*Descriptive Statistics of Questionnaire Items*

Item	No	Mean	SD
1. I understand the requirements of the writing tasks assigned by professors.	73	3.89	.826
2. I usually achieve what I have been asked while writing.	73	3.75	.795
3. I find the topics of my writing classes interesting to work on.	73	3.42	.971
4. I usually brainstorm and outline before and during writing.	73	3.64	1.135
5. My professor guides me to overcome my writing challenges.	73	3.75	1.077
6. I consider myself a good writer.	73	3.29	.920
7. I can write the main parts of the essays such as introduction, body and conclusion appropriately.	73	4.21	.942

8. I can produce relevant content to the writing task required.	73	4.01	.790
9. I can write using correct grammar.	73	3.47	.647
10. I can use an appropriate academic writing style.	73	3.97	.745
11. I can organize my ideas while writing in coherent paragraphs.	73	3.96	.904
12. I can support or refute arguments/claims while writing.	73	3.92	.862
13. I can summarize ideas from sources.	73	3.99	.790
14. I can paraphrase ideas from sources.	73	4.30	.758
15. I am confident that I can format references accurately using APA.	73	3.27	1.146
16. I use ideas and examples from external readings in my writing.	73	3.79	.912
17. Due to workload pressure, I sometimes copy from external	73	1.90	1.043

texts without giving credit to authors.			
18. I express my ideas clearly in writing.	73	3.75	.830
19. I go back to my writing to revise the content and make my ideas clearer.	73	3.92	.997
20. I go back to my writing to edit my language.	73	4.03	.912
21. I almost give equal attention to both the language and the content when writing.	73	3.81	.981
22. I enjoy working on writing tasks.	73	2.93	1.251
23. I can develop my writing skills independently.	73	4.30	.701
24. Assessment plays an important role in writing classes.	73	4.22	.932
25. Assessment informs me with my writing needs.	73	4.00	.898

26. Assessment helps me improve my writing ability.	73	4.041	.840
27. Assessment results are trustworthy.	73	3.49	1.04
28. Writing is best integrated with other skills such as reading and listening.	73	4.08	.846
29. I focus on feedback from my teacher not the grade.	73	3.88	1.040
30. I understand the comments I receive from my teacher.	73	4.11	.891
31. The teacher informs me how to improve my writing ability.	73	3.88	1.013
32. I can evaluate my own writing.	73	3.08	.968
33. Feedback I receive from my colleagues is usually negative.	73	2.36	.856
34. My teacher showed me how to critically assess my own work.	73	3.16	1.014

35. In my opinion, writing errors are valuable learning opportunities.	73	4.18	.822
36. I think more grades should be assigned to the content of the essay rather than to correct language.	73	3.42	1.290
37. Feedback should be given only by the teacher.	73	3.21	1.166
38. Feedback motivates me to exert more effort in my writing.	73	4.19	.861
39. Feedback given by other students is useful for me.	73	3.48	.944
40. Feedback improves my writing ability.	73	4.37	.736
41. The instructor usually shares the scoring criteria/rubric with me before working on the writing task.	73	4.19	.844

Students' Perceptions of L2 Academic Writing Quality

There are different vital aspects that are categorized under the perceptions of students' writing quality, such as students' experience as writers, their attitudes toward writing, and features of meaningful academic writing from the students' perceptions, and writing strategies including both effective and ineffective strategies. Furthermore, writing challenges, academic writing style entailing language, and the content are addressed, with a specific emphasis on uncovering how students think of source-based writing. The following sub-sections report the results of these themes.

Students as Academic Writers. Students have several views about themselves as writers. In Table 4.2, the descriptive statistics, which consist of the mean and the SD of the items related to students' views on writing, are revealed. As shown in Table 4.2, item 6 holds a mean of 3.29, meaning that some students consider themselves as good writers. The students' ability to compose the main parts of the essays — introduction, body, and conclusion — hold the highest mean among other items, which is 4.21, showing an apparent variation in its distribution. On the other hand, the students slightly agreed that they could achieve relevance while responding to the writing task required. Since the mean is 4.01, the data is clustered, and there is no variation in this item. The students' ability to utilize grammar appropriately holds an average mean of 3.47, which can be interpreted as students' slight agreement on applying correct grammar while writing.

Table 4.2

Descriptive Statistics of Students as Academic Writers

Item	Mean	SD
------	------	----

6. I consider myself a good writer.	3.29	.920
7. I can write the main parts of the essays such as introduction, body, conclusion appropriately.	4.21	.942
8. I can produce relevant content to the writing task required.	4.01	.790
9. I can write using correct grammar.	3.47	.647

Interview data was the second type of self-reported data, which added significant depth to the results of the study. The primary purpose of the interview data collected was to gain insights into how the students viewed themselves as writers, this concerned writing tasks, writing strategies, and the features of meaningful academic writing. Furthermore, the data obtained from the interviews uncovered the students' perceptions of writing assessment, encompassing some of its key aspects; grades, LOA, rubrics, source materials, and some types of feedback.

The results of the interview data revealed that both ELI and RHET participants viewed themselves as mid-range writers capable of developing their writing quality due to attending academic writing courses in the university setting. This is in contrast to their experience with ineffective writing instruction during their high school or General Secondary Education Certificate (Thanaweya Amma); where writing was the least prioritized among other subjects in high school. For instance, Taha did not view himself as a good writer in high school. However, once he started taking his first English class at the university, he recognized that his academic

writing progressed. Saja, the second participant, perceived herself as a mid-range writer since she knew the structure and genres of the essays. She was capable of organizing her ideas to make them sufficiently clear. She also revealed her awareness of the need to enhance three writing elements: writing style, content and language emphasizing sentence structure.

Notably, Ahmed, not only did he perceive himself as a good writer who exerted effort for developing his writing quality, he also viewed writing as an authentic tool for reflecting on his real-life situations, especially with regard to writing essays since they often required elaboration on these real-life events. The fourth participant, Leila perceived herself as a developing writer who attempted to improve the content and word choice. The fifth participant, Mohamed thought that he was a good writer. In contrast to these participants who viewed themselves as good or mid-range writers, the sixth participant —Mahmoud— reported that he did not perceive himself as a writer. Additionally, he worked on his writing assignments for the sole purpose of fulfilling the requirements of the assignment. Hence, most participants viewed themselves as writers keen on developing their writing skills; each showed an awareness of the aspects they need to enhance. Only one participant out of the six participants perceived himself as a mid-range writer. Furthermore, he expressed his disinterest and demotivation in developing his writing ability.

This sub-section starts by showing the themes and the sub-themes that emerged from the data obtained from the interviews. This is followed by providing a detailed report on the themes, revealing the level of alignment with the results of the questionnaire data previously mentioned. Table 4.3 shows multiple themes and sub-themes relevant to the students' perceptions of their writing quality.

Table 4.3*Students' Perceptions of their Academic Writing Quality*

Theme	Sub-theme/ Category
1.Exams	IELTS
2.Academic Setting	High school versus university
3. Students as Writers	- writing experience - writing attitude -credibility -professionalism
4. Writing Features	-content -organization (main parts of the essay: introduction, body, conclusion, topic sentence and thesis statement) -coherence and relevance -grammar, strong word choice
5. Writing Development	-awareness -practice -progress -success

	-time
6. Writing Sources	-Internet
	-Google Scholar
7. Writing Courses	-writing beliefs
	-writing experience
8. Writing Strategies	-brainstorming
	-mapping
	-outlining
	-free writing
9. Source-based writing	-helpful
	-distracting
	-complicated
	-plagiarism
	-examples
	-quotes
	-citation
10. Writing Approaches	-product

	-process
11. Writing Enjoyment	-comprehension
	-application
12. Writing Challenges	-fear
	-difficult
	-time-consuming

Students' Attitudes Toward Academic Writing. As revealed in Table 4.4, the descriptive statistics of learner's autonomy has a mean of 4.30, which signifies that the majority of the participants thought that they could enhance their writing quality. Moreover, there is a high variation for this specific item.

Table 4.4

Descriptive Statistics of Students' Attitudes Toward Academic Writing

Item	Mean	SD
23. I can develop my writing skills independently.	4.30	.701

Students' Perceptions of Writing Features. As shown in Table 4.5, language editing has the highest mean (mean = 4.03), followed by the organization and coherence of ideas (mean = 3.96). The participants paid equal attention to language and content (mean = 3.81). This is followed by the lowest mean among the other items, which is related to expressing ideas showing clarity in writing, (mean = 3.75), emphasizing that the majority of the students prioritized editing their

language over other writing aspects, such as the organization of ideas, coherence and clarity, language and content. Notably, Table 4.5 reveals that the participants believed that language and content were more significant than expressing their ideas.

Table 4.5

Descriptive Statistics of Students' Perceptions of Writing Features

Item	Mean	SD
11. I can organize my ideas while writing in coherent paragraphs.	3.96	.904
18. I express my ideas clearly in writing.	3.75	.830
19. I go back to my writing to revise the content and make my ideas clearer.	3.92	.997
20. I go back to my writing to edit my language.	4.03	.912
21. I give almost equal attention to both the language and the content when writing.	3.81	.918

Table 4.5 concerns the questionnaire items that addressed the participants' views on their writing quality, with regard to fulfilling writing features. Item 20 has the highest mean (mean = 4.03), meaning that the participants edited their language after writing among the other items. The organization of ideas is followed by language editing; its mean is 3.96. The participants perceived revising the content and clarifying the ideas as more important than language and content. The mean of item 19 is 3.92.

Students' Writing Strategies. As shown in table 4.6, different writing strategies, such as brainstorming and outlining hold a mean of 3.64, emphasizing that the participants slightly agreed that they used these writing strategies.

Table 4.6

Descriptive Statistics of Students' Writing Strategies

Item	Mean	SD
4. I usually brainstorm and outline before and during writing.	3.64	1.135

Students' Writing Challenges. As revealed in Table 4.7 item 5 holds a mean of 3.75, emphasizing that the participants slightly agreed that their professors helped them overcome their writing challenges.

Table 4.7

Descriptive Statistics of Students' Writing Challenges

Item	Mean	SD
5. My professor guides me to overcome my writing challenges.	3.75	1.077

Students' Academic Writing Style. As shown in Table 4.8, item 10 has the highest mean (mean = 3.97) signifying that the participants utilized appropriate academic writing styles. Moreover,

the descriptive statistics of this table shows that the participants were better at using academic writing styles than at formatting references using APA. Item 17, which has been calculated through reverse scoring as it is considered a negative item, holds the lowest mean, 1.95, signifying that most of the participants provide credit to authors even when they have much workload, which is completely impressive because the participants are strongly aware of the academic integrity while working on their writing. The mean of item 15 is 3.27.

Table 4.8

Descriptive Statistics of Students' Style of Academic Writing Style

Item	Mean	SD
10. I can use an appropriate academic writing style.	3.97	.745
15. I am confident that I can format references accurately using APA.	3.27	1.146
17. Due to workload pressure, I sometimes copy from external texts without giving credit to authors.	1.90	1.043

Students' Views of Source-based Writing. As revealed in Table 4.9, item 14 holds the highest mean (mean= 4.30), emphasizing that the participants could paraphrase ideas from sources, among other writing skills such as supporting arguments, summarizing, and giving examples from external sources. Surprisingly, the students viewed paraphrasing as easier than summarizing. The mean of summarizing ideas from sources is 3.99. Item 16 has the lowest mean among the remaining items in Table 4.8. Supporting or refuting arguments has a higher mean (mean= 3.92) than external sources in writing (mean= 3.79).

Table 4.9*Descriptive Statistics of Students' Views of Source-based Writing*

Item	Mean	SD
12. I can support or refute arguments/claims while writing.	3.92	.862
13. I can summarize ideas from sources.	3.99	.790
14. I can paraphrase ideas from sources.	4.30	.758
16. I use ideas and examples from external readings in my writing,	3.79	.912

Writing Experience. With regard to one of the participants' writing experience, the results of the interview data revealed that the IELTS exam was perceived as an opportunity for improving the participant's writing quality. IELTS exam is one of the tests that students should take for university admission. According to the AUC website, students can choose to become either IELTS or TOEFL examinees, and they are enrolled in different language programs according to their scores in these exams. For instance, full admission requires a minimum of 5 as an overall IELTS band score and IELTS writing. This score makes students eligible to enroll in an English course entitled "English 98". With regard to TOEFL, students should obtain an average score of 48- 61 in TOEFL iBT, and an average score of 14-16 in TOEFL iBT writing. Students who obtain scores below these are not eligible for university admission. Thus, IELTS or TOEFL are high-stakes exams, which shape the future of the students. Focusing on the writing experience within the university setting, the aforementioned participant thought of his experience as an

opportunity to produce meaningful writing. Another participant related her writing experience to her awareness of the progress achieved in writing in terms of efficient response to the writing prompt; it also helped her with the production of relevant content focusing on aspects such as the organization of ideas, the layout of the entire essay, and distinguishing between the topic sentence and the thesis statement. This participant emphasized the necessity of developing her writing quality to become a more “professional” writer than she was at the time. Writing as an experience used to be challenging for another participant; it was difficult for him to produce meaningful academic pieces of writing, especially as he was visually-impaired. However, with the aid of technology, he could write meaningful essays after some practice. Another participant stressed the role of practice in changing her writing experience to become a positive experience instead of a negative one. Another participant mentioned that his writing experience was related to creating a “professional essay”, and different writing genres. Another participant viewed his writing experience as an assigned task that should be fulfilled.

Writing Attitudes. A mixture of writing attitudes emerged from the data obtained from the interviews. A participant linked writing to success; the process of how thoughts are put into action by being written on paper. Furthermore, writing was perceived as a tool for self-expression. In the same vein, another participant felt that writing saved time. In contrast, writing used to be one of the most intricate skills, which caused fear of the writing experience in the past. However, now, this participant could finish writing an entire essay in one hour. On the other hand, another participant thought that writing was time-consuming, and he did not like working on writing. A participant perceived writing as a means for one to vent their imagination. Surprisingly, this participant found writing to be a method of stress relief. Another response revealed that the participant thought that writing was enjoyable if she understood how to work on

the writing task. Moreover, she thought that writing was a “bit challenging for her.” Another participant stated that he loved writing more than other skills such as listening and reading because in his view, these skills were more complicated than writing.

The interview data also revealed that all the participants perceived themselves as “developing” writers. Some students perceived themselves as good writers while others viewed themselves as "moderate" writers. One participant even expressed he was a professional writer; the latter participant added that being a skilful writer meant possessing the ability to write in any writing genre.

One of the participants thought of academic writing as an opportunity to reflect on real-life situations, and a successful means for organizing thoughts and describing feelings. Some participants reported using several writing strategies such as planning, brainstorming, outlining, mind mapping, examples and quotations. Only a few participants expressed their confusion while using an outline, and others considered planning and outlining to be a “waste of time”. The interview data further revealed that most respondents believed that academic writing to be one of the most enjoyable skills; they preferred working on and developing it as compared to other language skills such as reading and listening. The participants also reported that academic writing courses changed their perceptions of writing. They perceived academic writing as one of the most challenging tasks at schools, and they thought that their writing skills would never be improved.

“Writing is a very successful way in order for people to achieve or to put their thoughts and thinking about something on a piece of paper or in a meaningful paper to describe their thoughts and feelings.” _ (Taha, participant 1)

In contrast, the interview data revealed that writing was perceived as an enjoyable, easy task at the university within the academic writing courses. Some participants illustrated the significant role of their teachers in changing their view of writing from a challenging task to an easy one. The participants also demonstrated some notable features of academic writing, such as coherence, relevance and organization—the latter including the central parts of an essay, i.e., introduction, body, conclusion, thesis statement and topic sentence at the beginning of the introduction and each body paragraph. In addition, they thought that grammar and word choice constituted the characteristics of academic writing.

In contrast, the interview data revealed that the average of the overall writing quality scores of the twelve writing samples was from 3-5 out of 5 based on the descriptors included in the TOEFL iBT holistic rubric. For instance, Taha — who perceived the significance of writing and is viewed himself as mid-range writer— obtained a score of 3/5 in the writing task. In contrast, Saja, — who perceived herself as a mid-range writer and a keen student who needed to exert due effort to develop her writing quality— obtained a score of 4.75/5 in the writing task.

L2 Academic Writing Features. The characteristics of academic writing were covered in several items in the questionnaire. Table 4.10 represents the descriptive statistics of how the students portrayed the interpretation of meaningful academic writing. As shown in the table, the students' perceptions regarding their writing quality in respect of the main parts of the essay has received the highest mean (mean =4.21).

Table 4.10*Descriptive Statistics of Students' Perceptions of L2 Academic Writing Features*

Item	Mean	SD
7.I can write the main parts of the essays such as introduction, body, conclusion appropriately	4.21	.942
8. I can produce relevant content to the writing task required.	4.01	.790
9. I can write using correct grammar.	3.47	.647

As revealed in Table 4.10, the highest mean exists in item 7 (mean = 4.21); hence the majority of the participants perceived themselves as capable of writing the main components of the essays appropriately. Coherence is the second item in Table 4.10, having a high mean (mean = 4.01). Surprisingly, the participants slightly agreed on using grammar correctly; its mean is 3.47, which is the lowest mean among the other items in the table.

The interview data revealed that the participants mainly viewed L2 academic writing features in terms of coherence, relevance, and organization of ideas. They also took into consideration paraphrasing and writing the central parts of the essay, i.e., introduction, body, and conclusion, emphasizing their ability to distinguish between the topic sentence and the thesis statement. Furthermore, the participants articulated some aspects that should be discarded while writing, such as redundancy. Content and grammar were highlighted by one of the participants as they constituted their definition of “appropriate” academic writing. Meanwhile, one participant added word choice as one of the writing features, and another emphasized the importance of writing the main parts of the essay.

The data obtained from the interviews regarding L2 academic writing features is aligned with the participants' writing samples. They clearly contained the main parts of the essay, with most paying particular attention to grammatical structures and word choice.

Effective Writing Strategies. The results obtained from the interview data showed that the students' writing strategies varied based on their language proficiency level. Although the proficiency level is not one of the main variables of this project, it apparently played a role in how the students perceived and selected writing strategies, which proved to be effective based on their writing experience. The majority of the RHET students reported that they followed a set of strategies to ensure efficient writing. The first writing strategy involved searching for writing samples on the internet and analyzing them in order to abide by that specific sample. Second, they would search for sources via Google Scholar, such as articles, extract some ideas or examples. They would then paraphrase them or summarize the main ideas to help them write on a specific topic. They sometimes extracted quotes as well, following the citation required, whether APA or MLA. Eventually, they awaited the teacher's feedback on their writing to enhance other essays. Furthermore, they sometimes monitored their progress throughout the semester, gaining some reflections and insights that could contribute to promoting their writing quality. Moreover, most of the advanced-level students reported that they perceived the traditional writing strategies— such as brainstorming, planning and outlining — as time-consuming, describing them as inefficient. According to two RHET participants, outlining could create confusion; therefore, advanced students preferred not applying these strategies. On the other hand, the intermediate or lower-level students preferred using different writing strategies, such as brainstorming, outlining or free-writing, in either in L1 or L2. Meanwhile, the advanced-level students employed different writing techniques. They tended to search for writing samples

via internet or YouTube to use as a model and to help them recognize the elements of appropriate writing. Another participant illustrated that efficient writing strategies could be carried out in a series of steps: reading the teacher's comments, monitoring her progress, and comprehending the procedures of writing academically according to the teacher's instructions. Additionally, following the teacher's recommendations was an effective strategy according to this participant. Free writing was one of the useful techniques that another participant followed; he stated that even using L1 could help him think of ideas relevant to the topic. Another participant mentioned that mind mapping and brainstorming were effective strategies. In contrast, outlining was considered an ineffective strategy due to the participant's confusion. Similarly, another participant perceived outlining as a useless technique. One participant restricted the effective strategies to just teacher's feedback, while another participant focused only on grammar. The latter also emphasized that planning was ineffective because when he started writing, all the ideas came to his mind.

Second Research Question: What are the students' perceptions of writing assessment?

The second research question of the study examines how students perceived the critical aspects of writing assessment, such as their assessment views in general. It focuses on writing assessment results in particular. Furthermore, this question investigates some issues related to LOA, i.e., how university students think of the writing assessment influences the development of their writing skills. Furthermore, writing assessment encompasses other aspects, such as task types, rubrics, the role of the professors and different types of feedback. The students' perceptions of these aspects are presented in this section.

The Critical Role of Assessment

As shown in Table 4.11, the participants strongly agreed on the significance of assessment in their writing classes, which holds the highest mean among the items in Table 4.10 (mean = 4.22). Item 26 taps into promoting the participants' writing quality through assessment, with this mean being 4.04. The participants strongly perceived the assessment to be a tool for providing crucial information about their writing needs, as revealed in Table 4.10. The mean of item 26 is 4.00, while item 27 holds the lowest mean (mean = 3.49).

Table 4.11

Descriptive Statistics of Students' Perceptions of the Role of Assessment

Item	Mean	SD
24. Assessment plays an important role in writing classes.	4.22	.932
25. Assessment informs me with my writing needs.	4.00	.898
26. Assessment helps me improve my writing ability.	4.04	.841
27. Assessment results are trustworthy.	3.49	1.042

Students' Perceptions of Assessment Tools Within the Instructional Context

As revealed in Table 4.12, item 1 holds the highest mean of 3.89, signifying that the participants agreed on the first item more than the rest of the items in the table. The participants slightly agreed on the second item, which has a mean of 3.75. Furthermore, it is evident that

participants found the writing topics interesting to work on in their writing classes. However, they did not enjoy working on the entire writing task, as the table reveals that the mean of item 3 (mean =3.42) is lower than the mean of item 22 (Mean= 2.93).

Table 4.12

Descriptive Statistics of Students' Perceptions of Assessment Tools

Item	Mean	SD
1. I understand the requirements of the writing tasks assigned by professors.	3.89	.826
2. I usually achieve what I have been asked while writing.	3.75	.795
3. I find the topics of my writing classes interesting to work on.	3.42	.971
22. I enjoy working on writing tasks.	2.93	1.251

Students' Views of Integrated Assessment

As shown in Table 4.13, the participants agreed on integrating writing with other receptive skills. The mean of item 28 is 4.08.

Table 4.13*Descriptive Statistics of Students' Views of Integrated Assessment*

Item	Mean	SD
28. Writing is best integrated with other skills such as reading and listening.	4.08	.846

Students' Perceptions of LOA

Table 4.14 illustrates the respondents' perceptions of LOA. They strongly believed that feedback was essential in enhancing their writing quality, as item 40 holds the highest mean (mean= 4.37). Furthermore, the participants became motivated to work harder on their writing when receiving feedback. As revealed in the table, item 38 holds a mean of 4.19. There is a very slight difference in the participants' agreement level between items 35 and 38. Item 35 holds a Mean of 4.18. The results of items 35 and 38 are aligned, meaning that the participants viewed their writing errors as valuable learning experiences. They learned from the feedback they received and developed their writing quality accordingly. Item 26 holds a mean of 4.04, signifying the participants' beliefs that assessment had a crucial role in developing their writing quality and in informing them of their writing needs. The mean of item 25 is 4.00, while item 31 holds the lowest mean of 3.88.

Table 4.14*Descriptive Statistics of Students' Perceptions of LOA*

Item	Mean	SD
25. Assessment informs me with my writing needs.	4.00	.898
26. Assessment helps me improve my writing ability.	4.04	.841
31. The teacher informs me how to improve my writing ability.	3.88	1.013
35. In my opinion, writing errors are valuable learning opportunities.	4.18	.822
38. Feedback motivates me to exert more effort in my writing.	4.19	.861
40. Feedback improves my writing ability.	4.37	.736

Grades

Table 4.15 reveals the participants' views on the trustworthiness of the assessment results and how grades should be assigned in writing essays. The mean of item 27 (mean= 3.49) is slightly higher than that of item 36 (mean = 3.42), meaning that a higher level of agreement regarding the trustworthiness of assessment results among participants is obtained.

Table 4.15*Descriptive Statistics of Grades*

Item	Mean	SD
27. Assessment results are trustworthy.	3.49	1.042
36. I think more grades should be assigned to the content of the essay rather than to correct language.	3.42	1.290

Rubrics

As shown in Table 4.16, the respondents strongly agreed that their instructors shared the scoring rubrics before the students started working on the assigned writing task. The mean of item 41 — the final item of the questionnaire — is 4.19, signifying that there is no variation in this item.

Table 4.16*Descriptive Statistics of Rubrics*

Item	Mean	SD
41. The instructor usually shares the scoring rubric/criteria with me before working on the writing task.	4.19	.844

Feedback Significance

Table 4.17 reveals the respondents' perceptions of feedback. The participants believed that feedback enhanced their writing quality. This is shown in the mean of item 40, (mean = 4.37), which is slightly higher than the mean of item 38 (Mean= 4.19).

Table 4.17

Descriptive Statistics of Feedback Significance

Item	Mean	SD
38.Feedback motivates to exert more effort in my writing	4.19	.861
40.Feedback improves my writing ability.	4.37	.736

Table 4.18 shows the participants' perceptions of grades and feedback. This is shown in the mean of the item 29, (mean = 3.88), which is lower than items 38 and 30 of Table 4.17.

Table 4.18

Descriptive Statistics of Grades and Feedback

Item	Mean	SD
29. I focus on feedback from my teacher not the grade.	3.88	1.040

Types of Feedback

Table 4.19 illustrates the respondents' views on different feedback types, such as teacher's feedback, peer-feedback, and self-assessment. Item 30, which taps into teacher's feedback, has the highest Mean (mean = 4.11), signifying that the participants strongly agreed that they comprehended teachers' comments. Furthermore, participants believed that the teacher should be the sole source of feedback, as revealed in the mean of item 37 (mean = 3.21). The participants slightly agreed that they learned how to critically assess their work from their teachers. As revealed in Table 4.19, item 34 holds a mean of 3.16. The participants slightly perceived the usefulness of peer-feedback. As shown below, the lowest mean (mean = 2.36) is for item 33, emphasizing that the participants did not receive negative comments from their peers. Meanwhile, for item 39, the mean is 3.48.

Table 4.19

Descriptive Statistics of Feedback Types

Item	Mean	SD
30.I understand the comments I receive from my teacher.	4.11	.891
32.I can evaluate my own writing.	3.08	.968
33.Feedback I receive from my colleagues is usually negative.	2.36	.856
34.My teacher showed me how to critically assess my own work.	3.16	1.014
37.Feedback should be given only by the teacher.	3.21	1.166

39. Feedback given by other students is useful for me.	3.48	.944
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Instructor's Role

Table 4.20 emphasizes the participants' conceptions of the instructor's role in writing classes. The participants strongly agreed that the instructors shared the scoring rubric with them before they started working on the writing task. As revealed in item 41, the mean is 4.19. The participants also confirmed that their teachers showed them how to enhance their writing quality. The mean of item 31 is 3.88. The participants slightly agreed that they learnt how to critically their work from their teachers. The mean of item 34 is 3.16.

Table 4.20

Descriptive Statistics of Students' Conceptions of the Instructor's Role

Item	Mean	SD
5. My professor guides me to overcome my writing challenges	3.75	1.077
31. The teacher informs me how to improve my writing ability.	3.88	1.013
34. My teacher showed me how to critically assess my own work.	3.16	1.014
41. The instructor usually shares the scoring criteria/rubric with me before working on the writing task.	4.19	.844

Table 4.21*Students' Perceptions of Writing Assessment*

Theme	Sub-theme/ category
Writing assessment	Grades, rubrics, LOA, feedback types
Grades	Very high, low
LOA	Pressure Assessment significance
Feedback	Teacher's feedback Peer feedback (opinions, inefficient Self - assessment
Rubrics	Informative Task fulfilment High grades
Writing Assessment Authenticity	Topic, integrated writing
Integrated writing	Citing sources MLA/ APA Plagiarism

	Students' writing credibility
Professors	Impact and LOA
Students' WA suggestions	Writing assessment Writing prompt Time

The interview data revealed that the participants viewed writing assessment to be "very helpful and useful." It allowed them to achieve progress and enhance their writing skills. One participant reported that assessment was a subjective process. Therefore, assessment differed from one teacher to another. The participants believed in the significance of grades as they revealed their writing quality. Moreover, the participants thought that they always received the grades they deserved. The interview data also showed that the participants thought of grades as an indicator of their writing quality.

One participant discussed how she changed her perception of grades and feedback; this participant used to be attentive to grades and their impact on the GPA, and considered feedback to be unnecessary. However, later on, feedback became more critical than grades. All the participants emphasized the significance and the trustworthiness of the feedback received from their teachers. The participants elaborated that they had always found their professor's feedback beneficial and that they consistently applied such feedback to enhance their writing skills through working on multiple writing drafts. However, the students found peer feedback to be ineffective and useless, as they became confused and did not understand what they were supposed to do, due to lack of instructions inside the classroom. As shown in the following interview transcripts, the participants relied only on teacher's feedback; they were not convinced

that their peers could provide useful feedback to them since they were in the same class and age range and had similar level of experience. Moreover, when the participants attempted to obtain peer feedback, they found their peers only gave them the feedback because of academic obligation, not because they wanted to help their fellow students. Furthermore, the participants gave "general comments" about their classmates' writing as they do not know how to give effective feedback to their peers.

“In my opinion, peer feedback is not beneficial because my colleagues have their own thoughts about what they are doing and also I have my own thought about what I am doing so we are not matching together. _” (Mohamed, Participant 3)

“Actually, I am not a professor, so I do not know what is right and what is not so I give my colleagues feedback in general. – “(Taha, Participant 1)

Concerning self-assessment, the interview data showed that the participants perceived self-assessment differently; nevertheless, they all reported that they did not know how to evaluate their own writing. One of the participants wished to know how to assess their writing. Another one responded that if he/she received the assessment criteria, he/she would assess the writing production. Another participant perceived self-assessment as comprising only proofreading. While this participant proofread his writing, he corrected the writing errors in his work. Hence, he perceived this process as assessing his writing ability. Furthermore, one participant argued that self-assessment would not be beneficial as the participant could only correct spelling mistakes. There was an inability to update the content because it represented the participant's knowledge.

“Actually, if I get a writing criteria, I can self-assess my writing.” (Taha, Participant 1)

Regarding rubrics, the participants viewed them as very useful and a tool for better understanding the writing task requirements. One participant explained that whenever the instructions were confusing or ambiguous, the participant refers back to the rubric to gain a better understanding of them. Two contradictory views were presented by other participants. One viewed rubric as a tool for developing critical thinking skills; whereas, the other participant expressed the confusion at receiving a rubric. The latter was incapable of comprehending the rationale behind using a specific rubric for the writing tasks despite being in the fourth semester at the university.

“Rubric is one of the effective and essential source for the students.” (Saja, Participant 2)

*“This is my fourth semester, and I still can’t understand any of the rubric that I see in my life”
(Leila, Participant 4)*

Writing prompts, time, pressure and the participants' suggestions were the four new themes that emerged from the data. The majority of the participants commented on the significant role of writing prompts and their impact on their writing performance. Furthermore, the participants linked “interesting topics” with “successful writing.” When they were asked about their most successful writing assignments and the reasons for their success in these, they responded that the topic was interesting to them. For instance, one participant explained that if the writing prompt addresses their interests, they exerted effort in writing about the topic. Consequently, higher grades were obtained. On the contrary, if the writing prompt was “boring” or if the participants are not knowledgeable enough about the topic, such as “nuclear weapons,” they did not perform well. Furthermore, the participants expressed the need to be assigned writing tasks that were relevant to their majors. “More serious and more readable topics” was a need expressed by one of the participants. This participant elaborated on the importance of the

writing prompt addressing the students' interests and of eliminating some writing prompts, such as "stress," "pressure," and "nutrition." Another participant added that any prompt related to "politics" or "economy" was not favored by the students. Therefore, such topics should be eliminated and replaced with "inclusive education, films, fictional characters or sports including football." In addition, participants linked "interesting topics" with "successful writing." When they were asked about the most successful writing assignments and the reasons for their success in these writing assignments, in particular, they responded that the topic was interesting to them.

Students' Messages to Writing Instructors

Among the new themes that emerged from the interview data, time, pressure, practice and the participants' suggestions remain to be addressed. Some participants mentioned time in a twofold manner. They perceived time as an essential factor in their writing progress or development. On the other hand, they perceived time as a stressful factor as well. Time placed the participants under pressure when they were assigned a specific writing assignment without ample time to work on it. Accordingly, participants felt stressed, which negatively influenced their writing quality. Pressure originated from two aspects: (a) lack of time to work on the writing task and (b) the writing topic if it did not engage the participants' interest or was inconvenient with regard to the students' knowledge. The majority of the participants commented on the essence of practice and its role in developing their writing quality. Some participants shared their insights regarding two aspects: peer feedback and writing prompts. They recommended eliminating peer feedback since the professor's feedback was efficient and effective in contrast to peer feedback. Another recommendation related to writing prompts was that students should be provided with two writing prompts instead of one, as this could allow the students to choose the most convenient one, leading to less pressure. The students' final

suggestion was related to teachers' feedback. Since the students mainly relied on their teachers' feedback, they recommended receiving feedback on all the assigned writing instead of only selected ones. They recommended that teachers avoid delaying their feedback because students need to make use of it in the upcoming writing tasks.

Writing Prompts and Writing Tasks

Writing prompts are one of the aspects that the current study investigated to answer the first research question. In this section, the results obtained from the questionnaire and the interviews are reported. Then, the results of the interview data regarding writing tasks are discussed. As indicated in Table 4.22, the mean of item number 3 of the questionnaire is 3.42 while the SD of this item is .971. Hence, the respondents agreed that the writing topics were interesting to work on.

Table 4.22

Descriptive Statistics of Students' Views on Writing Prompts

Item	Mean	SD
3. I find the topics of my writing classes interesting to work on.	3.42	.971

The results of the interview data showed that five out of six participants enjoyed writing. One of the participants stated that he loved writing on any topic while emphasizing his preference for writing on "more readable" topics, meaning "the ones people are interested in".

For instance, he preferred writing on topics related to inclusive education. This participant also mentioned the topics that were least preferable for him to write on, such as “stress” or “pressure.” Only one participant reported complete lack of enjoyment regarding writing prompts because he could not link the themes covered in RHET with his engineering major due to their irrelevance. Thus, he did not enjoy writing.

With regard to the writing tasks assigned to the participants in the writing classes, examining the extent to which it showed the participants’ writing quality, the interview data revealed that one of the participants thought of writing tasks as “helpful”, whereas another one thought that the writing tasks strongly revealed her writing ability due to the exposure to different academic writing genres such as reflection papers, summary, and essay. Another participant mentioned that writing tasks showed his writing quality at some times but not at others. Reflecting on writing assignments, this participant elaborated that the writing topics of the last semester did not appeal to him. Consequently, his writing quality was negatively influenced, and he received lower grades. In contrast, in the current semester, he wrote on topics which addressed his interest; therefore, he could efficiently reflect on them, which positively impacted his writing quality. He received higher grades as a consequence.

In the same vein, another participant expressed that if the writing task was enjoyable, the participant would be encouraged to exert effort while working on the writing task. Another participant thought that the nature of the writing task was mainly linked to the guidelines that could help understand the task requirements. Therefore, the task was easy if the participant was fully sure of the task requirements. Accordingly, the participant viewed the task as complicated if the information provided was insufficient.

Conclusion

The purpose of the following chapter is to discuss the results of this chapter by illustrating how these results may contribute to the field of L2 writing assessment. In addition, different educational stakeholders such as students, teachers, teacher educators, textbook designers and university administrators will be provided with insights regarding L2 writing. Then, the limitation and the recommendation for further research are included in the next chapter.

Chapter 5

Discussion

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate students' perceptions of writing assessment. It explored two research questions regarding students' perceptions of academic writing quality and their perceptions of writing assessment. In this chapter, the findings of the current study are presented and compared with those of other studies carried out on university students' perceptions of writing quality, and writing assessment. The discussion of results is presented in accordance with the order of the research questions.

First Research Question: Students' Perceptions of Writing Quality

In this section, the results of the present study are categorized into several themes and discussed in light of previous studies. First, this section taps into one of the main themes, i.e., students' perceptions as L2 academic writers, followed by effective writing strategies, writing attitudes, and argumentative writing skills. Afterward, the students' perceptions of their writing quality are discussed.

Students as L2 Academic Writers

The results of this theme identified three categories of students' writers: developing, mid-range, and professional writers. Developing writers are the ones who perceive themselves as good writers but are keen on exerting due effort to develop their writing quality. Mid-range writers perceive themselves as producing moderate writings. Professional writers are the ones who perceive themselves as efficient writers. Surprisingly, the participants who perceived

themselves as developing or mid-range writers were exhibited lower proficiency levels than the professional writers.

Effective Writing Strategies

The results of the current study displayed the students' perceptions of specific writing strategies, such as planning, brainstorming and outlining. Most advanced-level students found these strategies to be ineffective. However, the students with lower proficiency levels used brainstorming and outlining. It can be said that students with lower proficiency levels exert more cognitive efforts than students with higher-proficiency levels. These results contradicted with the results of Raofi et al. (2017), who investigated the relationship between the use of writing strategy and the students' proficiency levels. These researchers administered a questionnaire and a writing test for 312 undergraduate students in Taiwan. The results of this study demonstrated that students with higher proficiency levels utilize more cognitive writing strategies than those with lower proficiency level students. Therefore, student writers could use cognitive strategies more efficiently to create effective written production. Similarly, the advanced-level students of the current study did not use any of the writing strategies applied by the students with lower proficiency levels.

Writing Attitudes

The majority of the participants reported their enjoyment while working on academic writing tasks. They also expressed how writing changed from being a challenging task at high school to one of the easiest tasks at the university. Moreover, the participants confirmed that writing did not consume much time and that writing was the most preferable skill among other language skills, such as listening, reading and speaking. They illustrated that their writing instructors had a significant role in changing their L2 academic writing perceptions, and they

allowed the students to perceive writing as one of the easiest tasks. These results strongly contradict other findings in the literature (Akhtar et al., 2020; Bulqiyah et al., 2021) The results of Akhtar et al. (2020), who investigated students' attitudes toward academic writing, in a Malaysian university. The researcher administered a questionnaire with 27 participants. The results of Akhtar et al. (2020) showed that students recognized the significance of academic writing, writing courses at the university, writing strategies and textbooks. On the other hand, the results of the current study strongly align with the results of Jabali (2018), which indicated that the students had positive attitudes toward academic writing. Furthermore, they also had very positive perceptions of writing assessment. One of the challenges that impeded students from developing their writing quality in Jabali (2018) was time constraints; this was similar to the challenge faced by the students of this study.

Students' Perceptions of their Writing Quality

Based on the interview data, participants viewed writing as the most substantial academic skill in the university setting. The results of the current study indicated that the students also perceived writing as one of the most enjoyable and easiest tasks. However, in other studies, writing was perceived as one of the most challenging language skills (Al Badi, 2015; Lillis & Turner, 2010; Xiao & Chen, 2015). The results also indicated that students perceived efficient writing skills as including organizing ideas as well as paying attention to grammar, and mechanics, which are significant aspects of writing. Weldy et al. (2014) mentioned that these aspects are the basic skills; however, students are required to develop content through enhancing their critical thinking skills and creativity. Furthermore, there is an emphasis on the significance of writing practice and its connection with writing development, which refers to perceiving writing as a process. Weldy et al. (2014) investigated the impact of practicing writing on

students' perceptions of their writing ability, writing confidence, and writing significance for academic success. The researchers found that students favored practicing writing to enhance their business writing skills; which could align with the results of the current study.

Second Research Question: Students' Perceptions of Writing Assessment

In this section, some key aspects of writing assessment are discussed. Initially, there is a discussion of the importance of assessment from the university students' perceptions. Afterward, the significance of writing assessment for developing students' writing quality is discussed, followed by an elaboration on some key aspects of writing assessment, such as the students' perceptions of writing tasks and its types, the writing prompts, grades, rubrics, feedback types and the instructor's role in writing classes.

Students' Perceptions of Assessment

Briggs (2003) illustrated that students' engagement in the learning process is shaped by their perceptions. He claimed that students and teachers had different priorities in the assessment cycle. Teachers paid attention to the learning outcomes and the in-class activities; eventually, they look at the assessment plan. In contrast, students look at assessment first and get involved in the activities and review the learning outcomes in light of the assessment scheme of the course. In the current study, the majority of the participants believed in the criticality of assessment. They recognized that assessment provided them with sufficient information about their written production. Furthermore, they viewed assessment results as trustworthy because they believed they obtained well-deserved grades. Furthermore, the participants strongly believed that assessment guided and helped them monitor their academic progress. As a result, assessment allowed them to improve their writing skills within the academic domain. In the following sub-

section, two main themes categorized under assessment are discussed according to the students' views.

Assessment authenticity and fairness are two of the significant themes that were obtained from the interview data. The participants believed that the assessment tasks were authentic. Notably, the participants became demotivated if the assessment lacked authenticity, which eventually influenced their written production negatively. Fairness is the second theme categorized under assessment; students perceived as "fair" and "trustworthy" when receiving their grades, as a way of demonstrating their progress. The questionnaire and the interview data revealed that participants perceived the trustworthiness and fairness of assessment, only a few participants thought that the assessment results were only slightly fair and trustworthy. The questionnaire results also revealed that some participants were neutral. Therefore, the majority of the participants agreed on the critical role of assessment in their learning; while, a minority tended to either disagree or stay neutral. This aligns with Flores et al. (2015), who categorized students' perceptions of assessment into three themes: positive, neutral or negative. They found that assessment is connected with more positive and neutral perceptions than negative ones.

Students' Perceptions of Writing Assessment

Students' Perceptions of Writing Tasks and Prompts. In this section, the results of the students' perceptions of the writing tasks are discussed. Then the results of how the students perceived the writing prompts are elaborated on. The results of the current study demonstrated that although integrated tasks are more challenging than independent ones (Plakans, 2010), most participants favored working on integrated writing tasks over independent ones; according to them, consulting sources facilitated working on their writing. The data obtained from the interviews revealed that the participants preferred working on integrated writing tasks, and they

confirmed the usage of different citation formats, such as MLA or APA, in their essays. Providing credit to authors is associated with the participants' perceptions of "credible writers". Therefore, they were keen on crediting authors so they could gain the readers' trust. However, cited references were not found in any of the collected writing samples. Only an inappropriate in-text citation was found in one writing sample. Surprisingly, one out of six participants thought of consulting sources as an act of plagiarism since they would be borrowing ideas that were not their own to write on a specific topic.

Regarding the writing prompt, the results of this study indicated that students' writing performance was highly influenced by the writing prompt. If the prompt addressed their interest, they would be motivated to exert effort to produce the best possible writing. If the topic did not address their interest, they became demotivated; as a result, they would not show their real writing quality, which could eventually affect the trustworthiness of writing assessment for the students.

Students' Perceptions of Scoring Rubrics. Rubrics played a vital role for the students. They could comprehend the task requirements easily when reading the rubrics. In case the students were confused, they referred back to the rubrics to help them comprehend the writing task requirements more easily. Furthermore, the participants of this study strongly agreed that they obtained high grades when they abided by the scoring rubric specified for the writing task. They emphasized that they received the scoring rubric prior to working on the assigned writing task. This aligns with the findings of previous studies. Bachman and Palmer (1996) illustrated that well-constructed scoring rubrics helped the students comprehend fulfilling the writing requirements of the writing task. In addition, rubrics allowed the participants to exert due effort to produce high-quality writing assignments. Consequently, better grades were obtained

(Bachman & Palmer, 2010; Cumming, 2013). Only one participant in the current study could not comprehend the significance of the rubric despite being at the university for a long period. Meanwhile, another participant emphasized the important role of the rubrics and how it developed the student's critical thinking skills.

Students' Perceptions of Grades. The students perceived grades as an indicator of their progress in L2 academic writing. They started to prioritize the importance of grades' interpretation; their influence on their academic progress and future success. Through grades, they comprehended the extent of fulfilling the rubrics previously shared with them for the assigned writing task.

Students' Perceptions of Feedback. The students believed that grades and feedback to be inextricably intertwined. Students perceived grades as indicators of how well they responded to a writing task. Student could obtain high or low grades. If they received high grades without feedback, they would not recognize the strong points included in their written texts. In case, they received low grades without feedback, they would not comprehend the points of development they needed to work on for obtaining higher grades and improving their performance. The interview data of the current study revealed that participants are keen on receiving feedback for improving their writing ability and obtaining higher grades. Participants of the current study believed that feedback to be a powerful tool that promoted their writing quality. This supports the results of Zumburnn et al. (2016), who investigated students' perceptions of writing feedback and found that over a quarter of the participants preferred receiving feedback on their writing for the purpose of improving their writing quality. There are several types of feedback: teacher's feedback, peer-feedback, and self- assessment. The results of the study with respect to these feedback types are discussed in the following sub-sections.

Students' Perceptions of Teacher's Feedback. The results of this research project revealed that the students valued their teachers' written comments. The students took their instructors' feedback seriously, and the interview data signified that developing and mid-range students exerted due effort in applying their teachers' feedback. The questionnaire data revealed that more than half of the participants relied on teachers' feedback. The students' perceptions of their teacher's feedback, highlighting it as trustworthy, professional, and experienced, strongly supports the findings of a set of previous studies (Badger & Yu, 2006; Gulley, 2012; Vasu et al., 2016). Badger and Yu (2006) claimed that most students favored teachers' feedback for the same reasons the students of the current study mentioned. Gulley (2012) found that the students' writing quality was improved through feedback. Furthermore, the teachers acted as "role-models" who guided the students through the writing process. Vasu et al. (2016) found that Malaysian students assigned significant value to their teacher's feedback, and all the following writing aspects of the teachers' feedback were rated as highly important: word choice, organization, content and grammar. Hyland's study (2006) also illustrated that the students preferred teachers' written comments to any other type of feedback.

Students' Perceptions of Peer Feedback. Several studies have revealed the effectiveness of peer feedback (Hyland, 2000; Yang et al., 2006). However, the results of the current study show that students did not perceive peer feedback as useful for their development. The students found only the teachers to be credible sources of feedback, and they did not perceive themselves as qualified enough to give feedback to their peers. The results are aligned with findings showing different biases as one of the negative consequences of peer feedback, including friendship (Bijami et al., 2013; Saito & Fujita, 2014). Another disadvantage is that peer feedback focuses on the writing product rather than the writing process. Therefore, several students focused on

local errors instead of global ones, which was mentioned by one of the interviewees of this study.

Students as Self Assessors. In this study, self-assessment was not experienced by students; they wished to assess their writing quality, but they do not know how due to the lack of instructions and guidelines in the classroom. Previous research studies have emphasized the significance of self-assessment, highlighting its vital role in developing students 'progress (Boud; 2013; Chung et al., 2021; Ross, 2006). Furthermore, Brown and Harris (2014) highlighted that students' reflections and monitoring their progress are the essence of self-assessment in education. The results of several studies have indicated that there is a positive impact of self-assessment on students' achievements (Brown & Harris, 2013; Thompson & William, 2005).

Students' Perceptions of Teacher's Role in the Writing Classes. It is worth-noting that teachers influence students' academic progress. They play several roles in ensuring students' progress. The results of this study showed that the participants strongly agreed that their teachers shared the writing rubrics with them before they started working on the assigned writing tasks. The teachers' role was also significant as they motivated the students to enhance their L2 academic writing quality inside and outside the class, as revealed in the data obtained from the interview data. However, the questionnaire results showed that the students either disagreed that teachers could help them overcome their writing challenges and show them how to critically assess their work or were neutral on this matter. Zhu (2004) conducted a study to investigate the teachers' views of academic writing significance in two different disciplines: engineering and business. It was found that the teachers believed academic writing to be a substantial means for

students' academic and professional growth. Consequently, they provided guidance to their students in both disciplines.

Students' Messages to Writing Instructors. The data obtained from the interviews revealed the students' recommendations to writing instructors. These recommendations mainly focused on authenticity, writing prompts, feedback and the time allocated for responding to writing tasks.

Authenticity. The participants recommended that teachers assign authentic writing tasks, which the students could easily relate to their real-life situations. The participants selected some interesting writing prompts that they would be motivated to write about, such as social media and inclusive education. On the contrary, they disregarded topics related to space and economy. Authenticity is the students' ability of linking between the writing tasks and their real life (Behizadeh, 2014). The students' call for being provided with authentic tasks strongly align with some scholars who insisted on including real-world activities, believing in their role of motivating students and engaging them in writing (Behizadeh, 2011; Brown et al., 1989). Hence, the inclusion of motivation in authenticity helps students develop their writing ability.

Writing Prompts. The participants suggested that they should choose from multiple writing prompts to efficiently respond to the writing task and ensure that each student chose a prompt addressing their interest. However, it is not recommended to provide the students with several writing prompts because there are two important variables which should be considered while designing a writing prompt: students' background knowledge, and topic familiarity. Students differ in their background knowledge, and in their familiarity with the assigned topics (Cho, 2019), which eventually affects the fairness of their grades negatively. Several researchers examined the impact of providing students with multiple writing prompts on their writing

production, in which syntactic complexity differs when several writing prompts are provided to students.

Allocated Time for Writing Tasks. The time allocated for the writing tasks was the last point recommended by the participants. The students believed that providing them with ample time to work on their assignments could help them exert effort and develop their writing production. In contrast, if they did not have adequate time, they felt stressed; thus, their writing quality was negatively influenced.

Teacher's Feedback and Peer Feedback. Since teacher's feedback is highly significant for the participants, they recommended receiving feedback on all the writing assignments and avoiding delays in the feedback so that they could improve their writing for other assigned tasks. The participants assumed that if they received feedback from teachers on each writing assignment, they could develop faster and more efficiently. Sometimes, the students are asked to work on writing assignments before being given the feedback for the previous assignments. Hence, their writing quality was negatively influenced.

Regarding peer feedback, the students recommended that it should be removed since it was useless and also confused them. However, this confusion or negative perception originated from the lack of instructions and guidelines, which should be provided to the students in the writing classes.

Implications of the Study

As the primary aim of this study is to further understand students' perceptions of writing quality and writing assessment, this may influence different educational stakeholders such as students, writing instructors, textbook designers, teacher educators and university

administrators. Since the main focus is on the students, this section starts with a sub-section on students, followed by the remaining stakeholders.

Students

It is interesting that the students in this study's sample perceived writing as a crucial skill and, at the same time, enjoyed working on several writing tasks. They also enjoyed practicing writing. They are also aware that writing assessment helped them enhance their writing skills. They were required to manage their time effectively to avoid stress and have the potential to produce high-quality academic pieces of writing. Most importantly, they are required to understand that being assigned multiple writing prompts to choose from affects the standards of fairness negatively, which will negatively influence their writing ability, through obtaining inaccurate grades.

Writing Instructors

Writing instructors are the most significant academic stakeholders as far as students are concerned. They have an impact on students' conceptions, and they are able to allow students to enjoy working on writing tasks. Therefore, teachers should spend more time discussing the writing prompts with students, especially if it is not an interesting topic for the students. In the context of AUC, for RHET students, explaining the rationale behind working on a specific writing task and attempting to connect it to any of their real-life situations could be very effective, as sometimes RHET students cannot understand the rationale behind assigning a specific writing task, and they think that the task is useless and cannot relate it to their real-life situations. The students also called for more feedback sessions and conferences before being assigned with new writing tasks so that they could obtain the maximum benefit from their

teacher's comments and improve their future writing tasks. Giving ample time for students to work on their writing tasks is a crucial element in developing their writing quality. Providing comprehensive guidelines before conducting any writing activity in the classroom is recommended.

Textbook Designers

The participants of this study discussed the possibility of receiving two writing prompts and choosing one to work on. Therefore, while designing writing tasks, students' interests should be prioritized as they may enjoy working on writing tasks. Moreover, designing writing assessment activities based on the learning outcomes of the coursebook is recommended, and interpreting the grades of each writing task is a possibility. Since AUC professors do not use textbooks and the writing courses are based on specific themes to be covered during the semester, it is recommended that these themes address students' interest to motivate them to work on their writing tasks.

Teacher Educators

Teacher educators are the professionals in the field of education. They contribute actively to the professional development of teachers. The role of teacher educators is significant because their impact is not restricted only to teachers but to students as well in an indirect way. Teacher educators should dedicate some professional development (PD) events to illustrate the significance of the following points: (a) guide teachers on how to conduct peer feedback activities and providing clear instructions to students. This will help students change their perceptions toward peer feedback and enhance their writing ability, which will align with their beliefs that writing assessment helps them develop their writing ability. (b) train teachers on implementing a variety of self-assessment activities with the students, allowing students to think,

reflect, and learn from their weaknesses. Most importantly, teacher educators need to train teachers on how students could self-assess their writing objectively. Brown (2018) illustrated that there were three main misconceptions of self-assessment. First, when teachers ask students about how they “feel” about their work, students respond that they feel “good” about their work. Brown (2018) argued that by asking students about their feelings, they are “not actually doing any kind of intellectual analysis” of their work. Second, students assess their work by the effort they exerted. They could work hard but, in the wrong direction. Third, students misinterpret self-assessment as assessing themselves instead of assessing their work. Therefore, teacher educators need to train teachers to explain to students that they are assessing their production, which includes points of strengths and points of development; however, their production does not assess their personal traits. This is a crucial point because when students understand these notions by their teachers whom will be trained by their teachers educators, this may encourage students to assess their work objectively and truly learn from assessing their work. Consequently, their production is always in progress.

University Administrators

There is a variety of responsibilities for university administrators. But they are mainly accountable for delivering academic programs to students within the university setting. In light of the previously mentioned suggestions, it is recommended that university administrators (a) reward writing instructors who conduct new successful writing assessment activities targeting different feedback types such as peer feedback, and self-assessment. Also, the university administrators could (b) facilitate training teachers on how to use LOA in writing, (c) evaluate their performance to provide them with constructive feedback while implementing assessment

activities. Finally, (d) university administrators could closely monitor prospective students to attentively listen to their voices regarding L2 academic writing and writing assessment.

Limitations of the Study

This study had some limitations that influenced its results. First, the response rate was low because few classes are usually conducted in the spring semester. Therefore, generalizing the results of this study to the target population — ELI and RHET programs — is not possible. By obtaining a larger sample of participants, it may be possible to use correlation between the instruments of the study.

Suggestions for Further Research

It would be productive if students' perceptions of writing assessment were to be compared with their teachers' perceptions of writing assessment. Furthermore, students' perceptions across disciplines could be investigated. Moreover, students' perceptions of writing ability and writing assessment across other variables such as proficiency levels and gender could be examined. Also, using an integrated writing task instead of using an independent writing task could be investigated.

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Appendix A: Questionnaire

I. Writing ability					
	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)

1.I understand the requirements of the writing tasks assigned by professors.					
2.I usually achieve what I have been asked while writing.					
3. I find the topics of my writing classes interesting to work on.					
4.I usually brainstorm and outline before and during writing.					
5. My professor guides me to overcome my writing challenges.					
6. I consider myself a good writer.					
7. I can write the main parts of the essays such as introduction, body, conclusion appropriately.					
8. I can produce relevant content to the writing task required.					
9. I can write using correct grammar.					
10. I use an appropriate academic writing style.					

11. I organize my ideas while writing in coherent paragraphs.					
12. I can support or refute arguments/claims while writing.					
13. I can summarize ideas from sources.					
14. I can paraphrase ideas from sources.					
15. I am confident that I can format references accurately using APA.					
16. I use ideas and examples from external readings in my writing.					
17. Due to workload pressure, I sometimes copy from external texts without giving credit to authors.					
18. I express my ideas clearly in writing.					
19. I go back to my writing to revise the content and make my ideas clearer.					
20. I go back to my writing to edit my language.					

21. I give almost equal attention to both the language and the content when writing.					
22. I enjoy working on writing tasks.					
23. I can develop my writing skills independently.					
II. Students' Perceptions of Writing Assessment					
24. Assessment plays an important role in writing classes.					
25. Assessment informs me about my writing needs.					
26. Assessment helps me improve my writing ability.					
27. Assessment results are trustworthy.					
28. Writing is best assessed when integrated with other skills such as reading and listening.					
29. I focus on feedback from my teacher not the grade.					

30. I understand the comments I receive from my teacher.					
31. The teacher informs me how to improve my writing ability.					
32. I can evaluate my own writing.					
33. Feedback I receive from my colleagues on my writing is usually negative.					
34. My teacher showed me how to critically assess my own work.					
35. In my opinion, writing errors are valuable learning opportunities.					
36. I think more grades should be assigned to the content of the essay rather than to correct language.					
37. Feedback should be given only by the teacher.					
38. Feedback motivates me to exert more effort in my writing.					

39. Feedback given by other students is useful for me.					
40. Feedback improves my writing ability.					
41. The instructor usually shares the scoring criteria/ rubric with me before working on the writing task.					

Appendix B: Interview Questions

1. How do you see yourself as a writer? Please talk about your writing experience. How do you feel about writing?
2. How do you think of the writing tasks in your classes? Do they show your ability as a writer?
3. In your opinion, what are the characteristics of meaningful academic writing?
4. How do you feel your progress in writing tasks so far? What strategies are you using and how? What works and what doesn't?

5. To what extent do you agree/ disagree with the following statement “assessment improves your writing ability.”? Why? Why not?
6. Did you ever get feedback on your writing? From your teacher or colleagues or both? How do you feel about feedback and what do you usually do with it when you receive it? To what extent do you understand the feedback on your errors?
7. Do you care about how others worked on their writing tasks? Do you care what others think about how you did? Why? How do you give feedback to colleagues?
8. How do you find peer feedback beneficial for your own learning and development?
9. Do you self-assess your writing? If yes, what do you think of it?
10. What do you think of the rubric (assessment criteria) used in your writing classes?
11. What do you think of the grades you receive on your writing?
12. In what way do you think writing assessment may promote or impede your writing? Why?
13. How do you incorporate (combine) your source materials into your writing? How do you use readings in your writing?
14. What do you think of using source materials in your writing? Please give details.
15. If you reflect on your academic writing course, what have you learnt? Have your beliefs changed? How? What contributed to these changes?
16. You have done a number of different types of assignments this semester. Can you talk a bit about one or two that were most successful for you? Why do you think you did better in these? What about the ones that you did less well in? Why do you think that was?
17. Do you have any further comments, suggestions, or reflections related to academic writing that you would like to share?

Appendix C: Interview Analysis Sample

Appendix C. Post-course interview transcript example

Interviewee (I): How do you see yourself as a writer now after 4 weeks on EAP?

Participant (P): I think I feel better than before because I have practiced my writing for more than three weeks and get some new knowledge about how to write well or write more academic.

I: How do you feel when you write now?

P: sometimes it is difficult to catch up some clear ideas to prove my main point, but other aspects, like how to write the Introduction or Conclusion and using the references correctly is better for me to write.

I: How does writing help you to learn the language?

P: writing includes not only the vocabulary and some paragraphing and some model sentences I can use in other skills, like listening and reading.

I: How does writing help you to develop language skills?

P: when I write my essay I can keep some useful sentences to help my reading and listening.

I: Have your expectations been met on the EAP programme?

P: yes, I think so, not all achieved but I can get better than before, I improved a lot in my writing. I can listen my tutor's advice and erm ... abandon some of my own drawbacks and keep on the advantages of writing, and read more academic essays and texts to help me finish my own essay. I hoped I could read and write more, but sometimes I was lazy and didn't read more.

Seeking tutor support

Use of exemplars

I: Imagine a new student has arrived on the EAP programme. How would you explain what good academic writing is?

P: it should have well-organised introduction and summary and body paragraphs should connect to key points listed at the beginning, and if they are some researches from other persons, we should write the references at the end of essay. Some referencing, paraphrasing, quotation and citation well. I have also learned the Introduction should include the key points, my own position and the route map.

I: Have your goals with regard to writing changed in 4 weeks on the EAP course?

P: before I hoped I can practice my English by the EAP course and improve my presentations by using spoken English well, but now I think English is not the only important thing to learn, but also my future degree course is very important to learn, so I need to acquire some knowledge to become familiar with my Major course. Sometimes I just don't know how to prove my evidence clearly, sometimes my examples are not supporting my main point. So, I look for some journal articles from which I can learn how to integrate evidence from the literature to my own essay. Reading various academic books and papers has helped me to become better at writing and I feel much more confident now.

Engaging in extensive reading

I: Have your methods of writing changed in 4 weeks?

P: before I would write my essay from beginning to the end, but now I tend to write and revise more frequently written writing. I notice that reading again what I have just said helps. Thus, I can easily spot some mistakes or incomplete sentences. I think I should make a clear outline first, write an Introduction and then think 3-4 key topic sentences about my body paragraph and finish each paragraph and last I will complete my summary.

Backtracking

Appendix D: Writing Task

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Face-to-face communication is better than other types of communication, such as letters, email, or telephone calls. In 90 minutes, please write at least 250-word essay and use specific reasons and details to support your answer. Pay attention to the organization of ideas, vocabulary, and grammar.

Appendix E: Scoring Rubric



In English with Confidence™

TOEFL iBT® Test Independent Writing Rubrics

SCORE	TASK DESCRIPTION
5	<p>An essay at this level largely accomplishes all of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effectively addresses the topic and task Is well organized and well developed, using clearly appropriate explanations, exemplifications and/or details Displays unity, progression and coherence Displays consistent facility in the use of language, demonstrating syntactic variety, appropriate word choice and idiomatity, though it may have minor lexical or grammatical errors
4	<p>An essay at this level largely accomplishes all of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addresses the topic and task well, though some points may not be fully elaborated Is generally well organized and well developed, using appropriate and sufficient explanations, exemplifications and/or details Displays unity, progression and coherence, though it may contain occasional redundancy, digression, or unclear connections Displays facility in the use of language, demonstrating syntactic variety and range of vocabulary, though it will probably have occasional noticeable minor errors in structure, word form or use of idiomatic language that do not interfere with meaning
3	<p>An essay at this level is marked by one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addresses the topic and task using somewhat developed explanations, exemplifications and/or details Displays unity, progression and coherence, though connection of ideas may be occasionally obscured May demonstrate inconsistent facility in sentence formation and word choice that may result in lack of clarity and occasionally obscure meaning May display accurate but limited range of syntactic structures and vocabulary
2	<p>An essay at this level may reveal one or more of the following weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited development in response to the topic and task Inadequate organization or connection of ideas Inappropriate or insufficient exemplifications, explanations or details to support or illustrate generalizations in response to the task A noticeably inappropriate choice of words or word forms An accumulation of errors in sentence structure and/or usage
1	<p>An essay at this level is seriously flawed by one or more of the following weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Serious disorganization or underdevelopment Little or no detail, or irrelevant specifics, or questionable responsiveness to the task Serious and frequent errors in sentence structure or usage
0	<p>An essay at this level merely copies words from the topic, rejects the topic, or is otherwise not connected to the topic, is written in a foreign language, consists of keystroke characters, or is blank.</p>

Appendix F: Consent Form



Documentation of Informed Consent for Participation in Research Study

Project Title: University Students' Perceptions of Writing Assessment

Principal Investigator: Hanan Alaa Mohamed Hegazi

Email: hananalaa@aucegypt.edu

*You are being asked to participate in a research study. The purpose of the research is to investigate three aspects: students' perceptions of their writing ability, writing assessment and the relationship between students' writing perception and writing ability and the findings may be *published*. The expected duration of your participation is 30 minutes

The procedures of the research will be as follows:

- Participants will be asked to respond to an online questionnaire via google forms.
- Participants will then participate in an online interview via Zoom in case they are interested.
- Participants will participate in writing an essay and it will be graded based on a specific holistic rubric.

*There *will not be* certain risks or discomforts associated with this research.

*There *will not be* benefits to you from this research.

*The information you provide for purposes of this research *is confidential*.

*Participation in this study is voluntary. Refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or the loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Signature _____

Printed Name _____

Date _____

Appendix G: Institutional Review Board Approval Letter

CASE #2020-2021-075



To: Hanan Hegazy
Cc: Sara Tarek
From: Atta Gebril, Chair of the IRB
Date: Feb 25, 2021
Re: IRB approval

This is to inform you that I reviewed your revised research proposal entitled " **University Students' Perceptions of Writing Assessment**" and determined that it required consultation with the IRB under the "expedited" category. As you are aware, the members of the IRB suggested certain revisions to the original proposal, but your new version addresses these concerns successfully. The revised proposal used appropriate procedures to minimize risks to human subjects and that adequate provision was made for confidentiality and data anonymity of participants in any published record. I believe you will also make adequate provision for obtaining informed consent of the participants.

This approval letter was issued under the assumption that you have not started data collection for your research project. Any data collected before receiving this letter could not be used since this is a violation of the IRB policy.

Please note that IRB approval does not automatically ensure approval by CAPMAS, an Egyptian government agency responsible for approving some types of off-campus research. CAPMAS issues are handled at AUC by the office of the University Counsellor, Dr. Ashraf Hatem. The IRB is not in a position to offer any opinion on CAPMAS issues, and takes no responsibility for obtaining CAPMAS approval.

This approval is valid for only one year. In case you have not finished data collection within a year, you need to apply for an extension.

Thank you and good luck.

Dr. Atta Gebril
IRB chair, The American University in Cairo
2046 HUSS Building
T: 02-26151919
Email: agebril@aucegypt.edu



Institutional Review Board
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Appendix H: Transcribing Interviews

Interviewer: I

Participant: P

Interview 1 (Meeting ID: 562 063 3675)

I: Good evening Taha,

P: Good evening

I: Thank you so much for coming. May I record the interview?

P: You are welcome, yes, of course.

I: Thank you so much.

P: You are welcome.

I: So, the first question is how do you see yourself as a writer?

P: Basically, before enrolling university, my writing was not so good eehhh and then after taking the first English class which is English 98, my writing get better.

I: Ok, can you talk about your writing experience?

P: ehh actually in the high school, I was not working on my writing well because of a lot of subjects, another subjects like physics and chemistry, these subjects are very complicated eh so in the last year of high school, I was focusing only on chemistry and these subjects in order to achieve the goal of “thanawya amma” ehh however, after finishing the high school, I was working on IELTS and then IELTS gave me a very good opportunity to enhance my writing skills and to enhance general my English, and then, right after IELTS, I got enrolled in the university, taking first class I took first English class; and then 0210 and now I am in RHET writing class.

I: ok, and how do you think of the writing experience at the university?

P: Actually, it was very good because I learned a lot of skills in order to write a very meaningful writing paper.

I: and how do you feel about writing?

P: in general?

I: yes

P: yes, writing is a very successful way in order for people to achieve or to put their thoughts and thinking about something on a piece of paper or in a meaningful paper to describe their thoughts and their feelings.

I: And how do you think of the writing tasks in your classes?

P: basically, writing tasks in my classes are very helpful, but I do not like to work under pressure if I took a writing task to do in my house or to do in my leisure time, it will be more better than doing them under pressure in for example like in classes.

I: Ok, do the writing tasks in your classes show your ability as a writer?

P: As I mentioned, sometimes if I took enough time to write what I am thinking about, it will be more better; but however, if my professor assigned to me, if I assigned to do the task in a very small time, it will not be better.

I: ok,umm in your opinion, what are the characteristics of meaningful academic writing?

P: ehh I think ehh they must be, the sentence must be very organized or in general the writing paper should be in a very organized coherent like sentences and essays and paragraphs should be more organized.

I: Alright, how do you feel your progress in writing tasks so far?

P:eehhh every writing I take, I feel better, I feel that my writing skills get better in every writing task.

I:And what are the strategies are you using in order to develop your writing?

P: Basically, the internet is a very good source to search or to see people or instructions about a very meaningful writing. For example, using of vocabulary, and built structure sentences. I can search on youtube or even in google to see the writing sample of meaningful writing sample.

I: Alright, and do these strategies work with you?

P: yes, yes of course.

I: Are there any strategies that do not work with you?

P: ahhh No

I: Ok, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement “assessment improves your writing ability?”

P: ehhe actually, assessment put me under pressure to write in a specific time but I like writing tasks, writing tasks should be in a very enough time to express my feelings and my thoughts in a paper.

I: Did you ever get feedback on your writing?

P: yes, in every like every valuable task, I get feedback from my professor, recently I took a feedback regarding RHET, RHET writing class regarding essay 1 from my professor, and this feedback helped me a lot to enhance my third draft.

I: Ok, do you get feedback from your colleagues?

P: yes.

I: ok, How do you feel about the feedback you receive from your professor and from your colleagues?

P: first of all, from my professors, the feedbacks are very helpful because when I know my drawbacks in writing, I can enhance my writing in the future based on that feedback, and secondly from my colleagues, sometimes they work and sometimes they not in which my colleagues give me extreme bad feedback and extreme good feedback so they are not moderate so I cannot understand what they mean.

I: ok, and what do you usually do with the feedback when you receive it?

P: I can read it very well in order to know what my strengths and what my drawbacks in writing so I can enhance my writing.

I: and to what extent do you understand the feedback on your errors?

P: could you please repeat?

I: Sure, to what extent do you understand the feedback on your errors, when you receive the feedback from your professor, do you totally understand the feedback on your errors?

P: yes, of course. Yes

I: Alright, great. Do you care about how others worked on their writing tasks?

P: actually if they are very organized writers, I do care

I: ok, and do you care what others think about how you did?

P: not all of them, if the feedback or something came from my professor, I will care, and Actually, I do not like feedback from other people like my colleagues because they have their own thoughts, their own feelings about what they do so they are not matching together.

I: ok, how do you give feedback to your colleagues?

P: based on what they write in the paper. Basically, if they write in a very good structured way or they are using new vocabularies, this will be, this how I give feedback.

I: So your feedback is specific like you have some points and you share these points or you just give them general comments?

P: actually I'm not professor so I do not know what is right and what is not so I give them feedback in general.

I: How do you find peer feedback beneficial for your own learning and development?

P: in my opinion, it is not beneficial, because as I mentioned before, they have their own thoughts about what they are doing and I also have my own thought about what I am doing so we are not matching together.

I: Do you self-assess your writing?

P: not yet

I: would you like to do so?

P: actually if I get a writing criteria, I can do that.

I: ok, what do you think of the rubric used in your writing classes?

P: the rubric are very helpful because it show me what should be done or should be written in my paper and what should not.

I: what do you think of the grades you receive on your writing?

P: the feedback and grades are connected to each other in which when I get feedback and I will not or I did not enhance my writing based on that feedback so I can understand that my grades based on what I did.

I: in what way do you think writing assessment may promote or impede your writing?

P: I don't think that they can give me opportunity to enhance my writing.

I: why?

P: because the pressure is a very very bad situation in order "yaani" I should avoid it to write enough or to write a very structured essay.

I: ok, and how do you combine your source materials into your writing?

P: basically "pause" I am searching in google or on some like google scholar to get or see readings and books in order to get or match my topic and then I get my sources and even I can

get quotes from that sources or references like I can get two lines or three lines from specific source like book or website and then put it into my essay and then get the websites and make it APA style or even MLA style and put it from the alphabetical order in the last page of my file.

I: and what do you think of using source materials in your writing?

P: they are very very good because first firstly they can give the reader a background what yaani that I am credible and reliable and if I did not put sources, my writing will not trusted because the reader will think where I get these sources, where I get this piece of information.

I: If you reflect on your academic writing course, what have you learned?

P: academic writing courses, actually, right now I am taking RHET class, so, I can understand that they are very helpful because I can write in academic way, before enrolling university, I was writing like a first person in which I discussing or writing “ I”, “ me” or “you” so this is not academic way of writing.

I: Have your beliefs changed?

P: Yes, of course.

I: How?

P: you know after getting the English classes or academic writing class, yes my beliefs changed in which I can write academic writing with a very detailed information and without mentioning something not meaningful. I do not know actually how to say it but I totally believe that my beliefs changed.

I: and what contributed to these changes?

P: the feedbacks, the feedbacks I get from my professor.

I: Alright, you have done a number of different types of assignments this semester, can you talk a bit about one or two that were most successful for you?

P: regarding academic writing?

I: yes

P: yes, I did my first draft, actually last week. my third draft of essay 1 in RHET. The first draft it was very very boring and not in a good way, but the university gave us the opportunity to search and to search online in order to reach what should be done in my writing and what not should be done. So, in the second draft, my writing got better and last draft based on the feedback that I get from my professor in the second draft became more better.

I: Alright, and like why do you think you did better in these assignments?

P: actually based on the feedback, my searchings or my findings online I can believe that I did better in the last draft. However, I did not do better in the first two drafts.

I: Alright, and what about the ones that you did less well in?

P: you mean the first draft and the second one?

I: no, no, other assignments that you think you did less well in.

P: in other courses like introduction to mass communication, it was my first writing task in the semester so I did not write very well, I did not use good vocabulary so my professor gave me a very bad degree on that specific task.

I: ok and do you have like any further comments, suggestions, or reflections related to academic writing that you would like to share?

P: actually, I have one comment.

I: sure, please go ahead.

P: Regarding the assessments, I don't like to write this in my own."yanni" I do not know what others think about that. But I like to write in enough time, did not get stress, I did not like to write under pressure. This will be very helpful for some students who are not efficient in writing, hold their life or academic life so hopefully that the assessment should be have enough time for students to write throughout without stress.

I: May I ask you what causes the stress or the pressure?

P: yes of course, when I write, I feel that I will run out of time and I will not write anything and I will not brainstorm because you know the stress is a very way to damage your thoughts. So, these all things I am thinking about.

I: Thank you so much Taha

P: You are welcome.

Interview 2 (Meeting ID: 562 063 3675)

I: Good afternoon, Saja

P: Good afternoon,

I: May I record the interview please?

P: for sure, you can record it.

I: thank you so much

I: Alright, let me ask you Saja how do you see yourself as a writer?

P: me as a writer, I do not think I am a perfect enough, and also I am not a baddest or a weakest writer because I know the basics of the essay, I know the types of the essay, and I know how to organize my essays, how to make my ideas clear, and obvious to the professor. I think I am in the middle but I want to develop my writing style and my information and improve for sure my language and the structure of the sentence.

I: alright, can you tell me about your writing experience, please?

P: my writing experience now it developed more than before because from three semesters almost 9 or 8 months, it was weak, and need to develop, maybe I was zero information about how to writing an academic essay. I don't know the type of essays. I do not know how to write a good content, maybe my writing was out of the topic but now I know how to be on the topic. I know how to organize my ideas, how to organize my bodies, each body of the essay. Also, I know what is the meaning of important sentences, and what is the difference between the thesis sentence and the topic sentence. Now, it...(pause)

I: Student B, Student B

P: yes

I: could you please repeat the last part? because I could not hear you.

P: for sure, for sure. I said my writing is better but I have to develop it to be more specialized than now, more professional than now.

I: ok, and how do you feel about writing?

P: writing nowadays writing or recently writing become one of my favorite tasks and the easiest task, I do it easily and quickly. I don't take a lot of time as before because before it was one of the hardest tasks to me, and I was afraid from it and I take a lot of time to manage my idea or write a one body. But now maybe I write all of the essay on an hour. Nowadays, I enjoy writing more than listening or reading because (pause)

I: sorry because what Saja?

P: sorry could not hear you.

I: You were saying that you enjoy writing because of what?

P: because I understand it, I understand how to manage my ideas, how to organize it, how how to write the thesis. So, I take less time than before. So, I enjoyed writing tasks more than other tasks.

I: ok, and how do you feel about writing?

P: actually, writing is one of the hardest tasks because as all of us know it takes a lot of time, just to make an outline before you start, brainstorm for our ideas, so, it takes a lot of time. Also writing, it is hard because it gives the professor chance to evaluate students from their language, their grammar, their content, their information. So, it is one of the hardest. But if the students concentrate and manage their ideas and give writing a lot of time, it will be one of the easiest tasks.

I: ok, and how do you think of the writing tasks in your classes?

P: Excuse me, could you repeat the question?

I: Sure, how do you think of the writing tasks in your classes? Do they show your ability as a writer?

P: nowadays, yes, it is because I knew a lot of types of essay, how to write a summary, academic essay, reflection paper so all of this types give me the chance to show my ability to manage the article. Because now I know what is the meaning of thesis. I know what is the meaning of topic sentence, what is the difference between background information and importance information. I know what is the difference between conclusion and introduction, how to manage them, how to make paraphrase on the essay. Moreover, I know the importance of concluding sentence in each body. So, I think that is give me a chance to I am sorry those information helped me to develop my writing and show my ability of essay, of writing essay.

I: great! So, in your opinion, what are the characteristics of meaningful academic writing?

P: the characteristics there are a variety of characteristics but the essential point people have to know what is how to write an intro, an introduction, and organize their bodies, and paraphrase, do not repeating the same word. Moreover, they have to write a clear and very obvious thesis statement at the end of introduction. Then, at the each body, they have to write a concluding sentence at the end. Moreover, at the beginning of each body, they have to write a topic sentence to give the professor the main idea of each body. Moreover, at the end of the body, they have to summarize their ideas by the different words as I know before, they have to paraphrase, and in the conclusion, it is not allowed to say any new information or any new suggestion at the end. They have to concentrate on content. Moreover, follow the rubric. I mean by follow the rubric, they have to write a good language, good structure or right structure of the sentence. Moreover, they have to be on the topic so they have to write their prompt clearly to understand if this prompt mean write an opinion essay or argumentative essay or academic essay. Additionally, they have to correct any pronunciation. I think that's all, to write a good essay and an academic essay, you have to follow all of those steps.

I: Alright, and how do you feel your progress in writing tasks so far?

P: my progress, ah I believe my writing developed and If I talk as steps, ahh my writing was very very weak, as I said before, and I don't know what the meaning of the thesis and I don't know what the importance of the thesis. But now my essays developed and being more organized than before. Ahh also it becomes clearly and the professor understand me, and one of the essential issue I was faced, my professor was saying my ideas of the essay is not logic or not organized. But now I know how to manage them, and how to be logical in the articles in my essays so I think nowadays it becomes better than before.

I: Great, and what strategies are you using in order to develop your writing?

P: ah my strategy is firstly, after I read, I have to read and concentrate on my professor feedback. Ah, then, ah (pause) I am sorry. Then, I compare between my essays in the first semester and at the end of the semester to know how my level is developed. Ah additionally, ah I asked my

friends all of the time one of the main points helps me my professor when he clarify new type of essay, she say it on the steps. Firstly, you have to write a topic sentence. I remembered when I was on 101 level, my professor tells us write to follow TAXES. TAXES mean T topic sentence, A for I think.(pause) I don't know them. I don't remember them now. But to follow this strategy, TaXES, example, analysis, and example, topic sentence, I am sorry, concluding sentence. Those help me. This is the strategy that I follow; my professor feedback and information at the beginning of illustrate or clarify the essay.

I: Great, are there any strategies that don't work very well in writing?

P: Strategies that don't work. No, I think each strategy , each advice my professor said to me I was needed, I was needed this and I think I never use any step or any advice from any professor until now it wasn't effective. All of them was effective and all of them I was needed and I needed to be logic, I needed to be organized, I need to write a thesis, I need to write a concluding sentence. All of them was effective. I think no strategy is not important.

I: Great, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement “assessment improves your writing ability.”

P: assessment improve my writing ability?

I: yes

P: I completely agree with this, by evaluation, I can understand my weakness point, my strength point, and I know how to improve them, how to avoid that. So, I think all of the students, especially in 101 and 102 level need evaluation, and need really to do something wrong and know how to correct it. I am strongly agree with this statement.

I: Did you ever get feedback on your writing?

P: yes, I talked a lot of feedbacks from my professors, and a lot of them was effective, and helped me to improve my essays. I think without feedback, I do not develop or understand how to improve my essays.

I: very good. Do you actually get feedback on your writing from your colleagues?

P: yes, I took a lot of feedbacks from my colleagues. But, in my opinion, sometimes, it wasn't effective to me.

I: and why is that?

P: maybe because we are colleague, we are at the same age. Our information almost the same. We are in the same class. We are teach from the same professor. So, our information almost the same. How I can give them an advice to improve their levels or them gives me an advice or they give me an advice to improve my essays? I think it wasn't effective, maybe, at the beginning, we decided to help each other, but our advices to each other is not effective. Maybe we lose the time

on joking or reading or while we are working together, feel bored because no one sure his advice is accurate, academically or not, just each one of us say his perspective and it may be wrong.

I: ok, and what do you usually do with feedback when you receive it?

P: if this feedback from the professor, I read it more and more, I try to work on these points. If I don't understand some point of it, I asked my teacher again. In fact, to be honest, in fact, from my colleagues, sometimes, I prevent it, and I don't concentrate on it.

I: and to what extent do you understand the feedback on your errors?

P: my errors, the feedback about my errors?

I: Yes

P: in fact, one of my professors was did something it is effective and efficiently to me. She said after I took the feedback from her, even just I did this sentence structure wrong, she asked me to repeat or redo this assignment again, so, in this case really this feedback, it is very effective to me and I really learned from this professor, but if just I know them or reading them, sometimes I forget some points, and some points I never forget. Moreover, if the professor, one of the professor did something very effective. She correct the essay while I am with her. So, she read each word while I am with her. So, she correct each sentence and each word while I am with her. So, it is a very effective style of correcting an essay.

I: Great. Do you care about what others worked on their writing tasks?

P: Excuse me, just a second and I will be with you.

I: Sure

(pause for few seconds)

P: I am very sorry

I: no worries, welcome back

P: thanks

I: So, do you care about how others worked on their writing tasks?

P: how others works on their writing tasks?

I: yes, how they worked on their writing tasks, like do you go and ask your friends or your colleagues what you did on your writing tasks?

P: in fact, yes but I concentrate with the hardworker only; those who got for example I got on language maybe 2.5 out of 4, or 2 out of 4 so I will be concentrated with those who get 3 out of 4 to ask them about their language or to learn from them how to improve my language and structure sentence because that is my only problem on the essay; language and sentence structure.

I: and do you care what others think about how you did?

P: yes, I do but I don't know whether they care or not. But I think those who asked me to see my essays, they are care, maybe I did something right, they didn't. They just want to learn from my essay. And if any one from my colleagues asked me to see my any type of essay, that really made me happy because I felt that I did something right others want to learn from it.

I: and how do you give feedback to your colleagues?

P: Firstly, I read their whole essay. Secondly, I concentrate on topic sentence in each body, even in introduction. Thirdly, I concentrate if they have a thesis at the end of the introduction or not, and in each body, I concentrate on if they have a topic sentence and a concluding sentence at the end. And at the middle of the body, their ideas is clear, and explain it well, explain it by example or by idea or any or by their experience, and at the end a conclusion. They paraphrase their ideas well, and they are on the topic or not. Moreover, I concentrate on whether they did paraphrasing for their words or just repeat one sentence and use it more than once. That's how I concentrate on my colleagues' essays.

I: Alright. And how do you find peer feedback beneficial for your own learning and development?

P : Excuse me, you asked about the peer evaluation?

I: Yes, peer feedback like your colleagues' feedback, how is it useful for your own learning and development?

P: in fact, to me, it is not useful. As I told you before, they just we are at the same age, at the same experience. to be fair, sometimes some colleagues give me a good and effective and useful moreover it is useful, really it is useful because I was not understand the essay or I was not understand the task but after I talked with them, I understand even a bit of the target of the essay. But others while I talk with them, maybe I don't understand the ideas or their advices to me is not effective as I need.

I: as what?

P: Could I say an example?

I: Could you please say just the last sentence then you could say the example?

P: I said maybe I don't understand their meaning, or their advices are not effective to me, or this type of advice that not what I need.

I: ok, so now you can proceed with the example, please.

P: for example, the last time I have a task on my course, and the task was a video and this video was so hard and have a lot of examples, too much examples. So, I don't understand all of them. But after I did a peer work with my colleagues, I understood almost four or seven examples, and I can grab the idea of the video after I worked with my colleagues. On the other hand, one of my colleagues was correct one of my essays, and his advice to me wasn't effective, he just told me you have to clarify more although I clarified a lot. I think he supposed to tell me to clarify in points one, two, and three. In this style, I can hear his advice more effective not just told me, you have to clarify more. It wasn't effective to me and I don't understand which point I have to clarify or which point I have to explain it more.

I: and do you self-assess your writing?

P: self-assess?

I: like do you evaluate your writing?

P: ah I think I didn't do that before, but if I did it, I think my writing is good and I will be good in all of the steps but my issue will be structure of the sentence and I need to focus more and more to develop this point.

I: Great, and what do you think of the rubric used in your writing classes?

P: It is one of the effective and essential source for the students. To me, if sometimes, I don't understand what I am supposed to do in this essay, I just look to the rubric to understand what is the professor want from me, she will graduate my essay on the content so I have to develop my content, she will focus on language so I have to develop my language. She will focus on sentence structure and grammar, paraphrasing, that is the essential and the important source for the students, especially in the writing tasks. Moreover, the rubric help me and my colleagues to know how the professor will divided the grade. So, for example, content will have forty percent, so will have to concentrate more to content to get a high grade. So, that will help us to success in this and pass it.

I: and this brings us to the next question, what do you think of the grades you receive on your writing?

P: my grades, I think that is what I really deserve. If I write a good, I will take a good high grade. If I follow as a rubric, I will get high grades. If I don't follow the rubric, I will lose a lot of marks. That return to the importance of the rubric that saves the students and the professor right. So, the students will be from the beginning of the semester know how the important of the content for example and how it take a high average of the grade. So, I have to concentrate on this point. And if he did good on the content, if not so he understood he did not good enough on the content. So, the student want to develop his content and or each body paragraph, (voice lagging)I just took content as an example.

I: Sorry, could you please repeat the last sentence, please?

P: Excuse me, I don't hear you.

I: Could you please repeat the last sentence?

P: For sure, for sure, I said the rubric saves students' and the professor's right. If the student did good on content for example so, the grade will be high. So, he understood he did good on the content. If not, he understood not good enough on the content. So, he wants to develop this part who get a highest or a lowest grade.

I: Alright, and in what way do you think writing assessment may promote or impede your writing? May develop your writing or prevent you from developing your writing?

P: assessment?

I: writing assessment, yes.

P: I am strongly with evaluation because without assessment, I don't understand. I don't learn. I learn from my mistakes. I did mistakes to learn from it. My professor evaluate me to teach me.

Without evaluation, or without assessment, my writing will not develop and I will not understand, I will not teach anything. It is one of the essential step after I write my essay.

I: and how do you combine your source material into your writing?

P: my source material into my writing?

I: yes, how do you use readings into your writing?

P: ok, that ehhe will moved us to what we did in the integrated essay?

I: yes

P: ehhe while I am reading; firstly, I read the articles that the professor gave to us. Then, I read the prompt. So, reading helps me and give me the idea and save my time. Moreover, it gives me the idea related to my prompt. So, while in this type of essay, while I am writing, I fell more comfortable because I am sure I am in the topic. I didn't do anything out of the topic or I am not related to the main idea. No, in this type of essay, I am sure I catch the main point. I am on the right track. So, reading before writing helps me and make writing easily and quicker, saves my time, and it is one of the smoothest types.

I: And what do you think of using source materials in your writing?

P: source materials, excuse me?

I: what do you think of using external readings or source materials in your writing?

P: I think it is one of the easiest ways of learning because it helps students to have an idea related to the topic, without losing time or exert a lot of effort as we did in the writing without reading.

I: if you reflect on your academic writing course, what have you learnt?

P: academic writing course really is one of the effective courses to me because it helps me to develop my language, my grammar mistakes, my content, it developed my English. Actually, my English all of it because I wasn't know anything, and nowadays, I know a lot of things, I have a lot of information about writing. Without writing, I don't know how to. I don't know what is the meaning of the thesis. Without writing, I don't know what is the important of the concluding sentence. Without writing, I don't know the important of paraphrasing my sentence. Without writing, I don't know anything about English. Writing helps me to use my language, my handwriting also. Writing helps me to improve my grammar mistakes. Without writing, I will not did any mistakes, so I will not learn. Writing is one of the essential and the effective skill students need to develop their language.

I: Have your beliefs changed?

P: For sure, yes.

I: How?

P: before writing academic course, I thought writing is one of the hardest courses, and my skill will never develop because it takes a lot of time, and need to brainstorm too much, and organization. But now, no everything changed because I just after I read the prompt, my ideas comes easily, and my mind maybe becomes open-minded. I have a lot of ideas, I write more easily. I felt writing is one of the easiest courses. But, at the first, it becomes hard because the student was afraid or nervous, but after they get into, they felt it is one of the smoothest because just we need to read the prompt, divide this type of essay, just get into the essay, it becomes more

easier, and smoothly. So, in the past I thought it was hard and I will never being developed in this type of essay. But now, it is one of my favorite essay, one of my favorite tasks.

I: and what contributed to these changes? Like what caused the change of your beliefs?

P: yes, I got it. I think it is practice, only practice and the feedbacks. In my 101 course, I remember my professor gave us one assignment for each day of the five days. So, I write everyday an assignment. So, that's the practice and each day, I get and give a feedback for the assignment I did the day before. They are the only, they are the two steps that helped me to change my perspective forward writing. I write a lot so I did a lot of mistakes. Then my professor give me a lot of feedbacks. That helped me my ideas be more logical, my grammar mistakes, and I learned a lot; to be on the topic not out of the topic, respect know what the meaning of thesis and the importance of the essay. So, after I learned all of those points, my perspective forward writing changes.

I: you have done a number of different types of assignments this semester.

P: yes.

I: can you talk a bit about one or two that were most successful to you?

P: Sure, one of the most successful one is one is the reflection and second one is outline. The first one is reflection and I succeeded on it because I reflect on each step on the essay. Moreover, while I am reflect, and I mentioned each step by its name and if it is a video, I write it academically, I did the citations in the right way. Moreover, I wouldn't explain the steps. I explain what I teach from each step, I think that is the secret helped me success in this reflection. Then, I will move to the outline. That is one of the successful assignments I did this semester because I catch for example I wrote it clearly, I did it clearly, I write the topic sentence. I selected it from the essay easily and on the right way. Moreover, I understood the thesis. I understood the concluding sentence in each body, the topic sentence for each body. I understood the idea of this article that helped me to give a successful outline.

I: and what about the ones that you did less well in?

P: One of the baddest assignments, also, it is a reflection, it is weak because I did not mention each step. Moreover, I explained the steps not explain what I teach or what I feel in each step. That is the reason why I got the lowest grade in this assignment.

I: ok, and do you have any further comments, suggestions or reflections related to academic writing that you would like to share?

P: If I will share an idea, I just want all of my colleagues to advise me to practice a lot, and if the professor forget or doesn't give us a feedback, we have to ask about it. Moreover, if we have a peer assignment and we suppose to do it, we have to believe that and doesn't joke and lost our time, and also I would advise professor to remember a feedback about each assignment not only

does he did a conference each week to do evaluate about just one assignment, we write 2 on the week because we need a feedback for each assignment. That's all.

I: Thank you so much, Saja for this interview, and for your valuable time.

P: You are more than welcome.

Interview 3 (Meeting ID: 562 063 3675)

I: Good morning Mohamed so, may I record the interview?

P: yeah, sure.

I: Thank you so much.

P: Alright, let's start. The first question is how do you see yourself as a writer?

I: As a writer, I see myself ehh probably a good writer trying to enhance the experience and reflect everything happened in my life ehh in the essay especially if it is academic essay so everything should be sorted out, or should be considered in the body of the essay.

P: ehh Can you talk about your writing experience?

I: ehh I have started writing ehh mainly two years ago. Although in the beginning, it was very difficult to organize everything, even ehh I have some difficulty paragraphing my own essay due to my own ehh vision loss, I found it very difficult to get this into a very organized academic essay. So, my experience with writing improved time by time ehh and now thanks to the modern technology which could help me organize me organizing my own essay.

I: and how do you feel about writing?

P: I believe that ehh writing is the best way to just vent everything happens in your life, if you cannot talk to anyone, so writing will be your own source to just vent and to get rid of each stress that you might have from anything.

I: and how do you think of the writing tasks in your classes?

P: ehh regarding the writing tasks in my classes, I I love I love writing in any topic. However, I do love them more serious topic, and the more readable ones. I mean the ones that people are interested in. So, for example, I do not like to write about ehh something like stress or pressure. Therefore, people will not be interested in it. I like to write about something about like ehh how to achieve inclusion inside the classroom, how to help people, people who are freshmen at universities. ehh And we all know that people when they enter something from the beginning, they find it quite challenging.

I: ehh do the writing tasks in your classes show your ability as a writer?

P: ehh sometimes yes, and sometimes no. And that happened with me ehh in a previous writing task. I didn't like the topic so I didn't do it well. So, eh my grades has got affected by this, and the complete opposite happened last semester, when a topic came and I loved it, and I reflected on each experience I know about. So, I got a higher grade. It depends on the topic itself.

I: Great, in your opinion, what are the characteristics of meaningful academic writing?

P: ehmm I am the kind of person who believes that grammar could be a good pillar of the writing. I mean that a good content without grammar couldn't fit in in the context, and a good grammar without content also couldn't fit in. So, this is a supply chain that couldn't be something couldn't be lost from it.

I: and how do you feel your progress in writing tasks so far?

P: so far I have some shortfalls. I am not ashamed to say this. However, I have some shortfalls in the writing. Sometimes, I am the person who suffers from a writing block, and writing an academic essay ehh immediately, I have some writing blocks that I suffer from. Ehh and I feel that quite efforts from some teachers as well as lots of writing will mitigate this influences.

I: What strategies are you using in order to develop your writing?

P: ehmm the strategies that I am currently started to use to develop my own style of writing is to hold on the keyboard, and just write without thinking. So, I do not focus on grammar, content, or anything, I just write each and everything even if I wrote an Arabic word, if I wrote a slang expression, if I wrote something not academic, and afterwards when I revise this, I may find some ideas. So, when I write again, it would help me relieving quite a lot, and it is a psychological cycle by the way.

I: Alright, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: "assessment improves your writing ability".

P: I agree but there are some points that need to be considered when we say assessment because assessment differs from one to another. You might assess me as a good writer. However, another teacher could assess me as a good vocabulary chooser, so assessment could not play the integral role of writing rather than practicing a lot.

I: Did you ever get feedback on your writing?

P: Always, I always get feedback from my teachers, ehh and from my expertise when I get a writing task, I always ask for feedback because feedback is the main key to improve the writing. If someone does not know his own faults, and his own defects in something, even if it is not writing, it will not be improved.

I: Alright, do you get feedback from your colleagues?

P: ehh sometimes trustworthy colleagues ehh do good feedback but it is not dependable.

I: And how do you feel about feedback, and what do you usually do with it?

P: It depends also on the kind of teacher who gives this feedback. I'll be honest with you. There are some teachers who always focuses on small and tiny things. For me also as a disabled passive and someone focuses on the line or the font, this is a kind of thing that I do not use. So, I will not be concerned about it. If the feedback is about something that I do not take it in my life, this doesn't make me care about it.

I: and to what extent do you understand the feedback on your errors?

P: ehmm currently from my teacher, the teachers always illustrate very accurately the feedback, and if it is not also ehmm understandable, I can ask about it, and get more clearer and clearer ideas.

I: Do you care on how others worked on their writing tasks?

P: mmm yes, I sometimes evaluate, evaluate other people. So, I can know how to assess and how even to help myself assessing myself but mmm the writing tasks cannot be as one standard. There are lots of ways and methodologies in writing. So, we cannot say this is right, this is wrong. It depends.

I: Do you care what others think about how you did?

P: Who, who are the others?

I: your colleagues

P: It depends about the colleague level of using their language. If their use of language is good. I will care. But if it is not, no. I am more than higher.

I: Ok and how do you give feedback to colleagues?

P: ehh in evaluating, everything I always read it in full ehh at the first time then try to search about the weaknesses, and put it in some good feedback. So, the colleague will not be smashed. The colleague will not be destroyed mentally. And this is what I suffer from from some teachers, when they give a very destroying feedback, it could consequently destroy the mentality of the receiver of the feedback.

I: and how do you find peer feedback beneficial for your own learning and development?

P: ehmm as an English learner, I sometimes do not depend on them because ehmm I review or I revise my feedback, my own essay or my own task before I gave it to someone else. So, their feedback won't be strong as much as it could be or as it could be expected.

I: Do you self-assess your writing?

P: Yes, I do. I do love to do so each time I write because proof reading is the same process as you said assessing. So, when you proof read, you already assess yourself.

I: ehh what do you think of the rubric used in your writing classes?

P: emm, the rubric that I use this semester or at what I am assessed by this semester is kind of good one. It gives me the opportunity to think critically first, and to write. So, it gives me the space to write without fearing of losing more grades, and more marks in my writing task.

I: What do you think of the grades you receive on your writing?

P: As I said before, it depends on the topic. So, if I love the topic, I will get a high grade. If I don't, I will get a low grade as applied to the previous assignment that I had.

I: In what way do you think writing assessment may promote or impede your writing?

P: Can you elaborate?

I: like how do you think writing assessment could develop your writing or could not help you to improve your writing? Do you think it improves your writing or it doesn't improve your writing?

P: When it comes to the current semester, it improved, it especially improved my own writing. I didn't know how to write, how to paragraph, how to put some paragraphs within the essay. So, within the current semester, yeah, true, it improves my style of writing. But I will always believe that ehhm assessment is something related to the teacher. If the teacher knows how to assess very well so the user or the learner will be able to improve very well consequently.

I: Great, and how do you combine your source materials into your writing?

P: ehh

I: How do you use external readings in your writing?

P: aha. External readings, I consider them a very distractive way because when you read something, it gives you some ideas inside your mind, and this could be come as plagiarism. So, and this this comes as a non-stop thing inside your mind. So, you are not able to just not take the idea that you read. If the reading doesn't exist, so you will not become ehh you will not get a plagiarized task. But if you read if I read something like this and this and this, it could it could come as plagiarism.

I: ehhm what do you think of using source materials or external materials in your writing?

P: If it is used in a writing task, so the topic should be far beyond. The topic shouldn't come as an idea inside the reading passage.

I: ehh if you reflect on your academic writing course, what have you learnt?

P: as mentioned before, I have learnt how to put paragraphs, how to write in an organized way, and avoid writing freely without considering the academic essay structure.

I: You have done a number of different ehh sorry, have your beliefs changed?

P: yes, I have some beliefs that each sentence should start with a connector and this semester I got changed, my mentality got changed dramatically especially when I believe that a simple sentence could play a very good structure in an essay.

I: and what contributed to these changes?

P: ehhm I believe that when someone wants to change. So, he should practice. So, I can say that practice, lots of practice, lots of writings contributed to the essay.

I: ehh you have done a number of different types of assignments this semester, can you talk a bit about one or two that were most successful for you?

P: yes, one of them was about ehh was about ehh inclusive teaching that I love to choose this topic to reflect on or to write about. And when I wrote about, the amount of words, the word count I used was very successful, and very great the feedback from the teacher was also great. And I don't have grammar mistakes.

I: ehh Why do you think you did better in these assignments specifically?

P: because ehh I had an experience before about the topic. So, when a student has some experience about a specific topic, he will do good. But for example, the student has a topic that the experience is seldom represented or something, so you will not be able to write about. I can give an example when I last year, when I took my IELTS test, ehh, I had a topic about nuclear weapons, and as I am a student, I didn't know anything about the topic. And this got me very confusion first and to think a lot about the topic before I write because as you know this is an international test. I mean the specific grade to get to obtain.

I: and what about the ones that you did less well in?

P: yeah, it happened, it happened before. I had a topic about nutrition as well and I didn't. I know some information about the topic, but in my own comfort, I do not like to write about this topic. So, I will not do well in it.

I: ehh do you have any further comments, or suggestions, or reflections related to academic writing that you'd like to share?

P: Yes, academic writing is not always related to academic topic so you can write about everything academically, and I hope students should have some choices when they are assigned

some topics to write about. So, the teacher should not give a topic as a one topic and the student is supposed to write about it. If it is something ehmm more show more or less, getting into choices, the students will feel free to choose all even if the students doesn't love the topic itself. So, two topics will give him some relaxation.

I: Thank you so much for this interview, and thank you for your valuable time and support.

P: You are most welcome.

Interview 4 (Meeting ID: 562 063 3675)

I: Good afternoon, Leila

P: Good afternoon.

I: May I record the interview?

P: Yes, sure.

I: Thank you so much.

P: So, the first question is how do you see yourself as a writer?

I: eh I see myself actually improving in the writing skills. However, I do have some eh problems like vocabulary, and some of the contents.

P: Can you tell me about your writing experience?

I: eh actually from the beginning I start to hate writing skills or what I am doing actually related to writing, or reading. But after eh a long time of practicing and taking courses regardless the writing, I start to like it sort of.

I: And how do you feel about writing?

P: Can you explain the question?

I: yes, sure. So, do you feel that writing is an easy task, is it a challenging task? Do you enjoy writing?

P: eh somehow I enjoy writing when I know what should I write, but it is not it is a little bit challenging for me sometimes.

I: and how do you think of the writing tasks in your classes?

P: like the exams?

I: not necessarily the exams, but the writing tasks like the assignments, the writing assignments that you receive in your classes.

P: ehh actually, as I said if I 100% sure of what I'm writing, I see it easy for me to write and correct it by my own-self but if I don't know what shall I do in the exactly in the writing, I see it a little bit challenging and difficult.

I: and do the writing tasks show your ability as a writer?

P: what that mean?

I: like ehhm the writing tasks that you receive in your class, ehhm do they reveal or show your ability as a writer? You get to know what exactly to do so after finishing or working on the writing task, you understand your strong ability as a writer?

P: yes

I: Alright, in your opinion, what are the characteristics of meaningful academic writing?

P: ehh a good content, organization, grammar for sure, and strong vocabulary, words.

I: and how do you feel your progress in writing classes so far?

P: the progress?

I: the progress, yes.

P: ehhm I do have a problem to find, knowing the right or the perfect vocabulary word for what I am writing about, and somehow the grammar, but like not a difficult way but grammar and vocabulary. "Bas" all of the stuff are improving.

I: What strategies do you use in order to develop your writing?

P: mind map, brainstorming.

I: Do they work with you?

P: yes, if I have a sources, enough sources, and credible sources, and I know what I am doing, and what I am gonna write about.

I: Are there any strategies that do not work with you?

P: can you give me an example?

I: ehhm such as creating an outline or maybe ehh

P: the ehh the outline. It is confusing.

I: confusing. ok, eh to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: assessment improves your writing ability?

P: what? Can you repeat it again?

I: Sure. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: assessment improves your writing ability?

P: strongly agree.

I: why?

P: because as you said, it is helpful to develop or enhance your writing strategies or skills also.

I: Did you ever get feedback on your writing?

P: yes, a lot from my doctor, and from my ehh classmates. But I definitely ehh like the doctor's feedback.

I: Why do you like the doctor's feedback?

P: because since you are with a couple of students that came to learn and they don't know anything about what they have to do. So, the professor, he or she, he is the one who are ehh who is ehh credible with the mistakes you do in the writing. He know what is wrong, what is right and what is wrong.

I: and how do you feel about feedback?

P: ehh in the beginning and sort of till now I cared about my grades more than feedback, however feedback helped me or will help me to improve my GPA. So, I am trying to understand feedback so I can redo the mistakes that I did.

I: and what do you usually do with the feedback when you receive it?

P: ehh I try to understand them, and I redo the mistakes or I redo them.

I: and to what extent do you understand the feedback on your errors?

P: unclear sound

I: sorry

P: ehh I may understand them wrongly sometimes.

I: and what do you do when you understand them in an inappropriate way?

P: I redo my mistakes in whatsoever essay or whatsoever writing I did wrong.

I: Do you care about how others worked on their writing tasks?

P: on their writing tasks not mine?

I: like do you care about how they did on their writing tasks?

P: ehhh in the past, I was actually caring for what they do. But for now, I don't care.

I: and do you care about what others think about how you did?

P: how they did?

I: how you did?

P: No

I: why?

P: ehh it is my paper, it is my mistakes. That's it.

I: ok, and how do you give feedback to colleagues?

P: La2 I don't keep feedback to my colleagues. I keep it for myself.

I: ok, So, how do you find peer feedback beneficial for your own learning and development.

P: No, slowly.

I: How do you find peer feedback beneficial for your own learning and development?

P: ehh I don't like when a peer give me a feedback on my writing.

I: ok, ehh do you self-assess your writing?

P: what that mean?

I: do you evaluate your writing?

P: ehh no because I don't know what is wrong and what is right. So, I let the doctor tell me that.

I: and what do you think of the rubric used in your writing classes?

P: and what?

I: what do you think of the rubric used in your writing classes?

P: ehh this is my fourth semester, and I still can't understand any of the rubric that I see in my life.

I: and what do you think of the grades you receive on your writing?

P: helpful.

I: ehmm in what way do you think writing assessment may promote or impede your writing?

P: sorry, repeat it again.

I: in what way do you think writing assessment may allow you improve your writing or may prevent you from improving your writing?

P: strongly agree. I don't know.

I: ok, so do you think that writing assessment will improve your writing or will prevent you from improving your writing ability?

P: improve my writing skills

I: Why?

P: I don't know.

I: How do you incorporate, or how do you combine your source materials into your writing?

P: source materials?

I: yes, the external readings.

P: ehh examples, quotations, examples

I: ok, and what do you think of using external readings in your writing?

P: ya3ny eh?

I: like do you think that they are beneficial, they are not beneficial?

P: the credible ones, actually.

I: are they important?

P: if they are related to the topic that I am talking about, yes.

I: ok, and if you reflect on your academic writing course, what have you learnt?

P: I don't know.

I: emm Have your beliefs changed?

P: in what?

I: in academic writing courses.

P: yes

I: how?

P: ehh I kept developing through my writing skills, and be stubborn, and care more for the feedback rather than the grades.

I: ok, ehh you have done a number of different types of assignments this semester. Can you talk a bit about one or two that were most successful for you?

P: I think it was the second draft for an assignment, ehh I can feel that I get it right; however, the doctor did not give me feedback yet.

I: But why do you think that this is the most successful one for you?

P: ehh I think I corrected the mistakes that the doctor gave it to me in draft one. So, yes.

I: why do you think and what about the ones that you did less well in?

P: the ones that what?

I: that you did less well in?

P: what about it?

I: like why do you think the other assignments were less successful than this one?

P: ehh I was quickly in doing it so I didn't ehh correct it for the last time.

I: So, do you have any further comments, suggestions, and reflections related to academic writing that you'd like to share?

P: No.

I: thank you, Leila for your valuable time.

P: thank you

Interview 5 (Meeting ID: 562 063 3675)

I: Good afternoon, Mahmoud. Thank you so much for coming. May I record the interview?

P: Yes.

I: Thank you so much. So, the first question is how do you see yourself as a writer?

P: mm I think I am a good writer.

I: Can you tell me about your writing experience, please?

P: My writing experience, ehmm I think I can write an a professional essay, and the all summaries like listening summary and reading summary. That's all.

I: and how do you feel about writing?

P: ehmm I love writing of course

I: ok

P: more than listening and reading.

I: ok, and why is that?

P: emm because I think it is more easier "yaani"

I: and how do you think of the writing tasks in your classes?

P: Can you repeat this?

I: yes, sure, ehmm how do you think of the writing tasks in your classes? The writing tasks that you take in your writing classes?

P: I think it ehmm it is easy, but I don't like the integrated essay, the types of writing "yaani". "7agat" I think that essay is easy, but integrated essay is not easy.

I: And do these writing tasks show your ability as a writer?

P: yes

I: ok, great, so, in your opinion, what are the characteristics of meaningful academic writing?

P: ok, (pause) characteristics ehmm, ok, can you repeat this question?

I: yes, sure, in your opinion, what are the characteristics of meaningful academic writing?

P: meaningful academic writing, ok, I think that the writing should the essay should be starting with the introduction, the body, and then the conclusion.

I: Good, any other characteristics?

P: No.

I: and how do you feel your progress in writing tasks so far?

P: The thing that my writing is developing day by day but by my assignments and by the feedback that the doctor give it to me. Ehmm That's all.

I: and what strategies are you using in order to develop your writing?

P: correct my assignment, get the feedback from the doctor.

I: while writing, are there any strategies that you use?

P: No

I: ok, ehh. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: assessment improves your writing ability?

P: yes.

I: Why?

P: because I can correct my mistakes.

I: ok, did you ever get feedback on your writing?

P: yes

I: from your teacher or colleagues or both?

P: ehh both

I: and how do you feel about feedback and what do you usually do with it when you receive it?

P: I think I correct my mistakes.

I: ok, and to what extent do you understand the feedback on your errors?

P: 100% (said with a very low voice)

I: Mahmoud, could you please raise your voice a little bit?

P: Could you please repeat the question again?

I: Sure, so to what extent do you understand the feedback on your errors?

P: 100 %

I: 100% Great. Do you care about how others worked on their writing tasks?

P: no

I: Ok, do you care what others think about how you did?

P: yes

I: why?

P: to work on my mistakes.

I: and how do you give feedback to colleagues?

P: I don't give feedback to my colleagues because I don't have the experience to give the feedback.

I: ok, and how do you find peer feedback beneficial for your own learning and development?

P: yes, I think it beneficial.

I: How, how is it beneficial or useful for you?

P: because I want to increase my writing, yaani to correct my mistakes.

I: ok, do you self-assess your writing?

P: I don't understand this question.

I: Do you evaluate your writing?

P: no

I: ok, do you wish to do that?

P: yes

I: why?

P: mm, to get more proficient to be more professional in writing.

I: ok, and why don't you evaluate your writing?

P: because I don't know how to evaluate my writing.

I: ok, and what do you think of the rubric or the assessment criteria used in your writing classes?

P: give me more information that the to know the grades, or how the essay will be graded.

I: and what do you think of the grades you receive on your writing?

P: I think ehh mm it is not good.

I: ok, so what does that mean?

P: ehh That mean that I ehh I need to increase my writing quality yaani.

I: In what way do you think writing assessment may promote or impede your writing?

P: La2 Can you repeat the question?

I: ok, sure, in what way do you think writing assessment may improve your writing or prevent you from improving your writing?

P: I think ehhm assignments will increase my writing exp quality but I have to do a lot of assignments and get the feedback from my doctor.

I: ok and how do you combine your source materials or external readings into your writing?

P: can you repeat it? Sorry.

I: how do you combine your source materials or external readings in your writing?

P: I don't understand this question.

I: So, in integrated tasks, you may be asked to go for external readings, paraphrase them or use these readings into your writing.

P: yes, in my writing, right?

I: yes, so, how do you use these readings in your writing?

P: summarize it or get the main ideas.

I: ok, so you get the main ideas like copy paste or you try to do something with these ideas?

P: not copy paste but I get the main idea and write it by my own way.

I: ok, and what do you think of this technique like of using ehh source materials in your writing?

P: I think it is helpful, and get will give me a lot of information to write.

I: And if you reflect on your academic writing course, what have you learned?

P: Sorry, the internet is gone.

I: no, no worries.

P: Can you repeat it?

I: Yes, sure. If you reflect on your academic writing course, what have you learned?

P: ok, I have learned how to write an professional essay, and all types of writing.

I: Have your beliefs changed in writing?

P: yes.

I: how?

P: Because in the past, I don't I I didn't love writing but now I love writing.

I: And what contributed to these changes? What helped you to love writing?

P: my doctor, my doctors.

I: ok, ehh you have done a number of different types of writing assignments this semester.

P: yes.

I: can you talk a bit about one or two that were most successful for you?

P: ok, ok, last week, I did an assi essay about the advantages and disadvantages about online learning. I think it is easy.

I: ok, and what made it like one of the most successful assignments for you?

P: because it ehh the topic is easy.

I: and what about the ones you did less well in?

P: less well in, mm I don't remember.

I: ok, do you have any further comments, suggestions or reflections related to academic writing that you would like to share?

P: No.

I: Alright, thank you so much, Mahmoud for your valuable time.

P: ok, thank you, thank you.

Interview 6 (Meeting ID: 562 063 3675)

I: Hello, student. Thank you so much for the interview. May I record the interview, please?

P: yeah, sure.

I: Thank you so much. The first question Is how do you see yourself as a writer?

P: I actually when I do write anything, I feel that I am not like a writer. I am just doing what I am assigned to do because I do not enjoy any writing at all to be honest.

I: Can you tell me about your writing experience, please?

P: Only my experience in writing when I am assigned to do any writing essays in college, or in school, and that was all, "yaani"

I: and how do you feel about writing?

P: ehh writing I feel like it waste my time because it have no relevant with the theme that I want to do, and it is not something that I like at all, and it is not something that I feel that I like at all. Because I feel that I am wasting my time in something I don't like to do.

I: and how do you think of the writing tasks in your classes?

P: ehh The writing task in the classes, it sometimes it is enjoyable depending on the topic I am writing about. Now, for example, now I am writing about heroes and fictional characters. So, it is a little bit enjoying because I look for sources, and I watch some films about fictional heroes. It come to be a little bit enjoying. But when I write about a problem in the eco-system or a problem economically, it is feel a little boring.

I: and do these writing tasks show your ability as a writer?

P: which tasks?

I: the ones in your writing classes.

P: ehh if I am writing about something I like, I put all my effort, if I write about something I like, I feel like I perform better in it more than writing about something about politics for example or an issue in the world. If I am writing about football for example or films, I feel like I write better in these things.

I: In your opinion, what are the characteristics of meaningful academic writing?

P: can you repeat the question?

I: in your opinion, what are the characteristics or the features of meaningful academic writing?

P: meaningful academic writing I think it is to concentrate on the grammar or the language not on the topic. So, I feel like professors should make the topic that students will write about more engaging and something they all like like social media for example so they will all enjoy it and put their efforts on it, and then find their disabilities when they submit it like grammar or language. That's it.

I: and how do you feel about or how do you feel your progress in writing tasks so far?

P: so far the progress is very good because I am writing about fictional hero, the joker, and I like what I write about because I get to enjoy my time a little bit by watching the film or watching scenes of the film, or watching scenes from other films like the dark night. So, I enjoy my time writing about it.

I: What strategies are you using in order to develop your writing?

P: I only concentrate on my grammar, I proofread the essay to look for grammar issues or language issues, and that's it "yaani". I feel when I start writing, all the ideas come to me. So, I do not plan for anything before writing. I just write and it all comes to me.

I: and does this strategy work for you?

P: yeah, I have been doing it from since school. So, yeah it is the one that I am used to, and I cannot I feel when I plan for the outline before it, I do not have main ideas and it waste a little bit of my time, especially if the writing have a time limit. So, I feel that starting to writing at once is more better for me.

I: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: assessment improves your writing ability"?

P: Yeah, I agree with it because when you see the mistakes that you have and the parts that you are weak in like passive for example passive mistakes or spelling mistakes, you work on these parts and you will get stronger in your writing.

I: Did you ever get feedback on your writing?

P: Yes, from my teachers.

I: and did you get feedback from your colleagues?

P: ehh yes, in university, they used to make us read each other's essay to give each other feedbacks.

I: How do you feel about feedback, and what do you usually do when you receive it?

P: The feedback about the teacher, I feel it is more helpful because the teacher is more the professor is more professional in reading the essay, and more professional in correcting it. So, I feel the feedback from the professor is more useful than the colleagues because the colleagues sometimes, they just read it to finish the class or to finish the assigned task that they have. So, if the task is to give your colleague a feedback, you will just read it, and you will not concentrate in it, you will just want to finish it very quickly so you would go and buy something to eat for example.

I: To what extent do you understand the feedback on your errors?

P: ehh from the feedback of my professor, if I do not understand anything, I ask them for more clarification. But from the colleagues, they are just like they gave me feedback about spelling mistake. You write like this word is missing an e, or this word is missing an ed. That's it. "fa" if I don't understand anything, I ask for more clarification.

I: Do you care about how others worked on their writing tasks?

P: No, I do not concentrate on others. I concentrate on what I have to do.

I: and do you care about how others think about how you did?

P: No, I don't care about their opinion because if I got a high grade in the essay, and they my colleagues said it is a bad essay, I will not care because the grade says the opposite.

I: and how do you give feedback to colleagues?

P: ehh I if I found any mistake like a mistake in the theses, or a mistake in topic sentences, I say to them if their thesis can be more can be more clarified or can have more details, I tell them, and if they have any grammar mistakes, I tell them.

I: How do you find peer feedback beneficial for your own learning and development?

P: Peer feedback is beneficial for my developing because it make me know my mistakes and weak points that I have so I work on it and make it more stronger.

I: Do you self-assess your writing?

P: I do not self-assess my writing because what I write is what I know so if I try to assess my own writing, I will not see any mistake except if I have a spelling mistake, or something. But the content in it, I will not know how to correct it or if it is right or wrong, because it is what I wrote.

I: What do you think of the rubric used in your writing classes?

P: I think it is a little bit harsh because some people because I feel like writing is a gift. Some people have this gift, and some others do not. So, it is harsh on the people who struggle in writing because they do not have the gift of writing and the gift of thinking of ideas and deep ideas. So, it is a little bit unfair for them.

I: What do you think of the grades you receive on your writing?

P: I think it is fair if the reason behind it yaanni convince me if I have yanni it depends on the rubric. If the rubric say if I need to get 5, I have to do no spelling and grammar mistakes, I will not feel anything if I have mistakes or grammar got less grades on it because yaani it will be fair because I agree on the rubric and the rubric is assigned to me, and it is obligatory, so I have to follow it. Of course, I feel sad if I got a low grade ehhh but I will try to work on it until I have a higher grade.

I: In what way do you think writing assessment may promote or impede your writing?

P: Can you repeat the question please?

I: So, in what way do you think writing assessment may improve your writing or it impedes your writing, it makes your writing level lower?

P: La2 it improve my writing because I get to practice ehh on my writing and on my speed in writing and my speed in thinking. So, it helps.

I: and how do you combine your source materials into your writing?

P: ehh if I got any quote from a source, I write it, I tell the author and I write it in my work cited page. And if I took any information, and paraphrased it in the essay, I put the source in the works cited page as well.

I: and how do you use readings in your writing?

P: I use readings like articles in my writing, if I got any information or statistics from an article, I put it, if I read a book before and I know something in it, I put this information in the essay. If it is a quote, I will say the author inside the essay itself. And if it is not a quote and I paraphrased the information, I will put the source in the work cited page.

I: What do you think of using source materials in your writing?

P: It is very helpful because it gives, it makes people their mind expand and their ideas expand to more ideas that is related to the topic especially if this topic is something new, or something that they do not know anything about. For example, politics for an 18-year student may not know everything about politics, everything about the world problems.

I: And if you reflect on your academic writing course, what have you learnt?

P: ehh I have learnt to organize my essay, and structure it very well like the introduction have to be a general and the thesis have to be strong, each paragraph should have a topic sentence, and I learnt how to structure the ideas inside each body paragraph, and I learnt how to make a conclusion in a concluding paragraph.

I: Have your beliefs changed?

P: about what?

I: about academic writing

P: ehh I don't think it is changed because I want to ehh my major is Engineering and I feel that writing will not be that beneficial, I will not use it that often in my work, and I feel like Calculus, and physics and chemistry is more beneficial for someone who is majoring in Engineering or Biology for example.

I: You have done a number of different types of assignments this semester. Can you talk a bit about one or two that were most successful for you?

P: So, this semester, I wrote about the joker film. It was the one the most successful in it because I enjoyed it and it was about making an analysis about a scene in the film. I wrote it very well

because I got some feedbacks from my teacher about the structure and the grammar mistakes. So, I fixed those things before submitting. And ehh analyzing the scene was very enjoying because I like to concentrate on details and look for hidden messages and stuff like that. So, it was very enjoying and I think I did very well in it, and the other one was on the effect of social media on students. This one was very helpful because I am like a victim for the social media because I am a student and I use social media everyday so I know how it affects me. So, I did very well in it because I know, I did know what to write about, and I know the ideas and the problems about it. So, I wrote it very well yanni.

I: And what about the ones you did less well in?

P: ehh the one I did less well in was the I have to write an I have to make a reading response about an article. I didn't do very well in it because the article was about ehh politics, and I didn't understand most of the information in the article. So, I didn't make a good response about it.

I: Do you have any further comments, suggestions or reflections related to academic writing that you would like to share?

P: that the professor, I have one suggestion, that the professor should stop making colleagues' feedbacks because it is not very useful, and it waste the time for the students sometimes, and they should make the topic that the students will write about more engaging and something with their knowledgeable area, not something that it is talking, not something that gives them to write an essay about Mars for example. No one will know anything about Mars. That's my suggestion.

I: Any other further comments that you would like to add?

P: No, thank you.

I: Thank you so much dear student.

P: Thank you.

Appendix I: Writing Samples

Sample One (2 pages)

Writing Task

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Face-to-face communication is better than other types of communication, such as letters, email, or telephone calls. In 90 minutes, please write at least 250-word essay and use specific reasons and details to support your answer. Pay attention to the organization of ideas, vocabulary, and grammar.

People spread quotes and information to other people through communication. Although communication is the general definition, there are other communication methods such as face-to-face communication, letters, email, and telephone calls. In my opinion, the best way of communication is the face to face communication in which people can understand each other easily without any troubles. Face-to-face communication and other communication types are common in traits; however, they have advantages and disadvantages.

Some people believe that face-to-face communication is functional than other ways of communication, while others are not. However, both faces to face communication and other ways of communication have drawbacks. In face-to-face communication, there might be many audiences in which not all people will get the correct information; also, with a vast number of audiences, people will lack concentration due to the overlap between the speaker and the listener. On the contrary, other ways of communication, such as using email and letters, might be more functional than onsite communication in which, for example, people might email thousands of people without facing any noise and troubles. For instance, face-to-face communication might be time-consuming. For example, people might take so much time in traffic in order to meet. On the other hand, letters might achieve the purpose of meeting in a short time in which the company owner can send letters to his employees without any stress to do a specific task.

Lack of physical contact might lead to misunderstandings between individuals or even groups of people. Face-to-face communication is the best way humans might have because it allows people to have discussions and conclusions. For example, Face-to-face meetings are usually extremely effective because they allow participants in productive discussions and constructive discussions to work together. “Digital communication is completely different from in-person, face-to-face conversations. One will give you surface insights, and the other really gives you depth”(Joe Gebbia). This indicates that face-to-face discussions will provide us detailed information in order to reach conclusions. On the contrary, other communication methods give a superficial view of things and do not lead to valid conclusions.

Both methods, whether face-to-face or other ways of communication have their time. However, each has its own advantages and disadvantages. In the face to face communication, people used to share knowledge between themselves. However, other communication methods

such as email, telephone, and letters are used to inform people with fast information, but they cannot deliver vast numbers of messages as face-to-face communication.

Sample Two (2 pages)

Writing Task

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Face-to-face communication is better than other types of communication, such as letters, email, or telephone calls. In 90 minutes, please write at least 250-word essay and use specific reasons and details to support your answer. Pay attention to the organization of ideas, vocabulary, and grammar.

Communication is one of the essential aspect between people. It has a lot of types such as writing or speaking. The communication between people is important because it makes their live easier and simple. In fact, I strongly agree with face to face communication is the quicker and easier than other styles of communication because it helps people to avoid misunderstanding and give them a chance to see each other facial expression.

The first reason why face to face communication is the best style because it prevents misunderstanding between people. To clarify, when people writing and emails or letters sometime they do not know how to explain their issues well or the writer do not got their intention right so that make a lot of misunderstanding problem. For example, I had a problem from a month , and I want to clarify it to my professor and the only communication between us is email so I send to her an email but because I do not demonstrate my issue well she did not understand my goal of the email so she did not reply to me . Then, I felt she ignored my email although she read it but did not understand it. After that, I met her on zoom meeting and told her about my issue and she understood it easily and quickly. Moreover, she told me she did not reply because she did not understand me well. I think if I was with her on the class and explains my problem, she will understand it quicker than emails. Hence, face to face communication being the best way of communication because it saves time and avoid misunderstanding especially among students and professor.

The second reason why face to face communication is the most successful way of connecting between people is it helps people to use their facial expressing and body language. To clarify, while people using face to face communication their face expression and body moves helps them to achieve their goals easier than before. For example, if the professor explain a lesson on the class and using his facial body langue's and seeing the student expression so that helps him to understand if the students understood him or not and the student who does not understand the teacher explanation may be understand from his body language so, if effect on both professor and students. Thus, face to face communication is the best way of communication because it gives people the chance to express by their facial expression and their bodies language.

In conclusion, communication is the only way that helps people to get rid of their thought so it has to be face to face to avoid any negative intention and help people to show their body language and facial expression so that will save the time for all people. It is recommended to the professor because it is hard through the pandemic that the world face to meet so it will be better if the professor gives their phone number to the students and access them to call them audio or video calls because those ways makes communication easier as face to face communication and avoid sending emails because it loses a lot of time and effort without achieving the goal.

Sample Three (2 pages)

Writing Task

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Face-to-face communication is better than other types of communication, such as letters, email, or telephone calls. In 90

minutes, please write at least 250-word essay and use specific reasons and details to support your answer. Pay attention to the organization of ideas, vocabulary, and grammar.

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It is a controversial issue that raises a lot of discussions. Many people are applied to communicate with others face to face while others are against it .Nowadays, people have a lot of ways to communicate like sending emails or have telephone calls, but not all of the people are displayed in the same way. In my opinion, I agree with the two ideas because every method of communication has advantages and disadvantages.

Firstly, some people support the idea of communicating with others face to face, and they think that by this method, they will sound better than texting. For example, people who work in a company never share by texting or video calls, and they use to have meetings to feel free to talk. Communicating face to face will force the listener to give the speaker all attention.

Secondly, other people assume that communicating can be more easily by texting an email or using Whatsapp, Facebook, and many other applications that help people communicate from other countries without traveling or spending money on calls. For example, some people don't have the availability to see others because they don't live in the same country, so they have to text each other with these applications.

To conclude, there are many ideas to communicate with people, such as talking face to face, phone calls, and texting. In my opinion, there are a lot of positives for each way of communication, and we should use them all to help us communicate easily because in some situations we don't have the option to talk face to face due to lack of time and distance.

Sample Four (1 page)

Writing Task

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Face-to-face communication is better than other types of communication, such as letters, email, or telephone calls. In 90 minutes, please write at least 250-word essay and use specific reasons and details to support your answer. Pay attention to the organization of ideas, vocabulary, and grammar.

Communication between people is now an essential and indispensable routine in every one's daily life. That is because in the midst of the crises communication is the only solution that could rescue the individuals from missing their loved ones. So, it is irrational that one can be found in the universe without having a sort of communication regardless of the methodology that is used. According to the statement, two main ways of communication are the face to face and the distant connections.

The first existing way of communicating between people is the face to face meetings or visits. In other words, it is preferable for all of people to meet in person to discuss what they aim without restrictions. They can get along easily and communicate actively together. In addition, when people organize the In person meetings, they are more likely to understand each other effectively thereby practicing gestures, making ice-breakers and so on. For example, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, people tended to reduce their in person communications and turned to the online systems. This was applied upon all the fields. This example highlights the fact that in person meetings are very beneficial for all of people. Thus, one can conclude by saying that the more direct meetings that could be organized, the more successful achievements could be made.

The second way of communication is the distant connection. That basically means, people can communicate by correspondences via emails, letters or online text messages. Although it seems that this way is rapid and can fulfill most of things, it cannot replace the integral role that in person meetings do. If individuals can easily be in touch just at the convenient time they choose, they will not be able to express their ideas freely and their work will not be accomplished with the same rate of the in person meeting . For example, the online education has turned to be impacted from the online system. Students were exposed to something they haven't experienced in before. Just for the first time, they were required to gain the skills as soon as they could. This example clearly shows that other than the physical meetings that could happen, nothing can compensate for this. Therefore, one can say with some confidence that the more indirect meetings, the more outcomes we can obtain.

In conclusion, it is the exact time for everyone to wake up before it is too late. we should realize the importance of communication in general and it involves the person to enhance his or her people skills. as far as I am concerned, two indispensable ways that communication depend on are the face to face meetings and the distant meetings. I really recommend that people should compromise between both and work relentlessly to get the most out of it.

Sample Five (1 page)

Writing Task

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Face-to-face communication is better than other types of communication, such as letters, email, or telephone calls. In 90 minutes, please write at least 250-word essay and use specific reasons and details to support your answer. Pay attention to the organization of ideas, vocabulary, and grammar.

Has the coronavirus affected the system of education in Egypt?. The effect is clear on the Egyptian education system because today all students and teachers are staying at home without going to schools and universities. Although most universities decided to stop traditional lectures, the university authorities have decided to put a new system of education by using online instruction. However, there are two main reasons why the face to face instruction is more effective than online, which are saving time and more effective communication.

The main reason why traditional education is better than online is to save time. Students can do many activities with their teachers during lectures in schools or universities. To illustrate, when students used to go to schools before the outbreak of the coronavirus, they learned many skills in English such as writing, reading, and doing some exams during the lecture to learn from their mistakes. However, when using online instruction, they can not do all these activities like they used to do because almost one of the teachers or students has a problem with the internet such as it is very slow or the electricity is cut so they can not hear others. As a result, most people support that traditional education is more saving time than online instruction.

The second important reason why students prefer traditional teaching rather than online classes is communication. Although communication among students is found in online education, the cooperation of students in the classroom has more positive effects than cooperation by using the Internet. For instance, when students were at the university and the professor divided them into small groups to do one project together, every member in each group suggested some ideas and they discussed these ideas to choose and design the best idea. Nevertheless, because these activities are hand made such as designing Engineering projects, they can not do these activities now. Thus, they believe that traditional instruction has more benefits than online.

In conclusion, there are two reasons why students believe that traditional education is more effective than online, which saves time and is more positive cooperation. Although they believe that traditional instruction is the best way to improve students' education skills, there are new emergency circumstances due to coronavirus which is forcing all schools and universities to stop all traditional lectures and use online instruction to continue the academic semester.

Sample Six (2 pages)

Writing Task

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Face-to-face communication is better than other types of communication, such as letters, email, or telephone calls. In 90 minutes, please write at least 250-word essay and use specific reasons and details to support your answer. Pay attention to the organization of ideas, vocabulary, and grammar.

Face-to-Face Communication is the Best!

Because of the currently undergoing pandemic people are experiencing novel means of communication. New ways of communication such as email, virtual meetings, phone calls and text messages are now heavily depended on instead of conventional face to face communication. This shift raises the question of whether these new means of communication are better than face to face communication or not. Although some people might find them more convenient, I believe face to face communication is far better then other ways of communication. I believe so because face to face communication is more interactive, facilitates clear communication and gives an overall better experience.

To begin with, face to face communication is more interactive than other ways of communication. In other words, there are no limitations on how people can interact with each other. In contrast, virtual meetings and other methods of communication are limited by so many factors such as the quality of the internet connection, the geographic distance between people interacting virtually and other limitations. To illustrate, when universities shifted to online operation and students were forced to attend classes online, many of them reported the inability to interact with their professors and peers as they used to do in normal classes. In short, other ways of communication limit the interactivity which face to face communication offers without limitations. This, however, is not the only reason for it to be the best communication method.

Another reason is that face to face communication eases clearer communication. This means that conveying a message is far easier in situations where face to face communication is employed. This is best proven by our example of online classes. Although professors and teachers were doing their best, more than 50% of the students (made up stats) faced difficulties understanding what their professors were explaining. Not only that, but professors as well faced difficulties communicating ideas due to the new virtual environment. In addition, not being familiar with technologies such as video conferencing impedes communication further. In contrast, people are by nature adapted to face to face communication which makes communicating ideas in face to face set-ups fare easier than any other method of communication. In addition to this, one final reason is worth emphasizing which is the overall experience.

Finally, the overall experience of any mean of communication is outmatched by that of face to face communication. This is because when you are communicating with people, you are communicating with them in their environment. The environment of communication, in contrast with this of other ways of communication, is more “alive”. To illustrate this point further, imagine meaning with someone virtually on a zoom meeting. Even though zoom meetings provide both visual and audible communication (which is better than text messages and phone calls), they fail to “communicate” the environment. Meeting someone virtually is never the same as meeting someone in a cafe or in a garden. Although you are hypothetically sitting with someone, you are still in your room, sitting on your desk and staring at a screen in your laptop/phone. The environment factor as studies show (made up studies) is very important to the experience of people communicating.

To summarize, even though some people might find communicating through emails and virtual meetings better and easier, I believe face to face communication is better than any other way of communication. This is due to the fact that face to face communication is more interactive, helps conveying clearer messages, and, lastly, provides a better overall experience. This calls for the emergency of finding a solution for the current situation so that less people are suffering from troublesome zoom meetings and awkward virtual communication moments.

Sample Seven (1 page)

Writing Task

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Face-to-face communication is better than other types of communication, such as letters, email, or telephone calls. In 90 minutes, please write at least 250-word essay and use specific reasons and details to support your answer. Pay attention to the organization of ideas, vocabulary, and grammar.

Waiting for Host to Start the Meeting

Around a year ago, we used to wake up, ready to go to school or to university and meet our friends and professors. Now, we just open our laptops and sit in front of it all day long in online classes. We never really experienced online learning; our interaction with online learning was restricted to extra youtube videos for more understanding of material we took in school or university. Now that we have experienced both, the question raises itself: to what extent is face-to-face learning better than online learning? In my perception, I view that face-to-face learning is completely better than online learning; this is because online learning leads to decrease in understanding of material and decrease in concentration.

To begin with, face-to-face communication allows body language interpretation, which in turn leads to better understanding of material. A student sitting in a class will have his/her teacher look him/her in the eye or telling them to leave the phone. Teachers may understand whether the class comprehends the material or not by looking at body language and therefore change their way of explaining things if they feel the class does not understand. However, in online learning, more often than not, students have their cameras off. Students may not understand the material, but since there is no body language interpretation, teachers will not know that students do not understand. For that reason, face-to-face communication deems itself more effective.

To add on, another reason why face-to-face learning is better than online is that concentration levels decrease in online sessions. When one is at home, they are more relaxed; they may be sitting in bed, for instance. There may be external factors such as siblings or parents, not to mention the fact that the internet connection may be unstable from both the tutor's or the student's side. This, in turn, leads students to lose their concentration. Not only that, but also, in school or in university, there is human interaction, which can help many refreshes and be able to continue their day. At home, however, there is minimal human interaction, and this can lead to boredom- another factor that leads to loss of focus.

To conclude, face-to-face communications causes better communication between teachers and students, due to body language interpretation and increase in concentration levels. The ways in which online learning could be made more effective could be looked into by teachers and policy-makers.

Sample Eight (1 page)

Writing Task

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Face-to-face communication is better than other types of communication, such as letters, email, or telephone calls. In 90 minutes, please write at least 250-word essay and use specific reasons and details to support your answer. Pay attention to the organization of ideas, vocabulary, and grammar.

Considering how the human technology revolutionised, it's definitely had a drastic impact on how we communicate with our close ones. Regarding the debate between whether it is better to communicate face to face or through electronics, I adamantly stand with face to face communication because I believe many people including me would view the aftermath of it as inevitably vital.

Strongly biased to my view, I uphold resolute belief that although others may adopt a different standpoint, this topic offers a lot of insights. For instance, face to face communication provides special bonds and warmth between people, considering how studies show that even though those who immigrated away from their families communicate with them, they still develop a desolated sense of loneliness. Additionally, using the body language and facial expressions in face to face communication, people find it easier to build up their relationships and promote the trust within, on account of the fact that it has also been proven how those who communicate with each other only through online methods don't develop the sentiment of trust and safety that they do with people they see everyday.

Concisely, I am absolutely arduous when I say I stand with face to face communication, as I believe that if we pragmatically regard its notable points, we will acknowledge the gratifying gains which many people -including me- view as inevitably vital.

Sample Nine (2 pages)

Writing Task

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Face-to-face communication is better than other types of communication, such as letters, email, or telephone calls. In 90 minutes, please write at least 250-word essay and use specific reasons and details to support your answer. Pay attention to the organization of ideas, vocabulary, and grammar.

Nowadays, everything has become online and the communication face to face has become very little. However, communication between people face to face is better than communication by social networks. The best two reasons for students to make them communicate face to face are to make education more effective for students and to increase the interaction of students with each other.

The main reason for students to make them communicate face to face is to make education more effective for students. Communication face to face makes students learn Knowledge and skills more than online communication because it makes students understand quickly and know as they can all courses. For instance, when I study online, I cannot understand the materials well and I cannot communicate with other students. Nevertheless, when I went to study face to face, it was easy and understood well. Therefore, I prefer face to face.

Another main reason for students to make them communicate face to face is to increase the interaction of students with each other. Communication face to face makes student interaction with others and makes them more social. Moreover, they can learn more experience form each other. For example, when I interact with my friends in the class, I learn more skills. Therefore, I believe that communicating face to face makes the students more interactive.

To conclude, the two important causes that make communication face to face better than online are more active and deal with others. I recommend that the government return everything face to face to deal with others.

Sample Ten (3 pages)

Writing Task

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Face-to-face communication is better than other types of communication, such as letters, email, or telephone calls. In 90 minutes, please write at least 250-word essay and use specific reasons and details to support your answer. Pay attention to the organization of ideas, vocabulary, and grammar.

Communication is significant in our lives because it helps us to understand ourselves and even understand others. According to the Oxford dictionary [n.d.]it means the process, in which people can express their feelings and their opinions. At the very beginning, people used the carrier pigeons to send each other messages and letters. After that, they started using sell phones in order to make calls. Overtime, they use the online communication to interact with each other through using Facebook, and Whatsapp. As a matter of fact, different kinds of online communication, such as sell phones and email are better than face to face communication because it facilitates communication among people professionally and personally.

Online communication makes people's work easier than before by saving too much time and increasing their productivity. To clarify, online communication plays a vital role in saving people's time specifically those who work. They can easily do their work and organize conferences using Zoom and other programs; for example, online communication saves students' time, so students can spend more time studying rather than spending hours and hours going to schools and universities; in addition, it increases people's productivity by allowing them to work more and make profits; in addition, many you tubers nowadays starts producing more content in their channels since they have a lot of free time; moreover, doctors can increase their productivity by allowing patients to book appointments online; to exemplify, many people start using [Vezeeta] application to book appointments while staying at home. Hence, other types of communication and online communication makes work flexible and convenient.

As important as online communication and its positive effect on facilitating people's work, it plays a pivotal role in making communication among people easy by enhancing social interaction and narrowing the gap among them. Although some people can think that face to face communication is better than other types of communication since it is basically about social interaction online communication helps people to interact and socialize. In other words, online communication increases people's interaction for it allows people to get to know each other more by getting involved in social groups on Facebook, Whatsapp, Tel gram, and other applications. This clearly shows that it helps people in a society to interact; furthermore, it helps individuals to communicate and express their feelings and speaking with people by making phone calls or even video calls that can enable everyone to notice the body language of the person and whether he feels upset or happy. Meanwhile, it closes the gap among people by allowing immigrants and those who are far away from their countries to interact with their parents and their friends by using some applications that not only allow them to speak or send messages, such as Skip and Viber, but they allow them to see the faces of their loved ones as well. This highlights that online communication helps people to get closer and feel connected, whereas they are far away from each other; therefore, online communication enhances the social interaction among people and makes them closer to each other.

In conclusion, various types of online communication play a fundamental role not only in facilitating communication among people in work, but also in making communication among them as persons easier than before. It makes people's work easy through saving their time and helping them to be flexible that allow them to be productive and work more; in addition, it makes the communication among people convenient by enhancing social interaction and closing the gap

among them. At the end, people cannot live without communication because they are social animals, and they always want to feel connected and be part of the group.

Sample Eleven (1 page)

Writing Task

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Face-to-face communication is better than other types of communication, such as letters, email, or telephone calls. In 90 minutes, please write at least 250-word essay and use specific reasons and details to support your answer. Pay attention to the organization of ideas, vocabulary, and grammar.

Technological advancement facilitates the way we communicate by a wide array of means. The busy pace of life and the availability of online communication forms made people avoid face to face communications and rely more on other types of communication such as letters, email, or telephone calls. For sure, face to face methods of communication is most effective. Still, the different ways of communication can help in many ways to eliminate the borders of communications that might arise from urgent situations such as the pandemic.

I agree that nothing can replace the benefits of face-to-face communication. We can reach each other via e-mails, social media platforms, or phones, but messages there are bigger chances for our messages to be misinterpreted. First, face to face communication allows for better opportunities to fully understand one person's words, attitudes, facial expressions, body language, feelings, and tone of voice. These characteristics make it easier for people to engage and build connections with each other. Moreover, we can detect if the one we are communicating with is lying or telling the truth from these attributes.

Besides, face-to-face communication eliminates the feelings of stress and isolation that resulted from the time we spend in front of the computer and smart screens. Once I read a blog post that discusses that Idea and concluded that the feelings and connections purple build in the first five minutes of face-to-face communication need more than three hours of other ways of communication to communicate the same feelings.

To sum up, face to face communication is the most effective way of communication. Nothing can compete it as it serves to comprehend the other person's attitudes, communicate our feelings, and decrease stress.

Sample Twelve (2 pages)

Writing Task

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Face-to-face communication is better than other types of communication, such as letters, email, or telephone calls. In 90 minutes, please write at least 250-word essay and use specific reasons and details to support your answer. Pay attention to the organization of ideas, vocabulary, and grammar.

Face-to-face communication or other ways

Nowadays, the ways people use to communicate with each other have significantly been developed thanks to the huge technological advance in the past century. Many people today prefer to call, text, or email their relatives and friends instead of meeting them face-to-face. Honestly, face-to-face communication can be more challenging and take more effort than other communication methods. However, it still has countless great benefits that makes it better than nearly all other ways of communication. Two important ones of these benefits are: it takes less time to deliver and understand ideas easily and clearly, and it helps reducing the stress resulting from long hours of using technological devices.

First of all, almost all people can agree that face-to-face communication is the best way for communicating one's point of view with the best clarity and least possible amount of time. This happens due to the help of non-verbal cues such as body language and facial expressions. When one is communicating with others through a phone call or text messages, the lack of non-verbal cues makes one unable to correctly interpret how others feel because one can only do so if they can see others' facial expressions. Also, when one is engaging in a direct conversation, they can deliver their ideas and get others' responses much faster than through emails or letters because the respondents would be forced to reply in the same instant. For example, it has been found that in a business meeting, a single five-minute conversation can eliminate fifteen back and forth emails. This shows why face-to-face communication is much better than any other way when someone wants to discuss an important matter.

Secondly and most importantly, in this age, many people are required to sit in front of digital screens most of the day to learn, work, or even entertain themselves. This behavior can damage people's, brains and eyes, decrease their productivity and efficiency, and can make them disconnected from their families and associates, which gradually increases their stress levels and can cause them serious psychological disturbances. However, when people try to shift as many as possible of their digital conversations to frontal ones, they start feeling the difference between just typing and sending emotionless messages that others can just ignore and the other choice of engaging in healthier and funnier conversations that convey ideas and emotions. That is why face-to-face communication reduces the stress of everyday tasks and replenishes the energy needed to perform these tasks so people can be more productive and effective.

To sum up, while it is easier to choose to call a friend to check them and then finish the call while still feeling the need to actually seeing them, or to send an email to the manager to discuss with them a new idea and then wait for two days or more to get a response, it would be much faster and more enjoyable to put in the effort of arranging a meeting to meet with them face-to-face. This would not only take less time to achieve your goal of the meeting, but it will also reduce the stress of the task by disconnecting you for a while from the online world and connecting you back to the real one.

Appendix J: Writing Flyer



Please Participate in a Research Project

*University Students' Perceptions of Writing
Assessment*

By

***Writing on an argumentative
topic***

<p>Word count At least 250</p>	<p>Gift Receiving feedback on your writing</p>	<p>Deadline for Sending Your Writing Anytime till Thursday, April 8, 2021</p>
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