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A Forum for and by Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages

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The Development of the *Study Buddy Map*, A Tool for L2 Conversation-Partner Programs

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Benjamin L. McMurry, Brigham Young University, Utah, USA

Abstract

This is part two of a two-part series on L2 conversation-partner programs. The first part (James, Henrichsen, Tanner, & McMurry, 2019) described a particular conversation-partner program (Study Buddies) and outlined its history. It then reported the results of a needs analysis and evaluation of the program. To conclude, it made three recommendations: (a) revise the pairing process, (b) provide written guidelines for participants, and (c) plan activities beyond the initial orientation meeting. This second part describes our activities following up on the second of these recommendations. It outlines the design, development, implementation, and evaluation of a written product (the Study Buddy Map) created to provide instructional support for both participants in a conversation-partner dyad. It also directs readers to a website from which they can download their own *Study Buddy Map*.

Key words: ESL, foreign language learning, conversation partners, Study Buddy Map, program evaluation, peer tutoring

Introduction

After conducting the needs analysis and evaluation for the Study Buddy program at Brigham Young University's English Language Center (see James, et al., 2019, for details), we decided to address our second recommendation, that of providing written guidelines for Study Buddy tutors, as our next step in program improvement. These guidelines eventually took the form of the *Study Buddy Map: An English Language Tutoring Tool*. This map is a paper, brochure-type resource that provides tutors with prompts for topics and activities to use during Study Buddy sessions. This tool is meant to guide students through conversations and level-appropriate exercises.

Product Design and Development

Nearly a year before designing the *Study Buddy Map*, the lead researcher and author on our team realized that she wanted to create something that would be useful for people who wanted to help language learners. Seeking to be helpful, without knowing how to help, can be a frustrating experience for the would-be helpers. It was precisely this predicament that we wanted to remedy by creating a tool that volunteers could use when they were working as conversation partners with language learners.

Design Decisions, Specifications, and Constraints

Keeping in mind that our Study Buddy program was an extracurricular activity, we felt the need to make sure that the product we provided for the participants was not overwhelming or discouraging. Many types of courses, workshops, manuals, and books exist that teach people how to tutor or mentor in a language, but busy college students often don't have time to attend time-consuming workshops or read lengthy manuals or books. They need something that they can pick up, quickly peruse, and then use as a reference during their conversation-partner sessions, leading them to success. In other words, the product we envisioned needed to be more than just a list of guidelines, and it also needed to motivate the students to continue with their study sessions. It also had to be sufficiently flexible and provide enough content to get partners through a semester of Study Buddy sessions without the pressure of needing to do every assignment listed. The product needed to be simple enough that the students could refer to topics and follow the outline and come away feeling successful (Pawlak & Mystkowska-Wiertelak, 2015).

The purpose of the product was not to make the students into professional tutors, but rather to help get partners speaking and sharing their own language with their partner in a way that would benefit them both (Cohen, Kulik, & Kulik, 1982). Perry and Hart, (2012) recommend that such a product should provide hands-on training that will provide partners with enough experience and guidelines that they will continue to help others speak their language and become more and more confident as they do so. Kang (2005) supports this idea, saying that it is important for guidelines to be positive and encouraging. Knowing that continual practice and persistence is what will make students more productive in their target language, the primary goal was to create a tool that would enable partners' desire and will-

ingness to continue with their study sessions. When study session time increases, speaking time in the desired language increases (Pawlak & Mystkowska-Wiertelak, 2015), thus improving speaking skills.

Today, the term *technology* often infers an electronic product, a website, or a handheld app, yet *technology* can also include any sort of scientific knowledge that helps people solve a problem or perform a task (Galbraith, 1967, p. 12, as cited by Heinich, Molenda, Russell, & Smaldino, 2002, p. 21). Initially, we considered creating an app or a website to provide topics and hints for the Study Buddy pairs, but we finally decided that a tangible object that could work as a reference and a guide would be more usable. Thus, we decided it would be best to create a simplified tool using an old-fashioned technology, a paper product that resembled a map. During partner sessions, this tangible object would be a reminder of the task at hand. At other times, it would serve as a reminder to meet with their partner. Of course, the tool needed to look professional and use warm and welcoming colors, so it would not intimidate or scare away the novice partners.

The characteristics and content we considered necessary for the tool included the following criteria:

- Clear, clean design features that make it easy to read
- Welcoming colors and graphics that are not intimidating to volunteers
- Examples and a simple structure for partner sessions
- Tips for working with and helping people
- A size that fits in a notebook or binder
- A design that folds up, so a large amount of content could fit in a small space
- Lesson or conversation session outlines that follow the ROPPPES model (defined below)
- Leveled content that fits with the ACTFL speaking proficiency levels
- Limited content so that reading would not take very long

The idea of “map” being a part of the project title was attractive, because the term connotes a journey and progress. Thinking that learning a language with a new friend can be like a journey led to the title *Study Buddy Map: An English Language Tutoring Tool*.

Development Process

After identifying these specifications, we decided to develop a large folding card, similar to a road map. We found successful educational reference materials in a similar format (Berman, 2008; Kershul, 2002) that were either laminated or printed on thick glossy paper, and we determined that either of these options would fit the needs discussed. Printing on 11" x 17" paper would allow our product to be folded into a small enough package to fit into a student's notebook for protection and be large enough for a considerable amount of reference material and guidance. A thick glossy paper would be less expensive than laminating paper in plastic—an important consideration when dealing with a limited budget.

One side of the card was reserved for the basic tips and information that student tutors would most likely need to know to get them started with their language partner. These tips were derived from the researchers' own experiences with tutoring, as well as from the time spent as a Study Buddy during the previous year. The map contained sections for the tutor as well as the learner, in the hope that they would make each of them feel more comfortable in their respective roles and encourage them to jump in and practice what they were learning.

The other side of the *Study Buddy Map* was reserved for conversation topics that the students could choose from for their conversation sessions. Eight general topics were chosen and divided according to language difficulty, so they could neatly fit into the four folded sections of the product. The eight topics were lined up across the page horizontally and appeared in different colored boxes. Three levels of difficulty were lined up vertically with novice level units at the top and then moving down through intermediate and advanced levels. The levels were based on the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages' (ACTFL) guidelines (Swender, 2012) and specified word-level vocabulary production at the novice level, sentence-level vocabulary production at the intermediate level, and more advanced paragraph-level production at the more advanced level. None of these eight topics was so demanding or time consuming that learners would feel tied down. Rather, they were free flowing to encourage open discussion and keep the excitement and willingness to communicate at a higher level.

Product Description

The final version of the *Study Buddy Map* was printed on a sturdy gloss paper in muted orange and blue. The 11" x 17" paper was positioned horizontally and has three score marks so the map folds like an accordion into a 4-1/4" x 11" document. The left front section has the title followed by a drawing of two friendly study partners and an encouraging explanation of the map's purpose (see Figure 1). The colors were selected to be welcoming and comfortable in order to attract novice tutors, who may feel intimidated by a bold, daring, or sleek design. The words, confident and comfortable, are used to promote confidence for both the tutor and the learner.

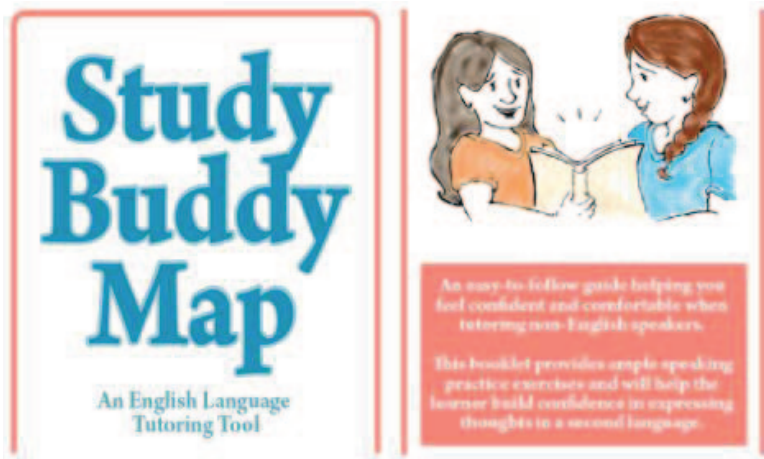


Figure 1. Front section of the Study Buddy Map

The center section of the map front serves two purposes. The section has a “Welcome” area that explains what a Study Buddy is and where to find more information (at studybuddymap.com). It also lists pointers for those engaging in the program or working with a language learning partner in general (see Figure 2). There are do’s and don’ts intermingled with ideas for activities and examples of sensitive topics.

Welcome Study Buddies!

This is a program that pairs the learners of two different languages. You both get to teach your language, learn the other language, and make a friend in the process.

How does it work?

Find a partner who speaks a language you want to learn and who wants to learn your language and arrange to meet each week for an hour.

Follow the outline on the right. Spend half the time on one language then switch roles and work on the second language.

It's easy!

For more information, check out the website.
www.StudyBuddyMap.com

Things to Remember

- Get to know each other, become friends, and get comfortable.
- Be encouraging and positive. Learning a language takes time.
- Participate equally. Do not let one person do all of the talking.
- Exchange proverbs, tongue twisters, riddles, poetry, jokes, & humor.
- Don't be over concerned with grammar or pronunciation unless it interferes with understanding.
- Role play to help each other practice speaking in different situations.
- Avoid correcting homework during conversation time.
- Be sensitive to cultures. Ask if it is okay to discuss certain things (like how old someone is).
- Compare traditions like holidays and folk remedies.
- Be patient, relax, and enjoy!
- It is better to share free-flowing thoughts or ideas than to stumble through exact language structure.

Figure 2. Welcome area of the Study Buddy Map

The bottom part of this section has tips for the tutor and tips for the learner (see Figure 3). The tips include practical advice that may seem natural to an experienced teacher, but are not so obvious to novice tutors and should be made very clear. It is also important to make sure that the learners are comfortable with their new learning environment so basic tips, like “pay attention to your partner’s pronunciation” and “take notes,” are included with the less obvious learning strategies to boost the confidence level of those partners who may be extra nervous. There is a little bit of room at the bottom of each list for notes, in case other ideas need to be recorded by either the tutor or the learner. This section is not meant to be all-inclusive, but rather helps to boost partners’ confidence and encourage them to begin. As participants work through a few sessions with each other, the expectation is that the partners will get comfortable with the process and not have to refer to the *Study Buddy Map* as much as they did in the beginning.

Tutor Tips	Learner Tips
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Speak in clear and natural phrases, slower with beginners. 2. Use relaxed, informal language. 3. Repeat and paraphrase if necessary. 4. Use gestures and facial expressions. 5. Use nonverbal cues like pointing or pantomiming. 6. Ask and answer questions to encourage conversation. 7. Model reading and have your partner copy pronunciation, intonation, phrasing, and stress. 8. Take mental or written notes of mistakes, discuss after they are done talking—don't interrupt. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pay attention to your partner's pronunciation. 2. Ask for help. Ask your partner to repeat or say things in a different way if needed. 3. Ask for examples, drawings, or to have things written down. 4. Be aware of your surroundings. Pay attention. 5. Keep a notebook for things you are learning. Record assignments, questions, and ideas for new topics. 6. Compare your new environment and learning with your own to help you remember. 7. Speak your new language as much as you can.

Figure 3. Tips section of the Study Buddy Map

The final section on the front of the map provides an outline for a Study Buddy session that starts with three steps for the partners to follow: choose a topic, pick the level of difficulty, and pop the activities into the outline. The outline then shows seven sections, which follow the ROPPPES model of teaching, a format for planning effective ESL lessons used at the BYU's ELC. The ROPPPES model also explains what to do, in addition to showing an example in italicized text to make sure the instructions are clear (see Figure 4). When the map is folded, this outline is visible on the outside so that it can be referred to on a regular basis. As the Study Buddy partners follow the guided outline, they will find themselves participating in the ROPPPES model. This includes reviewing previous sessions (R=review), planning what to work on in the session (O=overview), sharing new information (P=present), encouraging partner learning (P=practice), coaxing the new skills from the partner (P=perform), recognizing, encouraging, and assessing progress (E=evaluate), and helping fix mistakes, summarizing what was learned during the session, and confirming a meeting time and plan for the next session (S=summarize). These steps were chosen for this outline to increase the success of the Study Buddy partners in their conversation sessions.

Outline

Map out what to do during your Study Buddy session in a few easy steps.

- 1. With your partner, choose a topic from the back side of this map.**
- 2. Pick the level of difficulty, from one star to three stars. You can adapt a little as you go if you need to.**
- 3. Pop the activities into the outline below and begin speaking!**

Review — This is where you get to know each other and decide which topics you want to work with. After your first session, use this time to connect to your previous session. Review the things you learned last time to help you both remember. *Hi! Tell me about yourself. Or let's see if you remember the days of the week that we learned in our last session.*

Overview — Take a moment to set a goal for your time together. *At the end of our Study Buddy session, my partner will be able to name 20–30 new foods in my language.*

Present — The first part in each topic section encourages you to present information. Use pictures, things from home, the Internet, drawings, or whatever you can to share the information with your partner. You don't have to take much time, just get new info out

Figure 4. Outline section of the Study Buddy Map

The back side of the map is divided into eight columns, each bearing the title of a different theme along with conversation ideas that correlate with that theme (see Figure 5). The themes are typical conversation topics that learners from all culture backgrounds should feel comfortable discussing, but they can also be used as general ideas for structure if another topic is desired. The lesson ideas are designed to train the partners in effective language conversations and to support their continual Study Buddy sessions, not to be inclusive in structure, vocabulary lists, or themes.

Dates & Time ★	Family & Careers ★	Food & Shopping ★
<p>Display a calendar and review the months of the year, days of the week, and how to say numbers for days. "This is the fifth."</p> <p>Practice giving details about a date on the calendar and take turns naming others. "What was yesterday's date?" "My birthday is on Monday, April 10th."</p> <p>Point to days on the calendar and ask for the correct date.</p> <p>Review—Ask questions like: "What day is before Saturday?" "What months are in the fall?"</p>	<p>Learn vocabulary relating to families, e.g., Mom, dad, aunt, uncle, etc.</p> <p>Share pictures of your families and discuss features, e.g., age, hair and eye color, size, etc.</p> <p>Ask your partner to describe family members (or other people) using vocabulary you have discussed. Use real pictures or draw them as needed.</p> <p>Review—Quiz your partner on the words used for relatives, e.g., cousin, aunt, brother, etc.</p>	<p>Show pictures of food and teach or review their names.</p> <p>Discuss which foods you both like or dislike.</p> <p>Let your partner talk about typical foods, favorite foods, or foods enjoyed since coming to this place.</p> <p>Fieldtrip—grocery store.</p>
★★	★★★	★★
<p>Demonstrate how to tell time. Review different ways to say it. "It's one twenty." "It's 20 minutes past one." "It's 20 after one."</p>	<p>Introduce several occupations and describe the kind of work involved. Show pictures or act out the job to make it easier to</p>	<p>Look at a menu from a popular place to eat and describe typical meals in the area.</p>

Figure 5. Conversations organized by topics in the Study Buddy Map

The columns on the back of the map have the same shades of orange and blue as the front to separate them from one another, and they are each divided into three sections. The three sections are marked with a single star, two stars, or three stars, representing *novice*, *intermediate*, and *advanced* levels respectively (see Figure 6). These levels follow the ACTFL guidelines which break the proficiency levels of language learners into five categories. The map uses the first three levels, as noted above.

The lessons or conversation sessions are also designed to have the three P segments from the ROPPPES model separated so the partners can better plan their Study Buddy session using the outline on the front of the map. Each lesson (see Figures 5 and 6) has a portion that presents, a second portion that allows practice, and a third that asks for performance of some type. There are also occasional bonus activities and fieldtrip ideas throughout the lessons to inspire the partners to apply their learning to real experiences. The final feature on the back of the map is a small graph in the bottom right corner defining the stars by the level names (see Figure 6).

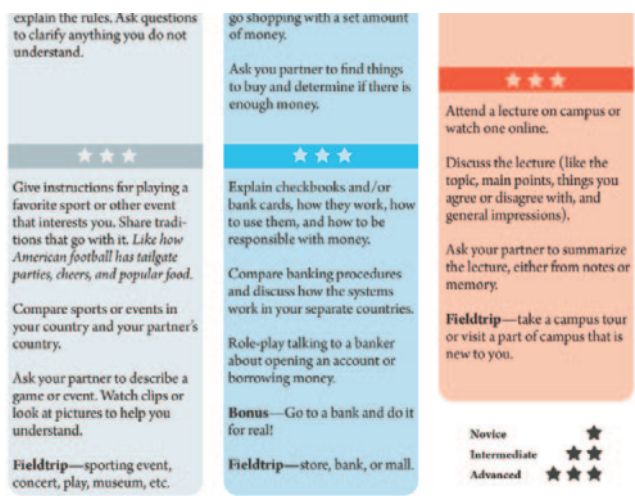


Figure 6. Stars in the Study Buddy Map to indicate activity levels

The maps were completed using *Adobe Illustrator* and printed at the university’s print shop. The order was paid for with a grant provided by the ELC with the expectation of using them for the Study Buddy program the following semester.

Implementation and Evaluation of the Study Buddy Map

“I think the Study Buddy map is suited for Study Buddies that need help getting started with their sessions together and for someone who is very uncomfortable with the idea of teaching language to someone else.” This quote from the survey about the *Study Buddy Map* reveals the two positive outcomes that are hoped to be gained from the creation of the tool; competence and confidence from the Study Buddy partners.

The second evaluation for this project was conducted regarding the *Study Buddy Map* itself. The evaluation of this tool (i.e., the collection of data from Study Buddy Program participants) was conducted with permission from Brigham Young University’s Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Pilot

During the next semester, students registered for the Study Buddy program using a QR code, printed on a flier, which was linked to a Qualtrics® survey. This

was the method of collecting their contact information for a survey scheduled for later in the semester. During the orientation session at the beginning of the semester, the students were introduced to the *Study Buddy Map* and given a copy. The introduction included a review of the sections and a brief demonstration of how to use it. Contact information was collected from the students who had not previously registered, and the participants were all asked if they would be willing to complete the survey already mentioned. No other changes were made to the traditional orientation meeting or the Study Buddy program during this semester, so the only differences returning students would see would be the addition of the *Study Buddy Map*.

Evaluation Design

To find out if the *Study Buddy Map* was an effective tool for Study Buddy partners and whether or not it should continue to be used in the Study Buddy program, a survey was created that asked a variety of questions about the program as well as the map. Similar to the survey administered during the evaluation of the Study Buddy program, this survey included open-ended questions designed to elicit opinions on items that were important to the students. The following questions were created for the surveys, which were administered online through Qualtrics®.

1. You received this survey because you registered to be a Study Buddy. Did you get a Study Buddy partner?
2. Did you use the *Study Buddy Map*?
3. What did you expect to gain from being a Study Buddy this semester?
4. With 0 being “not confident at all” and 100 being “completely confident”, rate your level of confidence for the following questions. When mentoring another student in your language, how confident . . .
 - a. ...were you when you began the Study Buddy program?
 - b. ...were you after you met with your Study Buddy once or twice?
 - c. ...are you now that you have met with your Study Buddy several times?
5. How often did you use the *Study Buddy Map* during your Study Buddy sessions?
6. How easy or difficult was the format of the *Study Buddy Map* to use?
7. What did you like about the *Study Buddy Map*?
8. What did you NOT like about the *Study Buddy Map*?

9. Rate the importance of the features of the *Study Buddy Map*?
 - a. Color
 - b. Layout
 - c. Content
 - d. Size
 - e. Design features
 - f. Instructions for use
10. Did the information provided in the *Study Buddy Map* make you a better Study Buddy?
11. Do you think the *Study Buddy Map* should continue to be available for the Study Buddy program?
12. What other comments do you have about your experience with the *Study Buddy Map*?
13. What other comments do you have about the Study Buddy program?

These questions produced qualitative data that could be used to determine if the participants felt prepared to tutor before they began, if the *Study Buddy Map* helped them feel more confident in their task, and if they thought it should continue to be used in the program. These questions were asked during a single survey after program participants had used the tool on a weekly basis for about two months. The next section will review the responses to the survey and analyze the data to answer the research questions.

Findings

Thirty-nine participants took the survey. Twenty-eight of them indicated that they had a Study Buddy partner. The others did not receive one. When asked about what they expected to gain from the experience, most of the responses echoed the ones from the needs analysis survey. They expected to improve their language skills, help others, and make friends. For example, one student responded that he expected to “[connect] with others, [improve] my language skills, and [learn] more about the culture of my Study Buddy.”

Students were also asked to rate how confident they were when mentoring another student using a slider on a scale ranging from 0 (not confident at all) to 100 (completely confident). Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics for the re-

sponses to this question. The calculations included responses from students who marked that they had received a Study Buddy.

Table 1. Confidence level while mentoring

Time	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
...were you when you began the Study Buddy Program?	9.00	100.00	65.11	27.18	738.74	28
...were you after you met with your Study Buddy one or twice?	9.00	100.00	69.93	25.63	656.88	27
... are you now that you have met with your Study Buddy several times?	0.00	100.00	75.00	25.68	659.26	27

The mean confidence level increased by nearly 5% from the beginning of the program to when participants had met once or twice. There was another 5% increase from the time they met once or twice to when they had met several times. These increases, although modest, may suggest that the guided practice provided by the *Study Buddy Map* contributed to higher confidence levels among participants.

Of the 28 responses from those that had a study buddy, 13 (46%) indicated that they used the *Study Buddy Map*. Three (11%) students indicated that they used the *Study Buddy Map* every time they met with their partner while 11 (39%) used it occasionally. The other 14 (50%) reported that they never used the map during their sessions (see Table 2). Some students commented that they did not receive a map at the beginning of the program, which may account for the lower number. In addition, a couple of comments explained that students planned to work on homework or TOEFL prompts and didn't need other materials.

Students also indicated how easy they felt the *Study Buddy Map* was to use. Eleven (39%) said that the *Study Buddy Map* was very easy to use. Another 11 (39%) said it was not easy or difficult, and 6 (about 21%) said that it was somewhat easy to use (see Table 3). None of the students said that it was somewhat difficult or very difficult. This was good to learn, since one of our design specifications was to have an easy to use product.

Table 2. Frequency of using the Study Buddy Map

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Every time	3	10.71%
Often	0	0.00%
Occasionally	11	39.39%
Never	14	50.00%

Table 3. Responses to the question How easy or difficult . . .

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Very easy	11	39.29%
Somewhat easy	6	21.42%
Not easy or difficult	11	39.29%
Somewhat difficult	0	0.00%
Very difficult	0	0.00%

In response to the open-ended questions, participants indicated what they liked and disliked about the *Study Buddy Map*. Students tended to like the ideas and topics provided to stimulate conversation during their sessions. They also appreciated the examples and the overall ease of use of the product. Things they disliked about the map were a little more varied. One student said that, “The map seemed mostly geared towards vocabulary and did not seem to include very much grammar tips.”

Another student lamented that he only had a physical copy. Other comments were that the visual display had too many words on the page and that the items on the map did not challenge her partner very much.

These comments suggested that some of the students could use more of a challenge when they mentioned broader content, grammar tips, and not enough push. This possibility may suggest a need for an advanced tool or further training for the mentors. Another comment recommended using a digital format for the *Study Buddy Map*, which might be considered in the future.

To understand which features of the *Study Buddy Map* were most important for the users, the participants rated six features on a 5-point Likert scale. *Size* and *design features* were both rated *neither important nor unimportant* by 50% or more of the respondents. In other words, these two areas did not appear to be the most important features to focus on during development. On the other hand, *content* and *instructional use* were both rated *very important* and *somewhat important* by over 60% of the respondents. The final two features, *color* and *layout* appeared to be more spread out across the scale with no distinct pattern (see Table 4).

Table 4. Ratings of various elements of the Study Buddy Map

Element	Very important	Somewhat important	Neither important nor unimportant	Somewhat unimportant	Very unimportant	Total
Color	1 3.57%	9 32.14%	9 32.14%	4 14.29%	5 17.86%	28
Layout	5 17.86%	11 39.29%	9 32.14%	1 3.57%	2 7.14%	28
Content	12 42.86%	5 17.86%	8 28.57%	0 0.00%	3 10.71%	28
Size	2 7.14%	9 32.14%	14 50.00%	2 7.14%	1 3.57%	28
Design features	4 14.81%	8 29.63%	14 51.85%	1 3.70%	0 0.00%	27
Instructions for use	8 28.57%	9 32.14%	7 25.00%	2 7.14%	2 7.14%	28

Additionally, students indicated to what degree they felt that the *Study Buddy Map* contributed to their efficacy as a Study Buddy. Of the 28 participants who had partners, 16 (57%) responded positively (see Table 5).

Table 5. Study Buddy Map contributed to greater efficacy as a study buddy

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Definitely yes	3	10.71%
Probably yes	13	46.42%
Might or might not	10	35.71%
Probably not	0	0.00%
Definitely Not	2	7.14%

To sum up, in regard to our first evaluation question—*Was the Study Buddy Map an effective tool for Study Buddy partners?*—it appears that those who used the map found it useful.

Since, the survey was given near the end of the semester, after students had been working with their Study Buddies for some time, it seemed valuable to get their point of view regarding the value of continuing to use the *Study Buddy Map* as a permanent part of the Study Buddy program. There was a very positive response to this question with 21 (75%) of the students answering with a *definitely yes* or a *probably yes*. Another 6 (21%) of the students answered that it *might or might not* be continued, and only 1 (4%) answered *probably not* (see Table 6).

Table 6. Continue using the Study Buddy Map?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Definitely yes	9	32.14%
Probably yes	12	42.86%
Might or might not	6	21.42%
Probably not	1	3.57%
Definitely Not	0	0

When asked for general comments and feedback about the Study Buddy Map, 17 (60%) of the responses did not indicate anything in particular. One student said,

“It’s a Great tool for me and my Study Buddy.” Another student echoed those thoughts but also admitted to not using the tool. “It looked like a great tool, we just never really used it. We talked about topics we wanted to know how to talk about better and that took up a lot of time.”

Apart from the Study Buddy Map, students were provided the opportunity to give comments and feedback about the Study Buddy program itself. One participant’s response praised the program and said that, “It has been really helpful—way more helpful than conversation labs I have had to go to for some Spanish classes. Its one-on-one nature forces me to speak in Spanish and then I get real time feedback when I am doing something incorrectly.” Others mentioned that in addition to the language practice, they were able to make friends and have an enjoyable time talking.

From the above responses, it is clear that the Study Buddy program has been beneficial for those students who have participated in it. We know the program has lasted for many years and has the potential to continue helping students if they can get the training and resources they need to keep them involved.

Revisions

Several people—professors, classmates, an editor and friends—were given copies of the *Study Buddy Map* to review and provide comments. Based on these reviews, several small revisions were made in hopes of enabling the map to be a better learning/teaching resource. The first change was the addition of the legend in the bottom corner on the back that explains the conversation-topic levels indicated by the stars. The second change involved dividing the welcome section from one large area into two smaller sections, thus eliminating the fold line going through the original paragraph of instructions. The third change was a revision of the em dashes throughout the map to make them consistent with printing standards, adjusting some of the spacing throughout, and correcting a few typographical errors. The overall design and format were well received by advisors, and cohort members, as well as the participants in the Study Buddy program who took the survey, so no major changes were considered necessary. Three non-formatting suggestions included a request to change the map into an online app, a complaint about having too many words in the outline, and a suggestion to add more pictures. While each of these suggestions may benefit a few users in some way, they were consid-

ered as merely alternate suggestions and not necessary to improve the effectiveness of the tool for the majority of users.

Conclusion and Future Plans

The results of this evaluation encourage the continuing use of the *Study Buddy Map* in the Study Buddy program. In addition to the *Study Buddy Map* itself, future participants at Brigham Young University will receive training on how to use it, and additional research will determine how much training is necessary for optimal use. Other future projects could include a *Study Buddy Map* website with training videos and instruction, an online app, and an evaluation of the participants' progress throughout a semester in the program. Marketing plans are already underway to provide a way for other institutions and individuals to obtain copies of the *Study Buddy Map* for their own use (studybuddymap.com). While the *Study Buddy Map* is not a perfect tool, it is hoped that it can still be useful to the BYU Study Buddy program and similar programs elsewhere. One of its main purposes is to reduce participant attrition in the Study Buddy program by helping the individual student feel more comfortable in the role of a tutor. In this regard, it has great potential value for language tutoring programs at universities, high schools, and community help organizations. It can also work for families with exchange students or immigrant neighbors by providing the simple tools a willing volunteer may need in order to feel confident in helping a friend become more fluent in a new language. We look forward to seeing the *Study Buddy Map* utilized in a variety of programs and helping a large number of people—one tutor at a time.

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Effects of Teacher Feedback on the Rewrites of Chinese Undergraduates' English Argumentative Essays

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Abstract

The present mixed-method study examined the effects of teacher feedback on the rewrites of English argumentative essays by Chinese undergraduates in a prestigious university in Beijing. Drafts 1 and 2 on the same topic written by 117 of these students, as well as teacher feedback on drafts 1, were collected and analyzed. Meanwhile, 127 of the same population answered the Perceptions Toward Teacher Feedback Questionnaire, 47 of whom were interviewed. Major findings were: (a) syntactic errors occurred the most frequently in Drafts 1 and 2 and teacher feedback, followed by lexical and content errors respectively, (b) Drafts 1 differed significantly from teacher feedback in 15 types of errors, both Drafts 1 and teacher feedback differed significantly from Drafts 2 in almost all types of errors, Draft 1 scores were statistically significantly lower than Draft 2 scores, (c) the intake of eight types of errors were powerful predictors of Draft 2 scores, and (d) the students were generally highly positive toward teacher feedback and considered it highly helpful. Apparently, teacher feedback had a significantly positive effect on the students' composition revisions. Based on these findings, some implications are discussed.

Key words: teacher feedback, effect, revision, argumentative essay

Introduction

Given that both writing and assessing writing are time-consuming and challenging (Qi, 2004; Wang, 2004), different types of feedback have been executed such as peer review and machine feedback, as well as teacher feedback to help foreign/second language (FL/SL) learners write more effectively (& 2016; Shintani, 2015). Even though both peer review and machine feedback have proved to be useful in assisting SL/FL learners' writing, teacher feedback is still the most popular among SL/FL learners. This is not only because teachers are grade givers

and thus often considered authoritative (Earls, 1987), but also because teacher feedback has proved to be more effective in students' composition revisions (Ferris, 1997; 2004; Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Keh, 1990; Sterna & Solomo, 2006; Vardi, 2009). Thus, students may be more willing to revise their compositions according to teacher feedback. Even so, the effects of teacher feedback on composition revisions and the quality of rewrites, though often researched, are still in wide discussion, which might be attributed to many variables such as research design and methodology, as well as teacher and learner characteristics (Guénette, 2007; Hattie & Timperle, 2007; Kang & Han, 2015; Lee, 2014). Targeting Chinese university EFL (English as a FL) learners, the present mixed-method study examined the effects of teacher feedback on the rewrites of their English argumentative essays.

Literature review

In the past few decades, the process approach to writing has become popular among SL/FL writing instructors, which argues that writing is recursive (Stewart & Cheung, 1989). Supporters of this approach argue that it is essential for writing instructors to help students develop skills necessary to create ideas, search for ways of expressing the ideas, and polish their writing (Caulk, 1994). Feedback of all kinds, as well as required revision, is fundamental in writing classrooms using this approach (Keh, 1990; Paulus, 1999).

Feedback refers to the "information with which a learner can confirm, add to, overwrite, tune, or restructure information in memory, whether that information is domain knowledge, meta-cognitive knowledge, beliefs about self and tasks, or cognitive tactics and strategies" (Winne & Butler, 1994, p. 5740). In both behaviorist and cognitive theories of SL/FL learning, feedback is considered conducive to language learning (Ellis, 2009; Ferris, 2010) and powerfully affects learning and achievement (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Despite the time-consuming nature of providing comments, teacher feedback is both desirable and helpful. By providing comments on a writing assignment, an instructor offers expert advice for improvement on students' writing (Costello & Blakesley, 2001, p.39). This has actually been confirmed in empirical research, which shows that students prefer teacher feedback and are more likely to incorporate it into their rewrites (Ashwell, 2000; Bitchener & Knoch, 2009; Bitchener, Young & Cameron, 2005; Chandler, 2003; Connor & Asenavage, 1994; Ferris, 2010; Lee, 2004; Li, 2010; Miao, Badger

& Zhen, 2006; Saito, 1994; Truscott, 2007; Vardi, 2009). For example, based on Faigley and Witte's (1981) taxonomy of revisions, Paulus (1999) categorized the types and sources of revisions made in 11 ESL (English as a SL) student essays to evaluate the first and final drafts of the essays. The researcher also recorded students' verbal reports during revision. The results revealed that teacher feedback had a greater impact on the rewrites than peer feedback and that writing multiple drafts resulted in overall essay improvement. To explore the relationship between teacher feedback and composition revisions of 6 students in two academic writing classes, Hyland (1988, 2003) collected data from teacher think-aloud protocols, teacher and student interviews and student texts. He found that teachers were much concerned with language accuracy when providing feedback despite their beliefs and teaching approaches. He also found that students incorporated teacher feedback into their revisions to varying degrees due to individual differences in needs and approaches to writing. The researcher thus suggested a more open teacher-student dialogue on feedback in that students might have misunderstandings of the feedback.

Matsumura, Patthey-Chavez, Valdés and Garnier's (2002) investigation showed that the amount and type of teacher feedback predicted a significant though small effect on the quality of the content, organization, and mechanics of students' final drafts. The researchers thus suggested a need for professional development for teachers. Sterna and Solomo (2006) collected faculty comments from 598 graded papers written for hundreds of courses from 30 different departments in a university. Results indicated that most comments were technical corrections concerned with spelling, grammar, word choice, and missing words, and that there were no macro- and mid-level comments concerned with paper organization and quality of the ideas. Understandably, students might thus choose to focus on technical issues in their rewrites. Kang and Han (2015) adopted a meta-analytic approach to synthesizing 21 primary studies. They found that written corrective feedback led to greater grammatical accuracy in SL writing, though mediated by a host of variables such as learners' proficiency, the setting, and the genre of the writing task, partly supporting the finding in Bitchener et al. (2005).

As reviewed, teacher feedback is useful to student writing (Ferris, 1997; Olson & Raffeld, 1987; Vardi, 2009). Even so, as discussed in Paulus (1999) and Hattie and Timperle (2007), the effects of teacher feedback and revision process on the

improvement of student writing are yet to be determined. This may be due to various factors such as research design and methodology, teacher and learner approaches to SL/FL writing, and teacher and learner characteristics (Guénette, 2007; Kang & Han, 2015). The difference may also be explained by the small sample size used in most current studies. To further enrich the present literature, the present study, targeting Chinese university EFL learners, aimed to examine the effects of teacher feedback on the rewrites of their English argumentative essays. The specific research questions were:

- 1) What teacher feedback is given to Chinese university learners' English argumentative essays?
- 2) How does teacher feedback impact the learners' rewrites of English argumentative essays?

Research Design

Context. The present research was conducted in a highly prestigious university in Beijing, which attached great importance to English writing and required each undergraduate to take at least one academic English reading and writing course. The participants in the present research, predominantly male, were all intermediate-advanced English learners and registered in the English Argumentative Reading and Writing course taught by the same teacher. The class met once a week for a 90-minute period, lasting for 16 successive weeks. The teacher was in her early forties, had a Ph.D in Applied Linguistics, was widely published, had been teaching the course for five years. The course, focusing on reading and writing English argumentative essays, discussed numerous techniques related to English argumentative essay reading and writing such as text structure, statement of main and supporting arguments, paragraph structure, argument-developing skills, quality of evidence, cohesion and coherence, and use of references. Students were required to write three long argumentative essays (more than 400 words) as well as a few short ones (about 100 words). Adopting the process approach to writing, the instructor stressed the importance of revision and encouraged students to revise their drafts on the same composition at least twice (most students revised their drafts three times). To help them write English argumentative essays more effectively, she gave feedback electronically on each draft at sentence, paragraph and text levels, and held classroom and person-to-person discussions with students about

Drafts 1 and teacher feedback for about 45 minutes in class the following week when all students had received teacher feedback on their first drafts. Based on these, the students revised their first drafts thereafter.

Participants. Students (altogether 158) registering in the English Argumentative Reading and Writing course who participated in the present study: 127 (102 male and 25 female) students filled in the questionnaires related to their background information and perceptions of teacher feedback. Of these, 117 submitted all required draft for analysis. Subsequently, 47 were interviewed for their verbal perceptions about teacher feedback. With an age range of 16-27 and an average of 19.42, the survey participants were from various disciplines such civil engineering, mathematics, chemistry, and architecture: 74.8% of them were students of Engineering, 11% of Science, 9.4% of Arts and Humanities, and 4.7% of unknown disciplines.

Instruments. The data in the present research were from questionnaires, interviews, texts, and writing scores, as detailed below.

Student texts. The first (Draft 1) and second (Draft 2) drafts of the course's second composition on global warming, together with teacher feedback, were collected. Based on student consent and the completeness of both drafts, 117 compositions of each draft as well as teacher feedback were finally collected to be used in the present research.

Writing scores. The scores of drafts 1 and 2 were collected, which were scored by the instructor on a scale of 1-15 in terms of text structure, power of argumentation, coherence, grammar and use of words.

Perceptions of Teacher Feedback Questionnaire. This 14-item Perceptions of Teacher Feedback Questionnaire (PTFQ) was developed to investigate students' attitudes towards teacher feedback in terms of its role and usefulness in their composition revisions, which involved such issues as grammar, use of words, expression of viewpoints, use of evidence, and references (Wyrick, 2008). All the items were placed on a 7-point Likert Scale, ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree" with values of 1-7 assigned to each of the alternatives respectively.

The Background Questionnaire. The background questionnaire aimed to collect informants' personal information such as age, gender, and major.

Informal semi-structured interview. The informal semi-structured interview guide involved such questions concerning teacher feedback as its coverage, advantages and disadvantages, and effect on composition revisions.

Procedure. Data were collected during weeks 7-9 of the semester when the second argumentative essay on global warming was assigned. Drafts 1 were finished and submitted online in week 7, followed by teacher feedback in weeks 7-8. In week 8's class meeting, the instructor conducted a public review of drafts 1 and had face-to-face communication with the class about their drafts 1 and teacher feedback. Revisions were finished and submitted online in weeks 8-9. In week 9's class meeting, the questionnaires, together with a consent form, were distributed to the students who answered them in about five minutes during the class break. According to the consent forms, 47 students were informally interviewed by two research assistants thereafter in week 9. Each interview was conducted (and recorded) in Chinese (Mandarin), and lasted for about 10 minutes.

Data analyses. Since teacher feedback was made at sentence, paragraph, and text levels, accordingly, the present research analyzed teacher feedback and student texts at the three levels. For this purpose, this study categorized errors with reference to the revision scheme in Kramer, Leggett and Mead (1995). The scheme used in the present study covered 4 types of errors: content errors (nine aspects involving failure to show a controlling idea, improper topic sentence and failure to achieve paragraph coherence, etc.), mechanical errors (misspelling, punctuation and capitalization errors), syntactical errors (errors involving tense, part of speech, article, verb, adjective/adverb degree, agreement, and case, etc.), and lexical errors (errors in word formation, word choice, collocation and unclear expression). Drafts 1 and 2 were analyzed carefully using the scheme (Kramer et al., 1995) to identify what errors were made by the writers. Teacher feedback was also analyzed using the scheme to explore what suggestions were made by the instructor. All the analyses were conducted by two research assistants with an average inter-rater coefficient of .89. Then the number of each type of error was counted for each text. The results were then analyzed via SPSS 20 to explore the distribution of and differences in different types of errors between Drafts 1, teacher feedback and Drafts 2. To explore the effect of teacher feedback on student revisions, the intake of different types of errors in Teacher Feedback was identified and calculated in each Draft 2. Then, multiple regression analyses were run, with Draft 2 scores being the de-

pendent variable and the intake of teacher feedback of errors of different types being independent variables.

The survey data were also computed via SPSS 20. The mean and standard deviation of each survey item were computed to determine how the students perceived teacher feedback. The interview recordings were first transcribed, double-checked and then analyzed according to themes (Charmaz, 2006).

Results

Text analyses results

Content of teacher feedback

The errors in Drafts 1 and 2 as well as teacher feedback were identified, coded and counted, which were then analyzed in terms of mean and standard deviation (see Table 1).

Table 1: Means and Standard Deviations of Errors in Student
Texts and Teacher Feedback (N = 117)

As seen from Table 1, the errors with highest mean scores in Drafts 1 were SE6 (article errors) (mean = 2.67), LE2 (word choice errors) (mean = 2.13), SS2 (tense errors) (mean = 1.68), SS7 (mean = 1.49), LE3 (collocation errors) (mean = 1.25), LE4 (unclear expressions) (mean = 1.25), SS3 (agreement errors) (mean = 1.22), SS1 (errors in part of speech) (mean = 1.19), C3 (failure to provide adequate evidence) (mean = 1.19), and ME (mechanical errors) (mean = 1.07); the errors with highest mean scores in Teacher Feedback were SS6 (mean = 2.50), LE2 (mean = 1.88), C3 (mean = 1.63), SS2 (mean = 1.50), SS7 (errors in plural forms of nouns) (mean = 1.17), LE4 (mean = 1.15), SS1 (mean = .91), SS3 (mean = .85), LE3 (mean = .74), and SS4 (mean = .73); the errors with highest mean scores in Drafts 2 were LE2 (mean = .75), SS6 (mean = .62), SS2 (mean = .53), LE4 (mean = .36), SS7 (mean = .36), LE3 (mean = .35), SS3 (mean = .33), SS1 (mean = .299), SS4 (verb errors) (mean = .299), and C3 (mean = .26).

Table 1: Means and Standard Deviations of Errors in Student Texts and Teacher Feedback (N = 117)

	Draft 1		Teacher Feedback		Draft 2	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
C1	.62	.68	.50	.68	.12	.40
C2	.50	.76	.33	.66	.197	.77
C3	1.19	1.43	1.63	1.59	.26	.51
C4	.36	.74	.31	.66	.09	.32
C5	.21	.45	.37	.75	.09	.34
C6	.21	.47	.29	.63	.07	.29
C7	.299	.46	.28	.63	.07	.31
C8	.31	.46	.17	.38	.02	.13
C9	.25	.43	.21	.41	.13	.34
Total C	3.96	2.81	4.09	2.55	1.03	1.48
ME	1.07	2.41	.496	.85	.22	.54
SS1	1.19	1.76	.91	1.27	.299	.69
SS2	1.68	1.77	1.50	1.42	.53	.90
SS3	1.22	1.21	.85	1.13	.33	.72
SS4	.83	.83	1.18	.73	1.10	.299
SS5	.09	.09	.34	.05	.29	.03
SS6	2.67	2.67	2.22	2.50	2.10	.62
SS7	1.49	1.49	1.51	1.17	1.36	.36
SS8	.15	.15	.42	.14	.35	.01
SS9	.09	.09	.29	.02	.13	.02
SS10	.55	.55	1.09	.56	1.07	.09
SS11	.79	.79	.94	.73	1.12	.21
SS12	.11	.11	.47	.09	.31	.07
SS13	.26	.26	.79	.26	.73	.09
SS14	.07	.07	.25	.13	.46	.07
SS15	.14	.14	.51	.26	.48	.16
SS16	.73	.73	.82	.54	.76	.24
Total SS	13.09	13.09	5.96	10.92	5.09	3.62
LE1	.06	.06	.27	.02	.13	.01
LE2	2.13	2.13	2.02	1.88	1.96	.75
LE3	1.25	1.25	1.25	.74	1.00	.35
LE4	1.25	1.25	1.11	1.15	1.16	.36
Total LE	4.68	4.68	2.32	3.79	2.44	1.47
Total E	21.74	21.74	8.15	18.81	7.19	6.15
Writing Score	11.38	11.38	1.83			13.40

Notes: Please refer to Appendix I for the abbreviations of error types

TotalC = total number of content errors; TotalSS = total number of syntactic errors TotalLE = total number of lexical errors; TotalE = total number of errors

Comparison of the mean scores of the errors across Drafts 1, Teacher Feedback and Drafts 2 shows that the errors of most types scored more or less in Drafts 1 and Teacher Feedback and that the errors of all types scored the lowest in Drafts 2. Paired samples t-test results (see Table 2) showed that Drafts 1 differed significantly from Teacher Feedback in 15 types of errors, largely with a small or medium effect size. This might be because the instructor advised the students to carefully proofread their writings for a certain type of errors instead of marking for them all the errors of the same type. Table 2 also shows that both Drafts 1 and Teacher Feedback differed significantly from Drafts 2 in almost all types of errors, largely with a medium or large effect size. In addition, Draft 1 scores were statistically significantly lower than Draft 2 scores, with an effect size of .62.

Effect of teacher feedback on students' rewrites

To explore the effects of teacher feedback on students' rewrites, the intake of each type of errors were identified and calculated. Then multiple regression analyses were run, with Draft 2 scores being the dependent variable and the intake of errors of different types being independent variables. The results are presented in Tables 3 and 4.

As shown in Tables 3 and 4, 8 models were produced for Draft 2 scores, with the change in R^2 being all significant (see Table 3). Of the 8 predictors in Model 8, all were positive predictors, generally with a small effect size. The most powerful predictor was TotalC (total sum of content errors) ($\beta = .451$, $t = 5.31$, $f^2 = .083$), followed by TotalE (total sum of errors) ($\beta = .252$, $t = 2.96$, $f^2 = .048$), C1 (failure to show one controlling idea) ($\beta = .212$, $t = 2.43$, $f^2 = .036$), TotalSS (total sum of syntactic errors) ($\beta = .188$, $t = 2.37$, $f^2 = .021$), SS2 (tense errors) ($\beta = .168$, $t = 2.33$, $f^2 = .016$), LE2 (word choice errors) ($\beta = .152$, $t = 2.23$, $f^2 = .013$), SS6 (article errors) ($\beta = .147$, $t = 2.21$, $f^2 = .011$), and LE4 (unclear expressions) ($\beta = .133$, $t = 2.17$, $f^2 = .001$).

Table 2: Paired Samples t-test Results (N = 117) (degree of freedom = 116)

	Draft1 & TF		d	TF & Draft 2		d	Drafts 1 & 2		d
	t	p		t	p		t	p	
C2	2.65	.009	0.19	1.96	.052	/	3.57	.001	0.23
C3	-2.70	.008	0.07	9.59	.000	0.64	7.29	.000	0.47
C4	-.74	.463	/	3.22	.002	0.21	3.62	.000	0.24
C5	-2.73	.007	0.69	4.76	.000	0.25	3.74	.000	0.14
C6	-1.45	.150	/	3.45	.001	0.22	2.97	.004	0.16
C7	.36	.717	/	4.57	.000	0.21	5.40	.000	0.23
C8	2.92	.004	0.15	4.09	.000	0.24	6.38	.000	0.45
C9	1.15	.253	/	1.75	.083	/	2.62	.010	0.14
TotalC	-.64	.525	/	14.82	.000	0.81	13.17	.000	0.78
ME	2.73	.007	0.14	2.92	.004	0.21	3.70	.000	0.46
SS1	1.76	.082	/	5.42	.000	0.33	5.57	.000	0.44
SS2	1.47	.143	/	6.90	.000	0.41	6.55	.000	0.46
SS3	4.39	.000	0.22	4.39	.000	0.30	7.22	.000	0.42
SS4	1.71	.090	/	3.98	.000	0.27	4.64	.000	0.30
SS5	2.03	.045	0.08	.498	.619	/	1.35	.181	/
SS6	2.02	.046	0.34	9.55	.000	0.64	9.82	.000	0.68
SS7	3.74	.000	0.28	5.72	.000	0.39	7.55	.000	0.50
SS8	.332	.740	/	4.13	.000	0.28	3.41	.001	0.30
SS9	3.11	.002	0.13	.00	1.00	/	2.55	.012	0.13
SS10	-.576	.566	/	4.68	.000	0.37	4.35	.000	0.37
SS11	1.02	.309	/	4.12	.000	0.32	5.10	.000	0.34
SS12	.773	.441	/	.41	.685	/	.799	.426	/
SS13	.000	1.00	/	2.56	.012	0.17	2.41	.018	0.17
SS14	-1.35	.179	/	1.26	.210	/	.000	1.000	/
SS15	-2.25	.026	0.05	1.73	.086	/	-.51	.614	/
SS16	3.47	.001	0.20	3.41	.001	0.22	5.70	.000	0.30
TotalSS	6.60	.000	0.79	13.81	.000	0.79	15.92	.000	0.68
LE1	1.91	.058	/	.58	.566	/	1.92	.057	/
LE2	3.32	.001	0.31	6.50	.000	0.43	7.92	.000	0.49
LE3	6.02	.000	0.29	4.12	.000	0.25	8.52	.000	0.42
LE4	1.05	.294	/	6.96	.000	0.38	8.05	.000	0.42
TotalLE	6.98	.000	0.48	9.53	.000	0.63	14.32	.000	0.77
Total E	6.54	.000	0.65	19.23	.000	0.82	22.03	.000	0.91
Score							-14.61	.000	0.62

Notes: effect size of Cohen's d: small = $d \leq 0.2$; medium = $d = 0.5$; large = $d \geq 0.8$ (Cohen, 1988)

Table 3: R Square Change and Sum of Squares for the Resulted Models

Model	R square change	Sum of squares			Mean Square	df
		Regression	Residual	Total		
1	.077	18.08	216.29	234.37	18.08	1
2	.046	28.78	205.59	234.37	14.39	2
3	.035	37.02	197.35	234.37	12.34	3
4	.020	241.857	98.096	339.953	60.464	4
5	.016	247.160	92.793	339.953	49.432	5
6	.013	251.510	88.443	339.953	41.918	6
7	.011	255.172	84.781	339.953	36.453	7
8	.010	258.596	81.357	339.953	32.325	8

Table 4: Multiple Regression Coefficients and Significance of Error Predictors for Draft 2 Scores

Intake of errors		TotalC	TotalE	C1	TotalSS	SS2	LE2	SS6	LE4
Draft 2 score	β	.451	.252	.212	.188	.168	.152	.147	.133
	t	5.31	2.96	2.43	2.37	2.33	2.23	2.21	2.17
	p	.000	.001	.006	.017	.01	.022	.032	.045
	df	1	2	2	3	4	5	6	7
	VIF	1.395	1.395	1.024	1.019	1.017	1.017	1.006	1.006
	Cohen's f^2	.083	.048	.036	.021	.016	.013	.011	.001

Notes: df = degree of freedom
effect size of Cohen's f^2 : small = $f^2 \leq .02$;medium = $f^2 = .15$; large = $f^2 \geq .35$ (Cohen, 1988)

Self-reported results

Survey results

The mean and standard deviation of each survey item were computed (see Table 5), which shows that the students scored 5.71-6.54 on the Perceptions of Teacher Feedback Questionnaire (PTFQ) items. The five items with the highest means were items 13 (intake of teacher feedback) (mean = 6.54), 14 (acceptability of teacher feedback) (mean = 6.54), 11 (relevance between [main] claims and sup-

porting evidence) (mean = 6.33), 3 (text structure) (mean = 6.33) and 10 (adequacy of evidence) (mean = 6.28). These findings indicate that the students were generally highly positive toward teacher feedback and considered it highly helpful.

Table 5: Self-reported Questionnaire Result (N =127)

Teacher feedback	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. improved my ability to use grammar correctly.	6.05	.999
2. improved my ability to use vocabulary appropriately.	5.94	1.07
3. enhanced my knowledge of the structure of academic English argumentative essays.	6.33	.85
4. improved my ability to state the main arguments clearly in academic English argumentative essays.	6.27	.82
5. improved my ability to state supporting arguments clearly in academic English argumentative essays.	6.24	.92
6. enhanced the logic of arguing for points in my academic English argumentative essays.	6.24	.897
7. improved the coherence and cohesion in my academic English argumentative essays.	5.94	1.03
8. improved my ability to cite properly in academic English argumentative essays.	5.71	1.14
9. improved my ability to use vocabulary formally in academic English argumentative essays.	5.96	1.08
10. improved my ability to argue adequately in academic English argumentative essays.	6.28	.89
11. improved my ability to argue substantially in academic English argumentative essays.	6.33	.94
12. improved my ability to use argument-developing skills in academic English argumentative writing.	6.19	.998
13. was mostly incorporated into my revised draft.	6.54	.76
14. was largely acceptable.	6.54	.74

Interview results

Table 6 summarizes the interviewees’ perceptions of teacher feedback. As shown in Table 6, more than 70% of the interviewees considered that teacher feedback was right to the point, specific and comprehensive, correct, authoritative and incisive, although around 27% of them believed it to be untimely and not specific enough.

Table 6: Self-reported perceptions of Teacher Feedback (N =47)

Advantages	Disadvantages
a) Teacher feedback is right to the point (36/76.6%)	a) Teacher feedback is not timely (13/27.2%)
b) Teacher feedback is specific and comprehensive (35/74.5%)	b) Some teacher feedback is not specific enough (11/23.4%)
c) Teacher feedback is correct, authoritative and incisive (33/70.2%)	

Although teacher feedback was “slow and sometimes hard to understand” (No. 24), to most interviewees, it was “objective and incisive” (No. 25), “fairly proper in every aspect” (No. 40), and provided “necessary guide on how to write better at both paragraph and textual levels and polish the language at the sentence level” (No. 17). Consequently, all the interviewees reported that teacher feedback was helpful to their revisions and were satisfied with it, in that it “makes me fully aware of what I’m poor in in English argumentative writing” (No. 36), “helps me understand what should be argued for and how” (No. 39), and “improves not only my English writing but my argumentative ability in general” (No. 42).

Discussion

Analyses of the data showed that teacher feedback improved the students’ abilities to use grammar correctly, use vocabulary appropriately, and write English argumentative essays effectively. Apparently, teacher feedback had a significantly positive effect on the students’ composition revisions, similar to or even better than the findings in previous studies (Bitchener et al., 2005; Ferris, 1997; Kang & Han, 2015; Matsumura et al., 2002; Paulus, 1999; Sterna & Solomo, 2006; Vardi, 2009). This might be closely related to the context of the present research: (a) the course instructor spent considerable time on how to write English argumentative essays

(more) effectively, including text structure, paragraph structure, expression of main and supporting arguments, and skills to support arguments. This enabled the participants to be clear of how to write English argumentative essays (more) effectively, (b) the instructor provided rich and specific written feedback on students' Drafts 1, covering content errors, mechanical errors, syntactic and lexical errors, unlike many other studies which focused on mechanical and syntactic errors but ignored content errors (Sterna & Solomo, 2006), as shown in Examples 1 and 2, (c) the instructor had public review and face-to-face conversations with the students about their first drafts and teacher feedback on Drafts 1 in class, clearly explaining what they were poor in and how they could do better, as communication between teachers and students enhances the effectiveness of teacher feedback and composition revisions (Bitchener et al., 2005; , 2004; Hyland, 2003; Price, Handley, Millar & O'Donova, 2010), (d) the students communicated with each other on Drafts 1 and teacher feedback as well in class, and (e) the students were intermediate to advanced EFL learners and were willing to revise their compositions to be better. All these contributed to the students' better understanding of teacher feedback and how it could be used to revise their first drafts. This was because the situation in the present research met the three conditions necessary for students to benefit from feedback identified in Sadler (1989). According to Sadler (1989), students must: (a) be aware of the goal/standard they are expected to achieve, (b) compare their level of writing with the expected goal or standard, and (c) engage in appropriate actions leading to better performance. In other words, effective feedback requires students to have a goal, take actions to achieve the goal, and receive goal-related information about their actions (Wiggins, 2012). In addition, although teacher feedback in the present study was often not timely, it was clear, specific and differentiated, which rendered it effective (Brookhart, 2012).

Example 1:

Is Global Warming True?

2014010466

... In 1978, the FSU spacecraft landed Venus. They found that ~~the~~ 97% of the surface of Venus' s atmosphere was carbon dioxide. ~~And~~ carbon dioxide is easy to absorb solar infrared radiation, which ~~make~~s the surface temperature of Venus up to 480 °C. Scientists explain it as "greenhouse effect" and remind people on ~~the~~ earth to limit the use of oil, coal and ~~nature~~ natural gases. ~~Where is the main argument?~~

However, some scientists made a survey against it that carbon dioxide emission of human is less than 100 billion tons per year, while the emission of microorganism is more than 1500 billion tons, and the ~~plus-total amount~~ of human emission and microorganism emission just accounts ~~for the~~ 5.4% of carbon dioxide in atmosphere. It indicates that the carbon dioxide emission of human is negligible. Thus, the activities of human cannot cause ~~the~~ global warming.

Some people think that the rise of sea level is because of globing warming.

批注 [w1]: No ' the' before GW, please check the whole text.

Example 2:

~~takes-brings~~ us some benefits in some aspects.

... Global warming makes ~~certain-the~~ ecology ~~in some areas turn better-develop-a-virtuous-cycle~~. Because of global warming, the ocean strengthens its water conveyance capacity. It ~~increases-makes-the~~ rainfall ~~increase~~ in some arid area, which will improve the arid area' s environment in the future. For example, in the past decade, ~~the-northwest-area-in-China-has-presented-this-trend~~. In northwest China, many inland lakes ~~has-had~~ a higher water level and a larger surface than before and rivers flow from the mountains increased. This will create a more perfect ecology ~~in those areas~~.

批注 [12]: The power is weak.

Clearly, the learning context is important for teacher feedback to be effective, which foster communication between the instructor and students, as discussed in Hattie and Timperley (2007). Even so, when providing specific comments on students' texts, it is better for the instructor to scaffold his/her ways of commenting according to individual needs. This is because good teacher feedback should be differentiated as well as timely, clear and specific (Brookhart, 2012). Meanwhile, it is important for students to have more access to English reading and writing. Without adequate practice of and exposure to English reading and writing, teacher feedback alone might not be workable, as found in Pan (2010). Pan's (2010) investigation of the effects of teacher error feedback on students' ability to write accurately showed that the students made progress in the revised versions of their passages but not in their later test essays. The researcher thus suggested that teacher error feedback alone might not facilitate the learning of linguistic information and

that it had better be complemented by sufficient practice in and exposure to English reading and writing to be (more) effective to students' rewrites.

Conclusions

The present mixed-method study examined the effects of teacher feedback on the rewrites of Chinese university learners' English argumentative essays. Analyses of the triangulated data showed:

- (1) Syntactic errors occurred the most frequently in Drafts 1 and 2 and teacher feedback, followed by lexical errors and content-related errors respectively, as found in Sheppard (1992). This indicates that language accuracy was still a very important focus of teacher feedback in the present research, similar to that in Hyland (1988, 2003),
- (2) Drafts 1 differed significantly from Teacher Feedback in 15 types of errors, both Drafts 1 and Teacher Feedback differed significantly from Drafts 2 in almost all types of errors, Draft 1 scores were statistically significantly lower than Draft 2 scores,
- (3) The intake of eight types of errors (TotalC, TotalE, C1, TotalSS, LE2, SS6 and LE4) were powerful predictors of Draft 2 scores. This indicates that content errors were more influential in evaluating students' compositions in the present research, and
- (4) The students were generally highly positive toward teacher feedback and considered it highly helpful.

Despite these findings, there are some points worth noting in the present study. First, the participants in the present study were all intermediate-to-advanced learners of English, had been trained on how to write English argumentative essays systematically, and were encouraged and willing to revise their drafts. Coupled with the fact that the university set high demand on their English writing ability, these participants were generally motivated to write better. Students with different backgrounds might not be so motivated to write better, which might negatively affect their attitudes towards and intake of teacher feedback. Second, the instructor in the present research was experienced at academic English writing. She thus was able to provide specific, incisive and expert comments on students' texts at sentence, paragraph and text levels, which made her feedback generally "right to the point" (No. 15). And the students considered teacher feedback "authoritative" (No. 46) and were willing to incorporate it into their revised texts. If the instructor were

different, the effects of teacher feedback on composition revisions might also be different accordingly. Therefore, it is important to research the effects of teacher feedback on composition revisions in varying contexts so that more effective feedback can be provided by faculty and more teacher feedback can be adopted by students, as various factors may work together to mediate the effects of teacher feedback (Kang & Han, 2015; Matsumura et al., 2002). With more findings, it may be possible to train writing instructors to provide more effective feedback, as suggested in Hattie and Timperley (2007), and students to better understand and evaluate teacher feedback (Price et al., 2010).

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Appendix 1: Error Coding & Classification Scheme

Content errors

C1	Failure to show a controlling idea/More than one controlling idea
C2	Improper topic sentence/no controlling idea/no topic sentence
C3	Failure to provide adequate evidence
C4	Failure to provide substantial evidence
C5	Lack of the power of the argument/Weak arguments or evidence
C6	Failure to keep the necessary consistency in meaning/Inconsistency between the topic sentence and supporting sentences
C7	Fail to achieve paragraph coherence: poor organization/Lack or misuse of transitional markers
C8	Inconsistency between the conclusion and the main argument
C9	Introducing a new topic in Conclusion

Mechanical errors (ME)

ME1	Misspellings
ME2	Punctuation errors
ME3	Capitalization errors

Syntactical errors (SS)

SS1	Errors in part of speech (noun/adj./adv./prep./pron./conj./verb)
SS2	Tense errors
SS3	Errors in agreement
SS4	Verb errors
SS5	Adjective/adverb degree errors
SS6	Articles errors
SS7	Errors in the use of plural or singular forms/uncountable nouns
SS8	Case errors
SS9	Errors in mood/auxiliaries (including modal auxiliaries)
SS10	Errors in word order (positive and negative sentence/questions/subordinate clause/adverbs and adjectives)
SS11	Errors in coordinating conjunctions and subordinating conjunctions
SS12	Errors of illogical comparison or ill parallelism
SS13	Errors of sentence fragments/run-on sentence/dangling modifiers
SS14	Errors of mixed or confused expression and sentence structure
SS15	Missing a part of the sentence
SS16	Overuse of a part of the sentence

Lexicall errors (SL)

LE1	Errors in word formation
LE2	Errors in word choice
LE3	Errors in collocations
LE4	Unclear or incomplete expressions

Self-directed Revision in L2 Writing Classes at a Japanese University: A Study of Students' Views

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Abstract

While the provision of formative feedback is an essential element of the process approach to teaching second language writing, learners must also take responsibility for revising their own written work, and teachers need to devise methods by which they can be encouraged to do so. Three classroom activities were used in order to stimulate self-directed revisions by a group of Japanese undergraduates. These activities were found to be highly effective, with learners making three times as many revisions to their writing as did a control group. This article focuses on affective factors, and investigates the attitudes of these learners towards the process of self-directed revision. At three points during the writing process learners completed a questionnaire, and in order to provide further insight, six were interviewed in depth. Results indicated that although students realised the utility of the three treatments, their attitudes towards self-directed revision remained somewhat ambivalent.

Key words: second language writing, revising, self-directed revision

Introduction

In recent years, with computers steadily replacing pen and paper as the medium through which writing is done, revising written work has become considerably easier, as making changes to an electronic document is a far less time-consuming process than redrafting one written by hand. While writers have always revised their work, technology has thus served to reinforce the role of revision, fundamentally changing the balance between the time and effort required to redraft and the benefits of doing so. In turn, the relative ease of revising a piece of writing has enhanced the value of receiving feedback on early drafts, with writers now likely to be more willing to make changes to their compositions in response to this feedback. Both feedback and revision have therefore become more central to how

we write, and this is perhaps even more true when writing in a second language, as the work of less experienced or proficient writers is even more likely to benefit from revision. Teachers of ESL and EFL writing classes thus have a duty to think carefully about how best to utilize feedback and how best to encourage their students to effectively revise their writing. This paper examines student attitudes towards one attempt to do that.

Teacher feedback and revision

Since the rise of the process approach in writing instruction, there has been widespread acceptance of the importance of teacher formative feedback and re-drafting in developing the writing abilities of second language learners (Ferris & Hedgecock, 2014; Hyland & Hyland, 2006). However, although the importance of teacher feedback itself is rarely disputed, there is much more discussion regarding the specific forms that this feedback should take (see, for example, Shintani, Ellis & Suzuki, 2014; Van Beuningen, De Jong & Kuiken, 2012). One of the most charged debates within the field of second language writing has been regarding the value of grammar correction as a component of teacher feedback.

While acknowledging the value of feedback on content and organization, Truscott (1996) argued that feedback on grammar diverts teacher and student time and attention from more profitable activities, and as a result, although it may reduce grammar errors on specific drafts, is both ineffective and counterproductive with regard to long-term learning. Despite opposition from other scholars, most prominently Ferris (1999, 2004, 2006) and Chandler (2003, 2009), Truscott has consistently defended this position (Truscott 1999, 2007, 2009; Truscott & Hsu, 2008). But even among those who agree that error correction is worthwhile there is no consensus on how it is best provided. Although Robb, Ross and Shortreed (1986) concluded that the type of correction had only a negligible effect on improving the quality of students' writing, others (for example, Bitchener, 2008; Chandler, 2003; Shintani & Ellis, 2013) have found particular correction techniques to promote more effective revision. Furthermore, although not a theoretical justification, it cannot be ignored that students and institutions continue to expect teachers to provide grammar focused feedback. Timpson, Grow and Matsuoka (1999), for example, found that over 90% of the 1228 Japanese university students they surveyed believed error correction to be necessary. For many teachers then, regardless of

their personal views, abandoning grammar correction would be difficult in practice; a more realistic option being to ensure the feedback they provide on grammar is as effective as possible for as many students as possible. As Straub (2000), working in L1 education, points out:

There are as many good ways of responding as there are good ways of teaching writing... What works for one teacher, in one context, may or may not work for another... It depends on the particular teacher, the individual student, and the specific circumstances. (p. 24)

Thus, flexible and context-specific methods are perhaps most appropriate: not only might different students benefit from different types of correction, this may also be true of different errors (Shintani, Ellis & Suzuki, 2014).

Over and above the theoretical debates regarding feedback, there are also more prosaic issues. Lee and Schallert (2008), Makino (1993), Yoshimura (2010) and Zamel (1985) all lament the time and effort required to provide useful feedback on students' papers. And not only is this task time-consuming, it is far from easy to do well, with Goldstein (2004) offering the following (non-exhaustive) list of concerns:

What should I respond to first? What should I ignore at this time? How should I respond? Will each student understand and be able to effectively use my commentary? Will they learn from my commentary for future writing? What if they have difficulty? How will I know? What will I do? (p. 63)

However, while opinions vary on the timing, type and amount of feedback teachers should provide, there is a broad consensus that teacher feedback is effective in helping students to improve their writing and to develop their language skills. Nevertheless, it is crucial to remember that although his or her role is important, the teacher is not the sole provider of feedback on student writing.

Feedback by students, for students

Students themselves can be a rich and valuable source of feedback on both their own writing and that of their peers, and student-centred feedback and revision, in the forms of peer review and self-directed review, have become widely-used components of L2 writing classes (Yu & Lee, 2016).

A large body of research has investigated both the benefits of peer review to language learners and the issues arising from its use, with Yu and Lee (2016) providing a comprehensive overview of the research carried out in the preceding decade. Studies have indicated that peer review can provide students with a greater sense of audience than when writing for a teacher (Berggren, 2015; Keh, 1990; Tsui & Ng, 2000), offer a different, and complementary, focus to teacher feedback (Xu & Liu, 2010), encourage a more critical attitude to revision than is usually displayed in response to teacher feedback (Tsui & Ng, 2000), and help students develop into more autonomous writers and learners (Yang, Badger & Yu, 2006). A further clear benefit alluded to by Rollinson (2005) is that through peer review, students are able to receive feedback from multiple sources, with this wider range of perspectives likely to stimulate greater reflection on their writing.

Compared with peer review, less research has looked at self-directed review of writing – revisions students make independently of any feedback from an external source. Early studies in ESL settings found that the number of self-directed revisions exceeded those that were attributed to either teacher or peer feedback (Connor & Asenavage, 1994; Paulus, 1999), although it should be noted that investigating self-directed revision was not the specific goal of these studies, and the authors did not rule out the possibility of students having received feedback from a third-party source other than a teacher or peer. Research conducted more recently in EFL classes has further suggested that self-directed review can benefit L2 writers. Nakanishi (2008) found that training in self-feedback strategies was effective in helping beginner-level writers improve their compositions, and also that even without this training, students were able to make some improvements. Comparing the benefits of self-review and peer review to the reviewer, rather than the receiver of feedback, Wakabayashi (2013) found that students who reviewed their own texts could improve them to a greater extent than those who reviewed that of a peer. Diab, in research making comparisons with peer and teacher feedback, found that self-directed review offered the advantages of being more effective than peer review in helping students to correct rule-based errors (2010), and more effective than teacher feedback in reducing lexical errors (2016). Finally, Coomber (2016) found that although students who had simply been asked to revise their own work were able to make improvements in a wide range of areas, those

who had undertaken awareness-raising activities were able to both make more self-directed revisions and more successful ones.

Student attitudes to peer review and self-directed revision

There is ample evidence that students themselves understand and value the role that peer review can play in improving their written work. For example, students have reported that peer feedback offers opportunities to consider different perspectives (Mangelsdorf, 1992), learn from the strengths and weaknesses of classmates (Yu & Hu, 2017), reflect more deeply on their writing (Yu & Hu, 2017), and discuss their writing in their L1 (Allen & Katayama, 2016; Ho & Savignon, 2007). Yet problems with the implementation of peer review have also been identified. Some studies have suggested that students from East Asian backgrounds find peer review difficult for specific cultural reasons (Carson & Nelson, 1994; Nelson & Carson, 1998). However, more recent small-scale studies carried out in Japanese universities have suggested that students enjoyed giving and receiving peer feedback on written work (Hirose 2008), and that they both considered peer review to be effective and would like to do it again (Wakabayashi, 2008). In a larger study looking at the attitudes of 125 Japanese undergraduates to peer review, Morgan, Fuisting and White (2014) found that over 90% considered their classmates' feedback to have been helpful, and large majorities expressed no affective concerns about either giving or receiving feedback. It may be the case that while in an ESL setting in a foreign country alongside classmates of various nationalities, students have greater concern about the face-threatening aspects of peer feedback than they do in a more familiar home environment, in which Japanese students appear comfortable with peer review and cognizant of its benefits.

In the case of peer review, it therefore seems clear that, in general, students appreciate its benefits. But as Tigchelaar (2016) points out, far less research has looked in detail at students' views on self-directed revision. Zhang (1995) compared ESL students' views on teacher, peer and self-directed feedback, finding that over 90% favoured teacher over non-teacher feedback, and that 60% preferred peer feedback to self-directed feedback. In Nakanishi's (2008) study, 52% of students who had been trained in self-directed feedback believed it had been useful for them: a majority, but barely. Srichanyachon (2011) interviewed 10 students regarding their views on the same three types of feedback, and found that while

seven of the participants identified teacher feedback as the most effective, only one stated they would like to use self-directed feedback in the future. These results do not appear encouraging for teachers wishing to utilize self-directed revision in their classes, yet it is important to note that these different feedback options need not be framed as a choice. When learners are asked directly to state a preference, it is of no great surprise that, overall, teacher feedback is the most popular option. In itself, this cannot be taken to mean that they do not value, or do not benefit from, non-teacher directed feedback; however, it seems from the limited evidence available that students are not convinced of the value of reviewing their own work. Importantly though, as Lam (2013) points out, “teachers need to inculcate students with an idea of writer responsibility through self-assessment, since making the text succinct and comprehensible to readers is the job of authors” (p. 456). Beyond the classroom, obtaining feedback on writing from a third-party is less likely, and those students who use English in their post-university futures will almost certainly need to review and revise their own work. Before teachers can persuade students of its value, more research needs to be done into student attitudes towards self-directed revision, a goal this study aims to contribute to.

The context of this study

Hirose (2003) and Yasuda (2014) provide informative overviews of how writing is taught in Japan, with Hirose noting that students do not usually receive any specific instruction in L1 academic writing during any stage of their education, and that the writing they are generally required to do prior to university level is largely of a personal, expressive type. With respect to pre-university English writing, Hirose states that:

Japanese students' experience is practically non-existent. L2 writing instruction in high school is oriented toward translation from L1 to L2 at the sentence-level. (p. 184)

Thus, it seems that many Japanese students arrive at university with little, if any, experience of writing at length in English, and lacking experience with expository or argumentative genres even in their L1. Moreover, prior to university, it is unusual for any elements of the process approach to be utilised, and students rarely, if ever, receive formative feedback or are asked to revise their writing (Casanave, 2003; Kobayashi & Rinnert, 2001; Yasuda, 2014). Once at university, their previ-

ous lack of exposure may lead them to struggle with academic writing (Sasaki & Hirose, 1996).

Unsurprisingly, given the lack of previous attention to writing skill outlined above, in the Japanese university classes that I teach early pieces of student work tend to be highly variable. As they progress, however, many learners do improve their writing in terms of accuracy, organisation, and content. Nonetheless, it is not uncommon to receive essays containing basic surface errors with formatting, punctuation, grammar and spelling. These mistakes may be trivial, yet are symptomatic of a deeper problem. The same papers often fail to address the essay question, fall short of the required word limit, or have poor overall structure. In short, it seems that in order to meet deadlines, many students rush off written assignments at the last minute, and make little attempt to reread and revise their work before submission. Providing feedback on such drafts offers as little benefit to learners as it does satisfaction to the teacher. In order to motivate students to reread and revise the first drafts of written work at least once before submission, I introduced three additional in-class activities. The current paper is the final one in a series of articles examining the outcome of this intervention (see Coomber 2016, 2019), and focuses on student attitudes towards self-directed revision.

Method

The research was carried out in two classes following the same second-year writing course at a Japanese university. Over the course of a semester, students submitted four drafts of a 600-word essay, as outlined in Table 1:

One class, consisting of 23 students, was designated a control group; the other, consisting of 21 students, a treatment group. After submitting their first drafts in week 6, students in the control group were simply asked to revise the essays and resubmit them in week 9. No instruction on how or what to revise was provided, and the control group spent weeks 7 and 8 of the course working on tasks unrelated to essay writing. On the other hand, the treatment group spent these two weeks doing the following three activities, which had been designed to encourage them to revise their drafts.

- (1) **Poster presentation.** In week 7, students were asked to make a 5-minute poster presentation on their essay topics without using any notes. It was hoped that this would encourage them to reread their drafts carefully, and that while doing so they would notice points that required revision.
- (2) **Grammar Workshop.** Students spent the week 8 lesson locating and remedying the errors in 12 sentences taken from their first drafts, with no more than one sentence taken from any student's essay. Sentences which showed common error types made by many students were selected for the workshop in order to raise awareness of similar issues in their own work.
- (3) **Checklist.** Students were required to submit the checklist shown in Appendix 1 with their second drafts. This was intended as a simple way in which students could check themselves whether their essays followed the structure that we had studied in class.

After collecting both classes' second drafts in week 9, all revisions were counted and classified using the taxonomy shown in Appendix 2. As shown in Table 1, written and oral teacher feedback was then provided on the second drafts, and after these had been revised, the third drafts were peer-reviewed.

Table 1: Schedule

Week 6	First draft deadline Questionnaire 1
Week 7	Treatment 1: Presentations on essay topics
Week 8	Treatment 2: Grammar Workshop Treatment 3: Checklist
Week 9	Second draft deadline Questionnaire 2 Interviews
Week 10	Essays returned with teacher feedback Mini-conferences
Week 11	Third draft deadline Peer review of essays
Week 12	Final draft deadline Questionnaire 3 Interviews

Questionnaires

In order to ascertain the views of the learners in this study towards making self-directed revisions, questionnaires were completed immediately after students had submitted their first, second and final drafts, as shown in Table 1 above. Questionnaire 1 (Appendix 3) comprised 16 Likert-statement items, shown in Tables 2-4. In order to discourage non-committal responses, a six-point scale was used. Statements 1-5 investigated students' general views on writing in English, statements 6-10 related to the process of writing multiple drafts and receiving feedback, and statements 11-16 focused on the learners' evaluation of their own effort during the writing process. The statements have been grouped this way in the tables for ease of presentation; when administered, the order was slightly different. In Questionnaire 2 these 16 items were repeated, and six additional items regarding the three treatments added to the treatment group version (Appendix 4); in Questionnaire 3, a further four items on teacher and peer feedback were added (Appendix 5). Finally, an open comment box allowed the opportunity to add further comments. The questionnaire was provided in English and Japanese and was piloted with four students from a different, but similar level class, and minor adjustments made to clarify some items. All questionnaires were administered during class time. It was both stated in writing and emphasized verbally that responses were anonymous and unconnected to grades.

Interviews

To gain greater insight into student views on the three treatments, six volunteers from the treatment group were interviewed. Two interviews were conducted with each student: one after submission of the second drafts, one after the final drafts had been graded and returned.

The interviews were based on the questions listed in Appendix 6. Both were semi-structured, allowing for researcher and interviewee to expand upon points of interest if desired (Denscombe, 2010). It was explained in writing and emphasized verbally that participation was entirely voluntary and unrelated to grades, and that pseudonyms would be used when reporting answers. Interviews ranged in length from 11 to 17 minutes; in accordance with the preference of the interviewee some were conducted entirely in English, others in Japanese, and others in both languages.

Results and Discussion

Summary of revisions

It was found that, overall, students in the treatment group made three times as many self-directed revisions to their first drafts as did those in the control group. While 14 of the 21 students in the treatment group made 15 or more revisions to their first draft, this was true for only 3 of the 23 students in the control group. What is more, the revisions made by the treatment group achieved a higher degree of success in improving their essay drafts. A detailed exploration of the number, type and success of the revisions made by both groups is provided in Coomber (2016), while Coomber (2019) examines the revision strategies employed by three individual students in greater detail. The focus of the current paper, however, is a different aspect of the study: specifically, the students' attitudes towards the treatments and the revision process, as revealed by the questionnaire and interview data.

Questionnaire data

The sixteen statements shown in Tables 2-4 are those which were common to all three questionnaires. For ease of presentation, responses from the three 'agree' and three 'disagree' categories have been combined, and are expressed as percentages to account for the different number of students in the two classes. Due to the small sample size it seems wise to treat these figures with caution; nevertheless, some tentative conclusions may be drawn.

Items 1 to 5, shown in Table 2, were intended to provide background information on learners' attitudes to English writing in general. Although it appears that, in general, writing in English is not something these learners particularly enjoy (statement 1), the responses to statements 2, 4 and 5 indicate that a large majority recognize the value of studying writing, suggesting they would be likely to approach their writing both seriously and positively. Most of these figures indicate only minor changes over the semester, although it is interesting to note that the number of students in the treatment group who stated they enjoyed writing in English rose from seven to 12 over the course of the semester, with five of the 12 choosing 'Agree' or 'Strongly agree', compared to only one of the original seven.

General attitudes to English writing

Table 2: Results of Questionnaires 1 to 3, Items 1-5

Statement	Percentage of learners agreeing					
	Questionnaire 1		Questionnaire 2		Questionnaire 3	
	C	T	C	T	C	T
1) I enjoy writing in English.	36.4	33.3	33.3	47.6	47.8	57.1
2) Writing classes are not useful for me.	9.1	4.8	4.2	4.8	8.7	0.0
3) Studying writing is boring.	18.2	14.3	29.2	19.0	17.4	14.3
4) English writing ability will be important for my future.	86.4	81.0	87.5	95.2	95.7	85.7
5) Writing is a good way to improve my English ability.	81.8	85.7	87.5	95.2	95.7	90.5

C = control group; T = treatment group

Table 3 shows items 6 to 10, which focus on the drafting and feedback process. While almost all learners appreciate the value of multiple-drafting (statement 6), there is less consensus regarding the roles of teacher and learner during this process. Most striking is the difference in the responses to items 7 and 8 on the first and second questionnaire. When completing Questionnaire One, unaware that I would not be checking their first drafts, both classes were fairly evenly divided on the issue of whether teachers should check all drafts (statement 7). However, the process of revising and resubmitting these drafts without my having checked them seems to have reinforced the feeling that teacher feedback is necessary on all drafts. Particularly surprising to note is that despite having just made an average of 16 successful self-directed revisions each on their papers, over 80% of students in the treatment group agreed with item 7 on Questionnaire Two, and the proportion of those who agreed with item 8 had almost quadrupled. While this is somewhat disappointing, it may simply reflect the fact that, having invested considerable effort in revising their work by themselves, these students had developed both a greater understanding of how difficult this is to do and more appreciation of the value of teacher feedback. This interpretation, although tentative, seems to be sup-

ported by the fact that after revising their own drafts, there was almost unanimous agreement that this was the student's responsibility (statement 10), an increase of almost 20% in the level of agreement from Questionnaire One, suggesting that the greater desire for teacher feedback does not necessarily imply a failure to realise the value of self-editing. In contrast, the control group, who had made less than half the number of self-directed revisions as had the treatment group, had not changed their views on this issue.

Attitudes to drafting and feedback

Table 3: Results of Questionnaires 1 to 3, Items 6-10

Statement	Percentage of learners agreeing					
	Questionnaire 1		Questionnaire 2		Questionnaire 3	
	C	T	C	T	C	T
6) Writing several essay drafts is a good way to improve writing ability.	95.5	90.5	95.5	100	91.3	95.2
7) The teacher should check all essay drafts.	45.5	52.4	70.8	81.0	60.9	61.9
8) Finding problems in my essay is the teacher's responsibility.	22.7	9.5	29.2	38.1	21.7	19.0
9) The teacher should point out <u>all</u> the problems in my essay.	18.2	38.1	33.3	33.3	26.1	33.3
10) Finding problems in my essay is my own responsibility.	86.4	76.2	83.3	95.2	81.8	95.2

C = control group; T = treatment group

Two points are clearly apparent from the responses to items 11 to 15 (Table 4), all looking at learners' assessment of their own effort during this course. Firstly, both classes consider themselves to have taken their essay writing seriously: only once did a majority of students disagree with one of these statements. Secondly, both groups appear to have put in increasing effort as the course progressed, perhaps not surprising as the essay grade was determined by the final draft only. For the most part, the differences between the two classes are small. However, the increase from 42.9% to 81% of the treatment group who claimed to have read their essay carefully before submission (statement 12) stands out, and may indicate that

one or more of the treatments gave these students greater motivation to re-read their drafts than those in the control group, which showed a far smaller change between questionnaires.

Learners’ self-evaluation

Table 4: Results of Questionnaires 1 to 3, Items 11-16

Statement	Percentage of learners agreeing					
	Questionnaire 1		Questionnaire 2		Questionnaire 3	
	C	T	C	T	C	T
11) I put a lot of efforts into writing a good essay.	86.4	71.4	79.2	81.0	82.6	85.7
12) I read my essay carefully before submitting it.	59.1	42.9	66.7	81.0	78.3	90.5
13) I thought carefully about the organisation of my essay.	72.7	71.4	83.3	81.0	91.3	90.5
14) I thought carefully about the grammar and vocabulary in my essay.	68.2	52.4	70.8	71.4	78.3	85.7
15) I thought carefully about the content of my essay.	86.4	76.2	75.0	84.7	87.0	100
16) I can improve my essay without help from my teacher or classmates.	9.1	9.5	12.5	9.5	21.7	4.8

C = control group; T = treatment group

Perhaps the most interesting point to emerge from the data in Table 4 is the response to item 16. After handing in their first drafts, less than 10% in both classes agreed that they could improve them without third party assistance. Both classes then proceeded to do exactly that, with the treatment group making three times the number of improvements to their essays. It is therefore rather surprising that in this group the proportion of students agreeing with this statement fell, while in the control group it rose. This cannot be accounted for merely through a lack of self-confidence: by the time they completed the final questionnaire, students would have seen from the teacher feedback on their second drafts that the majority of their self-directed revisions had been successful.

It seems more likely that this can be explained by an ambiguity in the wording of item 16: the phrase 'without help' was intended to mean 'without direct feedback'; however, it may be that the treatment group interpreted 'help' to include the three treatments, and answered accordingly. The control group, on the other hand, received no help of any kind, yet most students still improved their essays to some extent.

Views on the three treatments

Questionnaires Two and Three included additional items investigating all revision-promoting activities carried out during the course. Figure 1 illustrates the treatment group's opinions of the three treatments, Figure 2 their views on teacher and peer feedback.

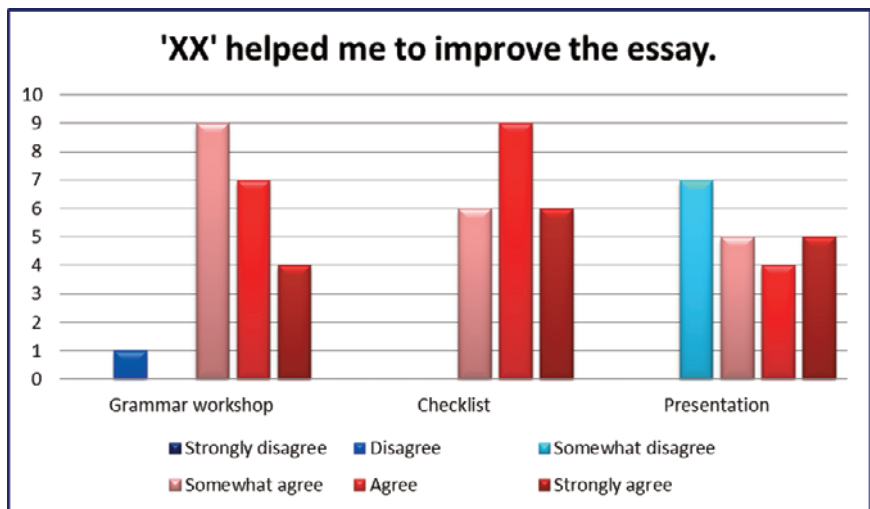


Figure 1: Questionnaire Three: Treatment group, items 20-22

Overall, it is clear that students valued all the treatments, and of the three it appears that the checklist was viewed as the most useful, with learners agreeing unanimously that it helped them improve their essays: possibly because they were able to re-use the checklist with the third and final drafts, whereas the value of the other two treatments was largely limited to producing the second drafts. In contrast, a third of the class did not feel that the presentation had been particularly useful. This may be because, compared to the other two treatments, it offered no specific

pointers as to how to improve their writing; alternatively, given that most students seem to find making presentations fairly stressful, it could be that negative attitudes to the activity in general affected their views of its usefulness.

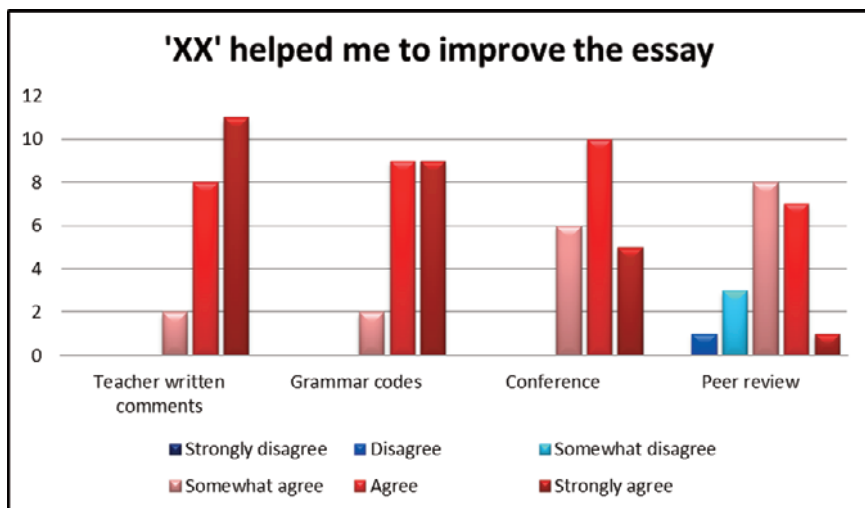


Figure 2: Questionnaire Three: Treatment group, items 23-26

While students generally viewed all the treatments positively, it is clear from Figure 2 that, in line with the findings of Zhang (1995) and Srichanyachon (2011), teacher feedback remains the most highly-rated means by which to improve writing. All three types of feedback I provided met with unanimous approval, reflecting the majority in both classes who stated that the teacher should provide feedback on all essay drafts. Unsurprisingly, views of peer review were rather more mixed: given that each person received feedback from a different classmate it is inevitable that the utility of this feedback would be more variable. Overall, the questionnaire results suggest that while learners seem to rate teacher-directed revision most favourably, perhaps lacking confidence in their own ability to self-revise, they also realised the value of the treatments in helping them to do so.

Interviews with learners

The interviews carried out with students from the treatment group give some further indications as to the possible role of the treatments in encouraging revision, as well as additional insight into learners' views. This section briefly discusses

some of the comments made by these learners regarding both the three treatments and the essay writing process in general.

Satoshi was one of six students who made substantial revisions to the content of their essays between the first and second drafts, making meaning-focused changes in all paragraphs of his essay bar the introduction. Satoshi, in common with two other interviewees, mentioned during interview that he found the poster presentations especially useful in reviewing the content of what he had written, stating that:

In the presentation I had to communicate my ideas...while I was writing the essay I could understand what I wrote myself... but the presentation is spoken, so I wondered whether this information was good... it was a good opportunity to make changes... the presentation was great... to me it was the presentation that made me think about a lot of things...

The need to present the contents of the essay seems to have influenced other learners' revisions in different ways. Tomoko, who like Satoshi made substantial revisions at both surface and meaning-level, noted the following during her interview:

Presentation have to use easy sentence... so I re-read my essay, changing sentence for my presentation so presentation's meanings are easy than my essay... in second draft I checked my presentation description and I used my presentation sentences.

Rather than extending content then, Tomoko's strategy was to simplify that which she already had in order to make it more comprehensible to her classmates. Whether students extended content or simplified their language, it seems that both strategies were prompted by the greater audience awareness afforded by oral presentation, encouraging students to think again about whether their views were both adequately supported and clearly explained.

Treatment Two, the grammar workshop, was viewed favourably by all six interviewees. Of the three treatments, it is this which can be most directly connected to individual revisions, and of the 21 students in the class, 20 had made revisions to points covered in the workshop, including all those interviewed. In contrast to their comments about the presentations, most spoke only briefly about the grammar workshop, the most common comment being that it encouraged them to check the essays more carefully. One learner, Kazuki, offered an interesting perspective, noting that:

When I saw other people's sentences I sometimes couldn't understand what they were trying to explain, and I thought that my essay is probably the same...

However, while it seems that the grammar workshop did influence the revisions students made (Coomber, 2016, 2019), the interview data provide little insight into precisely how it did so.

Although most of the interviewees also claimed that the checklist had been useful for them, an alternative opinion was offered by Ayako, who pointed out that many students, including herself, did not use the checklist as had been intended, only skimming over it and checking 'Yes' regardless of whether or not they had actually completed the action. Nevertheless, for the learners who did make use of it, the checklist seems to have been appreciated, with three describing it as useful or convenient, and two, Tomoko and Kazuki, mentioning that they found it the most useful of the three treatments, Tomoko noting that it helped her look for specifics, and Kazuki that:

This is the easiest way to check. Until now I've checked by myself, but the teacher pointing things out makes me more aware of them... because of the checklist I could change points that I didn't notice by myself... that was the best thing.

Somewhat surprisingly, the most positive overall assessment of the treatments was given by Takuya, a student who had made relatively few revisions to his first draft, but nevertheless stated that:

I think three steps is needed... all things needed for us to improve my skills and writing essay skill... for example only grammar shop did not improve our skills enough so three things is needed... so vital things.

Despite this view, Takuya had made only 12 revisions, most of them fairly minor. Perhaps this illustrates the point that beyond helping learners to notice what they need to change, these treatments may also have a role in helping them confirm what they have done well.

Conclusion

In summary, in line with previous research (for example, Nakanishi, 2008; Srichanyachon, 2011; Zhang, 1995) the results of this study suggest that learners

may be ambivalent about the value of reviewing and revising their own writing. Although students in the treatment group indicated that they found all three treatments useful, questionnaire responses showed that their efforts at self-editing, though meeting with considerable success, also served to reinforce the feeling that teacher feedback was necessary. Hawe and Dixon (2014) make the case that by creating opportunities for students to assess and revise their own compositions in writing classes, teachers can help them develop into autonomous learners. However, it seems likely that, in order to aid development of autonomous learning skills in the long-term, it is not enough for a particular activity or style of learning to *be* effective – it must also be *perceived to be* effective by the learners. Thus, the fact that student views on the three treatments used in this study were largely positive is a key finding, suggesting that if teachers incorporate such activities into writing classes, learners will not only revise their own work more extensively and effectively, but may also be more likely to do so in future, having come to realise the value of self-directed revision. However, it may also be the case that a more explicit explanation of the rationale of these activities would have been beneficial in terms of convincing students of their utility.

While the questionnaire and interview data revealed that the three treatments were viewed positively overall, it is also important to note that, inevitably, not all students found every treatment useful. For example, among the interviewees, Mayumi didn't really connect the presentation to revising her second draft, stating that as we had focused in class on presentation skills such as voice inflection and eye contact she didn't think so much about the content; Ayako, as noted, did not make use of the checklist. Moreover, in the second interviews conducted after students' final drafts had been graded and returned, three of the six interviewees identified the written teacher feedback on their second drafts as the most useful component of the course in terms of improving their writing, with two opting for the checklist and one stating that everything we had done had been useful.

Nevertheless, of the six students interviewed, all claimed to have found at least one of the treatments helpful in making revisions to their first drafts, perhaps underlining the importance of using a variety of techniques to encourage learners to revise. Individuals approach the writing process in different ways: while many students may submit a first draft completed in a rush to meet a deadline, others will have already reviewed and revised extensively by this point. Despite this, it

seems that even those who take time composing and revise extensively while writing may also appreciate the benefit of returning to their texts, and as Tigchelaar (2016) points out, by providing learners with some form of guidance in the skill of self-directed revision, teachers can “plant the seeds for more effective development of autonomous writers.” (p. 26)

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About the Authors

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Appendix One: Checklist

Please complete this checklist and submit it with your essay next week.

Essay Second Draft Checklist	Check <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
1. I have read the layout guidelines and example on pages 14-15 of my supplementary materials booklet. My essay follows these guidelines.	
2. My essay has four or five paragraphs.	
3. My essay is at least 500 words.	
4. My introduction begins with an interesting hook.	
5. My introduction gives background information about the topic.	
6. The last sentence of my introduction is my thesis statement.	
7. My thesis statement answers the question directly.	
8. My thesis statement includes the topic of each body paragraph.	
9. My essay has 2 or 3 body paragraphs.	
10. Each body paragraph focuses.	
11. Each body paragraph has a clear topic sentence giving the main point of the paragraph and mentioning a counter-argument.	
12. Each body paragraph has at least two different types of support.	
13. Each body paragraph ends with a concluding sentence.	
14. The conclusion includes a summary of the main points of the essay.	
15. The conclusion includes a recommendation.	
16. The conclusion finishes with powerful final comment.	
17. I have read every sentence carefully at least twice to check for grammar mistakes.	
18. I have checked all sentences starting with So, But or And.	
19. I have not used computer translation for any part of my essay.	
20. I have not copied any of this essay from the internet or anywhere else.	

Name: _____

Appendix Two: Taxonomy of Revisions

Dimension A (type of revision)

1. Surface changes (changes involving simple repair which do not have a substantial effect on the meaning)
 - a) grammar (including changes in tense, agreement, word form, word order, etc), divided into:
 - a.i) a point covered in the grammar workshop or checklist
 - a.ii) a point not covered
 - b) vocabulary
 - c) mechanics (spelling, capitalization, format and punctuation)
2. Meaning changes (changes relating to subject matter and ideas)
 - a) organization (e.g. moving a clause, sentence or paragraph)
 - b) complex repair (clarifying existing points at sentence or clause level)
 - c) extension of existing content (e.g. elaborating on or adding an example of an existing point)
 - d) addition of new content, divided into:
 - d.i) minor (e.g. adding a new supporting point)
 - d.ii) major (e.g. adding a new main point)
 - e) deletion of content

Dimension B (effectiveness of revision)

1. Revision is an improvement on the original
 - a) corrects a clear error
 - b) improves the style, level of detail or clarity
2. Revision is worse than original
 - a) makes an error worse
 - b) introduces an error where none previously existed
 - c) has a negative effect on style, level of detail or clarity
3. Revision cannot be judged either better or worse than the original

Notes

- i) I worked on the general principle of counting each individual change which had been made.

e.g. He didn't have rice enough → He didn't have enough rice

This counts as one 1a revision (word order) and one 1c revision (spelling)

- ii) Rather than including a 'substitution' sub-category in Dimension A, as do many taxonomies, if new content was added in replacement of old content this was counted as two changes: one 2e revision and one 2d revision, as it would have been possible to add the new content and retain the old, so two decisions have actually been made.
- iii) surface and meaning are terms of convenience: of course, changes in grammar and vocabulary can affect meaning. Some degree of judgment is needed here. Thus, for example,

Therefore people buy more cell phones in the future →

Therefore people will buy more cell phones in the future

would count as a grammar change (1a.i), but

Therefore people will buy more cell phones in the future →

Therefore people should buy more cell phones in the future

would count as a meaning change (2b). Often this judgment depended to an extent on knowledge of typical mistakes made by Japanese learners at this level.

- iv) Dimension B will, of course, involve some fairly subjective judgments, especially with regard to meaning-related changes.

Appendix Three: Questionnaire 1

During this course I will be doing some research investigating different ways in which teachers can help students to improve their English writing ability. This questionnaire is part of that research. You do not need to write your name on the questionnaire, and it has no connection to your grade in, so please give honest answers to the questions. Thank you very much for your time and cooperation.

この授業を通して、教員が、学生の英文ライティング能力の向上を助けたさまざまな方法を研究します。このアンケートは、その研究の一環です。アンケートは無記名で構いませんし、成績評価には無関係なので、質問に正直に答えてください。ご協力に感謝します。

Matt.

- 1) I enjoy writing in English.

英語で書くのが好きだ。

1 2 3 4 5 6

- 2) Writing classes are not useful for me.

ライティングの授業は私には役に立たない。

1 2 3 4 5 6

- 3) Studying writing is boring.

ライティングの勉強は、つまらない。

1 2 3 4 5 6

- 4) English writing ability will be important for my future.

英文ライティング能力は、将来的に私にとって重要だ。

1 2 3 4 5 6

- 5) Writing is a good way to improve my English ability.

ライティングは、私の英語能力の向上に良い方法だ。

1 2 3 4 5 6

- 6) Writing several essay drafts is a good way to improve writing ability.

レポートの下書きをいくつか書くことは、ライティング能力の向上に良い方法だ。

1 2 3 4 5 6

- 7) The teacher should check all essay drafts.

教員は、すべてのレポートの下書きをチェックするべきだ。

1 2 3 4 5 6

- 8) Finding problems in my essay is the teacher's responsibility.

私のレポートの問題発見は、教員の責任だ。

1 2 3 4 5 6

- 9) The teacher should point out all the problems in my essay.

教員は、私のレポートのすべての問題を指摘するべきだ

1 2 3 4 5 6

- 10) I put a lot of effort into writing a good essay.

良いレポートを書くために、かなり努力した。

1 2 3 4 5 6

- 11) I read my essay carefully before submitting it.

レポートの提出前に丁寧に見直しをした。

1 2 3 4 5 6

- 12) I thought carefully about the organisation of my essay.

レポートの構成について注意深く考えた。

1 2 3 4 5 6

- 13) I thought carefully about the grammar and vocabulary in my essay.

レポートの文法と語彙について注意深く考えた。

1 2 3 4 5 6

- 14) I thought carefully about the content of my essay.

レポートの内容について注意深く考えた。

1 2 3 4 5 6

- 15) Finding problems in my essay is my own responsibility.

私のレポートの問題発見は、自分の責任だ。

1 2 3 4 5 6

- 16) I can improve my essay without help from my teacher or classmates.

私は、教員やクラスメートの手助けなしで、自分のレポートを改善できる。

1 2 3 4 5 6

他のコメントがあったら、下の空欄に、自由に意見を書いてください。
(英語でも日本語でも構いません):

Appendix Four: Additional Items in Questionnaire Two

- 17) The checklist helped me understand what points were important.
チェックリストのおかげで何が大事か分かった。
1 2 3 4 5 6
- 18) The poster presentation helped me think more deeply about the content of my essay.
ポスタープレゼンのおかげでレポートの内容についてもっと深く考えた。
1 2 3 4 5 6
- 19) Looking at the textbook and my notes helped me improve the essay.
教科書と自分が書いたメモの復習のおかげでレポートが改善できた。
1 2 3 4 5 6
- 20) The grammar workshop in class helped me to improve the essay.
授業中の文法の練習のおかげでレポートが改善できた。
1 2 3 4 5 6
- 21) Using the checklist helped me to improve the essay.
チェックリストのおかげでレポートが改善できた。
1 2 3 4 5 6
- 22) Doing a poster presentation about the essay topic helped me to improve the essay.
ポスタープレゼンのおかげでレポートが改善できた。
1 2 3 4 5 6

Appendix Five: Additional Items in Questionnaire Three

- 23) The teacher's written advice helped me to improve the essay.

教員によるコメントのおかげでレポートが改善できた。

1 2 3 4 5 6

- 24) The grammar codes (ww, pl, vt etc) helped me to improve the essay.

文法の誤りを示す略語(ww, pl, vt etc)のおかげでレポートが改善できた。

1 2 3 4 5 6

- 25) Talking to the teacher in class helped me to improve the essay.

授業中教員と相談したのおかげでレポートが改善できた。

1 2 3 4 5 6

- 26) Talking to my classmate during Peer Review helped me to improve the essay.

ピア・レビュー時にクラスメートと話したのおかげでレポートが改善できた。

1 2 3 4 5 6

Interview One: Post-second draft

- 1) How do you think your essay is going?
- 2) What was the most difficult thing about writing this essay?
- 3) About how long did you spend writing the first draft?
- 4) Did you re-read the first draft before submitting it?
- 5) Did you make many changes to your essay between the first and second draft?
- 6) About how long did you spend making revisions for the second draft?
- 7) Do you think your second draft is better than your first draft?
- 8) Did the presentation have any influence on the way you wrote your essay?
- 9) Did the grammar workshop have any influence on the way you wrote your essay?
- 10) Did the checklist have any influence on the way you wrote your essay?

Interview Two: Post-final draft

- 1) Were you happy with the final draft of your essay?
- 2) Are you satisfied with your essay score?
- 3) What do you think was the most useful part of this course for improving your writing?
- 4) What did you think about writing 4 drafts of the essay?
- 5) If you did this course again, is there anything you would like me to change in the course?
- 6) If you did this course again, is there anything that you would like to do differently yourself?
- 7) What do you think you have learned from this course?



Tips for Teachers

Collaborative Analytic-Scoring Rubrics for Writing Assignments

Naoya Shibata, Nagoya University of Foreign Studies, Nisshin, Aichi, Japan

I have been teaching at private high schools for five years and at a university for one year. Due to globalisation and technological advancement, people today understand the importance of English language and communicative competence. Regarding the importance of communication, listening, speaking and reading skills are often considered as essential components; on the other hand, writing skills tend to be undervalued. For example, my students at my high school were fully engaged in content-based interactive activities, but not in writing activities, as they believed that only listening and speaking activities were a part of communication. However, written communication has become an essential tool in various situations, such as in business, and education. Therefore, to help my students realise the importance of writing, I started to implement writing assignments using rubrics into my class.

Recently, to assess learners' language proficiency, many schools and institutions have introduced evaluation criteria often called "Can-Do Lists" or rubrics. They are groups of evaluation criteria for assessing learners' abilities. Since evaluation in language production measures is largely based on holistic scoring, one grade or score tends to include multiple integrated requirements, and therefore it is potentially less reliable. Wiggins (1998) states that this kind of evaluation can make it possible for the same assessor to offer different scores to the same test-taker at various times for changing reasons or criteria. Holistic scoring also offers enough feedback to learners to diagnose their strong and weak points and develop their language abilities. In educational contexts, the use of evaluation criteria should be helpful for both assessors and test-takers to give and receive useful feedback and to encourage learners to develop their target language abilities. Accordingly, to help students improve their skills, teachers need to know valuable ways

of making valid and reliable rubrics. Therefore, in order to maximise the validity and reliability of rubrics for my essay assignments, I decided to make analytical-scoring evaluation criteria with my students collaboratively.

Procedure

These steps introduced below may be helpful for other language instructors who wish to utilise analytic-scoring rubrics for essays in their classes, but sometimes struggle to maximise the validity and the reliability of the evaluation criteria. Depending on the course size and the learners' proficiency, it may require several days to complete the procedure. This approach is student-centred and encourages negotiation between the teacher and the students. The descriptions of each requirement can also be written in either English or the students' first language.

Step One

To help students reflect upon their writing experiences and daily lives and generate as many ideas as possible, the teacher provides them with two or three opportunities to brainstorm the essential requirements of good writing products, for example, quality of content, coherence, communicability, and paragraph construction, with their partner. They also share their ideas with different classmates to think about the reasons why each category is essential. After that, the teacher asks the students for some ideas and write them down on the blackboard.

Step Two

The marks need not be allocated equally in each category, but "should reflect the importance of the category" (Lee & VanPatten, 2003, p. 271). For example, because I usually implement content-based instruction into my English classes, my students and I prioritise content rather than accuracy. After sharing their ideas with each other, students decide what to include in the evaluation criteria and the degree of significance. Although the total number of categories may depend on the learners' proficiency and the time allocation, three or four components will be appropriate to make the criteria attainable for the students.

Step Three

The teacher divides the students into groups of four. They share their ideas with their group members to determine the criterion for each grade as well as characteristics of quality in their work and write them down on the provided handout. After that, the teacher collects their papers and makes the first draft of the rubric.

Step Four

The teacher provides students with the first version of the rubric and a sample essay to check the “inter-rater reliability” or usefulness of the rubric with them. He or she asks them which description is difficult to understand before letting them evaluate it. Later, they refer to the given criteria and assess it. After that, the teacher collects their evaluation and analyses the differences between the highest and the lowest scores in each category in order to fine tune the description and minimise the differences as much as possible. After two or three versions, the teacher and students arrive at a final version of the rubric which they can all use clearly and consistently.

Conclusion

Collaborative analytical-scoring rubrics can play a significant role in maximising the validity (particularly face validity) and the reliability of the evaluation process. The teacher and the students negotiate and understand the nature and goals of the assessment in advance, and everyone understands what language sub-skills to value and develop through the process of evaluating. Learning to read and evaluate others’ writing also helps learners both write and read with a critical perspective. It should also be pointed out that this approach to evaluation works equally well with speaking.

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About the Author

Naoya Shibata is a part-time lecturer at Nagoya University of Foreign Studies, where he acquired a master's degree in TESOL. He also works part-time at Aichi University and Eitoku High School. His research interests include second language writing, content-based instruction, and language testing using analytic-scoring rubrics.



Tips for Teachers

Improv Ideas for the Language Classroom

Ian Willey, Kagawa University, Takamatsu, Japan

Every time I attend an ELT conference in Japan or a nearby country, I am amazed by all the communicative English textbooks on display in the materials room. One would think that, with all the energy and money being poured into the communicative endeavor, students would have no problems speaking in English by now. Sadly, this is not the case. My own impression is that little progress has been made in students' speaking skills over the past twenty years. Textbooks are brighter than they used to be, with impressive accompanying videos and on-line activities, but for the most part they fail to engage students and, most importantly, fail to boost their speaking and listening abilities.

Recently, I have turned to alternative sources to try to find engaging activities that help students become better speakers and listeners. One promising source, I believe, is the realm of improvisational theater, or improv. The improv philosophy and its many techniques have been described in several popular books, including one by the actor Alan Alda. Although improv involves theatrical performance, its various tenets—an emphasis on deep listening, supporting one's conversational partner, and keeping a dialogue alive by adding ideas—hold much value to language learners. In this article I will introduce three improv tasks which have worked well in my English courses with students of varying English ability levels. The first two tasks play out like word games, and the last one is more communicative in nature.

Activity 1: Group sentences

This task encourages students to work together as an ensemble in order to produce meaningful, if a bit bizarre, sentences. The following steps can be taken.

1. Students should form groups of five to six students.
2. The instructor should tell students that groups will work together to produce sentences, with one word spoken by each person in turn. The instructor can demonstrate this by working with one group. The instructor can begin by saying I, and then one person in the group should think of the next word in the sentence, for example *think*, and so on.
3. Students can do the task on their own, producing as many sentences as they can during a five-minute period. Each group should select one member as the record-keeper, whose job it is to write down the sentences.
4. When five minutes are up, the record-keepers can come up to the board and write down their group's sentences.

If there are any problems in grammar, these can be corrected, but I prefer not to make a fuss over minor mistakes, to prevent a fear of errors from strangling their imaginations. Higher-level students can be given a theme to accompany their group sentences. For example, they can be told that their goal is to compose thoughtful proverbs. Some examples of proverbs can then be shown, such as *There is no royal road to learning*, or *A rolling stone gathers no moss*. Students can come up with their own proverbs, whose meanings the class can then ponder.

Activity 2: Repeat the last word

People tend to think about what they will say next while their interlocutors are speaking. As a result, they often miss the last thing the speaker says. This task forces students to listen carefully to their partners' utterances down to the last word. The idea is for a speaker to listen to a spoken sentence, and then state a new sentence beginning with the last word in the previous sentence. The steps below can be taken.

1. The instructor should first model the task, either by writing sentences on the board or choosing a volunteer from the class to demonstrate with. For example:
A: I need to buy some *eggs*.
B: Eggs are produced by *chickens*.
A: *Chickens* cannot fly very *far*. [Etc.]
2. Students should then be divided into pairs and told that they have three minutes to do the task. More than three minutes and the task may start to become onerous.

3. The instructor can then have students switch partners and do the task again.

The instructor should remind students that their task is to create sentences, and not a meaningful dialogue with their partners. This task can also be done in groups or by going around the class. I prefer to have students work in pairs initially to get them accustomed to focusing on their conversational partner. I also tell students that it is all right to change the number or tense of the last word spoken by their partner, or to add a functional word like an article or preposition, if this makes it easier for them to come up with a sentence.

Activity 3: Yes, and...

This is perhaps the definitive improv exercise. The goal is to affirm what one's partner says, and then add to it—essential elements in keeping a conversation alive. The following steps can be taken.

1. The instructor can introduce this task orally, or by writing sentences on the board, for example:
A: Today is a beautiful day.
B: Yes, and today's homework was easy. A: Yes, and...
2. Students should then be divided into pairs, and each student in each pair should take the role of A or B. Again, students should be given a time limit, perhaps two to three minutes.
3. Student A should begin, by saying *Today is a beautiful day* or another sentence.
4. Student B should continue by saying *Yes, and*, and adding a new thought, and then A should continue, and so on until the time limit is up.
5. The instructor can then have students switch partners and try the task again

Beginning with a new first sentence can help to keep the task fresh, for example: *Our school has a nice campus*, or *It's fun to play sports*. Higher level students can be asked to come up with their own first sentence. Also, students should be told that their sentences can be either factual or fictional, and it is all right if their conversational topic wanders from the first sentence. In fact, this is part of the fun! This task can also be done in groups, or, in small classes, by going around the class.

Once students get the hang of this activity, the instructor can introduce variations to keep the task from becoming tedious. Students can be shown a few different expressions for agreement to replace *yes*, *and...* such as *I know*, *That's right*, *I agree*, *I know*, or *yeah*, and then add their new thoughts. Through repeated practice of this task, the *yes*, *and...* part will come to fall away in importance as students realize how conversations in English often involve a continual adding of ideas about a subject, rather than the question-answer patterns that often appear in textbooks.

Final thoughts

These tasks help students to view communication as a dynamic exchange, in which full attention and active contributions are required of both speakers and listeners. They may also promote empathy in students, as they must listen attentively to their partners. I recommend trying these tasks from time to time, to help students become accustomed to them. Language learners—like actors—need ample time for rehearsal.

For more on improv:

Alda, A. (2017). *If I understood you, would I have this look on my face?* New York: Random House.

Madson, P.A. (2005). *Improv wisdom*. New York: Bell Tower.

About the Author

Ian Willey holds an MA in TESOL from Kent State University and a Ph.D. in Sociolinguistics from Hiroshima City University. When not working on research projects, he tries to find ways to get his students at Kagawa University to speak up in class.

Italki: www.italki.com

Review by Ali Saadatara, Tarbiat Modares University, Tehran, Iran

Before the advent of and developments in technology, language learners and teachers used to consider the classroom context as the only milieu for learning and teaching. Now, with technological innovations, the classroom is not the only place for teaching and learning. Emphasizing the importance of computers and mobile phones in language learning, Ogata and Yano (2004) suggest that technological devices can fundamentally increase learners' ability "to physically take their own learning environment with them." *Italki*, with its motto, "italki is changing the way the world learns foreign languages," is an ideal website for the purpose of ubiquitous learning, providing ample opportunities for language learners and teachers of any L1 background to learn/teach any L2. Both language teachers and learners can sign up for free on the website and begin teaching/learning a target foreign language. Language learning and teaching in *italki* happens either asynchronously on the website itself in sections like notebook entries, articles, discussions, and language exchange, or synchronously via Skype or other video chat software.

The website has certain distinctive features from which learners can benefit. The first feature is "customized learning" by means of which learners can choose from over 10,000 teachers on the website for one-on-one lessons based on their goals and interests. The second feature is "pay for lessons" which lets the learners only pay per lesson and at the price that meets their budget. Finally, the "ubiquitous learning" feature enables the learners to take online lessons at the time and place that suits them.

Learners can take their lessons by going through a number of steps. After signing up on the website and completing their profile information, they can choose a teacher to schedule a lesson with based on a number of criteria. Students can find teachers by their names, the languages they teach, their availability, their hourly rate, and whether they are professionals or community tutors. Online teachers can also be chosen based on whether they are advanced non-native users or native speakers of a given language and based on the levels (i.e. beginner, intermediate, advanced) they teach and the courses (i.e. ESP, EAP, business English, etc.) they

offer. After choosing a teacher, students can take their lessons on Skype or other video chat software.

The website also provides some extra options for both teachers and students. For example, the teachers' performance can be evaluated by their students. Therefore, those teachers who have received more positive reviews by their previous students have a higher chance of lesson requests by other students. *Italki* also provides teachers with both professional development and business opportunities. They can specify a fee in USD for every hour of instruction they provide and a fee for a half hour trial instruction. Prospective teachers have to upload a sample video of their language instruction on the website to showcase their teaching skills. These videos will be available to student users of the website and help them choose their ideal teacher. Students can also check the information on teachers' profiles which include the tuition fee they have specified, their Curriculum Vitae, number of lessons they have given, the languages they can speak and teach, the specialties they have, and their available times in a calendar based on the viewers' time zone.

There are two types of teachers in *italki*; professional teachers and community tutors. The former are those with certificates or degrees in education (uploaded and publicly available to student users) while the latter are those who are only passionate about teaching and can only provide speaking practices. An advantage professional teachers have over community teachers is that apart from teaching lessons, professional teachers can prepare sale packages of learning for students on different topics they are skillful to teach, like conversational English, job interview preparation, essay writing, proofreading, legal English, etc.

Additionally, *italki* has four unique sections, namely, notebook entries, articles, discussions, and language exchange, that can benefit both learners and teachers. Teachers on *italki* can share their pedagogical experiences and challenges with each other by adding notebook entries. The article section contains articles written and shared by the teachers about the techniques they have used in their instructions, the innovations in their daily practices, the challenges they have overcome, etc. Article titles like "10 study abroad tips you need to know," "10 fancy sentence forms to use in your essays," and "master four tones to perfect your Chinese" are but only a few of the titles shared by the users. New teachers are encouraged to be both consumers of such articles written by other teachers, and contributors by providing their own insights about language teaching. Moreover, in the discussion

section, teachers can ask their questions, start discussions on their challenges and invite other teachers to contribute to their discussions. On top of that, students can also share their own experiences of language learning, the personal strategies they use, the preferences they have, and their recommendations with other learners in this section. Finally, in the language exchange section, both learners and teachers can find a language partner to whom they can teach their native language and from whom they can learn a foreign language.

All in all, *italki* has many advantages among which are its cost-effectiveness as compared to private face-to-face tutors or many offline schools. Also, the learning convenience it provides is precious since learners can decide to learn anytime, anywhere regardless of the constraints of time and place. Most importantly, learners can take their time and learn at their own pace, and since the lessons are one-to-one between the teacher and the learner, the anxiety created as a result of the classroom environment and peer pressures is significantly reduced. Besides, *italki* can provide professional development opportunities even for those teachers who are teaching at schools and institutes as well. Such teachers (who may not necessarily be *italki* members) can improve their teaching practices by drawing from *italki* teachers' experiences, challenges, techniques, and strategies in sections like notebook entries and articles and put them into practice in their own classrooms. At the same time, *italki* can complement learning that happens in the classroom by providing the learners with ample out-of-class opportunities for practice (e.g. in the language exchange section). Furthermore, the learners can benefit from the wide range of courses available (e.g. EAP, business English, legal English etc.) along with their language classrooms at schools or institutes where such courses are not usually provided for the interested learners. Moreover, *italki* can also be used as a mobile phone app, available for free download both in Android and IOS versions. Its IOS version is compatible with iPhone, Ipad, and iPod touch.

Among the shortcomings of the app, based on reviewers' comments, is its constant requirement to log in every time you close the app. Besides, deciding on whether a teacher is qualified enough is not an easy job as many teachers have not provided enough information as to their skills. The authenticity of the teachers' certificates and CVs is also difficult to verify. Moreover, what *italki* teachers lack are some synchronous E-learning tools like online whiteboards, collaborative editing and proofreading tools and public pads which allow for better interaction and

save classroom materials. Finally, another downside of the app/website might be the technical/technological failures that may disrupt teaching/learning, and the fact that learning styles and strategies of some learners may not well dovetail with such methods of learning.

Reference

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Notes to Contributors

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