



# COMPENDIUM OF SCHOLARLY ESSAYS

Conference Proceedings of 10<sup>th</sup> Annual ELT Symposium

## EDUCATION, LEARNING AND TEACHING: NAVIGATING TOMORROW'S TALENTS

Preparatory Studies Center  
University of Technology and Applied Sciences - Shinas  
Sultanate of Oman

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## EDUCATION, LEARNING AND TEACHING: NAVIGATING TOMORROW'S TALENTS

16<sup>TH</sup> March 2023

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## 10<sup>th</sup> Annual ELT International Symposium

16<sup>TH</sup> March 2023

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**16<sup>TH</sup> March 2023**

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The Preparatory Studies Center (formerly the English Language Center) is truly grateful to the Vice Chancellor of the University and the management of Sohar International Bank for their generous support and sponsorship to conduct this event. We are thankful to His Excellence, Dr. Said Al Rubaiei, for inaugurating the conference and for his constant support and encouragement. His vision for UTAS Shinas has been instrumental in shaping the direction of our work, and we are grateful for his leadership. And we are deeply indebted to the UTAS, Shinas management for their unwavering support to the center. We are thankful to Dr. Ahmed Said Ahmed Al-Shahri, the Dean of UTAS Shinas for his constant support and guidance. We would like to express our heartfelt thanks to the plenary speakers and all the presenters and their contributions have been invaluable in enriching our knowledge and understanding of the English language. We would like to extend our sincere thanks to the members of the organizing committee and the volunteers and moderators who have put in their time, energy, and expertise into making this symposium happen. We are thankful to the management of the center, Mr. Saif Al Washehi, Head of the Center, Mr. Hamdan Al Abri, Head of Section and Ms. Amal Al Jahwari, Head of Section for their guidance and incessant support. We extend our thanks to the technical support team for their cooperation and support. Last, but not least, we are thankful to all the registered participants from all over the world for their active participation.

## **Address of Dr. Ahmed Said Ahmed Al-Shahri, Dean of UTAS, Shinas**

Ladies and gentlemen, fellow speakers; and our audience joining us online, from around the world welcome to the 10<sup>th</sup> ELT Symposium.

First, may I thank each of our speakers for taking part in this event – the quality and caliber of speakers this year is outstanding. And I hope all the participants will enjoy the symposium.

With around 350 participants and 13 papers from around the world, last year's symposium was a huge success. Today's symposium has 27 speakers and more than 500 enthusiastic participants registered from various countries. This will make our symposium truly international.

The main aim of our event is for the betterment of all the students and the development of teaching staff.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is now my very great pleasure and honor to introduce to you all University of Technology and Applied Sciences Vice Chancellor, His Excellency, Dr. Said Al Rubaiei, and request him to address the audience and announce the symposium open.

## **Address of His Excellency, Dr. Said Al Rubaiei, Vice Chancellor of UTAS**

Dear distinguished guests, colleagues, and participants from all over the world, welcome to our annual symposium organized by the University of Technology and Applied Sciences Shinas.

I am honored to be speaking before such a diverse and esteemed audience. This event is a great opportunity for us to share knowledge and exchange ideas that will contribute to the advancement of education and research in our fields of expertise.

Today's symposium features the speakers who are leading experts in their respective fields, providing insights into various areas of study, including engineering, information technology, business, and health sciences. With participants from different countries, this event promises to be truly international and enlightening.

As the Vice Chancellor of UTAS, I am committed to promoting academic excellence and supporting the professional development of our students and faculty, as we head together towards Oman vision 2040. This symposium today reflects our dedication to achieving these goals.

I would like to express my gratitude to all the esteemed speakers who have taken the time to participate in this event and share their knowledge and expertise with us. I would also like to thank our organizing committee at the English Language Centre at UTAS Shinas for their effort and dedication in bringing this symposium to fruition.

Without further ado, it is my honor to declare this symposium open.

Thank you all for joining us, and I hope you enjoy the symposium.

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## Foreword

Dear participants, authors and readers,

It gives us immense pleasure in bringing out the first publication, titled “Compendium of Scholarly Essays”, sub-titled ‘Conference Proceedings of 10<sup>th</sup> Annual ELT Symposium’. The symposium was held on 16<sup>th</sup> March, 2023. We intend to bring out this journal annually. The conference has brought scholars, participants, teachers, researchers and experts from around the world to share the ideas, teaching practices, and the research findings and to engage in fruitful and meaningful discussions on the theme ‘Education, Learning, and Teaching: Navigating Tomorrow’s Talents’. The conference has been a successful platform to exchange and disseminate cutting-edge research and to foster collaborative work. As editors, we are honored to present the compilation of conference papers which represent a diverse range of topics such as critical thinking and language learning, lifelong learning, creative teaching methods, psychology for language teaching and learning, and error correction and so on. This book encapsulates the collective efforts of all participants who have contributed their valuable research, insights and perspectives. In this context, we would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to Prof. David Crystal for sending us his paper which was based on his plenary talk titled, English Today and Tomorrow, to this journal, which is generally not a norm otherwise. We express our deepest appreciation to the management of UTAS and ELC, organizing committee, moderators, and last but not least, the sponsors for their untiring support and coordination and cooperation to make this event a success. Finally, we look forward to meeting you in the future conferences for your collaborative work and engagement.

Sincerely

**The Editorial Board**

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## **English Today and Tomorrow**

*David Crystal*

For English teachers and learners, focusing on 'tomorrow' requires an understanding of the directions in which the language is moving 'today', which in turn requires a look at the recent past. The one thing we can be certain of is that language changes: whatever English was like yesterday, it will be different today, and different again tomorrow. And one of the main factors that causes change is the diversity that arises as a result of the global reach of English.

It's important to keep up to date with the global situation. Comparing the statistics in the three editions of my Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language, we see that the growth in usage is still significant - from 1.5 billion English users in 1997 to 2 billion in 2003 and 2.3 billion in 2018 - but the figures do suggest a slowing down in the rate of increase. Perhaps there is a natural limit to the number of people worldwide who need to master a lingua franca, or perhaps new translation technology has reduced the incentive.

Vocabulary is always the main area showing linguistic growth. About a thousand new words and expressions enter English every year, reflecting social change both nationally and internationally. I recall the lexical impact of the pandemic, which led to hundreds of new items, often playful, as when the increased use of a word like quarantine resulted in such creative forms as quaranteatime and quaranteetotal. But the main impact has been as a result of global developments, where the 'New Englishes' of the world have added greatly to the English lexicon. Each of these international varieties has developed a local vocabulary of several thousand items reflecting the cultural identity of the community, and these can present a challenge to international understanding. This is a familiar experience in relation to British and American English - car boot/trunk, bonnet/hood, etc - but such regional usages are now increasingly seen and heard from all over the English-speaking world, especially online; so it's important to build a more systematic approach to cultural awareness into teaching practice than has been the case in the past.

A cultural lexicon is an important feature of any variety of world English - including Omani English, when people speaking English in Oman unconsciously introduce expressions into their conversation that reflect Omani culture. In British English, for example, one might hear someone moaning about the M25 motorway, and not understand why (because of the many traffic jams) or saying that their watch 'isn't Bond Street', and miss the allusion (Bond Street has some of the most expensive shops in London). If you know the cultural background, you have no problem; if you don't, the sentence is uninterpretable. Now, 'translate' these examples into the culture of New York, or Paris - or Oman. If a group of people were chatting in English they would make similar allusions to their world that outsiders would find opaque. Introducing a cultural dimension into a syllabus is thus the main challenge for tomorrow, for those varieties of World English that students are likely to encounter, either through travel or (more likely) through online visits or interactions. And it is a dimension that needs to include the historical, especially in relation to English literature. Famous quotations, for example, will appear in a new modern context, such as Hamlet's 'to be or not to be', which appears in today's news headlines in many adaptations, such as 'to diet or not to diet'.

Apart from this, other areas of English continue to change. In pronunciation, the main effects have been on intonation and rhythm. What is often called 'uptalk' - the use of a rising tune in statements - has been noticeable since the 1980s, especially among younger people, with the influence in Britain coming mainly from Australia and New Zealand. In orthography, the most noticeable changes have been online, with minimalist punctuation leading to new usages. The omission in social media (such as WhatsApp) of statement-final periods, for example, has led to a use of the period that expresses extra emotion when it is used. In grammar, where change is slow, a current example is the way verbs of mental state (love, think, remember), which traditionally do not take a continuous verb form (I remember the way rather than I'm remembering the way) are increasingly doing so - most famously in the Macdonald's slogan I'm lovin' it.

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## Exploring factors affecting students' writing performance while studying on the foundation program at Vocational Colleges in Oman

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### Abstract

*Students' difficulties in writing skills have become a thought-provoking issue for many stakeholders, including institutions of education, lecturers, parents and even the students themselves. This current study aims to explore (1) writing difficulties, (2) factors causing these difficulties and (3) suggestions to improve writing skills for EFL learners studying at the foundation program at Vocational Colleges in Oman. A total number of 9 teachers for semi-structured interviews and 122 students were randomly selected from Omani Vocational Colleges in Al Batinah North Governorate. The current study was generated by a sequential mixed method model. In the quantitative phase, a questionnaire was analysed descriptively. Then, the second phase of qualitative study was used for semi-structured interviews. The interviews were analysed thematically. Based on the students' perception, the most serious problem in writing was word choice followed by misspelled words, lack of ideas, poor organisation / illogical sequence, and grammatical mistakes. While, EFL teachers and learners believe that students are facing these difficulties due to lack of extensive reading, loss of reading habits, lack of practice, mismatch of themes between reading and writing, lack of vocabulary and low English proficiency, social environment and limited exposure to English language, lack of motivation, inappropriate teaching methods, lack of written feedback, unavailability of course books, heavy testing and time constrain, a gap between teaching and assessing, and assessment system.*

### 1. Introduction

Learning a second language is challenging for many people. Developing proficient English skills is more difficult for second-language students, especially if they learn in a non-English speaking country. Writing is one of the crucial language skills since it helps individuals to express their ideas clearly and persuade others. Many learners are struggling to write a good paragraph or essay. Learning how to write has always been one of the most complex language skills. The difficulty level is considerably higher when a foreign language is involved" (Octatviana, 2016).

This study proposes to find answers for the following research questions.

1. What difficulties do foundation program students face with writing skills at Vocational Colleges in Oman?
2. What are the factors affecting students' writing performance while studying at the foundation program at Vocational colleges in Oman?

### 2. The Context of the Study

This study was conducted in Spring of 2021 in the Departments of English Language of the Vocational Colleges in Oman, which are considered new colleges with many changes in the foundation programme, learning outcomes, name of these institutions, and the ministries they

belonged to previously. This type of instability may cause some merits and drawbacks in the process of teaching and learning.

### 3. Methodology and sample size

The *mixed method* design was used in this study. A total number of 9 teachers for semi-structured interviews and 122 students were randomly selected from Omani Vocational Colleges in Al Batinah North Governorate

#### 3.1 Instruments

- **Questionnaire:** The questionnaire of the current study has been adapted from:
  - (1) The previous research: (Habibi, Wachyuni & Husni., 2017 ; Farooq, Uzair & Wahid., 2012)
  - (2) The writing rubric which is used for writing assessment in Omani Vocational Colleges. The criteria in the rubric include content, organization, vocabulary, spelling and grammar, sentence structure (refer to the appendix (E) ).
- **Interviews:** Interviews help to better understand and explore research subjects' perceptions, experiences of this issue. Initially nine learners were individually interviewed and nine teachers who teach writing, in foundation program were invited for focus group interview.

### 4. Data Analysis

The mean and standard deviation will be used to determine writing difficulties. Then the analysis of data was interpreted by following the criteria established by Habibi et al. (2017), as in the figure below.

Mean Score	Interpretation
1.00 – 1.80	Very low
1.81 – 2.60	low
2.61 – 3.40	Medium
3.41 – 4.20	High
4.21 – 5.00	Very high

**Figure 1.** Mean Score and its interpretation established by Habibi et al., (2017)

As mentioned previously, the researcher purposefully selects participants (students) for having a

The data of both questionnaire and semi-structured interviews will be analysed and discussed separately by using thematic analysis and in relation to the research questions.

**Research Question 1:** What difficulties do foundation program students face in writing skills at Vocational Colleges in Oman?

## 5. Findings and Discussion

In this part, there were 19 statements related to the learners' perceptions of difficulties in writing. The research consisted of five types; statements were from each type. By using excel, the findings of the questionnaire can be seen in figure below.

No.	Difficulties in Writing	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1.	Lack of ideas	3.65	1.01	High
2.	Poor Organization / Illogical Sequence	3.58	1.00	High
3.	Problems of Word Choice	3.92	0.92	High
4.	Misspelled words	3.72	1.21	High
5.	Grammatical Error	3.16	1.11	Medium
<b>Overall mean score and standard deviation</b>		<b>3.60</b>	<b>1.05</b>	<b>High</b>

**Figure 2** Mean, standard deviation, and interpretation of types

Figure 2 above answers research question one. Based on the responses, students perceived that they face many difficulties in writing. Thus, learners believed that they face problems in **word choice**, with a total mean score of 3.92 among the types. The responses indicate that the students primarily believed that they have word choice problems compared with the others. In this construct, lack of vocabulary had the highest mean score (Mean = 4.09) followed by students' perception of confidence when using simple words (Mean = 3.87). Difficulty in choosing appropriate vocabulary when writing had the lowest observation in this category (Mean = 3.81). Principally, these observations cause word choice problems among learners as shown in figure 3. The findings were replicated by Habibi et al., (2017) who demonstrated that learners, perceived that they had problems of word choice when writing. The finding was also similar with the previous study Anh (2019), which showed the result students had vocabulary restraints that made students face difficulty in expressing their ideas and made writing assignments stressful.

Next, **misspelt words** had a mean score of 3.72 which interpreted a high level of difficulty. Learners perceived that spelling mistakes were the second difficulty that influenced the quality of their writings. In this category, students gave several supporting statements, with spelling mistakes having the highest mean score (Mean = 4.13). Difficulty in writing spelling was the second-highest perceived challenge (Mean = 4.09). This challenge was followed by the long time that learners take to check the spelling of words (Mean = 3.99) as in figure 3. Under this construct, the lowest perceived observation was the lack of knowledge to know the correct spelling of words after they have been marked as wrong (Mean = 2.68) as in figure 3. This finding supports previous research by Uba and Souidi (2020); Pathan and Ali Shan (2018); who found that spelling was one of the most frequent writing difficulties. These results are also reflected by Habibi et al, (2017), who found that spelling mistakes are one of the main challenges experienced by students in their writing experience.

Followed by **lack of ideas** that had got nearly the same mean score. Learners perceived the lack of ideas as one of the components that make their writing have poor outcomes. In the same category, students had a high perception about unfamiliarity with a certain topic as the case of lack

of ideas (Mean = 3.41). Lack of background knowledge about a particular subject can deny one an idea about the topic. Lack of idea development had a high perception among students (Mean = 3.60). Some topics have sub-components from which students struggle to develop ideas fluently. In the lack of ideas, students had a high perception over writing supporting sentences (Mean = 3.72) as shown in figure 3. These findings are in accordance with a study carried out by Habibi et al, (2017) about students’ perception of writing problems. Their findings indicated that effective writing highly depends on idea development and lack of it frustrates students, leading to poor writing outcomes.

The only difficulty in writing that was interpreted as a medium level of difficulty was for **grammatical errors**. It had got a mean score of 3.16. Learners perceived grammatical error as the fifth difficulty and the minor type to struggle. This result contradicted Poonyarattansoontorn’s (2017) research finding who found that the students faced grammatical difficulties more than any other writing difficulties. In this category, putting the right tense appropriate to an event had the highest perception and was interpreted as “*high*” (Mean = 3.42). The second-highest number of students perceived the problem of having poor grammar in general (Mean = 3.18). Producing sentence fragments was another challenge perceived by learners (Mean = 3.11). In the same breath, students admitted that they commit errors using incorrect prepositions (Mean = 3.10) as in the figure below.

The descriptive analysis resulted in the figures below showing mean, standard deviation and interpretations toward each statement of five types as earlier discussed.

**Figure 3** Mean, standard deviation, and interpretation toward each statement.

Items	Lack of Ideas	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1.	One of my problems is lack of ideas about the topics that are given to write.	3.86	1.00	High
2.	I have difficulty in writing because I am not familiar with the topic.	3.41	0.99	High
3.	I feel overwhelmed when writing because I don’t know how to develop my ideas.	3.60	1.11	High
4.	It is difficult for me to write supporting sentences.	3.72	0.94	High

Items	Poor Organization / Illogical Sequence	Mean	SD	Interpretation
5.	I face problems in connecting one paragraph with the other.	3.47	1.03	High
6.	I have difficulty in organizing my ideas while writing a task.	3.68	0.97	High
7.	I have difficulty in making outline before writing.	3.59	1.01	High

Items	Problem of Word Choice	Mean	SD	Interpretation
8.	By using the simple words in writing make me more confident.	3.87	1.02	High
9.	Lack of vocabularies make me confused in writing.	4.09	0.89	High
10.	I have difficulty in choosing appropriate vocabulary for different writing genre.	3.81	0.87	High

Items	Misspelled words	Mean	SD	Interpretation
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11. I face problem to write spelling of the word that is new to me.	4.09	0.92	High
12. I get poor grades in writing because of spelling mistakes.	4.13	0.82	High
13. Checking spelling of words take long time for me.	3.99	1.01	High
14. If my teacher marks on my spelling errors, I have difficulty to know the correct spelling of that words.	2.68	1.20	Medium

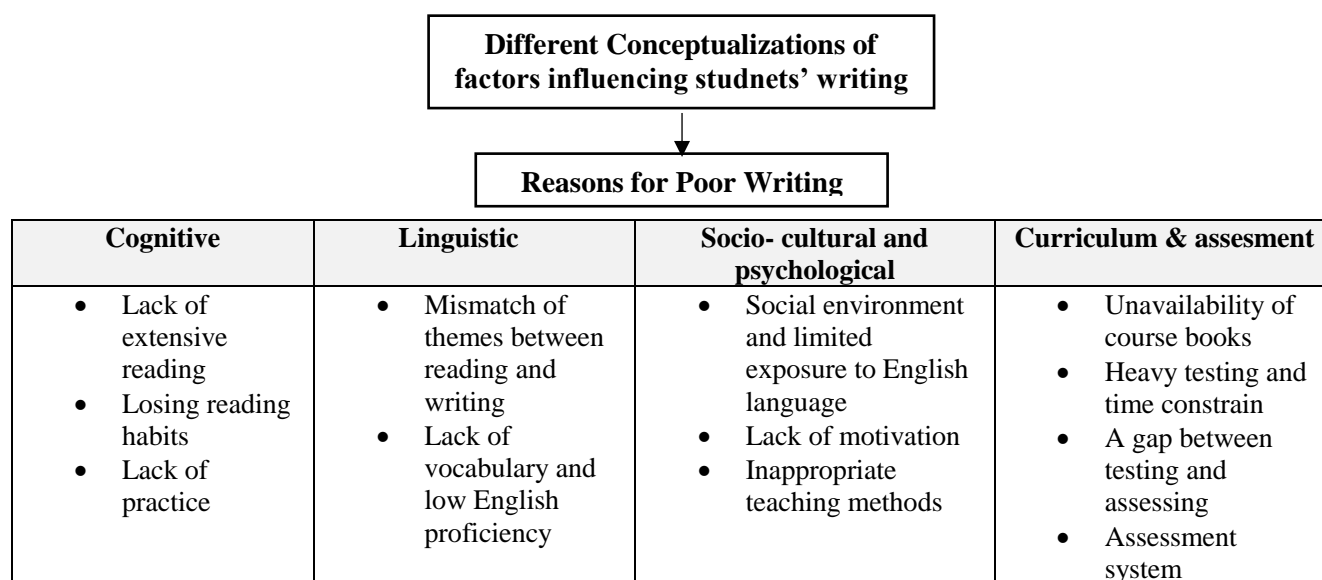
Items	Grammatical Error	Mean	SD	Interpretation
15.	My problem in writing is to put the correct tenses which appropriate to the event.	3.42	1.01	High
16.	Having poor grammar make my writing not so good.	3.18	1.04	High
17.	One of my difficulties in writing is producing a sentence fragment.	3.11	1.08	Medium
18.	I have difficulty in selecting the appropriate article ( a, an , the) before the noun .	3.03	1.23	Medium
19.	I commit errors in using correct prepositions ( on, in , at, etc.)	3.10	1.19	Medium

**Research Question 2:** What are the factors affecting students’ writing performance while studying on the foundation program at Vocational colleges in Oman?

**Interview**

**6. Findings and Discussion**

The main purpose of this research was to understand factors that influence students’ writing performance at Vocational Colleges in Oman. A comparison between the teachers’ and the students’ interview results reveals no significant difference between students’ and teachers’ perceptions regarding this issue. The interview results were categorized into cognitive, linguistic, and physiological problems and factors related to the curriculum and assessment system. Figure 4 shows a thematic framework for students’ and teachers’ responses about factors influencing students’ overall writing skills.



**Figure 4** Thematic framework for the interviews reponses

## 6.1 Cognitive and Linguistic Factors

### 6.1.1 Lack of extensive reading and mismatch of themes in reading and writing

Regarding the lack of extensive reading and its practice, the interviews revealed that lack of reading impoverishes students' reading achievements and language acquisition. A clear majority of teachers admitted that a majority of students shun reading. One participant equipped that "...they don't have better exposure to the language. They don't usually read English books and at home don't write in English even at college they most of the time talk in Arabic." In the same vein, the majority intimated that student do not read for pleasure. Instead, they engage in reading upon the teachers' request or when reading is a necessity for certain class assignments. At the same time, a small minority of respondents argued that the mismatch of themes between reading and writing is not beneficial when it comes to reading achievement or language acquisition. One of the teachers responded to this regard and gave an opinion that "*Students need to be familiar with the theme or the topic that they are going to write about; the second writing of LEE exam was about the differences and similarities between electronic materials and printed materials ... so how is it possible for the students to know the different aspects unless the students have been exposed to this topic before and have prior knowledge about it*". One of the studies that go hand in hand with these findings is that of Balan and Jönsson (2018) that found a causal relationship between lack of extensive reading or lack of practice and poor writing capability. Similarly, Yuntao (2019) reported that students who strictly adhere to writing habits and reading literature performed better than their counterparts who did not embrace such practices.

### 6.1.2 Lack of practice

Lack of practice is another factor that leads to students' poor performance in writing. In writing just as in other cognitive activities, progress does come with practice. However, a considerably more than half of the interviews' responses revealed that they give little regard to writing or reading practice due to other factors, hence they cannot be critical and analytical, or illustrate their thoughts through English writing. One of the factors is time constraint, which usually gives little room for students to practice. In this context, one respondent posited that "*We, as teachers we have to accept the certain fact that we mostly have a very hasty syllabus and therefore experience time constraints. So, we give less time to let them practice.*" Due to a tight syllabus schedule, teachers may assign writing tasks but might not find enough time to correct them and give students enough feedback. This situation implies that cognitively, learners struggle with the development of quality content or end up compromising the writing structure through banal word choice. This factor featured mostly among online students and was labeled as a factor that does not promise significant improvements in students' writing ability when they graduate. Therefore, insufficient practice is one of the factors that influence writing performance in students.

### 6.1.3 Lack of vocabulary and low English proficiency

The interviews also acknowledged that lack of vocabulary and low English proficiency derail students from achieving much in English writing proficiency. This factor was reflected in several interview responses in which respondents argued that learners face writing difficulties due to a lack of vocabulary. Quite often, students use basic vocabulary in their writings rather than advanced vocabularies, which are important for enhancing and stimulating students' motivation in

improving writing skills. According to one respondent, *“I know how to write but I can’t reach the required word count because I don’t have vocabulary to express my ideas.”* In some cases, students know how to write but cannot express their thoughts using the right choice of English words. Furthermore, writing that requires a specific word count presents daunting challenges to students as they cannot meet the required word count due to limited knowledge of vocabulary. This factor, along with the hastily delivered syllabus, is usually reflected in the students’ final exams as below-average performance. One respondent lamented that *“We also need to learn the important words. Without vocabulary, we can’t write anything”* In this regard, lack of command of the English language influences students' writing performance.

## **6.2 Socio-Cultural Factors and Psychological Problem**

### **6.2.1 Social Environment and Limited Exposure to English Language**

One of the issues that emerges from these findings is limited exposure to the English language. Considerably more than half respondents acknowledged that the situation does not demand them to practice writing in the Omani context. *“Not only students’ factors and teachers’ factors do affect their writing but also the language itself. In the context of English as a foreign language, they have a little exposure to the language, and most of them have exposure to the language only in the classrooms”*. (MT6) said. A level two student’s response to question one: How do you feel about writing? It was; *“In public places, we sometimes need to speak in English, When we go to Café we need to read the menu in English because Arabic is not provided in some Cafés..... but writing is not important outside”*. This response corresponds with many other similar responses that show that writing skill has a little chance to be practiced outside the classroom. Consistent with the literature, several studies thus far have linked the causes of poor writing performance with learners’ social background where the society does not help the learners to learn the language as English is not practiced in the society during the common activities (Akbar, Pathan & Ali Shan., (2018 ; Fareed, Ashraf & Bilal., 2016).

#### **6.1.2 Lack of Motivation**

Motivation through learners’ feedback was another important theme in the interview, with respondents emphasizing the importance of having written feedback. Feedback on what students have learned and their level of understanding is often a source of motivation. About 33% of respondents blamed the lack of feedback on the source of students’ writing difficulties. For instance, respondent FS40 complained that *“The teacher asked us to send our drafts, but he didn’t tell us what is right and what is wrong ... No comments at all ... We are suffering from this matter during this semester.”* The idea is that without motivation, students face a high level of writing challenges.

### 6.2.3 Inappropriate teaching methods

The interviews also revealed that teaching methods are the most effective agents of transforming students, with a formative effect eventually influencing their writing performance. Usually, poor teaching methods are reflected in the outcome of the teaching-learning process as poor grades and poor achievements. One respondent equipped that *“Methods of teaching to write are not appropriate. The topics are not introduced in the right way”*. Some students do not understand certain teaching methods, with one respondent noting that *“sometimes I understand writing sessions, but sometimes I don’t understand the teacher because he just gives us the topic directly and asks us to write.”* Kenta and Boshra (2019) supported the idea that effective teaching methods should incorporate feedback. The idea is to motivate students through writing and make them develop well-defined learning goals.

## 6.3 Factors Related to Curriculum

### 6.3.1 Unavailability of Course Books

The absence of course books, especially in the foundation program, also featured as one of the factors for students’ poor writing performance. Course books are considered the brick and motors of effective teaching and writing skill acquisition. As a result, respondents cited books as an important ingredient in learners’ writing prowess. FT4 equipped that *“We need to have a target language for every level; we don’t have textbooks or graded books. Each one of us has the liberty to use any material that is convenient to them.”* This comment was replicated by another respondent, who lamented that *“When I came to the college, I thought we will have books. But having books would help us like to do revision and know what we will take afterwards, providing a glossary for the important vocabulary for each level.”* Charalambous (2011) indicates that 'course books relieve teachers, reducing the heavy load of preparation, saving time, and making teaching and learning much easier'.

### 6.3.2 Heavy Testing and Time Constrain

The interviews result also varied regarding heavy testing and time constrain. Considerably more than half of the respondents acknowledged that the two factors influence students’ capability to write effectively and fluently in English. Notably, they limit the practice, training, and improvement in writing, thereby impacting learners’ overall performance. Essentially, teachers, along with students are forced to adhere to the strict schedule of the testing and syllabus calendar. The congested schedule usually limits students from exploring and processing the newly learned language, making the syllabus an exam-oriented teaching. As the interview response show, *“I am not satisfied actually with the testing calendar. To be very frank ...the thing that we are not able to give them time to explore on their own”*. Teachers also agreed with such constraints and observed that *“We are not teaching a language and it has become exam-oriented teaching.”* In this view, time allocations play an important role in students’ writing performance. According to (Naim , Lugamn & Matmin 2020), time constraints make it difficult for students to acquire writing skills since writing extends beyond just compiling correct grammatical forms together to creating and expressing ideas.



Vocational Colleges and College of Marine Sciences  
Vocational Diploma Programme  
English Foundation Programme  
Term 3 (2020/2021)

Month	Week	Teaching hours	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
March	W1	20	14	15	16	17	18
	W2	20	21	22	23	24	25
	W3	20	28	29	30	31	1
April	W4	20	4	5	6	7	8
	W5	20	11	12	13	14	15
	W6	20	18	19	20	21	22
	W7	20	25	26	27	28	29
May	W8	20	2	3	4	5	6
	W9	20	9	10	11	12	13
	W10	20	16	17	18	19	20
	W11	20	23	24	25	26	27
June	W12	20	30	31	1	2	3
	W13	20	6	7	8	9	10
	W14	20	13	14	15	16	17
	W15	20	20	21	22	23	24

week	Level One		Level Two		Level Three		Level Four	
4	Quiz 1		Quiz 1		Quiz 1		Quiz 1	
7	MTE: 26/4	Make-Up 4/5	MTE: 27/4	Make-Up: 4/5	MTE: 26/4	Make-Up 4/5	MTE: 27/4	Make Up: 4/5
10	Quiz 2		Quiz 2		Quiz 2		Quiz 2	
13	LEE: 14/6	Make-Up:22/6	LEE: 15/6	Make - Up: 22/6	LEE: 22/6	Make-Up22/6	LEE: 14/6	Make Up: 22/6
Speaking	CA Stand talk		CA Technical PPT		CA Interview		CA round table group discussion	
	LEE Free PPT		LEE Group PPT		LEE project PPT (part 1)		LEE project (part 2) final	
	NOTE:							
	1. Quiz 1 is in <i>week 4</i> and make - up in <i>week 5</i> the dates to be set internally. 2. MTE speaking <i>weeks 8 and 9</i> 3. Quiz 2 is in <i>week 10</i> and make - up in <i>week 11</i> the dates to be set internally 4. LEE speaking <i>weeks 12 and 13</i> / <i>12</i>							

Figure 5 Testing Calendar for EFP ,Term 3 (2020/2021)

### 6.3.3 Wide Gap Between Teaching and Assessment

The gap between teaching and assessment makes it a challenge for both students and instructors to get feedback on what the former have learned and their level of writing capability. Respondents argued based on how such feedback reflects the extent to which course goals have been achieved. A case in point is FS 15 who said that “*We do not know how are we assessed in the exam .. no one told us the division of marks.*” Another repetitive problem was raised in the interviews was unlimited *themes*. The extract below illustrates one of the writing learning outcomes that shows any theme that may come to the exam. A small minority of students claimed that they did not do well in the exam due to unfamiliar themes, which led to a lack of vocabulary and ideas.

**3. Write an argumentative essay a (minimum 100- 250) word with an introductory paragraph (including thesis statement), body paragraphs (including topic sentences and supporting sentences) and a concluding paragraph.**

Figure 6 An extract from level four writing learning outcomes.

### 6.3.4 Assessment System

Assessment systems also appeared as a central element in the students’ learning and writing process. About 33% of the respondents cited that some learners do not get the importance of writing thanks to the passing criteria. One respondent voiced the concern that “*One of the students got 85 total marks; but her marks in writing were less than 6.5 out of 23. For both writings and other skills she got good marks. So, they do not give much importance to writing.*” This

sentiment points to the idea that students' understanding of learning goals and assessment criteria positively affect their motivation for writing.

## **Conclusion**

In this study, a number of research questions were sought to respond. RQ1 asked about the students' writing difficulties. This study has shown that the overall mean for the students writing difficulties is high. There are various students' perceptions of writing difficulty, including lack of ideas, poor organization/illogical sequence, word choice, misspelled words, and grammatical errors. Misspelled words has a high students perception as well as a lack of ideas. In contrast, the challenge of grammatical error was the most minor category found in the perceptions of writing problems.

RQ2 aimed to explore the factors that affect students' writing performance. This investigation shows that the factors affecting students' writing skills were categorized into cognitive, linguistic, and physiological problems and factors related to the curriculum and assessment system. The most obvious findings to emerge from interviews are lack of extensive reading, poor reading habits, lack of practice, mismatch of themes between reading and writing, lack of vocabulary and low English proficiency, social environment and limited exposure to English language, lack of motivation, inappropriate teaching methods, lack of written feedback, unavailability of course books, heavy testing and time constrain, a gap between testing and assessing, and the assessment system.

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*Note: See Appendices-I for Questionnaire and other related documents*

## English Language Teaching (ELT) for Lifelong Learning: Strategies and Approaches

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### Abstract:

*With the growing importance of English as a global language, the need for lifelong learning has increased. English Language Teaching (ELT) for lifelong learning promotes self-directed learning and autonomous language development beyond the classroom setting. This paper explores various strategies and approaches to ELT for lifelong learning, including Task-Based Language Teaching, Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), learner autonomy and self-directed learning, needs analysis in ELT for lifelong learning, and development of intercultural competence through ELT. Additionally, the paper examines the use of technology as an effective tool to support lifelong learning, and emphasizes the importance of fostering learner motivation, setting personal learning goals, and creating a supportive learning environment. Practical tips and strategies for ELT teachers are also provided to support their learners on their language learning journey.*

**Keywords:** *English Language Teaching, Lifelong Learning, Task-Based Language Teaching, Content and Language Integrated Learning, Learner Autonomy, Self-Directed Learning, Needs Analysis, Intercultural Competence, Technology, Learner Motivation*

### Introduction

In today's society, a proficient command of the English language remains crucial due to its emergence as the universally accepted means of communication across various fields. The importance of mastering this language is especially evident given globalization and internationalization trends that require proficiency in business dealings and scientific endeavors alike. Thus, it is essential for individuals seeking career advancement or personal growth to adopt a lifelong learning orientation towards enhancing these skills through continued training in ELT strategy. The pursuit of continuous knowledge, skills, and attitudes beyond formal schooling is what lifelong learning embodies. This ongoing process aims to expand one's education and personal growth through both structured and unstructured learning experiences. ELT authorities define lifelong learning as a multifaceted concept that involves diverse means of acquiring knowledge.

### Definitions of lifelong learning

1. A well-known expert in English language teaching (ELT), David Nunan, defines lifelong learning as "a process of continuous intellectual and personal development that is undertaken throughout one's life, often with the aim of improving one's quality of life, work opportunities, and social interaction."

2. Another ELT specialist, Alan Maley, describes lifelong learning as "the acquisition and application of knowledge and skills throughout one's life, motivated by a desire to understand and engage with the world, to contribute to society, and to realize one's personal potential."

3. Lifelong learning, according to noted ELT author and educator Jack Richards, is "an approach to education that emphasizes the importance of ongoing personal growth and development, as well as the acquisition of new knowledge and skills, throughout one's life."

4. According to Scott Thornbury, a well-known ELT author and teacher trainer, lifelong learning is "an ongoing process of personal development that extends beyond formal education and training and encompasses informal learning opportunities, such as reading, watching movies, and conversing with others."

Experts in English language teaching (ELT) typically see lifelong learning as an ongoing process of personal and professional development motivated by a desire to comprehend and engage with the world, to contribute to society, and to reach one's potential.

### **Benefits of lifelong learning for an EFL/ESL students**

The acquisition of knowledge and skills throughout one's lifetime can significantly enhance the language proficiency, cultural sensitivity, cognitive function, employability prospects, and personal self-actualization of the English as a foreign/second language learner. The process of lifelong learning enables students to expand their horizons beyond textbooks and classrooms by exposing them to diverse discourses and experiences that challenge their assumptions, broaden their perspectives, and foster a lifelong passion for learning. Hence, EFL/ESL educators should encourage their students to adopt a growth mindset that embraces continuous learning to achieve both academic excellence and personal fulfillment.

Through consistent language use, exposure to many cultures, discussion of difficult concepts, keeping up with professional advancements, and pursuing individual interests and objectives, students can improve their English proficiency, their ability to think critically and holistically, and their ability to compete more effectively in the job market. EFL/ESL students may speak effectively, interact with people from various backgrounds, think more deeply, and lead more fulfilling lives through lifelong learning.

Additionally, lifelong learning can assist EFL/ESL students in developing a range of generic abilities, like research and computer literacy, which are becoming more and more crucial in the current digital age. Using online tools and resources, students can gain access to a wide range of knowledge, engage in global communication, and participate in collaborative learning activities. Moreover, lifelong learning can support the growth of resilience and adaptability by assisting EFL/ESL students in coping with change, overcoming challenges, and learning from their experiences.

Furthermore, by allowing students the chance to interact with people from various walks of life and take part in community events, lifelong learning can foster social inclusion and communal

cohesion. As a result of feeling more assimilated into their community, EFL/ESL students can increase their social support, civic activity, and sense of belonging.

Thus, EFL/ESL students can profit from lifelong learning, which gives them the chance to advance their language abilities, critical thinking abilities, cultural awareness, technological literacy, and more digitization, as well as professional chances, personal growth, resilience, and social inclusion. EFL/ESL students must therefore embrace lifelong learning and make the most of all of their opportunities, both inside and beyond the classroom.

### **Focus of ELT teachers to promote or foster lifelong learning skills in EFL/ESL students.**

ELT instructors are crucial in encouraging and sustaining EFL/ESL students' capacity for lifelong learning. They should work to promote student autonomy and self-directed learning to do this. This involves encouraging students to take charge of their education, assisting them in setting and tracking personal goals and assisting them in locating opportunities and resources to support language development.

ELT instructors can encourage learner autonomy by giving students the choice of how they want to learn. They could, for instance, offer students a range of options for tasks or activities meant to support the development of language skills, like speaking or writing. As a result of feeling in charge of their education and having the freedom to focus on topics that fascinate or are relevant to them personally, students may become more engaged and motivated in class.

Teaching students how to learn on their own should be another priority for ELT instructors. Students must be taught how to identify their own learning needs, set reasonable goals, and monitor their progress in order to achieve this. For instance, ELT instructors could give students checklists or rubrics for self-evaluation and urge them to consider their strengths and flaws. This might inspire students to participate more actively in their education and grow in self-awareness.

The development of lifelong learning skills and habits, such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and information literacy, should also be a priority for ELT teachers. This can be accomplished by giving students tasks and exercises that call for them to evaluate and analyze data, form conclusions, and apply their knowledge in unfamiliar circumstances. Teachers of English as a Foreign Language (ELT) should promote students' use of a range of technology and tools, including social media platforms, mobile language study apps, and online dictionaries.

ELT instructors ought to promote a collaborative, risk-taking atmosphere in the classroom. In addition to providing regular feedback and constructive criticism, this may encompass fostering peer learning and collaboration. ELT instructors can help students develop a culture of lifelong learning by creating a safe and supportive environment where they feel confident taking risks and making mistakes. They can also help students develop the skills and perspectives needed for continued language learning.



## **Strategies and Approaches to ELT for Lifelong Learning**

### **1.1. Importance of needs analysis in ELT for lifelong learning**

Needs analysis, which involves determining learners' objectives, drives, and linguistic requirements, is a crucial component of English language teaching (ELT) for lifelong learning. Following is a list of the benefits of needs analysis in ELT for lifelong learning:

1. *Personalized learning*: To provide students with a more individualized learning experience, teachers might employ needs analysis to identify the specific learning requirements for each student. By comprehending the objectives, motivations, and learning preferences of each student, teachers may provide tailored instruction that meets their individual needs and interests. The success, motivation, and involvement of students can all be increased with this tailored teaching approach.

2. *Relevant content*: Teachers can choose material applicable to their pupils using a needs analysis instrument. By identifying their students' language requirements, teachers can select resources and exercises pertinent to both their personal and professional lives. Student enthusiasm and engagement in the learning process may increase as a result. It may be easier for them to apply what they have learned to actual life circumstances.

3. *Effective resource use*: By identifying the linguistic requirements of the class, teachers can select exercises and resources pertinent to the students' personal and professional lives. Students' interest in and involvement in the learning process might grow because of this. They apply what they have learned to practical problems easily.

4. *Resource management*: Educators may maximize their time, resources, and technology capabilities by conducting needs evaluations. By concentrating on their students' requirements, teachers can select materials and exercises appropriate for their level, interests, and goals. This uses the time and resources available in the classroom to teach effectively.

5. *Learner autonomy*: By enabling students to participate actively in their education, analysis can promote learner autonomy. Teachers can help students identify their strengths and weaknesses and define learning objectives by involving them in the needs analysis process. Students may be inspired to take ownership of their education as a result, and skills for lifelong learning may be developed.

6. *Long-term success*: Using needs analysis, instructors can help students develop the language skills necessary for both their own and their employers' success. By identifying each learner's individual language needs and creating lessons to meet those needs, teachers may help students meet their goals and succeed long-term.

The promotion of effective and pertinent English language instruction for lifetime learning requires the use of needs analysis as a key instrument. Teachers can encourage student engagement, motivation, autonomy, and long-term success by determining learners' needs and modifying instruction to match those needs.

## **1.2. Task-Based Language Teaching**

A method of teaching languages that places an emphasis on using tasks or activities as the main point of instruction is known as task-based language teaching (TBLT). The method is built around the idea that learning a language is most effective when students are involved in meaningful dialogue and problem-solving tasks rather than just memorizing grammar rules and vocabulary lists.

Significant findings from recent TBLT research include the following:

1. **Task design:** According to recent research, it's crucial to create activities that challenge students' linguistic and intellectual faculties and provide them the opportunity to utilize the language in authentic situations.

2. **Planning and execution:** Most recent studies have concentrated on the careful planning and execution of TBLT, emphasizing the necessity for teachers to carefully scaffold and guide students throughout the task cycle while also allowing students to take ownership of their learning.

3. **Evaluation:** Recent studies have looked at a number of methods for evaluating learner performance in TBLT, including the use of self- and peer evaluation as well as the creation of rubrics and other assessment instruments that concentrate on both language accuracy and communicative effectiveness.

4. **Technology:** Studies investigating the use of digital tools and resources to enhance task design, implementation, and evaluation as well as to give learners chances for constructive dialogue and engagement have been a recent study focused on the integration of technology into TBLT.

Recent research on TBLT has highlighted the significance of creating and implementing tasks that are interesting, difficult, and engaging while also giving students the opportunity to apply the language in real-world situations. The continuing growth and improvement of the TBLT method must also pay close attention to the integration of technology and the creation of efficient assessment tools and techniques.

## **1.3. Learner Autonomy and Self-Directed Learning**

To become lifelong learners, EFL/ESL students must develop crucial skills such as learner autonomy and self-directed learning. Teachers in ELT settings can help students develop these abilities by giving them the chance to be in charge of their own education. Allowing students to select assignments and topics that interest them, encouraging them to establish individual learning objectives, and offering them tools and direction to support their learning are some examples of how to do this. Instructors can also give students an opportunity to reflect on their learning and progress while also assisting them in the development of critical thinking abilities such as information analysis and evaluation. ELT teachers may enable their students to become active, engaged learners who are driven to continue honing their language skills outside of the classroom by encouraging learner autonomy and self-directed study. As a result, pupils may grow to be more proficient language users who are also successful lifelong learners.

In addition to the strategies already mentioned, ELT teachers can also incorporate learner autonomy and self-directed learning into their classroom activities by giving students the chance to collaborate and work in groups. Cooperating allows students to benefit from one another's knowledge and experience while also exchanging ideas. Teachers can also motivate students to reflect on their learning experiences and provide feedback to their peers to aid them in developing metacognitive skills and developing into self-aware learners.

Another strategy to foster learner autonomy and self-directed learning is to use technology as a tool to support students' learning. For instance, teachers might give kids access to internet tools and mobile apps so they can study independently and hone their language skills. Students can use these tools to learn at their own speed, go over the material as needed, and monitor their development over time. Technology can be used by teachers to help students collaborate and communicate both within and outside of the classroom.

For EFL/ESL students to be successful as lifelong learners, learner autonomy and self-directed learning are crucial. By giving their pupils the chance to do so, ELT teachers can motivate their students to learn more on their own, work with others to advance their learning, reflect on their experiences, and use technology to do so.

#### **1.4. Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)**

A teaching strategy known as content and language integrated learning (CLIL) combines the instruction of language and subject matter in a meaningful and contextualized way. In the EFL/ESL teaching community, CLIL is gaining popularity to promote lifelong learning. This type of instruction involves teaching science, math, or history using a second or foreign language, typically English. Students learn subjects in English while simultaneously improving their language abilities because of this.

There are various ways that CLIL supports lifelong learning for EFL/ESL learners. First, it offers a stimulating and interesting learning atmosphere that encourages inquiry and curiosity. Students are exposed to scenarios and circumstances from real-world use of the language rather than learning it in isolation. This helps to create a more immersive learning experience and promotes deeper learning

Second, CLIL promotes the improvement of language abilities in a more genuine and organic way. Students gain exposure to a variety of linguistic structures and functions as well as skills for using language in meaningful and purposeful ways. Since students are more likely to recall and apply language that is used in a context that is relevant to their interests and needs, this helps to promote more successful language acquisition and usage.

Moreover, CLIL encourages the growth of intercultural competence. Students are exposed to other cultural perspectives and ways of learning topics through a foreign language. This encourages empathy and compassion for others with different backgrounds and contributes to the growth of more worldly citizens.

Finally, CLIL encourages students to continue learning throughout their lives by equipping them with a set of transferable skills and abilities. Students gain a variety of cognitive, metacognitive,

and affective abilities, including critical thinking, problem-solving, and self-regulated learning, by participating in content-based language acquisition. These abilities are helpful for lifelong learning in general as well as language learning specifically.

For EFL/ESL students, CLIL is an effective method of language instruction that has the potential to encourage lifetime learning. CLIL can assist students in becoming more effective and successful learners both inside and outside the classroom by providing an engaging and motivating learning environment, developing language skills in a natural and authentic way, fostering intercultural competence, and supporting the development of transferable skills.

### **1.5. Development of Intercultural Competence through ELT**

Intercultural competency is an important skill for EFL/ESL students, and ELT can play a significant role in helping students acquire this ability. By giving their students access to resources that educate them to various cultural concepts, opinions, and values, ELT instructors can incorporate multicultural issues into their courses. Students might be encouraged to interact with classmates from different cultures and participate in activities like festivals and conversations. They can learn to communicate effectively despite cultural differences by engaging in cross-cultural activities, which also helps them develop empathy, respect, and understanding for individuals of all backgrounds. By challenging students to challenge presumptions and prejudices and to critically analyze cultural norms and practices, ELT can help students build critical thinking skills. Examining their cultural identities and prejudices is another way that students can develop tolerance for cultural diversity through ELT. Developing cross-cultural skills through ELT can help EFL/ESL students become better communicators, more tolerant and respectful of other cultures, and better prepared for a globalized world.

### **1.6. Integration of Technology for lifelong learning**

Technology may greatly aid lifelong learning by giving users access to a plethora of information and opportunities for language practice outside of the classroom. A few of the technology options available to help English language learners include mobile apps, internet resources, virtual language exchanges, and language learning platforms. These resources provide personalized instruction, practical language use, and quick student feedback.

Mobile applications are a well-liked tool for language learning since they provide resources like flashcards, tests, and games that promote vocabulary study, grammar practice, and language development. In addition to enabling users to customize the learning experience to their own needs and goals, some of these apps offer personalized learning routes and adaptive content. Online courses, podcasts, and blogs are just a few examples of online resources that can provide flexible, self-paced learning opportunities for language learners. Students can practice their language skills with native speakers in real time utilizing video chat during virtual language exchanges, which encourages cross-cultural interaction and improves speaking and listening abilities.

Interactive activities, distinctive teacher comments, and multimedia content are just a few of the methods used by language learning platforms to create an engaging learning experience. These tools support language learners in setting goals, tracking their progress, and learning languages in a systematic, fun way.

When blended learning is used in ELT classes, technology can improve the teaching process. By using digital tools like interactive whiteboards, e-textbooks, and discussion forums, teachers can enhance student learning in the classroom. Teachers can use technology to give pupils individualized feedback, such as audio or video recordings, to facilitate individualized education and foster learner autonomy.

Because it provides access to a wealth of resources and opportunities for language practice outside of the classroom, technology can significantly support lifetime learning for EFL/ESL learners. To hasten language learning, ELT teachers must successfully incorporate technology into their lesson plans and encourage their students to make use of these tools.

### **Useful advice and tactics for ELT Instructors**

ELT instructors can assist their students in achieving their goal of learning a language by providing them with useful advice and techniques. Encourage pupils to practice English outside of the classroom along with other advice and methods.

- Give students the chance to speak with English-speaking people.
- Make language learning more effective by including authentic resources like journals, newspapers, and movies.
- Allow students to take part in authentic language activities like debates, role plays, and presentations.
- Encourage pupils to evaluate their language learning progress and set attainable learning objectives.
- Establish a secure learning environment that promotes learners' independence and self-direction.

### **Conclusion**

To build and improve language abilities outside of the classroom, ELT for lifetime learning is crucial. The many techniques and strategies for ELT for lifelong learning, such as TBLT, CLIL, learner autonomy, needs analysis, intercultural competency, and technology, have been examined in this study. A supportive learning environment and fostering learner motivation are equally critical for encouraging continual language growth. To assist their students in their language learning journey, ELT teachers might employ constructive advice and strategies.

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## Language Learning and Critical Thinking

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### Abstract

*Critical thinking in academia focuses on developing learners' potential and abilities to prepare for a complicated practical life they experience outside the classroom. Educationists contend that critical thinking skills are the fundamental goal of learning and particularly central to higher education (Paul, 1987; Ennis, 1996). A shift has occurred from viewing learning primarily as rote training to conceptualizing learning as a constantly evolving process of discovering, questioning, and reformulating hypotheses (Pennycook, 1994). In language education, critical thinking skills are inextricably interspersed with linguistic processing. Researchers have theorized that an efficient language learner is capable of utilizing maximum higher-order thinking skills, also known as critical thinking skills, to approach a variety of learning strategies. They are able to utilize their cognitive faculty for language processing and complex computational analysis simultaneously. This theory explains the role of the learners' cognitive and metacognitive domains in developing their awareness of the new language and the world around them (Fairclough, 1999). Incorporating critical thinking skills in a language classroom enables learners to find a practical purpose for learning and using the target language. This incorporation of critical thinking skills could develop learners' awareness of their progress and develop language autonomy along the way (Lin and Mackay, *ibid.*).*

**Keywords:** *critical thinking, higher-order thinking skills, language learning.*

### Introduction

Think about the following:

- (a) A king-sized lunch and drinks with friends at a high street restaurant or a simple meal with family?
- (b) Accepting a better offer from another organization or accepting a promotion from the existing role?
- (c) Saving money for a long-standing start-up idea or spending a fraction of those savings on a luxurious 2-week vacation in summers?
- (d) Black and grey or blue and brown?

Making decisions is an unceasing experience we go through since childhood. From choosing what color to wear, what university to go to, and deciding on the best time to take a getaway, we constantly face questions, examine the appropriacy, investigate the possibilities, analyze and judge our decisions. The problem, however, is how to do that – and for us, teachers, how to develop those skills in our learners and enable them to utilize those skills.

However, decision-making is just one skill we have highlighted. Think about comparing and contrasting, explaining, demonstrating why things happen, understanding others' perspectives, making value judgments and analyzing critically. These are some of the other plethora of essential



skills that are integrated in institutional learning. In academia, we refer to these as critical thinking skills.

### **Understanding critical thinking**

Critical thinking is not a novel idea, nor does it pertain to any complex and complicated scientific intervention. It is the foundation of all the basic cognitive functions we perform on daily basis: questions, answers, calculations, judgments, predictions, decision-making, evaluation, etc. However, it is only over the last decade that educators have started to innovate the idea of preparing learners for this ever-changing and unpredictable world we inhabit by incorporating critical thinking skills in teaching and learning.

When we discuss critical thinking, we refer to some targeted cognitive practices. On a general note, critical thinking occurs when we challenge or critically evaluate something: a text, an idea, a political statement, a speech, a piece of information, an article. As a result, the exercise enables us to build more than one perspective by looking at various aspects of a problem or an issue.

Criticism, principally, forms the basis of the process, objective and outcome of critical thinking. For example, disagreeing with the words of a journalist, while pointing out the problem and supporting our opinion with arguments. Also, when critically viewing new information, we can find more meanings that might be indirect.

Our academia, today, has taken critical thinking on the driving seat. Literacy, numeracy and language development find their origin in a child's ability to decode morpheme, develop the mechanics of phonetics, acquire the complex arrangement of grammatical items, and understand the semantics of text and discourse. The four skills of language and their sub-skills require language learners to apply skills like problem-solving, predicting, inferencing, evaluating, analyzing and explicating, all of which are now understood and classed as critical thinking skills. The application of these skills to decode a language- and vice versa- is a complex and complicated process that learners activate with the help of language tailor-made language learning and practice tasks.

The functional understanding of language learning and critical thinking lies in a teacher's resourcefulness of activating the process of critical thinking. This is done by employing certain strategies in lesson planning, syllabus design, and task allocation to put learners onto higher-order thinking skills (HOTS) that are induced as part of critical thinking. The collective process enables learners to compare and contrast, demonstrate, justify with rationale and logic, evaluate and analyze ideas, form opinions, introduce value judgment and exemplify.

In support of this discourse, academic research reveals critical thinking as a means of building on reasonable judgments by accepting and/or rejecting arguments and conclusions. Academics understand the term as an attitude involving an argumentative approach to drawing conclusions. Based on a wide range of elucidations, research should, however, also help us unravel a practical correlation between language learning and critical thinking and enable educators to build their resources and effective teaching practice if they are to help learners learn a language with a purpose.

## Understanding critical thinking in the context of language learning

Learning a language requires rigorous mental input and a deep, strenuous processing and computing of the language corpus, in contrast to some other disciplines that rely on testing the learner's memory. Some of the most commonly employed micro-skills of language learning include the HOTS: comparing and contrasting, evaluation and analysis, arguing, agreeing or disagreeing, predicting, exemplifying, making value judgment, inferencing, and the list goes on. These micro-skills, or the HOTS of language development entail critical thinking in the grand scheme of language processing. The understanding that critical thinking to receive and produce a language in a language classroom enables learners to become independent thinkers and learners and foster their overall intellectual development, is what language educators like Penny Ur emphasize.

In theory, critical thinking and language learning support and strengthen each other. It is important to understand that language learning can be made much more effective, practical and interesting if teaching and learning are based on critical thinking exercises. At the same time, critical thinking skills can be encouraged and enhanced while learning a language, based on the higher-order thinking skills the activities and planned curriculum and syllabus include.

Looking at critical thinking in the context of language learning, *deep processing* is a term used by Penny Ur. It is understood as a process involving learners to use target language to build perspectives, and conversely, use world view and the ability to judge, evaluate, analyze, exemplify and conceptualize to give meaning to target language. Deep processing requires learners to process information into knowledge-building concepts. The processing of information and facts into concepts and logic finds origin in the target language generating meaning and purpose. For example, in order for learners to be able to distinguish between action and state verbs, they need the understanding of sensory involvement of the human body along with a pragmatic understanding of actions that move the human body to perform a task, and those that don't. Language, in turn, will enable them to compare, contrast and draw conclusions about the meaning and form of the target grammatical item in question.

When learners practice the sub-skills, for instance, making an argument in an argumentative essay, they need the critical thinking skills that enable them to accept or reject notions and facts laid down by someone else, by evaluating the text itself.

### The challenges

Learners struggle with the demands of demonstrating critical thought. Several theoretical elucidations have tried to explain the connection between language learning and developing and using critical thinking skills. A noteworthy language-related explanation helps us understand a possible influence of language proficiency on critical thinking performance is in terms of cognitive cost (i.e., the mental resources cost associated with task performance) (Manalo & Sheppard, 2016). Research (Manalo & Sheppard, 2016) unwinds the correlation of language learning and critical thinking by explicating that

language processing entails the use of cognitive resources in working memory, and lower proficiency in a language would require the use of more resources. Thinking critically

would likewise require the use of working memory resources. There are, however, limited resources available in working memory and, if a considerable amount of those resources has already been expended on utilizing a language in which proficiency is low, there may not be adequate resources remaining for the satisfactory execution of critical thinking (p.44).

### **Are we teaching beyond facts and figures?**

As teachers, it is important to assess if we're teaching our learners beyond facts and figures. Also is it important to self-investigate if we are attempting to enable them to process this information into knowledge, and apply the knowledge outside the classroom? It is beneficial if we look at introducing innovative teaching methodologies in the classroom. One of the effective ways of doing so would be to modify questions and the way we ask them. Asking questions activates theoretical content and makes it purposeful and usable for learners to use it outside the classroom. It engages learners and checks their understanding of facts and figures.

Look at these questions and determine which one(s) assess(es) the learner's knowledge:

1. What is deforestation?
2. What are the three most important reasons for deforestation?
3. How does deforestation affect us as humans and the planet?
4. *Deforestation is an unavoidable human activity.* Do you agree or disagree? Discuss reasons.

The first question is memory-based. The second one is also memory-based, but requires learners to expand on their understanding and knowledge. The latter two (which can nevertheless be challenging for learners) give learners the opportunity to critically engage in the knowledge they possess and analyze and evaluate their understanding. Questions like the first and second only limit learners to develop what we call the lower-order thinking skills, while the third and fourth questions activate learners' HOTS that stimulate their semantic, pragmatic and critical engagement, analysis and evaluation outside the classroom, and prepare them to face similar, but real-life complex situations in the real world.

Questions that activate learners' HOTS are the key to developing their critical thinking skills. In a practical world, getting from A to B is a complex, strenuous journey in the real world as compared to examination questions that are based on multiple choice questions or definitions or fill-in-the-blanks tasks. Therefore, the need is to prepare them to face the challenge when the stakes are low. One way is answering the *why* questions, where learners are likely to be put to stakes for being judged or criticized when their preparedness is low. We cannot expect learners to prepare for the *why* and *how* questions after school; but, this practice in fact has to build up in school, so that the practice tasks can be translated into practical tasks in the real world (Oshiro, 2019). A good way to stimulate learners' critical thinking, thus, would be to start with the *what* questions, but modify them, for instance, *what are the three most important reasons of deforestation?* can be changed to *discuss the three most important reasons for deforestation and illustrate with examples.* This will require learners to go beyond definitions and take the risk of critically analyzing their knowledge. Similarly, *how*, *why* and argumentative questions give learners the opportunity to connect their objective and analytical knowledge with subjective representation of knowledge, present logic and defend their rationale.

I	Can	Do a lot of shopping	If	Me	Work hard
You	Will	Be unhappy	Unless	My parents	Are rich
My friends	Can't	Be happy	Provided	they	Are poor
	Won't	Have a happy life	As long as		Are smart
			Even if		Are beautiful

**Figure 1\***

In Figure 1 above, the first part of the task involves linguistic processing. It requires learners to simply make sentences using a word or phrase from each column. The second part, which requires critical thinking or higher-order thinking skill, is to find sentences that they agree or disagree with. The task could be further topped up with *why* questions to further encourage practice in critical thinking.

Rewrite paragraph:


Last summer, I painted our house. The job took about two weeks. First, I washed the exterior using warm water and a mild detergent. Then I sealed all the chinks and pores in the walls with putty. After the putty had had a chance to dry, the exterior could be painted. I used a latex paint because it is easy to apply and cleans up with water. It needed a whole week to finish this part of the job. I applied the paint very carefully and evenly because I did not want to have to apply two coats. I used a color that was very close to the original color. Our house is a two-story house, which meant that the second story needed to do with a tall ladder. The paint can had to be balanced on the top rung of the ladder while I worked. When I finished the job, I felt a great deal of satisfaction. I had to pat myself on the back. Even my dad said I did a good job.

**Figure 2\***

Another example is the Figure 2 above. A first-level lower-order thinking skills task in this activity is to simply change the highlighted sentences from active to passive voice and check the grammar. The HOT skills or critical thinking part, on the contrary, is to understand and analyze the difference in the original (active) and passive passages. Ask learners to identify the difference(s) in the two forms by analyzing the effect of the language. Questions like these encourage learners' critical thinking skills to enable them to think outside the box and apply the pragmatics and semantics of the language to their real-world conversations.

### Matching Words

Instructions: Match each word to the corresponding image.



box	bed	bag	leg
sad	frog	milk	fish

### CLASSIFY THE WORDS

**CHILDREN MILK MATHS HAVE A SHOWER SCIENCE**  
**WOMEN MEAT GO TO SCHOOL TEETH WAVY**  
**CHICKEN LANGUAGE BLONDE HAVE DINNER JUICE**  
**PEOPLE CURLY WATCH TV STRAIGHT GEOGRAPHY**

ROUTINE	SCHOOL SUBJECTS	FOOD	IRREGULAR PLURAL	APPEARANCE
GO TO SCHOOL				

**Figure 3\***

The matching-words activity on the left in Figure 3 above is straightforward. It is clearly a lower-order thinking task and does not challenge learners' language process based on HOTS and critical thinking abilities. On the contrary, with the classification task on the right, learners are not just required to say what the words mean, but the task also activates their cognitive processes in language development. In addition, the task is also likely to enhance learners' engagement with an interesting mind-raking and problem-solving exercise, as learners tend to find challenges more appealing.

## FEELINGS

Draw a line from each picture to the matching word.



- I get angry when...
- I am happy because...
- I become sad when...
- I am proud of...
- I get scared when...

**Figure 4\***

In the two different types of task above in Figure 4, learners will experience contrasting cognitive processes. Compared to the drab and straightforward emotions-matching task on the left, in the task on the right, learners get a chance to contextualize the listed emotions in their own experience. The conjunctions will also help them to logically think about cause, effect, time, place, etc. to make connections. This leads to better learning and processing of the emotions learners already know about, hence the processing of facts and information into knowledge, world view and experience.

### **Applying critical thinking to language teaching and learning**

Learning a language can be achieved by various tailor-made practical activities that combine critical thinking with teaching and learning material to ensure that language teaching and learning both become inclusive and practical. As teachers, there is a variety of modifications we can introduce to our pedagogy along the spectrum.

1. Evaluate the questions we ask: Are the questions we ask intended to test learners' memory or knowledge? Do they encourage an in-depth utilization of learners' knowledge or their reliance upon the information that is fed to them? Do they allow learners to reflect on their personal experiences and/or offer their opinions? Do they stimulate learners to generate a passionate debate and engage in investigation? For instance, *why is global warming a serious issue?* is an important question, but it doesn't entail learners to offer details about their thoughts or opinions on the matter, and it is unlikely to result in an enthusiastic response. Changing it to, *how could the effects of global warming impact or change your future life, and how does this make you feel?* directly solicits learners' perspectives. This question gets learners thinking about their own lives, which can enhance their engagement.

2. Spathis (2020) examines lesson planning and syllabus design as key strategies to induce learners' critical thinking skills. For example, an academic reading curriculum might have the following objective: "Learners will analyze a variety of academic writing samples in an effort to determine the components, organization, and structure of academic writing texts." Although English language teachers can think of any number of ways to teach and support reading as a skill, they may find it more difficult to achieve the first part of this objective- how to teach learners to analyze. The strategies, for instance, can be drawn from Bloom's Revised Taxonomy to focus on the development of learners' micro-skills of language, such as *recall, interpret, infer, execute, differentiate, critique, and produce*. For example, learners can be given a task of interpreting authentic resources such as infographics or podcasts to infer the meaning behind the titles and other content. Another interesting task, Spathis (2020) points out, could be to ask the learners to differentiate between cultural practices in the target language country and the United States. 'We want them to critique statements or texts that we present to them, and we want them to produce well-executed pieces of writing or oral presentations.'

3. Using authentic resources: Using authentic resources can augment learners' engagement and curiosity, especially if the resources also offer challenges. For example, a lesson plan on eating habits in the target culture should be adapted and have an authentic menu for learners to analyze (Spathis, 2020).

4. Making learners independent: Shifting the focus from the teacher to the student and reducing teacher talk time are difficult to handle, but handing over the control to learners is an essential strategy to empowering them and making them independent learners. When learners are given choices and problems that require them to handle tasks independently or collaboratively with peers, it enables their practice in independent critical thinking, decision-making and making value judgment about their perspectives and reflections.

Independent learning, by way of critical thinking, is also recognized for encouraging learners to question. However, it is also the teacher's role to limit their own questions and allow learners to come up with theirs. Also, it is best to not answer their questions right away. We may be tempted to give them clues to move on with the task, but an alternative approach would be to foster collaborative learning by making learners work in pairs or groups and peer check their work. Help them with their tasks by providing scaffolding – techniques/strategies to help them progress towards their learning outcomes.

In addition, Spathis (2020) identifies a vital aspect of independent learning that 'instead of leading every class discussion, teachers can assign learners different jobs in group discussions, or allow them to take turns facilitating a whole-class discussion. When learners are given a chance to lead, they generally rise to the occasion, which can lead to deeper learning.'

5. Project-based learning, also known as experiential learning, is known to be an effective approach to integrating language learning objectives with critical thinking skills. Project-based learning tasks and activities combine language and a practical task so that learners learn by doing (Brown and Lee, 2015). This approach enables learners learn to 'understand, examine, analyze, evaluate, and create while using English to complete a task or activity' (Spathis, 2020). The approach also gives learners a chance to build learning outcomes based on their personal experience and vice versa. Since project-based learning is founded on real-life practical activities, it urges learners to not only think beyond the books, but also allows them to connect their learning with the real world and in essence, trace their orientation from point A to B, as discussed earlier. The opportunity to draw learners into activities and interaction with other learners to construct knowledge requires most of the HOTS highlighted earlier. Therefore, through this process, the knowledge they perceive has life-long impressions and a practical element.

6. Tyers (2018) highlights some useful strategies incorporating critical thinking skills in language learning with a segregation of receptive and productive skills discretely. For reading and listening skills, learners can be made to work on a range of texts to develop inferencing, argumentative, evaluation and analytical skills. For example, an argumentative text can be used to have learners determine reasoning in it, and whether the reasoning is inductive or deductive. Similarly, other types of text can also allow learners to distinguish between qualitative and quantitative details, facts and opinions and author's voice, viewpoint and biases. Illustrations and visuals are proven to be a provocative way for learners to determine argumentation, for instance, learners can work in pairs to create a diagram that illustrates the argument and the structure of the argument.

7. Lessons on productive skills can perhaps be more rigorous than those on receptive skills. Writing tasks can range from position or argument statements where learners write two or three supporting

details to support them, to requiring them to write a few sentences that demonstrate inductive and deductive reasoning discretely, on a given topic. This is a useful activity on inferencing. Similar activities could be done with learners requiring them to write fact-based and opinion-based statements on a given topic.

8. Tyers (2018) also emphasizes the importance of using tasks on flawed reasoning whereby learners correct flawed reasoning in a text containing one. Moreover, the argument structure diagram used in teaching receptive skills can be reciprocated in lessons on productive skills and encourage learners to develop argumentative skills by creating an argument structure diagram on a given topic.

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## Fostering Critical Thinking Using Language of Literature – A Pedagogical Perspective

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### Abstract

*Teaching of Literature is always a rewarding and learning experience as it offers scope to broaden the horizons of thinking by virtue of open-ended discussion in the classroom. Literature is taught at different levels and based on the level and contextual requirement the teacher uses the text and sometimes goes beyond the text to critique, analyse, evaluate and conceptualize. The participant in the classroom is likely to receive multiple benefits such as developing sense of appreciation, aesthetic thinking and critical acumen. Literature and its language is often a linguistic treat as language in literature is used creatively and authentically used. The situations in novels, poems and plays provide a plethora of ideas which contribute towards enhancing the sense and sensibility. Its language comes with many connotations and denotations giving an opportunity for the teacher to foster critical thinking which demands reasoning, clarity of thought, accuracy in thinking, logic and fairness in inference etc. The current paper Fostering Critical Thinking Using Language of Literature – A Pedagogical Perspective aims at exploring lines from literary texts where in a teacher can judiciously use them to inculcate sense of critical thinking. The paper makes an attempt to bring into context certain treasured utterances from literary texts and explore the possibility of fostering critical thinking skills.*

**Key words:** Language, Literature, Soft skills, Critical Thinking

Critical thinking enables an individual to use his/her sense of judgment by rational assessment and scientific evaluation. Considering critical thinking as a skill, it is overambitious to think of imparting it within the four walls of classroom or through modules of teaching consisting of case studies. However, to a greater extent, discussion on soft skills namely decision making, team work, leadership, positive thinking and critical thinking using sources of literature, anecdotes and real-life situations may broaden the understanding of the course participant soft skills or life skills cannot be placed in a rigid curricular framework as they have to be imbibed through one's own cognitive thinking, experiential learning and one's own perceptions.

To nurture cognitive thinking and for skill enrichment literature is an inexhaustible source which can be judiciously used in the classroom as it promotes creativity, critical thinking, authentic use of language, aesthetic perception and human attitude besides providing ample scope for gaining better and succinct understanding of aforementioned soft skills. Literature which essentially deals with problems of human existence, the conflicts, the dilemmas, the resolutions and the crises situations offerings the readers a treat of feelings, a pack of emotions, a bundle of thoughts, a bonanza of same ideas and variety of people with varied attitudes undoubtedly contributes towards fostering of critical thinking.

Gillian Lazar in his seminal work, literature and language teaching opines literature is a useful tool for encouraging students to draw on their own personal experiences, feelings and opinions. It helps students to become more actively involved both intellectually and emotionally. (p.24)

Further language of literature is

- Correctly used
- Creatively used
- Critically used
- Carefully used

Any poet, novelist, playwright or a critic looks for best possible expressions and supplies apt expressions to suit the context. The use of language evokes the emotions, thoughts and feelings that they wish to convey. The choice of language and its vocabulary is crucial for any work of literature as the words carry different meanings, literal, figurative, contextual. Symbolic, connotative, denotative, social and grammatical.

Against this background, the current paper endeavors to put for the certain literary sources where in opportunities to foster critical thinking among the learners can be explored. In the current scenario, especially in technological institution where in there is greater thrust on skill component, literary texts have taken back seat and they are sparingly used.

While dealing with soft skills mostly teachers depend on text books which are in plentitude and which hardly ensure the consistency of ideas. The discussion often is confined to definitions of critical thinking or decision thinking (whatever skill is dealt), its features, types and couple of illustrations. Given a situation where the teacher or trainer gets adequate time, use of literature in the classroom where soft skills are taught, a more enriching experience can be lent which implicitly develops a better perception and broad understanding.

Before presenting certain treasured utterances / quotes from literature which provides insights on critical thinking, the theoretical basis of using literature is to be considered. The postulates of cognitive theory which consider reasoning, evaluation and creative output as key dimension of learning also vindicate the stand literary sources can be suitably utilized in the classroom for soft skills training. The constructivists' theory of learning which calls for learning on the basis of experience and past knowledge is also relevant in this context of discussion. Literature with its creative output presents varied experiences germinating from the imaginative prowess intellectual acumen and critical judgment of the literary artist. It has a humor potential to provide knowledge in the form of description of people, places events, history and institutions.

Critical thinking involves creativity problem solving ability and the caliber to analyses the situation. My attempt in this paper is to bring into context a few lines from different texts of literature where in the possibility to generate ideas about critical thinking exist.

Source: Julius Caesar

Genre: Drama.

Artist: William Shakespeare

**Quote: Not that I loved Caesar less, but that I loved Rome more. (Act III, Scene II).**

These are the words uttered by Brutus to defend himself before the furious mob after the assassination of Caesar. The rhetoric used by Shakespeare reflects his creative genius and linguistic brilliance, logic, reasoning and deeper thinking. If the teacher/ trainer provides the background of this utterance and assign a task of analyzing the critical thinking abilities of the course participants surface the demonstration of Brutus' wisdom, his ambition, the haunting guilty of killing his soul's friend and the need to exonerate himself from the crime. The crisis in the mind of Brutus can be an apt example and a useful source to foster critical thinking.

Critical thinking lies in the equipoise that lies in the quote. Both are dearer to Brutus but his greater inkling towards Rome is presented in these lines.

Source: Hamlet

Genre: Drama

Artist: William Shakespeare

**Quote: I will speak daggers to her, but use none. (Act II Scene II)**

Hamlet is one such play which not only perplexed the readers but critics for its complexities that lie in character of Prince Hamlet. There is quick a good number of lines from the play where in ideas on critical thinking can be explored for example Hamlet's address to Horatio when he says, *There is either good or bad in this world, Horatio, thinking makes it so* is worth mentioning quote which reveal the philosophical disposition of Hamlet and his intense thinking in the hour of crisis as he is grappling with conflicting thoughts.

The above lines offer scope to unearth the logic of Hamlet. On one hand his he is so enraged about disloyal and unfaithful nature of his mother and on the other he is restricted to take any drastic step considering the respect for womanhood as prescribed in scriptures. Not merely critical thinking, the quote can be used to teach communication and inter personal skills. Hamlet wants to question the infidelity of mother by using piercing words but without any intention to wound her.

Source: My Last Duchess

Artist: Robert Browning. Genre: Poetry

My Last Duchess

Collection: Dramatic Lyrics

**Quote: I gave commands then all her smiles stopped together**

The above lines from the famous dramatic monologue **My Last Duchess**, give the quintessence of the Dukes character who was jealous, ruthless sadistic, possessive and cruel. The teacher/ trainer dealing with critical thinking can interestingly present the context of the poem where in the analytical ability which is one of the crucial dimensions of critical thinking.

It also provides an opportunity to juxtapose the characters of the duke and Duchess and perceive their traits. What is essential for the activity is the presence of sufficient background of the poem

given by the teacher. The levels of learners may vary but each learner may come forward with his/her own analysis about the situation.

Source: Paradise Lost Book I

Poet: John Milton,

**Quote: Better to reign in hell than to serve in heaven.**

The above lines from Milton's classic *Paradise Lost* speaks about the leadership quality of Satan, the arch rival and his commitment to remain a master not a slave. Paradise lost is a perhaps source of discourse between evil and good glorifying the mission of John Milton to justify the ways of God to man.

Given adequate background to the learners the task to evaluate the character of Satan and his democratic thinking of not to remain subservient. On the other hand, contradictory ideas denouncing Satan may also surface. The debate between reigning and screwing may bring about the critical outlook.

At this juncture before concluding it is not out of place to mention the limitations in using sources of literature for fostering critical thinking. Heterogeneity of classroom, cross cultural aspects, linguistic ability aptitude of the learner towards literature and teachers limited knowledge about literary sources and also the academic constrains are some of the limitations to explore literary sources.

Self-access sheets may be prepared by the teacher and group activities also can be planned. The texts of literature with all its splendid expressions of language and their intensity to foster critical thinking offer a rewarding experience making both teaching and learning experiences more and more stimulating.

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## **How to Increase Students' Language Awareness and Strengthen Social Bonds through Collaborative Feedback and Feedforward**

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### **Abstract**

*When the pandemic started and both teachers and students were forced to adapt to working from home and rethink their practices, there suddenly was an abundance of online ready-made resources and techniques which kept growing as time went by. However, it was difficult to make a sensible choice which would cater for the specific needs and interests of students. Experiencing a totally unknown situation which was literally jeopardizing people's wellbeing and was splitting learning groups, it was therefore essential to find a resource that would bind learners of Oral Language Discourse Practices (OLDP) together as a community (Coll et al., 2014), and the key word was collaboration. In this paper, we will present and analyse an experience carried out at a teacher's training college in Argentina in which students participated in a podcast forum project, becoming highly benefitted through the use of collaborative feedback and feedforward.*

**Keywords:** *Language awareness, collaborative feedback, feedforward, podcasts*

### **Podcasts**

Pronunciation plays a significant role in comprehensibility (Anderson-Hsieh & Koehler, 1988). While there might be a variety of factors that affect pronunciation, including age, individual differences, motivation, and instruction, teachers should take advantage of the factors over which they have control: instruction and exposure (Ducate & Anderson, 2001). Nowadays, technology allows students to come into contact with a variety of materials, texts and accents that may not have been accessible before. "Technology, specifically the use of podcasts, could offer opportunities for contextualizing tasks, while at the same time honing pronunciation" (Ducate & Anderson, 2001, p.68). Podcasts can be effective texts for "raising [second language (L2)] learners' awareness of the important role of intonation systems" (Ramírez-Verdugo, 2006, p.153) that can, as Ducate and Anderson (2001) indicate, ultimately help learners improve their FL pronunciation. In addition to developing listening comprehension skills in learners, prosody represents another important aspect of pronunciation which can be acquired and trained through the use of podcasts. Prosody is defined as the "patterns in individual words of stress, pitch, and tone and rhythmic and intonational patterns of longer utterances" (Pennington, 1989, p. 22); aspects that otherwise may be difficult to explain and troublesome to deal with.

Prosody training for students at all levels is recommended as part of communicative language teaching (...) As learners tend to use L1 (first language) intonation patterns when speaking in the L2 (Ramírez-Verdugo, 2006), they need to be explicitly taught the prosody of the L2. One way to achieve this practice, as well as practice in comprehension and accentedness, is through the use of technology (...) However educators decide to use podcasts, it is first important to determine instructional goals (O'Bryan & Hegelheimer, 2007) and keep the emphasis on pedagogy (Rosell-Aguilar, 2007, 2009). In keeping these objectives in mind, practice with pronunciation, listening, and speaking are specific ways that foreign language teachers and learners can tap into this technological tool. Using podcasting in contextualized language learning (as opposed to simple pronunciation drills) can also be useful in that it allows teachers to contextualize pronunciation and create meaningful tasks, rather than simply have students repeat and practice lists of words or sounds. (Ducate & Anderson, 2001, p.67)

### **Context of Instruction**

“Historically, pandemics have forced humans to break with the past and imagine their world anew” (Peters et al., 2020, p.1). In Argentina, the academic year starts in March and finishes in December. During the pandemic when the Argentine government established a lockdown on March 20th, 2020, classes had just started. Overnight, classes were suspended and all educational institutions were closed. However, they were summoned to continue with online lessons to guarantee the success of the academic year.

This sudden change from onsite everyday lessons with rich face-to-face interaction to online meetings caused, among other things, a great impact on students' learning as well as on their wellbeing. They were under considerable pressure to perform academically but lacked the support of their peers, which they had so much relied on up until that time. The situation was not different for teachers and trainers who were supposed to continue teaching their syllabuses in the best possible way, very often not even having the necessary tools and techniques at hand. An almost complete redesigning of learning and teaching practices together with novel strategies was called for. As Peters et al. (2020) claim teachers can adopt two different stands to a changing situation:

We can choose to walk through it, dragging the carcasses of our prejudice and hatred, our avarice, our data banks and dead ideas, our dead rivers and smoky skies behind us. Or we can walk through lightly, with little luggage, ready to imagine another world. And ready to fight for it. (p.1)

In the particular case that will be explored below, the second stand was adopted and the project of OLDP which started in 2020 during the pandemic was successfully repeated in 2021 and 2022, allowing student-teachers to find a tool to learn in an almost autonomous way and at the same time, interact with their peers and benefit from that interaction not only academically but also socially.

### **1<sup>st</sup> Benefit: Language Awareness**

It is a commonly held belief that all students can benefit from language awareness (LA) in the foreign language classroom (Ellis, 2012). Its implementation in the educational context enriches

learners' experiences, fosters students' involvement in the four language skills and their knowledge regarding elements of language as well as the related target language culture (Majid & Mehrdad, 2015). Although Fairclough (1992) states that LA is "conscious attention to properties of language and language use" (p.2), Carter (2003) defines it as "the development in learners of an enhanced consciousness of and sensitivity to the forms and functions of language" (p.64). Of all our senses, listening may be said to be the most grounded and most essential to awareness because it occurs in real time, in a temporal continuum. "Learning to listen in an L2 requires initially some awareness of cultural and individual differences in use of schemata, and an ability to adjust or expand interpretations and interpretive possibilities when necessary" (Rost, 2015, p. 138). According to this author, awareness of the speaker's background experiences, information regarding a person's location in space, time, society and ongoing activity will influence speed and efficiency of linguistic processing.

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Benefit: Collaborative Feedback**

The term collaborative feedback refers to activity in which students assist one another and their interaction can help develop existing skills to higher levels in Vygotsky's (1978) Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). This process improves learning and helps both giver and receiver develop and refine their metacognitive knowledge. (Tan & Chen, 2022, p. 1). In the words of Falchikov (2003) providing feedback is a reflective undertaking that has an enormous impact on the work performed by both the giver and the receiver. Students are said to benefit from the feedback process as the opportunity to observe and compare peers' work could lead to work improvement (Chang, Tseng & Lou, 2012). Collaboration means "a coordinated, synchronous activity that is the result of a continued attempt to construct and maintain a shared conception of a problem" (Roschelle & Teasley, 1995, p. 70). Nonetheless, during the lockdown, this type of collaboration was impossible to sustain, leading to a new type of cooperation which took place in a Computer Supported Collaborative Learning (CSCL) environment. The challenge with this type of environment, though, is to "design a fruitful interaction process, since, even though the abilities to cooperate are naturally applied to personal, learning and professional contexts, effective interaction should not be taken for granted" (Hernández-Sellés et al., 2020, p. 2). As it is suggested by the authors, if collaboration is effectively designed and facilitated through teaching presence, students engage in the learning process that triggers cognitive presence and knowledge convergence through the construction of shared meaning.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Benefit: Feedforward**

Few studies are found about using feedforward in education (Duncan, 2007; Goldsmith, 2008). Feedforward has to do with learners' responses and what they do after receiving feedback, it "implies that students recognize the goal of feedback and interpret and apply the suggestions in order to close the gap between the current level of performance and the expected learning objective" (Koen et al., 2012, p. 240).

Feedback and feedforward play a critical role in collaborative learning at higher education since both provide students with the confidence and the belief that they have control over their success as well as ongoing motivation throughout their degree (Hine & Northeast, 2016).



Notwithstanding, considering the vast number of benefits derived from implementing collaborative feedback and feedforward within the foreign language classroom, there are not recorded experiences that have addressed LA increment in listening and sound features through their use in tasks. This study can thus become a benchmark in providing a detailed overview and understanding of how podcasts can be implemented in the EFL classroom and the benefits they may bring about in a CSCL environment. This experience was designed within the scope of the subject OLDP, *Prácticas Discursivas de la Comunicación Oral*, at Instituto Superior de Formación Docente N° 55 in Escobar, Buenos Aires, Argentina, for the student-teachers in their third and fourth years of their course with the dual purpose of, on the one hand, exposing learners to listening material that would help them notice a number of language features related to their object of study and, on the other hand, contributing to strengthening and even creating social bonds among themselves by encouraging them to interact giving one another constructive feedback alongside the feedback and feedforward provided by the class trainer.

## **Methods**

The present paper has been anchored on the principles of Action Research since it represents an enriching source of transformation of the educational reality where teachers are provided with an opportunity to apply the findings of research to their own situations and to adapt theory to practice (Efron & Ravid, 2019). This methodology relies on the integration of actions to solve a specific problem that involves ongoing assessment and monitoring of educational practices which will eventually lead to improvements in the professional practices of educators (New South Wales Department of Education and Training, 2008). Four different phases can be identified in an action research investigation cycle: planning, acting, observing, and critically reflecting. Throughout these stages, meaningful positive changes are achieved in the educational field, and, at the same time, the collected information becomes an enriching source for professional growth (New South Wales Department of Education and Training, 2008). For this reason, this methodology is believed to be beneficial for the whole educational community.

## **Participants**

This project was implemented in 2020, 2021 and 2022 in two different groups, one was a third level group and the other was a fourth level one, the fourth level being the last year of the teacher's training course in Argentina. There were a total number of 143 students working in six groups. Learners were all born in Argentina and their mother tongue was River Plate Spanish. Groups were mixed as regards ages and genre. Ages ranged from 21 to 40 years old. In all groups there was a teacher trainer and a teacher assistant who shared the same mother tongue with the students.

**Table 1:** *Description of participants*

	3 <sup>rd</sup> -level group participants	4 <sup>th</sup> -level group participants
Year 2020	17	37
Year 2021	27	14
Year 2022	33	15

## Materials

The primary aim of this project was to raise awareness of sounds and pronunciation features and its secondary aim was to help learners improve their own sounds and fluency in spoken English as a result of their gaining more confidence as they progressed in the completion of the task. To accomplish this, an online platform was used part of a Virtual National Network of higher teacher training colleges, known as “Red Nacional Virtual de Institutos Superiores de Formación Docente”. This platform connects all the teacher training colleges in Argentina and consists of a website, a campus and a blog to build a training environment mediated by ICT. Furthermore, it grants free access to all teacher trainers and students alike.

## Procedures

The task was opened in the forum of the teacher’s training college online platform and was set as a compulsory one: students had to make two interventions a month in order to be promoted. For each intervention, they had to (see Appendix A)

1. Listen to any podcasts in English that they liked
2. Choose one they preferred
3. Complete the description below:
  - a) Link
  - b) Topic

- c) Reasons for choosing it (it could do with the topic or pronunciation features that they could identify)
4. Post it in their class forum and identify and comment on the connected speech features which were being dealt with in class at the moment (see Appendix B)
5. They could also comment on their classmates' podcasts

Students were given some possible sources to start their assignment but they were free to choose any podcast providing it was in Southern Standard British English, which is the accent suggested in the National Curriculum Design. As a final comment, they were told that this was a two-fold activity which combined listening practice and pleasure.

### **Results and Discussions**

When the project was launched, students seemed quite shy to participate and before selecting a suitable podcast they listened to many more options than they were initially supposed to, thus increasing their exposure to listening material and gradually becoming more and more aware of the sound features they were looking for. Participants did very detailed work. Some pointed out the sound features which they perceived while others went on to explain their underlying rules. All participants received constructive feedback on their work and feedforward encouraging them to go for more or providing guidance on how to improve their work for future interventions (see Appendix C). As well as receiving feedback from the teacher trainer and teacher assistant, students interacted among themselves generating a thread of enriching comments which definitely fostered a sense of community and nearness hindered by the lockdown (see Appendix D). It is important to mention that there was more interaction among students in the 4<sup>th</sup> level groups than in the 3<sup>rd</sup> level ones. This might have been caused by the fact that the former had already been working together for two years when the project was conducted.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

The aim of this paper was to present and analyse the effects of the implementation of feedback and feedforward to enhance learners' language awareness in an educational and social context disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The conclusions reached completely support that the use of podcasts in the OLDP lessons with different groups of adults at an Argentine teacher training college led to an increment of student's LA and fluency in addition to helping them develop their listening skills and noticing abilities. Moreover, a high degree of engagement, rapport, confidence, motivation, enthusiasm, cooperation and participation were enhanced by using podcasts. Furthermore, not only did the participants accomplish the completion of tasks but they were also eager to help one another and spot the features of connected speech found in the podcasts of other classmates. Such enthusiasm for collaborating and actively participating in the forum was key to the achievement of positive learning results and even more positive social bonds. From the results obtained, it could be drawn that this working methodology was effective in the context in which it was implemented. Future research could address:

- The benefits of the use of podcasts with students of different ages and levels of English

- The employment of other tools to increase students' LA in online scenarios
- The constructive effects of feedback and especially feedforward in educational contexts

The scaffolding and the support provided by the teacher trainer and teacher assistant of the course were essential for the successful attainment of positive outcomes. Nonetheless, the teachers noticed a difference in performance due to students' own schemata. The experience carried out proved to be enjoyable and productive for EFL student teachers. This project could be considered to have contributed to finding more dynamic and gratifying ways of pronunciation instruction in this group of adults.

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*Note: See Appendices-II for feedback form and other related documents*

## A Novel Approach for 21st-Century Skills for Adult Education

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### Abstract

*This article introduces a comprehensive approach to studying 21st-century skills in adult education, focusing on how learners acquire and develop these skills and the role of educators in supporting their growth. It investigates adult learners' characteristics, such as prior experiences, learning styles, and motivations, and their impact on acquiring 21st-century skills. The paper also emphasizes educators' role in fostering these skills by analyzing how they can create inclusive, engaging learning environments, providing practical strategies for promoting adult learners' success. Additionally, the paper highlights the importance of institutional support in developing 21st-century skills, discussing higher education institutions' responsibility in offering resources and support for adult learners. It stresses the need for policies and practices that encourage effective use of digital technologies in teaching and learning. At the end, the research presents a novel perspective on adult learners' development of 21st-century skills and offers practical recommendations for enhancing their success in education, learning, and teaching in today's world.*

### Introduction

The 21st century has seen a significant shift in the skills that individuals need to succeed in the modern world. With the advent of technology and the increasing demand for digital literacy, the skills required for success have changed dramatically. This has led to the need for a new approach to education, learning, and teaching, one that focuses on developing the skills necessary for success in the 21st century. This paper presents a novel approach to studying 21st century skills in education, learning, and teaching for adults.

In this article, we present a comprehensive view of 21st-century skills in education, learning, and teaching for adults. We begin by exploring the characteristics of adult learners that may influence their acquisition of 21st-century skills. This includes examining the role of prior experiences, learning styles, and motivations in shaping adult learners' approach to learning. We also focus on educators' role in supporting the development of 21st-century skills in adult learners, including how teachers can create inclusive and engaging learning environments that support the development of these skills. Finally, we address the importance of institutional support for developing 21st-century skills in adult learners, including the role of higher education institutions in providing access to resources and support for adult learners.

## **Literature Review**

There is a considerable amount of research focusing on 21st-century skills within the realms of education and learning, encompassing studies that investigate the cultivation of these competencies in both K-12 and adult learners (Cai & Hong, 2022). Numerous studies have revealed that adult learners are driven to develop 21st-century skills due to several factors, such as personal and professional growth, career progression, and maintaining a competitive edge in today's labour market (Erten, 2022).

With regard to the part educators play in fostering 21st-century skills among adult learners, research indicates that teachers hold a crucial position in establishing inclusive and dynamic learning environments that facilitate the growth of these abilities (Kleinke & Lin, 2020). For instance, studies have demonstrated that the incorporation of technology, experiential learning activities, and collaborative learning opportunities all contribute to the enhancement of 21st-century skills in adult learners ("Interactive Design of Collaborative Art Project for 21st Century Learning", 2019)

Additionally, higher education institutions have been identified as playing a vital role in promoting the development of 21st-century skills in adult learners (Ahrens et al., 2023). Research suggests that these institutions can offer resources and support for adult learners, such as digital technologies, educational programs, and career services (Mubofu & Malekani, 2021). Furthermore, policies and practices that encourage the efficient utilization of digital technologies for teaching and learning can also significantly contribute to the cultivation of 21st-century skills in adult learners (Rosen, 2020).

## **Characteristics of Adult Learners**

Adult learners come from a wide range of backgrounds and have diverse experiences, learning styles, and motivations. These characteristics can influence their approach to learning and their acquisition of 21st-century skills. For example, adult learners who have prior work experience may bring a wealth of knowledge and practical skills to their learning experiences. This can help them to quickly grasp new concepts and apply them in real-world situations. On the other hand, adult learners who have limited prior experience may need more support and guidance to develop their skills.

Adult learners are unique in their characteristics, experiences, and motivations for learning, and these characteristics can have a significant impact on the acquisition and development of 21st-century skills (Hilliker & Loranc, 2022). Understanding these characteristics is an important factor in designing effective teaching and support strategies for adult learners.

Adult learners have a variety of prior experiences, with 60% having prior work experience and 40% having prior formal education. This data suggests that adult learners come from a range of backgrounds and bring a range of prior experiences to the learning process.



The prior experiences of adult learners can have a significant impact on their approach to learning and can shape their acquisition of 21st-century skills. For example, adult learners with prior work experience may approach learning with a more practical and applied perspective, while adult learners with prior formal education may have a more theoretical and academic approach. Understanding these prior experiences can help educators to tailor their teaching and support to meet the unique needs and perspectives of each learner.

In addition to prior experiences, adult learners also have a range of motivations for learning. Some adult learners may be motivated by career advancement (Coetzee, 2022), while others may be motivated by personal growth and development. Understanding the motivations of adult learners can help educators to create learning experiences that are aligned with their goals and that support the development of 21st-century skills.

### **Learning Styles**

Adult learners also have diverse learning styles. Some prefer hands-on, experiential learning, while others prefer more traditional, lecture-based approaches. Educators need to understand the learning styles of their students in order to create inclusive and engaging learning environments. By incorporating different learning styles into their teaching, educators can better support the development of 21st-century skills in adult learners.

One of the key factors that can influence the acquisition and development of 21st-century skills in adult learners is learning style. Learning style (Urea & Pirvu, 2020) refers to the preferred way in which an individual processes information and acquires new knowledge. Understanding learning styles can help educators to design learning experiences that are engaging, effective, and supportive of the unique needs and preferences of each learner.

According to the survey data presented in Table 2, adult learners have a variety of learning styles, with 30% preferring a visual learning style, 20% preferring an auditory learning style, and 50% preferring a kinesthetic learning style. These preferences can impact the way in which adult learners approach the learning process and can influence their acquisition of 21st-century skills. For example, adult learners who prefer a visual learning style may benefit from the use of visual aids, such as diagrams, graphs, and videos, in the learning process. These aids can help learners to understand and retain information more effectively and can support the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills. On the other hand, adult learners who prefer a kinesthetic learning style (Yuniarti et al., 2021) may benefit from hands-on learning activities that allow them to apply what they have learned in a practical context. These activities can support the development of collaboration and communication skills and can help learners to better understand the real-world applications of their learning.

### **Motivations**

The motivations of adult learners can also play a role in their acquisition of 21st-century skills. For example, adult learners who are motivated by career advancement may be more likely to seek out opportunities to develop their skills, while those who are motivated by personal growth may be more likely to seek out learning experiences for their own enjoyment. Understanding the

motivations of adult learners can help educators to create more engaging and effective learning experiences.

### **The Role of Educators**

Educators play a critical role in supporting the development of 21st-century skills in adult learners. By creating inclusive and engaging learning environments, educators can help adult learners to develop the skills necessary for success in the modern world. This can include incorporating technology into the classroom, creating opportunities for hands-on learning, and providing support and guidance to help adult learners overcome obstacles.

Table 1 presents the results of the survey on the prior experiences of adult learners. The table shows that 60% of the respondents had prior work experience, while 40% had prior formal education. This data suggests that adult learners come from a variety of backgrounds and bring a range of prior experiences to the learning process.

*Table 1: Prior experiences and motivations for learning*

<b>Prior experiences</b>	<b>Percentage of respondents</b>
Work experience	60%
Formal education	40%

This information is important because prior experiences can have a significant impact on adult learners' approach to learning. For example, adult learners with prior work experience may approach learning with a more practical and applied perspective, while adult learners with prior formal education may have a more theoretical and academic approach. Understanding the prior experiences of adult learners can help educators to tailor their teaching and support to meet the unique needs and perspectives of each learner.

Table 2 presents the results of the survey on the learning styles and preferences of adult learners. The table shows that 30% of the respondents preferred a visual learning style, 20% preferred an auditory learning style, and 50% preferred a kinesthetic learning style. This data suggests that adult learners have a variety of learning styles and preferences and that educators need to take this into account when designing learning activities and assessments.

*Table 2: Results of the survey on the learning styles*

<b>Learning style</b>	<b>Percentage of respondents</b>
Visual	30%
Auditory	20%
Kinesthetic	50%

For example, adult learners who prefer a visual learning style may benefit from the use of visual aids, such as diagrams, graphs, and videos, while adult learners who prefer a kinesthetic learning style may benefit from hands-on learning activities. Understanding the learning styles and preferences of adult learners can help educators to create learning experiences that are engaging, effective, and supportive of the unique needs and preferences of each learner.

Table 3 presents the results of the survey on the perceptions of adult learners regarding the role of technology in learning. The table shows that 70% of the respondents had a positive perception of technology, 20% had a neutral perception, and 10% had a negative perception. This data suggests that adult learners have varying perceptions of the role of technology in learning and that educators need to take these perceptions into account when designing and implementing technology-enhanced learning experiences.

*Table 3: Results of the survey on the perceptions of adult learners*

<b>Perception of technology</b>	<b>Percentage of respondents</b>
Positive	70%
Neutral	20%
Negative	10%

For example, adult learners who have a positive perception of technology may be more receptive to the use of technology in the classroom, while adult learners who have a negative perception of technology may be less receptive. Understanding the perceptions of adult learners can help educators to create technology-enhanced learning experiences that are inclusive, engaging, and effective.

Table 4 presents the results of the survey on the perceptions of adult learners regarding the role of teachers in supporting the development of 21st-century skills (ATIŞ AKYOL, 2023). The table shows that 80% of the respondents had a positive perception of teachers, 10% had a neutral perception, and 10% had a negative perception. This data suggests that adult learners have varying perceptions of the role of teachers in supporting the development of 21st-century skills and that educators need to be aware of these perceptions when designing and implementing teaching and support strategies.

*Table 4: Results of the survey on the perceptions of teachers*

<b>Perception of teachers</b>	<b>Percentage of respondents</b>
Positive	80%
Neutral	10%
Negative	10%

For example, adult learners who have a positive perception of teachers may be more likely to seek out their support and engage in the learning process, while adult learners who have a negative perception may be less likely to do so. Understanding the perceptions of adult learners can help educators to create supportive and inclusive learning environments that foster the development of 21st-century skills.

Table 5 presents the results of the survey on the perceptions of adult learners regarding the role of higher education institutions in supporting the development of 21st-century skills. The table shows that 60% of the respondents had a positive perception of higher education institutions, 20% had a neutral perception, and 20% had a negative perception. This data suggests that adult learners have varying perceptions of the role of higher education institutions in supporting the development of

21st-century skills and that these institutions need to be aware of these perceptions when designing and implementing support and resources.

*Table 5: Survey on the perceptions of adult learners regarding the role of higher education institutions*

<b>Perception of higher education institutions</b>	<b>Percentage of respondents</b>
Positive	60%
Neutral	20%
Negative	20%

For example, adult learners who have a positive perception of higher education institutions may be more likely to take advantage of the resources and support available to them, while adult learners who have a negative perception may be less likely to do so. Understanding the perceptions of adult learners can help higher education institutions to create policies and practices that support the effective development of 21st-century skills in adult learners.

One of the critical factors in the development of 21st-century skills in adult learners is the role of educators. Educators play a crucial role in creating learning environments that are inclusive, engaging, and supportive of the development of these skills. By understanding the unique characteristics and needs of adult learners, educators can design and implement teaching and support strategies that are effective and aligned with the goals of each learner.

According to the survey data presented in Table 4, adult learners have varying perceptions of the role of teachers in supporting the development of 21st-century skills. 80% of the respondents had a positive perception of teachers, 10% had a neutral perception, and 10% had a negative perception. This data suggests that educators need to be aware of these perceptions and take them into account when designing and implementing teaching and support strategies.

For example, adult learners who have a positive perception of teachers may be more likely to seek out their support and engage in the learning process, while adult learners who have a negative perception may be less likely to do so. Understanding these perceptions can help educators to create learning environments that are inclusive and supportive of the development of 21st-century skills in adult learners (Haug & Mork, 2021).

To support the development of 21st-century skills in adult learners, educators can take a number of steps, including:

1. **Creating engaging and inclusive learning environments:** Educators can create learning environments that are engaging and inclusive by using a variety of teaching methods, such as hands-on activities, group projects, and technology-enhanced learning experiences. These methods can help to foster critical thinking, collaboration, and communication skills in adult learners.
2. **Providing access to resources and support:** Educators can support the development of 21st-century skills in adult learners by providing access to resources, such as books, videos, and online learning tools. They can also provide support through one-on-one tutoring, group study sessions, and online forums.

3. Incorporating technology in teaching and learning: Educators can incorporate technology in teaching and learning to support the development of digital literacy and technology skills in adult learners. This can include using digital tools to support learning, such as online discussion forums, virtual simulations, and interactive videos.
4. Assessing learning in a variety of ways: Educators can assess adult learners' development of 21st-century skills in a variety of ways, such as through hands-on projects, presentations, and written assignments. This can help to assess a range of skills, including critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication.

### **Case Study 1: John, a 45-Year-Old Manager**

John, a 45-year-old manager, represents the adult learner who is motivated to pursue formal education for career advancement. Despite having over 20 years of work experience, John found that the transition to a formal learning environment was challenging. This is a common experience for adult learners who are returning to school after a period of being away from formal education. The pace of the coursework, the volume of information to be learned, and the expectations of the learning environment can all contribute to feelings of overwhelm and frustration.

However, John's prior work experience proved to be an asset in his learning journey. He was able to apply his real-world experiences to connect the coursework to practical scenarios. This helped him to better understand and retain the information and develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills. John's experience highlights the importance of considering the prior experiences and motivations of adult learners when designing and implementing learning experiences.

John's case also highlights the role of adult learners' prior experiences in shaping their approach to learning. Adult learners bring a wealth of experiences to the learning process and these experiences can influence their perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors towards learning. For example, John's prior work experience helped him to connect the coursework to practical scenarios, which supported his understanding and retention of the information.

In addition to considering adult learners' prior experiences, educators must also take into account their preferred learning styles. For example, adult learners who prefer a kinesthetic learning style may benefit from hands-on learning activities that allow them to apply what they have learned in a practical context. By considering the preferred learning styles of adult learners, educators can create learning experiences that are engaging, effective, and supportive of their unique needs and preferences.

### **Case Study 2: Sarah, a 35-Year-Old Teacher**

Sarah, a 35-year-old teacher, represents the adult learner who is motivated to pursue further education for personal growth and development. Sarah's experience as a teacher provided her with a unique perspective on the learning process, as she was able to connect the coursework to her daily work. This connection allowed her to better understand and retain the information and to apply what she learned in a practical context.

Sarah was motivated to develop her 21st-century skills in order to better support her students. This motivation highlights the importance of considering the motivations of adult learners when designing and implementing learning experiences. By understanding the motivations of adult learners, educators can create learning experiences that are aligned with their goals and that support the development of 21st-century skills.

Sarah's experience also highlights the importance of incorporating technology in teaching and learning. Sarah was able to use the technologies and teaching strategies she learned in her courses to create a more engaging and inclusive learning environment for her students. This underscores the need for educators to have access to resources and support for incorporating technology in teaching and learning and highlights the importance of providing access to these resources and support for adult learners.

In conclusion, the case studies of John and Sarah provide valuable insights into the experiences of adult learners in the development of 21st-century skills. These insights can help educators to design and implement effective and inclusive teaching and support strategies for adult learners and support their success in the modern world. By considering the prior experiences, motivations, preferred learning styles, and the role of technology in teaching and learning, educators can create learning experiences that are engaging, effective, and supportive of the unique needs and preferences of adult learners.

### **Institutional Support**

Higher education institutions play a critical role in supporting the development of 21st-century skills in adult learners (Kocak et al., 2021). By providing access to resources and support, higher education institutions can help adult learners to succeed in their learning and to develop the skills necessary for success in the modern world. This can include providing access to technology, offering hands-on learning opportunities (Sutton, 2020), and creating policies and practices that support the effective use of digital technologies for teaching and learning as described in Table 6.

*Table 6: Examples of Institutional Support for Developing 21st-Century Skills in Adult Learners*

<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Description</b>
Access to technology	Providing access to technology and digital resources to support the development of digital literacy skills
Hands-on learning opportunities	Offering hands-on learning opportunities to support the development of practical skills
Policies and practices	Creating policies and practices that support the effective use of digital technologies for teaching and learning

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, this research paper presents a novel approach to understanding the development of 21st-century skills in adult learners. By considering the characteristics of adult learners, the role

of educators, and the importance of institutional support, this paper provides practical recommendations for supporting the success of adult learners in education, learning, and teaching in the modern world. By incorporating technology, providing hands-on learning opportunities, and offering support and guidance, educators and institutions can help adult learners to develop the skills necessary for success in the 21st century.

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## What are errors and how should we deal with them in the Contemporary Dynamic ELT Classrooms

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### Abstract

*As Shakespeare says "To err is human", we know that it is natural to make mistakes when something new is learned. From error being seen as a sin to viewing error as an opportunity to learn, errors and correction have been a hotly debated topic in the ELT world. Errors, in Krashen's perspective (1983), were indications that language development was taking place. However, Moerk (1994) emphasized on more formal way of teaching and learning in which error correction is an integral part of language learning. So what are errors and how should we deal with them? Which way is better- Immediate correction or Delayed correction? There are some teaching experts who identify the common mistakes and error correction is done as a group activity. However, some language experts believe that the impact of too much feedback can have an opposite effect on the level of motivation for the students. Hence, this article will focus on errors, how and when to correct them in English language teaching and learning. It will look into the possibility of balancing the act of error correction, so that it doesn't have a negative effect on neither the students nor the teachers.*

**Key words:** Error correction, mistakes, feedback

### Introduction

Students are often being taught common grammar rules and vocabulary but still teachers do not get the desired result. Many educators take this too seriously and consider that making an error is unacceptable and see it as a sin while some teachers would see it as an opportunity to reflect on the errors by making it an interesting learning process where both learner and the teacher benefit. In a widely-quoted study, Paul Black and Dylan William found that feedback given to students on their work probably have more positive effects on achievement than any other factor. (Black and William 1998). Teachers stay calm and cool during the feedback process and this really helps them to have an open, uninterrupted flow of communication with the students. The students don't feel scared to make mistakes because they are aware that teacher will correct them without judging or shouting on them. As Pakdel and Khansir (2018) points out that when a second or foreign language is learnt, errors are inevitable as these reflect continuous growth in terms of learning a language and learners should have freedom to make errors as it does not affect the communication in general.

### What are errors and mistakes?

What are errors especially in language teaching and learning? According to CARLA "An error is a form in learner language that is inaccurate, meaning it is different from the forms used by competent speakers of the target language". Does an error affect communication? Does it affect

the academic performance of a language learner? To know the answers to these questions, error analysis needs to be done. Pakdel and Khansir (2017) said that “error analysis is one of the major important topics of Applied Linguistics which can be used in order to promote and improve language teaching strategies in ELT classroom” (p. 115). What is noticeable in terms of error analysis is that a teacher needs to have a clear understanding about the nature of errors and mistakes. So what is a mistake? “A mistake is described as a deviation in the speakers' language that occurs when the speakers, although familiar with the rule, fail to perform according to their competence” (Calenda) What are the differences between an error and mistake? Are errors and mistakes the same? There is a distinction between the error and mistake. Errors are the result of incomplete learning and linguistic incompetency of the learners and errors cannot be self-corrected by students. On the other hand, mistakes are the results of poor performance of language due to many factors like fatigue and carelessness on the part of learners etc. Learners have the knowledge of the correct linguistic form and they can self-correct themselves on the basis of their linguistic knowledge. Aurox defines errors as distinguished from mistake, does not entail spontaneous self-correction, since it results from the speaker's ignorance and, therefore, could not be emended without confrontation with a still unknown and yet broken rule (1998). Julian Edge in his book about mistakes and correction suggested that the mistakes students commit can be divided in to three categories. The first one is slips, these are issues which students can correct themselves once they are pointed out to them. Then there are errors, which the students cannot correct themselves and they need explanation. There is the third category which is called 'attempts'. This is when a student tries to say something but doesn't know the correct way of saying it. (Edge 1989: Chapter 2) Of these three categories, it is the category of 'errors' that worries teachers the most. Of course, though the students' 'attempts' would tell the teachers a lot about their current knowledge- and then work on those particular areas.

### **Sources of errors**

Now what are the reasons or sources of why students make errors? As Pakdel and Khansir (2018) said that in order to address errors at their root cause and prevent them from being made, it is crucial for language teachers to understand why their students make mistakes in the target language. It is important for language teachers to know why their students make errors in the target language in order to know that the language teachers may attack errors at their root cause and address them before they are even made. The most common reason why students commit errors is the influence of L1. All students who learn English as a second language has an issue with the high possibility of interference of L1 with English, which is being learnt as a new language. This can create confusion among the students. Bose (2005) mentioned that “the reasons for making errors in SL are generally the same for all learners of English” (p. 66). It can be at the level of sounds or grammar. For example, the students in Oman. Arabic has a slightly different system of grammar. To cite a simple example: There are no indefinite articles in Arabic, therefore our students often omit using articles “a”, and “an” in sentences out of habit.

May I borrow a pen. becomes May I borrow pen.

An elephant is a large animal. becomes Elephant is large animal.

Students may also use personal pronouns instead of the appropriate relative pronouns in the clause.

### **Significance of making errors**

Hence, it is known to everyone that students commit errors in a language classroom, whether it be from any source. Errors do happen because of the lack of attention by the students, ignorance of the grammar rules or, as we discussed before, due to the influence of their first language. Therefore, instead of considering as something to be completely avoided in English language learning, errors, from whichever source, are, as Selinker (1969) opines, significant in three respects: (1) they indicate the learner's progress in language learning; (2) they provide insights into how language is learnt; and (3) finally, help students to get involved in hypothesis testing. As errors are opportunities for both teachers and students, strategies have to be developed by teachers to help students to identify those errors and try to eliminate them while they produce the language next time.

### **Role of providing feedback**

Assessing students' performance is a key area in language teaching. *Harris and Hodges (1995)* defined *assessment* as the process of gathering data to better understand the strengths and weaknesses of student learning. Useful information about students' learning comes from well-designed assessment methods. They provide teachers with detailed information on what students were taught, how well they learnt it, and where they got into trouble. However, assessment is the final destination of a student's learning process. Prior to that, during the teaching and learning process, there has to be a lot of interaction between the teacher and students in terms of providing feedback to the students at various stages. Giving feedback plays a significant role in how a student demonstrates steady improvement in language acquisition. According to *Bohdana Allman (2020)* teachers recognize that feedback is balanced, differentiated and supportive because they understand the developmental nature and role of errors in language learning. Allman opines that the teachers need to look for patterns in the student's work, see what the student knows and what kind of errors they make, and provide feedback related to the next step in their growth. (137)

Teachers usually give feedback to students in two ways. A teacher either praises or blames a student for the language one produces. This kind of feedback can probably produce negative results as well. When teachers praise the students for the language a student produces, it can make that student overconfident and complacent. *Grant Wiggins (2013)* says, "Feedback is not about praise or blame, approval, or disapproval. That's what evaluation is – placing value. Feedback is value neutral. It describes what you did and did not do." Famous language expert *Geoff Petty (2019)* suggests feedback should include giving medals and missions to students. The medal is what we give students for doing something well, and the mission is the direction we give them to improve. Therefore, a medal should be more towards a direction for improvement which is called a mission. This is the basic idea teachers should keep in mind whenever they give feedback to students. The same pattern is suggested by *Hannah Haase (2022)* but with a different name. She called it the 'feedback sandwich', in which teachers have to start out by saying something positive, followed by criticism and constructive feedback. Then end with another positive comment. That way, teachers can ensure that their students don't only get negative feedback and packing the negative feedback between two positive "slices" will soften it a bit. How can we provide these medals and missions or serve this 'feedback sandwich'? Is there a proper way through? *Jeremy Harmer (2013)* suggests a few strategies for giving feedback to students. The first strategy is to give comments.

Usually, teachers comment in various ways. They use comments such as ‘Good, excellent, very good, or nod approvingly (speaking activity) for positive feedback. Teachers use comments like ‘That’s not quite right’, ‘‘You have made so many errors’ etc. as part of negative feedback. A student who receives such a feedback can most probably get dejected and fall short of motivation and willpower to continue trying again. However, if a student can receive a medal first, which is appreciation and acknowledgement of the effort one puts in along with the comments about what went wrong can act as suggestions for future action, which is the mission.

### **Nature of giving feedback**

The most significant question is whether teachers have to follow the same strategy in both written and oral feedback? Should teachers use two different strategies to give feedback on written work and during a speaking activity? One of the most controversial debates among teachers is whether we should focus on accuracy or fluency. There are teachers who argue that any kind of production of language has to be accurate. It plays a key role with regard to tests and assessments. Teachers should decide whether an activity they plan to execute in the class is aimed at complete accuracy, for example, teaching grammar, introducing new vocabulary, or teaching how a word is pronounced. Teachers also plan lessons in which they expect students to use the language as fluently as possible. Hence, how teachers give feedback depends on the nature and objective of the lessons.

### **Strategies of providing feedback on accuracy**

So, during an activity in which the focus is on accuracy, correction or feedback is usually made up of two distinct stages. Teacher should communicate to the students that they have committed an error. After that, teachers assist the students to correct it. It isn’t easy for teachers to do it. If teachers aren’t careful, this feedback can turn out to be blame. How can teachers point out the errors students make while producing the target language? There are a few ways in which teachers can do it smoothly without hurting the students.

Teachers can use ‘echoing’ as a strategy to bring the error to the notice of the students. Teacher repeats what students say, giving a stress on the part that was wrong.

For example:

I ‘**Go**’ to Dubai yesterday?

My friend ‘**Said**’ me.

When students hear this emphasis on those two words, they feel that something is wrong with those emphasized words. Naturally, students won’t get embarrassed as well.

The second strategy that can be used by teachers is by giving a statement or a question. It can be by giving a medal first, which is appreciating their effort.

For example:

You tried well. But do you think it is completely correct? What do you think?

This hint can ring a bell of caution for the students. They would definitely go back and check. They would be able to find their mistake and correct it by themselves.

Another way to bring the mistakes students commit to their notice is by the expression of the teacher. The gestures on the face of a teacher can communicate whether the student is right or wrong. Momentary expressions that signal emotions include muscle movements such as raising the eyebrows, wrinkling the forehead, and rolling the eyes etc. (Resmana Lim & Reinders 2000). These expressions help students to read their teacher very well. They do follow the facial expression of their teacher and then they reach a conclusion on their language.

One of the other effective techniques which can be implemented in a classroom is to get students to correct each other. According to Tammy Haley (2022) reviewing others' work and preparing constructive written or verbal feedback for their peers, and eventually students start thinking more about their own work and how to improve it. The only condition for this is that the group should be genuinely cooperative.

Reformulating the sentences is a very gentle way of correcting the errors of students while the activity is going on. It doesn't affect the flow of the activity in any way. For example:

Student: She **tell** me the college bus was late.

Teacher: Oh... she **told** you that the college bus was late. Did she?

Student: OH, yes. **I mean she told me.** So, I was very happy because I was already late to wake up.

### **Techniques to provide feedback in terms of fluency**

Now that there are many ways to give feedback during an activity in which the focus is on accuracy, how should teachers approach the key aspect of providing feedback to students during a communicative activity where fluency is focused? Language experts differ in their opinions on this matter. Some experts opine that delayed feedback is more effective. "If the objective is accuracy, then immediate correction is likely to be useful; if the aim is fluency, then lengthy, immediate correction that diverts from the flow of speaking is less appropriate" (Scrivener, 2005, p. 299). However, quite a few of them disapprove of it as well. For example, a research study says, when students receive delayed or zero feedback, they might reinforce misconceptions by making the same mistake several times without being corrected (Kehrer, Kelly, and Heffernan, 2013). It should be observed by teachers that both the times of giving feedback are effective. It is the prerogative of the teachers. They should be able to decide whether the feedback should be delayed or immediate based on aspects such as the nature of the activity and the attitude of the students. Any form of feedback by the teacher during a fluency activity is very significant, not only because of the way they perform at that time, but also on how they behave in fluency activities in the future. The first way to give feedback is by correcting the students gently. Imagine that the communication between the students and the teachers breaks down, then teachers have to step in. Teachers have to prompt the student to continue. It should be a tactful and at the same time gentle intervention.

For instance:

Student A: During my summer holiday, I enjoy **to visit** my grandparents and **to play** football with my cousins.

Teacher: Yes, I enjoy **visiting** my parents and **playing** football with my cousins too.

Student A: Ah, yes, I enjoy visiting my grandparents in my village and playing football.

In case teachers prefer giving feedback after the completion of the entire activity, one of the challenges is that they tend to forget the errors students have committed during the activity. Therefore, teachers are advised to take notes. Teachers can develop their own versions of note taking. It can be done by completing a table with different columns for various types of errors or by writing simple notes about each student. The common discussion of mistakes committed can be done by involving students as well. Initially, teachers can start with a discussion of the activity. And then analyze most common errors which were noted by the teacher. The teacher has the option to divide the students into groups and each group to focus on each mistake which was highlighted by the teacher and decide why it is wrong and recommend the changes needed.

### **Feedback on written work**

Providing feedback for written work is as important as giving it for oral production of the target language. Gayle Morris (2021) states that feedback usually includes recommendations for revision and questions that might help students rethink weaker elements in their current assignments, along with comments about things that are currently working well that a student might build on before they turn in a “final” version.

Now, feedback on written work involves a few very important techniques which language teachers can use. The first way to give feedback can be responding. When we respond, we say how their writing appears to us and how successful we think it has been (we give a medal) before suggesting how it could be improved (which is a mission). Short comments can also be written by teachers in the margin of the students’ work. There are cases among students who require additional effort from the side of the teacher by providing a detailed comment about each student which is very effective and useful for students. Some students often get dejected and disappointed when they see their paper with lots of corrections. Using correction symbols is another way of indicating students of the errors in their own writing. Each mistake is defined and pointed out by using a particular symbol. However, students should be trained on the definition and meaning of each symbol for an effective result.

It has been also observed as part of many empirical studies on students’ involvement on providing feedback to their peers, that it has an extremely positive effect. For instance Georgeta Ion, Aleix Barrera-Corominas & Marina Tomàs-Folch (2016) clearly suggests that students achieve greater professional and personal autonomy in the construction of knowledge. It encourages students to monitor each other and, as a result helps them to become better at self-monitoring. Most often teachers have to guide the students when we prepare them to give feedback to their friends. In most cases, feedback students give can be very general or not focused. To produce more focused feedback, teachers can design a form such as the one below.

Table 1. Student form for feedback

Overall, your essay is.....
The part which I like is .....
You can improve on .....
The noticeable errors are .....

Teachers consider giving feedback to be the most significant part of the teaching and learning process. When teachers provide feedback on the first and second draft of the essay, a final draft is expected after incorporating all the recommendations, and comments students received from the teacher. Teachers' reason for using code or symbols is to make them identify their mistakes and use dictionaries or grammar books as a way of resolving these errors. When students reach that stage, all the efforts put in by teachers are fruitful. On the other hand, when teachers return the essay after correction, students put it straight into a file or lose it, then all the effort and time teachers spent is completely wasted.

### Conclusion

The final question to be answered is don't teachers get stressed out because of the number of students and moreover, giving both oral and written feedback to all of them. Teachers spend an enormous amount of time making sure that each student is given proper feedback. Hence to avoid the amount of stress, teachers have to be selective, and smart and above all involve students more in the whole process to avoid unbearable stress. In conclusion, teachers need to be able to think creatively about how it can be best be done in the interests of both students and teachers.

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## Effects of a Writing Intervention Program on Developing Moroccan EFL College Students' Writing Skills

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### Abstract

*This study aimed to examine how a writing intervention program impacts the writing skills of Moroccan EFL college students. The research involved 39 students in their third semester at the Higher School of Education and Training (ESEF), Ibno Zohr university in Morocco. Initially, a pre-test was conducted to measure their writing ability in expository essay writing. Then, the study group received a writing program using the process-genre approach. After the treatment, a post-test was administered to assess the effectiveness of the program in enhancing the participants' writing skills. A Paired Samples T-test was performed to analyze the results and identify any significant effects of the writing program. The outcomes of the study revealed that the writing intervention program was effective in improving the students' writing performance. Based on these results, the study recommends the utilization of the process-genre approach in teaching writing to enhance the writing skills of tertiary-level EFL students.*

**Key words:** *Process-genre approach; Writing skill; Effectiveness.*

### 1. Research background

The writing skills is essential for effective communication in academic, professional, and social contexts. However, developing writing skills can be challenging for English as a foreign language (EFL) learners, especially in contexts where English is not the primary language of instruction, such as in Morocco. Previous research has highlighted the challenges that Moroccan EFL learners face in developing their writing skills, including difficulties in organizing their ideas, using appropriate vocabulary and grammar, and producing coherent and cohesive texts (e.g., Abouabdelkader, 2018; Benzizoune, 2021; Bouziane, 1999; Fati, 2013). According to Leki (2001), the difficulties that EFL teachers face when teaching writing include inadequate training and experience, large class sizes, and the mismatch between the goals of the writing course and the learning needs of students. In the Moroccan context, writing remains a significant issue for students at tertiary levels, and the teaching of writing is still "an arena for so much controversy as to what approach to adopt" (Bouziane, 2003, p. 132).

To address these challenges, various writing intervention programs have been developed and implemented in different EFL contexts, with varying degrees of success. Writing intervention programs are designed to provide targeted instruction and support to help students develop their writing skills. However, there is limited research on the effectiveness of such programs for Moroccan EFL learners. The few existing studies have mainly focused on exploring the challenges that Moroccan EFL learners face in developing their writing skills, rather than on evaluating the effectiveness of writing intervention programs (e.g., Benzizoune, 2022). Therefore, further research is necessary to determine the effectiveness of writing intervention programs for Moroccan

EFL learners. This study seeks to fill this gap in the literature by examining the impact of a writing intervention program on the development of writing skills in Moroccan EFL students. This is particularly important as writing is a skill that requires deliberate instruction and practice in order to improve. Additionally, due to variations in teaching and learning styles, researchers have suggested various approaches to teaching writing.

### **1.1 The Product Approach**

In the past, the main focus of research on writing instruction was centered on the final written product, with the learning process itself being treated as a task that stressed form and was primarily taught within the classroom setting. In the era of audio-lingualism, writing was considered a complementary skill used to learn grammar and sentence structures in language classes. The product approach to teaching writing entails providing students with a predetermined pattern to follow, with the primary emphasis being placed on the resulting written product instead of the writing process or how students approach writing. Badger and White (2000) argue that writing is viewed mainly as a way of gaining knowledge about language structure, and writing development is primarily achieved through teacher-provided texts used for imitation input. This approach is considered teacher-centered, as teachers are responsible for providing models. The product approach focuses mainly on providing correct language models for students to emulate by studying model texts and reproducing them. As a result, various exercises are required to help students produce similar texts (Jordan, 1997).

The product approach to teaching writing is a linear model that involves three distinct stages, each contributing to the development of the written product. According to Flower and Hayes (1981), the first stage is the pre-writing stage, where teachers select model texts for students to study and identify genre features, paragraphing, connectors, and language use such as tenses. Students then practice these features through controlled exercises. The second stage is the writing stage, which is crucial for organizing ideas. Finally, in the rewriting stage, students use the skills, structures, and vocabulary they have learned to produce the final written product, demonstrating their fluency and competence in using the language.

The product approach to teaching writing is still widely used in classrooms, as it is believed to improve students' writing skills by allowing them to learn through imitation. Proponents argue that this approach provides effective models for students to analyze and explore (Arndt, 1987; Myles, 2002). However, critics argue that the approach overemphasizes the finished product and does not provide enough room for creativity, leading to students viewing writing as a chore (Hinkel, 2002; Tribble, 1996). This has led to a movement calling for a re-evaluation of writing instruction approaches, leading to the development of the process approach.

### **1.2 The Process Approach**

According to Tribble (1996), the process approach is a method of teaching writing that emphasizes the writer's creativity and promotes the development of effective writing practices, rather than imitating models. This approach was developed as a reaction to teaching methods that prioritized the final product. The process approach involves guiding students through each step of the writing process, which includes prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing (Laksmi, 2006;

White & Arndt, 1991). In the first stage, pre-writing, students generate ideas and prepare to write by activating their prior knowledge. In the second stage, drafting, students write their ideas down without worrying about errors. The third stage is revising, where students look at the organization, main points, and connections between ideas to better communicate their message. In the fourth stage, editing, students correct errors in spelling, grammar, punctuation, and capitalization. The final stage is publishing, where students can share their writing with an audience by publishing it in a classroom newspaper or blog or by reading it aloud to the class. These stages allow students to develop their writing skills as well as develop their confidence as writers (Brown, 2001; Fulwiler & Gaber, 2003).

Overall, the process approach to teaching writing has been widely researched and found to be effective in developing students' writing competence in both first and second/foreign language contexts (Jordan, 1997; White & Arndt, 1991). This approach emphasizes prioritizing content and meaning over language concerns, collaborative techniques such as peer feedback and teacher-student conferences, and multi-draft instructions that encourage students to critically examine and improve their own writing. Additionally, providing guiding checklists and promoting student autonomy in revising and editing their own texts has been found to be effective. Studies have shown that implementing process-oriented writing programs has led to improvements in students' writing skills and attitudes towards writing (Ferris & Hedgcock, 1998; Ho, 2006; Raimes, 1983; White & Arndt, 1991). The process approach to teaching writing is therefore a valuable tool for educators in promoting students' writing proficiency and developing their overall communication abilities.

### **1.3 The Genre Approach**

The genre approach to writing instruction recognizes that writing is a social practice that is shaped by social and cultural factors, including the writer's purpose, audience, and context (Derewianka, 2015). This approach emphasizes the importance of considering the social dimensions of writing, including the writer's identity and the social and cultural contexts in which writing occurs. Moreover, this approach recognizes that different genres of writing require different sets of skills and knowledge, and that these skills and knowledge are shaped by the social and cultural contexts in which the genres are used (Whittaker et al, 2006; Truscott, 2012). For example, writing a research paper in a scientific discipline requires a different set of skills and knowledge than writing a personal narrative or a business report. In this approach, students are encouraged to engage in critical thinking and reflection about the social dimensions of writing, to analyze and respond to different rhetorical situations, and to develop an awareness of their own writing practices and how they are shaped by social and cultural factors.

In a nutshell, the genre-based approach to teaching writing emphasizes the importance of teaching students how to recognize and use the conventions of different genres in order to create effective texts. This approach involves teaching students the organizational structures, lexis, and grammar patterns that are typical in different genres, as well as the social purposes and situations in which these genres are used. By providing students with this knowledge, practitioners adopting the genre-based approach contend that students' writing skills and attitudes towards writing can be improved significantly (Hyland, 2004). Studies have shown that students who are taught using this approach are more likely to actively participate in class activities, use communicative moves in their writing,

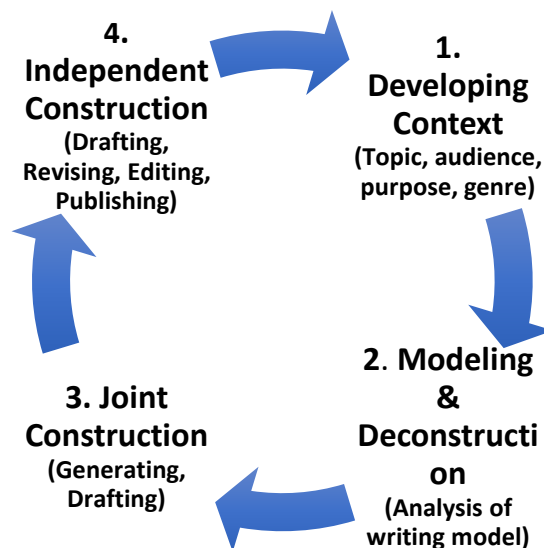
and gain explicit knowledge about English and the genres being taught (Cheng, 2008; Emilia, 2005; Krisnachinda, 2006). However, in the field of EFL/ESL instruction, experts acknowledge that there is no singular perfect approach. As a result, educators and researchers have suggested combining various approaches into a comprehensive one known as the process-genre approach.

#### **1.4 The Process-genre Approach**

Many researchers suggest that a balanced approach that integrates the strengths of the product, process, and genre approaches to teaching writing can be effective (Badger & White, 2000; Huang & Zhang, 2019; Lee, et al. 2009; Refnaldi, 2012). This approach may involve teaching students how to produce a well-structured and cohesive text (product approach), while also encouraging them to engage in prewriting activities, drafting, revising, and editing (process approach). Additionally, it may involve teaching students about the features of different genres and how to tailor their writing to specific audiences, purposes, and contexts (genre approach). By combining these approaches, students can develop a range of writing skills and strategies that will enable them to communicate effectively in a variety of settings.

As shown in Figure 1 below, the process-genre approach suggests that the teaching of writing in EFL/ESL contexts go through four stages. In the first stage, developing context, students are invited to analyze the writing prompt by discussing its purpose, audience, context, and suitable writing genre. In the second stage, modeling and deconstruction, students analyze examples of the genre to identify its linguistic and rhetorical features, including grammar, vocabulary, discourse structures, and communicative purposes. In the third stage, joint construction, students work collaboratively to plan, draft, and revise a sample text in the target genre. The teacher provides guidance and support as needed, emphasizing the importance of planning, drafting, and revision processes. In the last stage, independent construction, students work independently to produce their own texts in the target genre, using the skills and knowledge acquired through joint construction and analysis. Thus, by combining the genre approach and process approach, the Process-Genre approach aims to provide a comprehensive and effective framework for teaching writing that helps students develop both their writing skills and their awareness of the social and communicative aspects of writing.

**Figure 1:** *The Process-Genre Model for teaching Writing (Huang & Zhang, 2019)*



Several studies have explored the effectiveness of using the process-genre approach to teach writing in various educational contexts globally (Huang & Zhang, 2019; Janenoppakarn and Thongrin, 2020; Truong, 2022). These studies have consistently demonstrated that this approach can enhance students' writing abilities particularly in ESL/EFL contexts. For instance, Huang and Zhang (2019) conducted a quasi-experimental study to investigate the impact of a process-genre approach on the argumentative writing of L2 learners. The study was carried out in two English classes at a university in China, where the intervention group was taught using the process-genre approach and the comparison group received conventional writing instruction. Pretest, immediate posttest, and delayed posttest measures were used to evaluate the writing performance of the L2 learners. The results showed that the intervention group demonstrated significant improvement in their writing performance in the immediate posttest, and the effects were sustained in the delayed posttest 6 weeks later. In contrast, the comparison group showed little improvement in their writing performance in both posttests. Janenoppakarn (2020) conducted a quasi-experimental pre-test and post-test study with 37 EFL students of different abilities at a Thai University in Bangkok. The study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of the Process-Genre approach in developing the writing process and writing development of EFL students, as well as their attitudes towards the approach. The students were given pre-tests and pre-questionnaires before being instructed through the Process-Genre approach, and post-tests and post-questionnaires were administered afterwards to evaluate the effectiveness of the approach. The results showed that the approach was effective in developing the writing skill of both higher and lower proficient EFL students. Additionally, both groups exhibited positive changes in their learning attitudes after the instruction. These findings suggest that the Process-Genre approach can be an effective method for developing the writing skills and attitudes of EFL students, regardless of their proficiency levels. Truong (2022) conducted a study on the effects of the process-genre approach on the writing performance, self-efficacy, and autonomy of Vietnamese EFL students. The study involved 38 sophomores from a university in Vietnam who were enrolled in a nine-week writing course that utilized the process-genre approach. The research used pre- and post-tests and questionnaires administered to the participants. The results of the study showed that the process-genre approach

led to an improvement in the students' writing performance. Additionally, the approach increased the students' awareness and behavior related to writing autonomy. Based on these findings, the study suggests that the process-genre approach should be implemented in EFL writing classes.

All things considered, according to this literature review, combining the process approach with the genre approach seems to produce the best results. In this combined approach, called the process-genre approach, learners first study the structural and linguistic characteristics of a specific situation through a model text, and then engage in a series of writing activities to produce a final product. The process-genre approach is particularly suitable for the Moroccan EFL context, as students lack exposure to English genres but are accustomed to learning by memorization. This approach can help students learn the organizational and linguistic aspects of different genres. By balancing the process and genre approach, students can enhance their writing skills by gaining a holistic understanding of the writing process and the social functions and contexts of various writing genres. In this regard, it is crucial for educators to take into account the specific requirements and preferences of their learners as well as their learning goals when selecting a suitable approach. This study utilizes the process-genre approach as the main framework for the writing intervention program. Therefore, the research question that is examined in this study is: Does the process-genre approach help Moroccan EFL college students develop their essay writing ability?

## **2. Method**

The study aimed to examine whether an intervention program based on the process-genre approach could improve the essay writing skills of EFL college students in Morocco. Based on the literature review and prior research in the field of EFL writing instruction, it was hypothesized that the process-genre approach would positively impact the essay writing ability of Moroccan EFL college students.

### **2.1 Research design**

To fulfill the objectives of the study, a quasi-experimental design using a pre-test-post-test design was utilized with one intact group. This design was selected as it allowed the researcher to assess the impact of the intervention program on the participants' essay writing ability. Prior to the treatment, a pre-test was administered to measure the participants' writing proficiency, followed by a post-test to evaluate the effectiveness of the approach utilized in the treatment.

### **2.2 Participants**

The study recruited a sample of 39 Moroccan semester-three students, comprising 24 females and 15 males. Their native languages were either Moroccan Arabic or Berber, with French and English being their second languages. Therefore, the sample was diverse in terms of age, gender, and language background.

## **2.3 Materials**

### **2.3.1 The Pre-test and the Post-test**

The purpose of the pre-test was to establish the initial scores of the student writers and assess their level of proficiency in writing. The test consisted of one writing prompt requiring students to write an expository essay. The post-test was conducted in the same manner as the pre-test after the intervention program to determine whether the students had improved their writing skills. To ensure the validity of both the pre-test and post-test, the researcher enlisted the help of two senior professors to evaluate the tests for face and content validity. The professors affirmed that the tests were suitable and representative of the students' level. To score the participants' writings, an essay evaluation rubric was used to ensure the reliability and validity of the scores.

## **2.4 Procedures**

The study was conducted for a duration of nine weeks. In the first session, the teacher-researcher presented the objectives of the writing program. Additionally, the students were informed that they would be partaking in a research study, and the researcher explained the objectives and procedures of the study to them. The pre-test was administered in person by the researcher during the second session. In the following sessions, the researcher started the implementation of the treatment by introducing the students to the process-genre approach to writing and the various stages it involves. Throughout the sessions, the students focused on different activities that were recommended by this approach. That is, the lessons of the writing program consisted of several stages, which were designed to help students develop their writing skills in a collaborative environment. In first stage, Developing Context, the teacher introduced the topic and discussed the audience and purpose of the writing with the students. In the second stage, Modeling and Deconstruction, the teacher used a model essay to teach students about its structure and language features, such as organization, content, vocabulary, grammar, and linking words. In the Joint Construction stage, students collaborated with their peers to generate ideas and create a sample writing based on the given topic, while considering the writing's audience and purpose. In the Independent Construction stage, students wrote their own drafts, and revised them for organization, main points, support for ideas, connections between ideas, and genre conventions. Students were provided with checklists to guide them through the revising and editing stages, and the teacher provided feedback through conferences with individual students. In the editing stage, students proofread their work for grammatical and mechanical errors. Although the stages were ordered in a linear way, students were encouraged to move back and forth between them as needed. Finally, in the publishing stage, students shared their work with their peers, either by posting it online in their online platform or reading it aloud. During the last session of the writing program, the student writers took the post-test under the same conditions as the pre-test. Data from two students were eliminated due to their absence on the day of the post-test.

## **2.5 Analysis**

The students' scores in the pre-test and post-test were analyzed through descriptive analysis to compare the means and standard deviations. This analysis helped to determine if there was a significant difference between the scores of the students. To answer the research question about the effect of the process-genre approach on the students' essay writing skills, a Paired Samples T-



test was conducted using the SPSS statistical package. The purpose was to find out whether there was a significant difference in the mean scores between the pre-test and post-test.

### 3. Results

The objective of this study was to examine the impact of the process-genre approach to teaching writing on the essay writing skill of Moroccan EFL college students.

#### Mean scores

The descriptive statistics presented in Table 1 below indicate considerable differences in the mean scores between the pre-test and post-test of the participants. The descriptive statistics demonstrate that the participants had an average score of M=10.71 in the Pre-test, while their average score rose to M=15.14 in the Post-test. Comparing the two average scores indicates that there was a 4.43 point increase in their scores from the Pre-test to the Post-test.

**Table 1:** *Pre-test and Post-test mean scores of the participants*

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Pretest	10.71	37	2.442	.401
	Posttest	15.14	37	1.348	.221

Table 2 displays the results of a Paired Samples T-test. The test was conducted to determine if there was a significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores of the participants in the writing intervention program. The results indicate that there was a significant improvement in the participants' writing skills as there was a mean difference of -4.432 (SD = 1.509), with a 95% confidence interval ranging from -4.935 to -3.928. The t-value was -17.8 with 36 degrees of freedom, and the p-value was 0.000, which is less than the significance level of 0.05. Therefore, it can be concluded that the writing intervention program was effective in improving the participants' writing skills.

**Table 2:** Paired Samples T-test comparing the Pre-test and Post-test scores of the students

	Paired Differences					df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference			
				Lower	Upper		
Pair 1 Pretest Posttest	-4.432	1.509	.248	-4.935	-3.928	36	.000

#### 4. Discussion

The primary objective of the current study was to investigate the effectiveness of the process-genre approach in enhancing the essay writing skills of Moroccan EFL college learners. The findings indicate that the participants demonstrated significant improvements in their essay writing abilities in the post-test. The paired samples t-tests conducted to compare the mean scores of the pre-test and post-test revealed a significant positive effect of the process-genre approach on the students' scores in the post-test as compared to the pre-test. These results strongly suggest that the process-genre approach was effective in enhancing the participants' essay writing competence. The substantial improvements observed in the performance of both the control and experimental groups provide compelling evidence of the positive impact of the process-genre approach in developing the essay writing skills of Moroccan EFL college students.

The current study's finding is consistent with prior research ( ) that highlights the positive effects of the process-genre approach on students' writing performance, particularly in EFL/ESL contexts. There are several potential explanations for this effect. First, the approach's use of pre-writing activities may activate students' prior knowledge and assist them in generating innovative ideas, laying the groundwork for essay development. Second, the approach's stages provide students with a structured and sequential approach to writing, making the process more manageable (Huang and Zhang, 2019). Additionally, the emphasis on revision and peer editing in the approach allows students to rewrite and edit their compositions to better express their ideas, resulting in greater student autonomy and responsibility for their own writing ( ).

Furthermore, the present research supports previous studies that have investigated the effectiveness of the process-genre approach in teaching writing across various educational contexts globally (Huang & Zhang, 2019; Janenoppakarn and Thongrin, 2020; Truong, 2022). These studies appear to agree that the process-genre approach can improve students' writing skills particularly in ESL/EFL contexts. For example, in a quasi-experimental study by Huang and Zhang (2019), the impact of the process-genre approach on the argumentative writing of L2 learners was

explored. The study was conducted in two English classes at a university in China, with the intervention group receiving instruction through the process-genre approach and the comparison group receiving conventional writing instruction. The writing performance of the L2 learners was evaluated using pretest, immediate posttest, and delayed posttest measures, which revealed that the intervention group demonstrated significant improvement in their writing performance in both posttests, while the comparison group showed little improvement. Similarly, Janenoppakarn and Thongrin (2020) conducted a quasi-experimental pre-test and post-test study with 37 EFL students of different abilities at a Thai University in Bangkok, which found that the process-genre approach was effective in developing the writing skill of both higher and lower proficient EFL students. The study also revealed that both groups exhibited positive changes in their learning attitudes after the instruction. These results suggest that the process-genre approach can be an effective method for improving the writing skills and attitudes of EFL students, regardless of their proficiency levels. Moreover, Truong (2022) conducted a study on the effects of the process-genre approach on the writing performance, self-efficacy, and autonomy of Vietnamese EFL students. The study involved 38 sophomores from a university in Vietnam who participated in a nine-week writing course utilizing the process-genre approach. The study found that the process-genre approach led to an improvement in the students' writing performance and increased their awareness and behavior related to writing autonomy. Based on these findings, the study recommends implementing the process-genre approach in EFL writing classes.

## **5. Pedagogical implications**

The results of this study have important implications for EFL writing teachers. Firstly, the process approach appears to be an effective method for developing EFL writing competence. This implies that teachers should train their students to follow the stages suggested in the process-genre approach and to avoid focusing solely on writing as a product. Teachers should guide their students through the different stages of the writing process before reaching the final draft. The process-genre approach suggests that teachers should balance between developing students' fluency in writing while not neglecting writing accuracy. Therefore, attention should be given to both aspects when teaching writing to EFL students. Secondly, the findings propose that group discussions and social interaction can motivate students and enhance their writing abilities. Therefore, teachers should encourage an interactive and collaborative writing class where students write for each other as well as read and give feedback on each other's papers. Furthermore, the social context created by the process-genre approach is more authentic, meaningful, and practical, which promotes enjoyable and effective learning in the writing classroom. The results of this study also have important implications for the teaching of writing in Morocco, where teaching and learning writing in the EFL college context is considered challenging. The process-genre approach seems to be an effective approach for developing students' writing skills. Yet, it is important to continually evaluate the feasibility and effectiveness of these techniques and approaches in the Moroccan context and develop new pedagogical procedures accordingly.

## **6. Limitations**

The pretest-posttest one-group design employed in this study has several limitations that should be considered. One major limitation is the lack of a control group, which makes it difficult to

attribute the observed improvements in writing skills solely to the intervention program. Other factors, such as maturation, practice effects, or even extraneous variables that were not controlled for, may have contributed to the observed changes in the participants' writing skills. Another limitation is the small sample size, which limits the generalizability of the findings to other populations. Finally, the study did not measure the participants' motivation or attitude towards writing, which could have affected their performance on the writing tasks.

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## **E-Learning Strategies and Tools for Enhancing Foundational Linguistic Competence in English**

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### **Abstract:**

*English is one of the most widely used and recognized languages. Many countries are increasingly including it in early childhood education and socialization. Reading, writing, listening, and speaking are only a few of the numerous English language skills that may be acquired via the usage of E-learning methodologies. E-learning, which involves the use of various internet resources for the purpose of academic instruction, is a method that has just recently gained popularity for teaching and learning English. In this study, the benefits of e-learning and how it functions in enabling students of English as a foreign language (EFL) to improve their language proficiency and self-directed learning are discussed. These qualities are the most important in determining an individual's English competence, vocabulary expansion, and accent reduction. Non-native English speakers can benefit substantially from a variety of E-learning tactics, software, Internet-based Apps, websites, and YouTube. This research focuses on how to use these strategies to successfully acquire, practice, and perfect these fundamental English language abilities. The purpose of this article is to evaluate the usefulness of a blended-learning environment, which combines one type of e-learning with regular classroom education, to see if students' language skills and perceptions of this program improve.*

**Keywords:** *E-Learning strategies, Internet resources, ESL students, Digital material, Software.*

### **1. Introduction**

In the traditional classroom context, lectures, group projects, case studies, and homework all play important roles. Education occurs in what is known as a "synchronous context," which occurs when lessons are held at predetermined times and locations, and everyone engaged (teachers and students) is present at the same time. The lecture model may be seen in many academic institutions nowadays as a significant component of the traditional method (Al-Ghamdi, A., et.al, 2018). Indeed, in higher education, subject-specific, content-driven courses routinely miss the necessity of students actively acquiring their own knowledge (Baeten, Struyven, & Dochy, 2013). Lessons based on nonconstructive models, such as lecturing, tend to limit students' ability to interact directly with their professors and with one another (Loyens & Rikers, 2011). Many detractors deny the promise of online education due to their belief in the need of teacher engagement.

There has been a dramatic shift in the way education is provided, with the use of cutting-edge technology such as computers and the internet becoming increasingly important. The area of

education, particularly language instruction, has profited enormously from the introduction of e-learning. Language training and study are now more efficient and effective than ever before because of technological advancements such as e-learning. In this paper, we'll look at different e-learning tools and how they affect the development of a range of English language skills.

English is the most frequently spoken official language in the world in terms of total native speakers. It is also the preferred language for conducting international commerce. Knowing English is more important than ever before. Learning English brings us a world of possibilities, including improved communication with people all over the world and access to innumerable internet resources. The enormous variety of English dialects is influenced by historical, social, cultural, and geographical distinctions. English is extensively used and recognized as a legal and cultural medium in nations where it is not the predominant language of communication, such as China, Japan, and Russia. It is without a doubt the most frequently utilized language for global trade.

## **2. Literature Review:**

Electronic learning, or e-learning, is a relatively new technological invention that has found significant use in the field of education. To illustrate, the entire world and even the government of Thailand has recognized the potential of e-learning and has provided support with concrete strategies and infrastructures through the Thailand ICT Master Plan and the e-education framework, both of which fall under the purview of the National Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Plan and Education Policy. Thai students can enhance their education within this framework by using digital learning to gain access to material from all across the world (Suktrisul, 2007).

According to the findings, both educators and students agree that e-learning has the ability to enable students to take an active part in their education. As a consequence, more reserved learners are able to open up and make new friends, participate in a broader range of activities, establish their own drive to learn, and improve their study habits and time management. E-learning allows for a more student-centered approach to education in the classroom (Poon 2013). Soliman (2014) evaluated the effectiveness of e-learning in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in terms of boosting students' linguistic competency and promoting more autonomous study. According to the findings, e-learning is a valuable resource that should be used in addition to traditional in-class EFL training. It is hoped that this would improve students' language abilities and encourage them to study independently.

According to Dawley (2007), students who took online courses were more inclined to actively seek knowledge, critically evaluate it, discuss it with peers, and finally develop their own unique bodies of information. Tanveer's (2011) study, "Integrating E-learning in Classroom-based Language Teaching: Perceptions, Challenges, and Strategies," supports this evaluation.



### **3. Research Objective:**

The following objectives have been determined for this research article:

1. To gain a knowledge of how ESL students perceive e-learning; and
2. To gain an understanding of the challenges and opportunities presented by active learning in the context of ESL.

### **4. The Role of E-Learning Platform in Our Education System:**

Technology now pervades every facet of existence. As technology has grown more prevalent, it has also resulted in a drastic shift in the teaching methodology. "E-Learning," also known as "Technology in Education," has recently been a focal point in all classrooms worldwide. Today's pupils' requirements can only be satisfied by incorporating technology into the classroom. Modern classrooms appear to be considerably different from previous ones. Traditional approaches, which rely largely on lecture and repetition to memorize, are inadequate at helping students acquire English as a skill because they confine language education to rote memory. Online, Facebook, the Internet, blogs, Tweets, mobile phones, interactive boards, and many more contemporary technology advances have not only enhanced stimuli but also appropriately engaged learners.

### **5. The Importance of the Study:**

It is essential that teachers have the autonomy to develop their own theories of practice, which may then be molded to meet the requirements of the students, classrooms, and communities in which they work (Kumaravadivelu, 2001). In addition, educators shouldn't only adopt the conclusions of studies that they've read about; rather, they should conduct their own research and come up with their own ideas (Ellis, 1997). On the other hand, it is unclear how frequently action research is used by teachers of English as a foreign language in Nepal. How often do instructors do action research while they are educating students in English as a second language? If this is not the case, then what are some of the difficulties associated with action research? The purpose of this action research study conducted in the context of teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL) in Andhra Pradesh is to gain a better understanding of the perspectives, strategies, and challenges faced by those working in this industry. This study ought to equip educators and those who educate educators with broader possibilities for thinking about and improving their own pedagogical practices. It will be useful to all professionals involved in ELT, whether directly or indirectly, as well as scholars interested in the topic of reflective practices. Included here are curriculum developers, material producers (such as authors of textbooks and creators of training manuals, amongst others), and similar individuals.

### **6. Advantages of Online E-Resources:**

The Internet may not be considered a reliable source for legitimate English-language materials; yet, it serves as an extensive repository of diverse and respectable information, encompassing articles, books, courses, conferences, and more. Students have the ability to submit and receive

tasks, as well as take exams, through the use of email. Because the platform is hosted online, teachers are able to view student work anytime they choose. Students who are unable to physically attend a class can still see and hear their teacher through the use of a camera, and they can use an electronic whiteboard to access their class materials, which may include tests, quizzes, and notes. All of the schools are connected to one another through a network, which enables them to work together on the projects and digitally prepare the materials. These days, every university and educational institution has its own website. Learners can improve their command of the English language by utilizing a wide variety of free internet-based programs and websites that are available for use as e-learning resources on the internet.

#### **a. YouTube:**

YouTube contains a wealth of material that may be used for a number of research projects. YouTube videos may be used in an EFL classroom as an e-learning tool to help students with many different areas of the English language, such as vocabulary development, accent reduction, pronunciation clarity, voice modulation, and so on. The realistic examples of English in everyday situations on YouTube make it an ideal tool for language teachers. It may be used as an online resource to help students improve their language abilities in all four areas: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The teacher can select a section of the film appropriate for the students' skill level and utilize it as teaching material; for example, the instructor might prepare worksheets based on the movie clips ahead of time and have students complete them while viewing the videos. This might be an excellent opportunity for them to hone their listening and writing skills. YouTube, founded in 2005 and headquartered in San Bruno, California, is one of the world's most popular video-sharing websites. Three former PayPal employees founded the firm in February 2005. Google paid around \$1.65 billion for it in November 2006. (Hopkins, 2006). YouTube has become a subsidiary of Google since its acquisition. According to the Associated Press (2006). Users of the site may submit view, rate, share, and comment on videos. There are movies, TV series, music videos, trailers for forthcoming films, and other content genres such as vlogs, short original videos, and instructive videos. While the majority of the videos on YouTube are uploaded by ordinary people, CBS, the BBC, Vevo, Hulu, and other media sources all contribute content to the site as part of the YouTube partnership program. (Weber, 2007)

#### **b. Skype:**

Skype is an application that allows users to communicate with one another via video and voice calls. Users may send and receive text and video messages, as well as exchange digital assets like images, texts, and videos. The video calling capabilities of Skype make it an excellent online resource for ESL lessons and language exchanges. Skype works on PCs running Windows, Mac OS X, and Linux, as well as Android, BlackBerry, iOS, and Windows Phone and tablet computers (Markton, 2014). The worldwide reach and ease of use of Skype give limitless opportunities for encouraging global collaboration between instructors and their students. It allows students of a foreign language to engage with students of the same language from various countries. Teachers can provide students with mentorship and homework aid via Skype. Readings, presentations, and performances allow students to share their work with others in the classroom, and they can collaborate on writing and research projects. They have the freedom to explore further professional development options both inside and outside of the district.

### **c. Zoom Technologies:**

The use of technology in educational settings is becoming increasingly widespread. Even if conventional classroom training should not be abandoned in favor of online education, which is rapidly gaining ground, traditional classroom training should not be abandoned in favor of online education. This frequently ends up producing a more stimulating and motivating learning environment for technical students in the future. The use of the educational technology Zoom, which can be accessed online, has made it possible for numerous advances to be made in the teaching of foreign languages. Many teachers, including those in India, have benefited from the many approaches, activities, and resources that are associated with computer-assisted language learning (CALL). To our great fortune, the number of high schools and homes equipped with computers and Internet connection is quickly increasing. This paves the way for the development of innovative teaching strategies that make use of digital resources.

Zoom's features may be utilized by ESL teachers to promote meaningful interactions with medical students, which can subsequently be used to study and evaluate the four LSRW skills. When using Zoom in the classroom, teachers of English are strongly encouraged to place a focus on the shared screen in order to encourage their students to participate more actively. The instructor may opt to record their English classes in the cloud or locally, whichever they find more convenient, and their medical students can do the same, pausing and restarting the recording as much as they like over the course of the session. It might be beneficial for both the instructors and the students to record their lectures and then conduct post-lecture analysis in order to identify areas in which they could improve. Students of medicine can evaluate their growth over the course of their education by watching recorded lectures in chronological order. In addition, English teachers can evaluate their students' progress in the subject by playing the recorded lesson for a reliable colleague and asking for their opinion on the students' ability to communicate in English. As a result of utilizing Zoom, English teachers now have a variety of options for effectively disseminating educational content to their students. Zoom is a valuable tool for instructors who wish to improve the English language proficiency of their international students because it enables interactive screen sharing activities.

The practice of active inquiry should be modeled by English instructors both during and after viewing courses in order to aid medical students in reflecting on the material and improving their level of comprehension. The instructors may also request that the students record and share video comments on the topics being discussed in class.

### **d. Google Meet:**

The Internet is a factor that might be considered significant and influential in modern society. Google Meet, which was formerly known as Google Hangouts Meet, is Google's business video conferencing software. It is available for free to Google users in addition to being supplied as part of Google Workspace. Meet features technology that is not offered by Hangouts, such as the ability to caption conversations in real time and support for as many as 250 participants and 100,000 viewers of live streams. In addition to being utilized for online conferences, the Google meet platform also offers a broad variety of uses in the fields of academia and business. The broad transmission of the COVID-19 virus led to the later development of stringent safety precautions,

which in turn led to an increase in individual usage. This was a consequence of the widespread diffusion of the virus. In the year 2020, it is projected that Google Meet, a highly productive piece of technical innovation, would have a significant influence on the way education is carried out.

The four skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing are all interconnected, and improving any one of them can help a learner become more fluent in English. Why should you make an effort to improve your written English? Since a lot of different industries are demanding bilingual candidates, knowing English and another language is becoming more and more important.

Language proficiency, along with reading comprehension, are often regarded as critical components of student development. As a result, it is advised that students devote substantial time and effort to fostering it. Participating in self-conversation creates certain challenges as it is uncertain what emotions may intrude and lead the individual away from their present state of mind. It is essential to devote substantial time and effort to finding a partner who is appropriate to carry out dialogue based on one's individual needs and preferences. Aznam, Citrawati, Hw, Kusdianto, and Setyawan (2020) claim that the use of media-assisted teaching strategies in Google Meet fosters a unique educational setting. This is especially valid in the context of achieving educational objectives, such as acquiring information and enhancing students' academic outcomes within the walls of their own residence.

Benmansour (2022) asserts that the use of Google Meet classrooms enhances communication and motivation within online educational settings by developing a connection between educators and students. Although there exists a body of literature assessing the efficacy of Google Meet as a platform for facilitating classroom discussions, there has been a dearth of research specifically investigating this phenomenon within the Philippine setting. Prior research has not examined the specific effects of Google Meet discussions on students enrolled in a Bachelor of Secondary Education program with a focus on social studies. There is a dearth of scholarly study pertaining to the efficacy of Google Meet as a means of communication and virtual learning for students in the field of social studies, with a particular emphasis on the regional context. Multiple research studies have indicated that the utilization of the platform application advocated by educational institutions does not result in a heightened level of interest among students while learning English as a second language. Instead, it appears to pose challenges in effectively comprehending the instructional material presented by the teacher. Educators have acknowledged the necessity of offering application solutions or platforms that meet the requirements of students seeking to enhance their English communication abilities through remote education.

#### **e. Smart-boards:**

An interactive whiteboard is preferable to a regular whiteboard because it allows educators to display any material that can be shown on a computer's desktop (educational software, web sites, and others). Using SMART boards, instructors may make the classroom environment more student-centered and customize it to accommodate students with varied language skill levels. Using SMART Boards is an effective method for teaching children reading and comprehension, as well as grammar and composition. Teachers with access to a SMART Board may engage their students in interactive learning by combining video, music, Web surfing, and word processing. Thanks to smart boards, language arts lessons may be presented in a more engaging and fun

manner. "Pictogram" is an example of a game of this sort (draw an image, guess the word). Spelling bees are quite popular among elementary school and younger grade kids. Word games are a fun and effective method for enhancing vocabulary and language abilities, and they may be played in the classroom.

A teacher may utilize jumbled sentences, push pupils to locate terms with similar or contradictory meanings, or apply lexis or collocations in their classes. It is appropriate for the instructor to utilize a broad variety of colored pens. The instructor may use different-colored pens to depict the many elements of speech being taught when explaining grammar. For instance, the instructor may use a blue pen for nouns, a yellow pen for verbs, a red pen for adjectives, and a green pen for adverbs. Take the following as an illustration: "The small youngster (BLUE) jumped (RED) from the enormous (YELLOW) tree in an instant" (Green Color). In addition, the instructor can exhibit badly written paragraphs and have the students rectify them. The instructor can utilize a story starter and have the students create a class narrative, chain story, or peer story to develop the students' writing skills. As a direct result of this exercise, the individual will obtain a greater grasp of the structure and operation of the language through the process of constructing phrases from images. In addition, once pupils have watched photographs of actual or fictional persons, the instructor can have them enter their opinions in given "bubbles." (Chabra et al., 2012)

## **7. Multimedia Language Laboratory & Digital Resources:**

The primary objective of the language lab is to place an emphasis on electronic media, which includes personal computers (PCs), MP3 players (MP3 players), mobile phones (cell phones), and iPods. These electronic devices provide access to voice, text, picture, video, animation, and intriguing context. Utilizing these resources can assist you in developing all four skills associated with language, including grammar. The Language Laboratory is stocked with a wide range of resources, such as online tutorials, teaching materials, audio recording, video recording, LCD, teaching software, games, functional grammar, and classroom discussion, in order to pique the interest of students in grammar. Everyone acknowledges and admits that electronic media has become essential to day-to-day living, and they all agree with this assessment. This relatively new trend in education is one that, throughout the course of one's lifetime, is only going to become increasingly significant in the overall educational experience. This is the current trend, which can be attributed to the fact that the accessibility of modern technological tools has had a significant impact on the EFL (English as a Foreign Language) classroom in recent years.

## **8. Conclusion:**

Every day, technological advancements make it look as though education takes place in a classroom even in the midst of a pandemic, when people are prohibited from gathering together, as they will be in the years 2020 and 2021. The use of technology can be of assistance in maintaining the functioning of the educational system. People may find it easier to adhere to the standards of current health protocols with the assistance of certain tools, such as an online learning platform. The findings of a number of academic studies on the topic of incorporating different forms of media into online instruction with the goal of enhancing students' spoken communication skills provided the impetus for this endeavor.

The ability of a student to study and participate in their activities may be significantly improved by the utilization of various apps, media, or platforms. The success and diversity of e-learning are dependent on the abilities of both the teacher and the student; however, e-learning allows for more flexibility in studying outside of class limits and anticipates some of the hurdles that concentrations as high in class face, such as time, amenities, learning materials, and classrooms.

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## Overcoming Peter Pan Syndrome Using Anthrologic Practices in the EFL/ESL Classroom

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### Abstract

*Adult learners have their baggage of world experiences that they bring into the classroom; therefore, they perceive what is taught differently from how young learners do. Since adults bring a vast repertoire of world knowledge that enables them to engage with the task at hand differently from how a young learner does. Different adult learners perceive the same problem in various ways that are unique to each individual. The methodology adopted to deal with an adult learning situation needs to take into consideration these differences and be neither pedagogic nor scaffolding in nature. The teacher's role in an adult learning class should be that of a facilitator, a 'guide on the side' rather than the 'sage on the stage.' Therefore, the process of knowledge transaction in an adult learning class is different. In this paper, I have identified the anthrologic practices observed in four adult teaching-learning scenarios as part of my teaching practices. The findings suggest that with a bit of forethought, adult learners can emerge from their Peter Pan syndrome and become responsible for their language learning practices. The results of the study have implications for teachers who want to experiment with different modalities to make their classes more anthrologic.*

**Keywords:** *anthrologicity, ESL/EFL, adult learning practices, Peter Pan syndrome, learner autonomy*

The common understanding is that adult learners perceive what is taught differently from the way young learners do. They are more goal-oriented and pragmatic in all matters of life; this is further extended into their educational experiences. Therefore, it is imperative that the methodology adopted to deal with an adult learning situation be neither pedagogic nor scaffolding in nature. This argument first took hold in the works of Knowles (1968) who opined that “the biggest obstacle to the achievement of the full potential of adult education has been that it has been tied to and ... has been hamstrung by the concepts and the methods of the traditional education of children” (cited in Shreedeepea, 2022a). Especially with the ease of availability of information and resources, the teacher in an adult learning class is simply a facilitator, a ‘guide on the side’ rather than the ‘sage on the stage’. In addition, adults bring with them a vast repertoire of their world knowledge that enables them to engage with the task at hand differently from the way a young learner does. For this characteristic, different adult learners perceive the same problem in a variety of ways that is unique to everyone. Therefore, the process of knowledge transaction in an adult learning class is different; to establish this difference the term andragogy is most appropriate. However, attuning to the argumentation put forward by Shree Deepa (2022a, b), the terms that I have used in the article to refer to the concept being discussed are ‘anthrology’, ‘anthrologic’, ‘anthrologicity’, and ‘anthrologicity’. The underlying reason is to represent the adult learning process above and beyond the confines of gender differences.



## **Defining anthrogocity**

Traditionally the teaching learning process has been considered similar across age groups and the collective term used therein is pedagogy. This expects the teacher to consider the learner as the receiver of knowledge who must be given all the information. An immense amount of handholding plays a major role in the process. However, considering the expectations from young and adult learners, differentiation should be made in the methodology adopted as well. Knowles (1968) believed, “the biggest obstacle to the achievement of the full potential of adult methods of education has been that it has been tied to and...has been hamstrung by the concepts and the methods of the traditional education of children”. Therefore, the need of the hour is to differentiate the process of knowledge transfer that takes place from the teacher to the young learner versus the teacher to the adult learner. To further bring out this difference, it was imperative to use a term that would enable to paint a clear picture of the phenomenon. Literature already identifies the term ‘andragogy’. However, this was not best suited because it has its roots in the word ‘andro’ referring to men; half the voice of the population is thus lost. Further, when used in the sphere of education, it is limited to non-formal adult education or lifelong learning that may or may not take place within a formal educational context. Hence, the term ‘anthrogocity’ was devised which is all-inclusive, incorporating all genders, concepts of multilingualism and multiculturalism. The concept of anthrogocity shares its core values with the tenets of universal human values that have been emphasized in the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. The thinking adult has the onus of sustainable development practices that are built along the lines of equity for both the human and the natural worlds. Further, in such a class in keeping with the spirit of conviviality mutual respect is maintained between the teacher and the adult learner (Shreedeepta, 2022). Although a budding area of research, some of the well-established principles of andragogy include the following:

- the learner’s need to know
- self-concept of the learner
- prior experience
- readiness to learn
- orientation to learning
- motivation to learn

(Knowles et al., 2015)

To recapitulate, in this article, the term has been used in the broadest sense possible taking from the working definition arrived at by Shreedeepta (2022a). It is all-inclusive with respect to gender, multilingualism, multiculturalism, encompassing disciples and a variety of repertoire of pre-existing information that the adult learner is privy to. It is not merely informal or non-formal education; it is a part of what comprises educating adults also within the folds of regular teaching.

## **Peter Pan Syndrome**

On one hand, the concept of ‘anthrogocity’ gives the adult learner a range of freedom in the knowledge transaction process. On the other hand, research conducted in the sphere of educational psychology has shown that not every adult learner can take charge of their knowledge acquisition process. This has been attributed to the Peter Pan Syndrome (PPS). It is primarily a psychological condition evident among males who refuse to take responsibility for their actions or the lack

thereof. Kiley (1983), highlighted instances of recklessness, flippancy, and anxiety: all leading to stalling in their daily affairs as indicators of the Peter Pan Syndrome. Added to these are the emotions of disinterest to mask their feelings of doubt and inability to take responsibility. It leads to a certain amount of ‘learning impotence’ (Westman and Bennett, 1985) (cited in Shreedeepta 2022b), as a result of which the learners are disinterested in either school or work: things that are hallmarks of adulthood. In the present article, the term has been adapted to identify such adult learners across genders.

### **Research question**

In view of the different natures of learning coupled with the role of the learner, this article aims to identify the various anthropogenic moves and instances of Peter Pan syndrome identified in two literature and two language classes across a variety of teaching-learning contexts. Consequently, the research question that drives this study is: What is the nature of learning and the kind of learner roles adopted by the learners in an anthropogenic classroom?

### **Participants**

The data for the paper has been collected from the adult teaching-learning scenario that I encountered in India and Uzbekistan where eighteen years is defined as legal adulthood. Furthermore, these are the students who receive classroom-based instructions within the formal higher education context or the tertiary level. In sync with the definition given by Knowles (2015), an adult is someone

- autonomous and self-directed
- having vast amount of life experiences and knowledge
- pragmatic and goal-oriented
- who respond better to problem-solving and task-oriented learning

### **Tools**

The principal tool for data collection was a retrospective analysis of the sessions, unstructured interviews, and feedback received from the students using self-reflective reports that were useful for triangulating the data.

### **Methodology**

The data for the study comprised classes that I have taught in the last four years of my teaching journey. In most cases, incidents of a single session formed the source of data. The same topics were discussed in previous and following sessions. Information has been taken from two episodes of literature (E1, and E2) and two language-based (E3, and E4) sessions. E1 was a masters level course in English literature and E2 Bachelor of Arts (honours and general). E3 was a language course at a bridge course level in Uzbekistan and E4 was a session on communication skills in the same educational context.

## Data analysis

The aim of the study was to identify the principles of anthropogenic practices that are pre-existing among learners inherently, without conscious awareness. These have been referred to as the anthropogenic moves made by the learners in the class and are in opposition to the Peter Pan Syndrome moves wherein the learner is heavily dependent on the guidance of the teacher for classroom transactions.

## Learners' anthropogenic moves

- *Asking for help*: A significant area in which learners exhibited their ability to take charge of their learning process was by requesting help from the teacher/facilitator and other able peers. The learner asked for clarification related to the procedure to be adopted for attempting the given task (E3) or to ask probing questions for greater clarity in the literature sessions (E1). The less proficient learners asked for help from peers for arriving at the correct vocabulary (E1, E4) or for hands-on help with task completion.
- *Developing thinking*: Learners also exhibited their ability to be anthropogenic when it came to their critical thinking abilities. The EFL learners tried to guess the meanings of words from context (E3, E4) and in the literature classes, the masters level students were proactive in analysing the characters in their texts. They took the process of analysis a step further by extrapolating the characters from one context into a different story.
- *Cocreating materials*: Another area in which learners showed initiative was the content of the classes. In one case (E2), students had to study the same poem (Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard) three years in a row; this was unacceptable to them. Therefore, through a process of mutual agreement, the learners created their own texts in the form of poems, short stories, and even lyrics to a song showcasing the themes identified in the poem. Further, they added personal narratives (E1) from their experiences in their home country that resonate with the life stories of the protagonists they were reading about. While this is the norm across literature courses taught in India, it was a novel experience for the foreign students who were enrolled here. Therefore, it was akin to a leap of faith for first-time practitioners (students identifying as foreign nationals) to enjoy such autonomy in the literature class; they were used to rote learning.
- *Structure and organisation of the session*: Another area in which the learners exhibited their ability to make anthropogenic moves was the mechanics of the teaching-learning process. They took decisions related to the content and structuring of the presentations (E3, E4). Moreover, the choice of language to be used during the data collection stage for the given task was also the prerogative of the learners in the EFL context (E3). (A video sample of stage 2 of the project that comprised E3 can be accessed on the following link: <https://www.facebook.com/shravasti/videos/1463015487432363>). For this task, the amount of time delegated to each stage was also the learners' discretion thereby ensuring they made an autonomous move in their learning journey. Other components like the kind of classroom participation, and the order of asking questions during the data collection stage itself were also part of the anthropogenic moves made by the learners.

While there were numerous instances where the learners took up their adult learning responsibilities, many other instances were identified during the four sessions that indicated the prevalence of the Peter Pan Syndrome in the participants' learning styles. These are highlighted in the following section.

### **Peter Pan Syndrome**

- *Engagement with the syllabus:* The inability of the students to take decisions that worked in the favour of their learning process was evident in their interaction with the content of the literature and language sessions. They seldom took the initiative to read beyond the syllabus. Therefore, when asked to make a presentation on a poem the majority of the learners decided to do a thematic analysis of a single poem (E1). By extension, the students were also not very keen on reading literary criticisms and theoretical articles since it would entail additional reading. This was unacceptable in the master's level class since students are expected to read through the oeuvre of the author. In another instance, the first reaction of the students was in favour of dropping a poem altogether since it was a repetition. After much coaxing, and since the majority were in favour, the alternative could be implemented and students created their own materials to be discussed in the class (E2). In another instance, the BTech students who studied communication skills would have preferred to recycle previous presentations to escape putting in the required work. This would not only reduce their workload but also take away the opportunity to improve their linguistic ability as the majority of the students preferred a rote learnt presentation which lacked variety in the language used. This was accentuated on account of the EFL context in which the sessions were conducted (E4).
- *Setting the stage:* Across the four sessions a common factor observed was the teacher setting the stage for the classroom transaction. Although adult learners, the students seldom took the initiative to commence the classes. The process of teaching was directive in nature with the teacher having to lay out a plan for the next sixty minutes of class time. Even though the teacher was willing to take the learners' preferences into consideration in the sphere of classroom management, the students did not show any eagerness for it. Surprisingly, the class representative who is usually the go-between was also more akin to a receiver of instructions rather than rising up to the opportunity of being the spokesperson for the class.
- *Time management:* Learners across the session found it difficult to maintain time. This was most evident when it came to submitting the assigned tasks (E4). Also, they needed external indicators from the teacher during the presentations (E1, E3, E4).
- *Assessment:* One area in which students exhibited Peter Pan Syndrome to a great extent was the area of assessment. Across the four sessions, the assessment criteria were set by the teacher without any input from the learners. Possible places to give inputs could include the rubric adopted, choosing the assignments from a portfolio, and the modality adopted.

A major reason for this could be the fact that nowhere were the students expected to voice their opinions related to their assessment in any educational contexts earlier.

In the next section, the anthropogenic moves and the examples of the Peter Pan Syndrome exhibited across the four literature and language classes of the adult learners will be discussed further.

## **Discussion**

The information presented in the previous section shows that anthropogenic practices call for greater autonomy among learners with respect to the kind of learning. It requires the flexibility of the teacher to incorporate suggestions given by the learners and also for the learner to be equal contributors in different scopes of the teaching-learning process. This is based on the scope for ample negotiation. Therefore, the adult learners created their own teaching material as an offshoot of the session (E2), interpreted information about texts and put their thinking skills into place (E1); were able to identify real-time problems and arrive at solutions thereby exporting the components of the session into practice (E3). They were also given the scope to state their needs from the sessions and the classroom transaction was modified accordingly (E4). The learners' ability to think creatively and go beyond and between the lines of the text was also given expression by using the tenets of anthropogenicity (E1). Further, in almost all the teaching-learning scenarios I found that the learners were equal contributors to their learning in certain aspects that they were familiar with. Learning can take place only when the recipient of the product/ the consumer is invested and involved. As an anthropogenic teacher, I appreciated the learner's difference in background from my own which gave them a unique perspective of real-time tasks and activities. E2 and E4 brought out the multilingual and pluricultural experiences of the learners. They were also encouraged to use their mother tongue to add flavour to the sessions and to make it more relatable to their life experiences (E4). In E2, E3 and E4 learners either brought materials from their cultural and linguistic background or created their own texts which were discussed and interpreted in the class. In E2, and E3 we see that the learners were proactive and expressed their expectations and requirements from the sessions with ease. A sample of the material created by the learners of E2 is presented in appendix 1.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, it can be discerned that with a little planning and the bravery to take risks, anthropogenic practices can be easily incorporated into our ESL/EFL classrooms. Some components of the classroom processes such as the role of the teacher and the material to be used lend themselves to this practice with ease. However, it requires a certain amount of trial and error, and a change in the mindset of the learners themselves. Just as the teacher must learn to give away control, the learner should also be oriented towards taking charge of their learning. Similar to the instances highlighted by Rubayet et al. (2021) and Shreedeepta (2022b) they need to grow out of their Peter Pan syndrome. The notion that the teacher is the only source of information must undergo a subtle shift. To make the learners more anthropogenic one approach that will prove useful is to make them self-reflective. It will increase not only their level of confidence but also bring to light their learning needs. This will require time and appropriate practice; nevertheless, it will benefit adult learners by treating them as such and unlike pedagogy wherein children are dictated.

The results of the study have implications for creating a more inclusive classroom that is based on the principles of equity, equality, and an acceptance of multicultural awareness.

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Appendix 1

Bayed.

Date

the valley of saints.

in the valley of sufis, of mystics  
how did all the chaos come  
about?

how did the glorious rebels  
inflict upon the sufis,  
the pain of confinement.

were they not familiar? were they  
at all unfamiliar?  
how did they forget!

those rebels, how the saints admired them,  
for their untamed passion,  
to elude confinement.  
they ~~settled~~ immersed their land with red  
roses forever.

then, alas, how did they end up  
slaughtering the saints?

hopelessness has engulfed the valley  
now,  
it drowns in sorrow, in ash  
the left saints shed tears,  
wail for home,

oh! the valley of saints.  
the saints ask themselves, in despair:  
when did the glorious rebels become  
vile boules?  
and why?

@@@

## Students' Perception on Using Blogger as E-Portfolios in Project-Based Learning in English Evaluation Course

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### Abstract

*This study depicts students' perceptions on the use of blogger as an e-portfolio assessment tool in PjBL in an English evaluation course. While there are numerous benefits, there are also drawbacks that give rise to various perceptions. This study employed a quantitative case study. The research sample consisted of 27 English Evaluation Course students from the English Education Department at STKIP PGRI Jombang. The data was gathered from a questionnaire with seven indicators administered via the Google Form application. As a result, the findings of this study revealed that the majority of students had a positive or good perception of the implementation of PjBL through the use of blogger as an e-portfolio. Most of the students agreed that they were motivated to collaborate, communicate with their lecturer and peers, had good time management skills, promote their creativity, and problem-solving skills through the blogger. This study also provided a new perspective by collaborating PjBL, e-Portfolio and blogger can create the learning process which employs student-centered, constructivism and authentic.*

**Keywords:** Project-based learning, E-portfolio, Blogger, & English evaluation course.

### Introduction

Project-Based Learning (PjBL) is one of the methods proposed by the Indonesia curriculum for both school and university, whereas an e-Portfolio is one of the types of alternative assessment that is a new trend in either Indonesia or other countries. PjBL helps students understand the 21st-century skills such as critical thinking, communication, cooperation, creativity, and innovation, whereas an e-portfolio enables students to organize, document, and display their most significant learning experiences in a single digital space. National education strives to develop students' ability to become knowledgeable, talented, creative, autonomous individuals, as well as democratic and responsible citizens (Lukitasari et al., 2018; Marhaeni et al., 2017).

E-portfolio is one of the relevant alternative evaluation methods that incorporate technology. According to Alawdat (2014), Chye et al. (2013), Koraneekij & Khlaisang (2015), and others, using an e-portfolio can help students reflect more on their learning process over time, engage in self-evaluation, and progress as learners. The learning process is implied to be constructivist, student-centered, and authentic through the use of e-portfolio evaluation (Mahasneh, 2020).

Project-based learning is a type of learning activity that emphasizes student-centeredness and the integration of real-world problems and practices (Macias, 2012; Syarifah, 2019). PjBL has both positive and negative features in its implementation. Project-based learning, for example, may help students build 21st-century abilities, but it may take longer to execute because students must generate a product. However, one of the English Evaluation courses has implemented e-portfolio by using blog in project-based learning as their teaching strategy. As a result, students in the



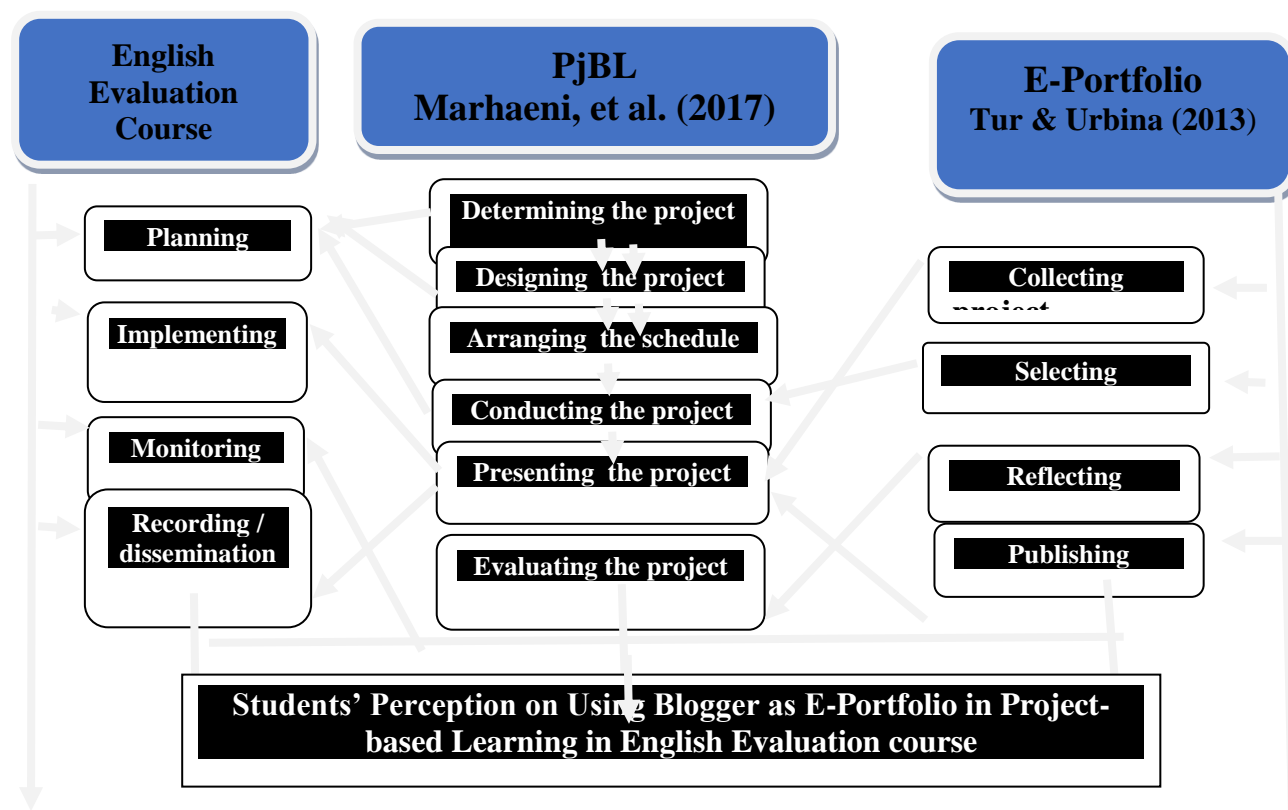
English Evaluation class may view differently project-based learning by employing e-portfolio as the students' alternative assessment.

E-portfolio or electronic portfolio refers to the procedure and portfolio assignment results that are saved in electronic format. An electronic portfolio is a document or project created by a student during a lecture that is stored in an online portal media such as a website or blog (Wijayanti & Basyar, 2016). Furthermore, blogs have been employed in learning activities focused on developing teacher identities (Hanuscin, et al., 2014). Nonetheless, students own their blogs, which can be engaging given that some research has highlighted the value of ownership (Buchem, 2012; Shroff et al., 2013; Buchem, et al., 2014).

E-Portfolios are effective learning tools because they support students' own knowledge construction, make otherwise invisible aspects of the learning process visible, and place agency in the hands of students, which fosters learners' motivation. Conventional portfolio assessment has several weaknesses such as requires a lot of storages to save the documents and requires more time to give feedback; hence it cannot be finished in short of time. These problems can be solved by doing portfolio assessment through web, which is called electronic portfolio assessment. Electronic Portfolio Assessment (e-portfolio) is evaluation based on assessment procedure for learning, which the students' works are collected digitally (Ramlawati et al, 2014; Buyarski et al., 2017). Because it has the potential to develop graduates who are self-directed learners and independent thinkers, e-Portfolio is acknowledged as a high-impact practice and is extensively used in higher education (Batson et al., 2017; Buyarski et al., 2017).

By using Blogger as E-Portfolio in Project-based Learning in English Evaluation course According to preliminary research conducted by the researcher at the English Education Department at STKIP PGRI Jombang, it was found that one of the most difficult things to understand is the teaching technique. In project-based learning, an e-portfolio can be utilized as an alternate teaching-learning technique that is very effective and innovative for measuring students' progress during the learning process.

Figure 1. Framework Using Blogger as E-Portfolio in Project-based Learning in English Evaluation course



## Methods

This study used a descriptive case study as the research design. It aimed to portray people's ideas, attitudes, qualities, and behavior (Rukminingsih, 2020; Yin, 2017). The purpose of this survey was to learn about students' attitudes toward online collaboration platforms in a critical reading course. The research sample consisted of 27 English Evaluation Course students from the English Education Department at STKIP PGRI Jombang. The data collection technique used in this study was a questionnaire with six indicators from English Education Department at STKIP PGRI Jombang.

The data collection technique used in this study was a questionnaire with six indicators adapted from Marhaeni, et al. (2017) and Tur & Urbina (2013) and administered via the Google Forms application. The first indicator that is used to describe students' perception of PjBL is the first step, questioning stated in 1 and 2. e, in the second indicator, the researcher discussed students' perception in designing stated in 4, 5, 6, and 7. In the third indicator, it described students' perception of scheduling in PjBL stated in 8, 9, and 10. The fourth indicator of PjBL is monitoring stated in 11, 12, and 13. Monitoring is related to teachers' responsibility in monitoring the students as they work on the project. The fifth indicator described students' perception of PjBL in assessing stated in 14 and 15. The sixth indicator described students' perception of opportunities and barriers

of openness in e-portfolios in number 16, 17 and 18. The seventh indicator described students' affordances of blogs as e-portfolio stated in number 19, 20, 21 and 22.

After collecting data from students' closed-ended questions, the percentage of each statement used for data analysis was calculated statistically, and the data was interpreted descriptively. The data was analyzed using SPSS 21 to determine the average score for each questionnaire indicator. The questionnaire score was the total number of alternatives selected by the respondent.

## **Findings and Discussions**

The findings and discussions of this study involves the seven indicators of students' questionnaire on students' perceptions on the use of blogger as an e-portfolio assessment tool in PjBL in an English Evaluation course.

*Table 1. The first indicator of questioning in project-based learning*

No	Statements	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	Neutral %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %
1	I found that brainstorming helps to activate students' past knowledge and interest and motivate them to learn more about the subject	14.8	71.8	6	7	0
2	The driving question keeps the students focus on the project which is relevant with their real life situation and makes them more active and successfully solve the problems.	3.7	79.3	6	7.4	0
Mean Score		9.25%	75.55	6	7.2	0

It could be seen that the average of 27 students responded from statements 1 and 2 with the mean score strongly agree was 9.25%, agree was 75.55%, neutral was 6%, disagree was 7.2 and strongly disagree was 0. It means that students had a positive perception on using blogger as e-portfolios in project-based learning in English Evaluation Course in the first indicator of questioning in project-based learning.

The finding showed that the majority of students believe that brainstorming helps to activate students' past knowledge and interest and motivate them to learn more about the subject and the driving question keeps the students focus on the project which is relevant with their real-life situation and makes them more active and successfully solve the problems. This finding is consistent with the previous studies. Project-based learning is a type of learning activity that emphasizes student-centeredness and the integration of real-world problems and practices (Marhaeni, et al., 2017; Macas, 2012; Syarifah, 2019). In Project-Based Learning, students explain their responses to real-life issues, difficulties, or challenges (Essien, 2018). So the students provided with some leading questions to make them more focus on their learning and tasks.

*Table 2. The second indicator of designing in project-based learning*

No	Statements	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	Neutral %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %
3	Discussing the steps of activities along with a lecturer and students help the students taking ownership of the project	11	83	4	2	0
4	As students are divided into several groups for the project, it improves their collaboration skills as they engage and share	3.7	79.3	6	7.4	3.7
5	The lecturer helps students carry out the project, it encourages them to be more creative and independent	12	78	2	8	0
6	The lecturer facilitating the students with a group discussion about designing the project improves their collaboration	15	70	5	10	0
7	Designing the project makes more the task perfect.	9	78	0	12	0
Mean score		10.14	77.66	3.4	7.88	3.7

It could be seen that the average of 27 students responded from statements 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7 with the mean score strongly agree was 10.14 %, agree was 77.66%, neutral was 3.4%, disagree was 7.88 and strongly disagree was 3.7%. It means that students had a positive perception on using blogger as e-portfolios in project-based learning in English evaluation course in the second indicator of designing in project-based learning.

The finding showed that the majority of students believe that in designing phase of PjBl provided them deep discussing between their peers and lecturer to decide the design of the project. The lecturer also facilitated the students with a group discussion on designing the project improves their collaboration to make the project more perfect. This finding is consistent with the previous studies. Habók and Nagy (2016) undertake study, but from the perspective of teachers. They investigate teachers' preferences for Project-Based Learning and how teachers perceive their role in the classroom. Adams (2018) & Susanti et al., (2020) opine that PjBL teaches students to learn in real world by training them to make a good design for their project.

Table 3. The third indicator of scheduling in project-based learning

No	Statements	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	Neutral %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %
8	The lecturer helps the students in creating a project and time preparation provides learning experience and practice in organizing projects and making allocation time for the ...	20	71	5	4	0
9	The lecturer helps students in discussing the deadline for projects promotes students' skill in managing time	14.5	70.5	5	10	0
10	You are helped by the lecturer in discussing the timeline for completing the project that promotes students' skill in managing time	17	73	2	8	0
Mean score		17.2	71.5	2.3	7.3	0

It could be seen that the average of 27 students responded from statements 8, 9 &10 with the mean score strongly agree was 17.2 %, agree was 71.5%, neutral was 2.3%, disagree was 7.3 and strongly disagree was 0. It means that students had a positive perception on using blogger as e-portfolios in project-based learning in English Evaluation Course in the third indicator of scheduling in project-based learning.

The finding showed that the majority of students believe that in scheduling phase of PjBl provided them deep discussion between their peers and lecturer to decide the design of the project. The lecturer also facilitated the students with a group discussion on scheduling the project to enhance the students' responsibility in managing time by collaborating with their peers to make schedule for their project. This finding is consistent with the previous studies. Devkota et al. (2017) PjBL provides students work with other students both within and outside the classroom to develop, construct, and evaluate what they have developed or built. In Project-Based Learning, students explain their responses to real-life issues, difficulties, or challenges (Essien, 2018).

Table 4. The fourth indicator of monitoring in project-based learning

No	Statements	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	Neutral %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %
11	The lecturer helps to monitor students to be more independent and disciplined of the projects.	22	70	4	4	0

12	You are with weaknesses in gathering information and have difficulties in the learning process	11	63	14	12	0
13	In the learning process, you are very active in group work	24	74	2	0	0
Mean score		19	69	6.6	8	0

It could be seen that the average of 27 students responded from statements 11,12 &13 with the mean score strongly agree was 19 %, agree was 69%, neutral was 6.6 %, disagree was 8% and strongly disagree was 0. It means that students had a positive perception on using blogger as e-portfolios in project-based learning in English Evaluation Course in the fourth indicator of monitoring in project-based learning.

The finding showed that the majority of students believe that in the monitoring phase of PjBl , the lecturer helps to monitor students to be more independent, active and disciplined of the projects. The lecturer also facilitated the students with a group discussion to overcome the problems of their project. This finding is consistent with the previous studies. (Gülbahar & Tinmaz, 2006; Macas, 2012; Syarifah, 2019) stated that PjBL is a type of learning activity that emphasizes student-centeredness and the integration of real-world problems and practices discovered that PjBL created favorable wash-back.

*Table 5. The fifth indicator of assessing in project-based learning*

No	Questions	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	Neutral %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %
14	The assessment by using project-based learning in English evaluation course creates students' positive washback.	39	51	4	6	0
15	The assessment by using project-based learning in English evaluation course provides feedback from the lecturer on the amount of understanding students have acquired, and shows their knowledge of related projects	20	67	6	7	0
Mean score		29.5	59	5	6.5	0

It could be seen that the average of 27 students responded from statements 14 &15 with the mean score strongly agree was 29.5 %, agree was 59%, neutral was 5%, disagree was 6.5 and strongly disagree was 0. It means that students had a positive perception on using blogger as e-portfolios in project-based learning in English evaluation course in the fifth indicator of assessing in project-based learning.

The finding showed that the majority of students believe that in the assessing phase of PjBl, the assessment by using project-based learning in English Evaluation Course creates students' positive washback and the students get feedback from the lecturer on the amount of understanding students have acquired, and shows their knowledge of related projects. This finding is consistent with the previous studies. Assessment is a method of evaluating students' progress and providing feedback to help them enhance their competency in the next learning phase (Sardareh, 2013; Yastibas & Yastibas, 2015).

*Table 6. The sixth indicator of opportunities and barriers of openness in e-portfolio*

No	Questions	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	Neutral %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %
16	E-portfolio encourages students' collaboration and sharing their tasks in students' blog.	65	30	2	3	0
17	E-portfolio can empower learning.	20	71	5	4	0
Mean score		42.5	50.5	3.5	3.5	0

It could be seen that the average of 27 students responded from statements 16 & 17 with the mean score strongly agree was 42.5 %, agree was 50.5%, neutral was 3.5%, disagree was 3.5% and strongly disagree was 0. It means that students had a positive perception on using blogger as e-portfolios in project-based learning in English Evaluation Course in the sixth indicator of opportunities and barriers of openness in e-portfolio.

The students believed that the e-portfolio had a favorable impact on their English evaluation course. The findings showed that majority of the students believe that e-portfolio encourages students' collaboration and sharing their tasks in students' blog and e-portfolio can empower learning. This finding is consistent with the previous studies. Hung (2012) discovered that e-portfolios created favorable washback. Buyarski et al. (2017) found that e-portfolio more accurate approach to assess students learning, create connections, and more purposefully integrate their learning. It has the potential to develop graduates who are self-directed learners and independent thinkers. E-Portfolio is acknowledged as a high-impact practice and is extensively used in higher education (Batson et al., 2017). According to Alawdat (2014), Chye et al. (2013), Koraneekij & Khlaisang (2015), and others, using an e-portfolio can help students reflect more on their learning process over time, engage in self-evaluation, and progress as learners.

*Table 7. The seventh indicator of students' affordances of blogs in e-portfolio*

No	Questions	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	Neutral %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %
18	E-portfolio creates chronological diary for individual student	55	30	4	5	6

19	E-portfolio stimulates the ease of use and development of digital competence.	41	49	4	6	0
20	Students can encourage language awareness and complex sentences by doing carefully tasks in the web blog as the evidences of their task records.	20	67	6	7	0
Main score		38.6	48.6	4.6	6	2

It could be seen that the average of 27 students responded from statements 18,19 & 20 with the mean score strongly agree was 38.6%, agree was 48.6%, neutral was 4.6 %, disagree was 6 % and strongly disagree was 0. It means that students had a positive perception on using blogger as e-portfolios in project-based learning in English Evaluation course in the sixth indicator of students' affordances of blogs in e-portfolio.

The finding showed that majority of the students believe that e-portfolio stimulates the ease of use and development of digital competence and students can encourage language awareness and complex sentences by doing tasks carefully in the web blog as the evidences of their task records. This finding is consistent with the previous studies. Electronic Portfolio Assessment (e-portfolio) is evaluation based on assessment procedure for learning, which the students' work are collected digitally (Ramlawati et al, 2014). According to Alawdat (2014), Chye et al. (2013), Koraneekij & Khlaisang (2015), and others, using an e-portfolio can help students reflect more on their learning process over time, engage in self-evaluation, and progress as learners. So, with the use of bloggers as e-portfolios, students could improve their language awareness and produce complex sentences as their progress after they learned from their records.

## Conclusion

The study's findings revealed that majority of the students had a positive view of the implementation of PjBL using Blogger as an e-portfolio. The majority of the students agreed that they were inspired to cooperate, communicate with their instructor and peers, had good time management skills, and used the blogosphere to boost their creativity and problem-solving skills. This research also presents a new perspective on how collaborating PjBL, e-Portfolio, and bloggers might produce a learning process that is student-centered, constructivist, and authentic.

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## **Omani students & their teachers' attitudes towards EFL Academic Writing between foundation programs and post foundation courses: A bridge or a gap?**

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### **Abstract**

*This study investigates the situation of academic writing taught at foundation programs in colleges and universities in the Sultanate of Oman. The study focused on probing the views and perceptions of students and their teachers about the academic writing skills of the first-year students and the teaching materials in relation to preparing them for higher education courses that require academic writing tasks. In addition, the study aimed to gain insights into the students' experiences of the writing taught at foundation programs and how it helps shape their academic skills. Also, the teachers' lived experiences of the situation were considered. The study used three data collection instruments: questionnaires constructed for both students and teachers, semi-structured interviews with teachers, and document analysis. A total of 80 students and about 49 teachers participated in answering the questionnaires. Sixteen interviews were conducted with teachers and heads of departments from the foundation and higher education. A sample of 15 students' writing papers was used in the document analysis. The results showed the need for further enhancements in the academic writing taught to foundation students. The thesis ends by suggesting some practical teaching implications based on the findings of this study.*

### **1. Introduction**

In a world where knowledge is power, research has become a necessity as these are essential sources of knowledge. Each field of specialization – be it engineering, medicine, commerce, trade or industry, conducts research for advancement. The academic community has become the nucleus for creating a culture of research. Such culture begins in the pre-college years of students through the teaching of academic writing. This module forms part of the curriculum in the foundation and post-foundation programs. This leads us to the primary aims of this research, which are focused on an investigation of whether the academic writing taught in foundation programs is sufficient to prepare students for the demands and requirements of higher education programs. Along this line, the study will find out the writing proficiency level of students as well as their inadequacies in Academic Writing as they exit foundation programs and join specialization courses at the colleges and universities in the Sultanate of Oman. This study hopes to propose ways by which those inadequacies could be supplemented.

This study attempted to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: To what degree have the exit level Foundation program students achieved academic writing skills?

RQ2: What is the perception of Foundation/ Post Foundation teachers regarding Omani students' academic writing skills?

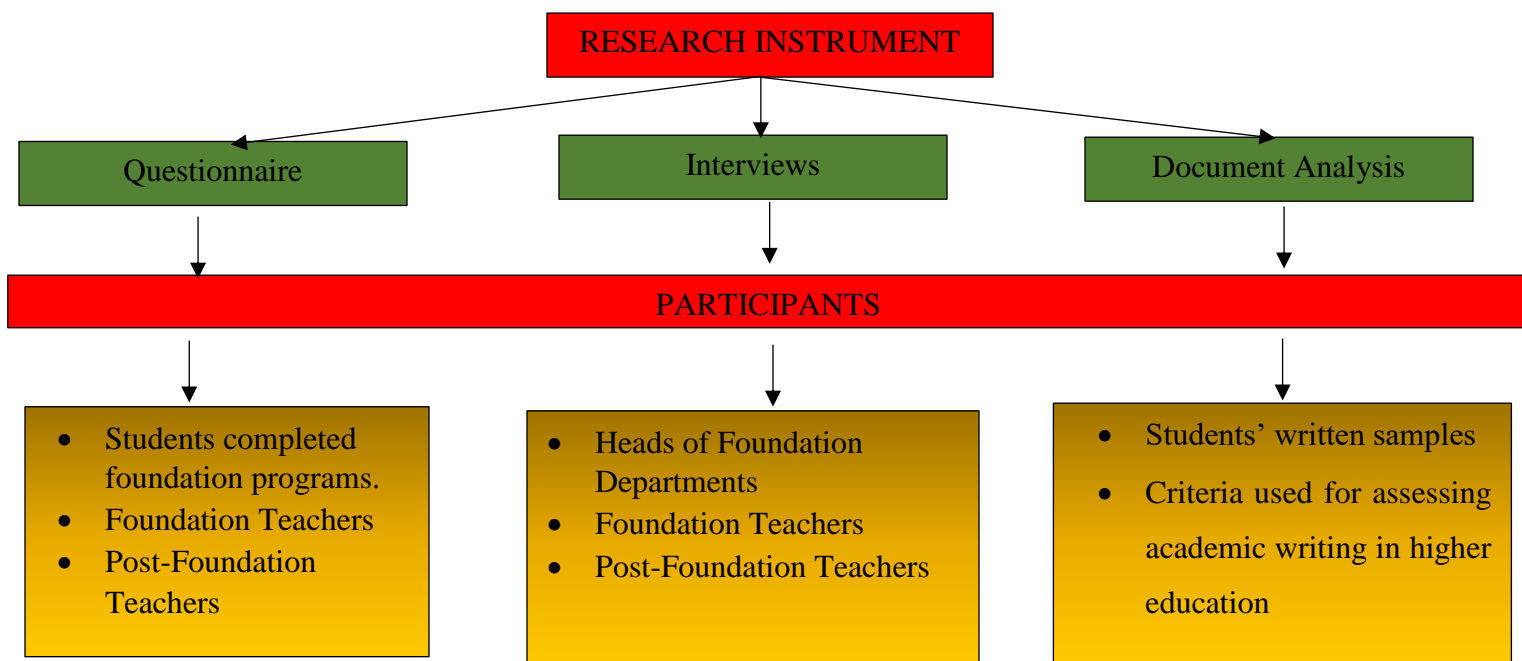
## **2 The Context of the Study**

This research is basically a *Needs Analysis type*, in which the context focuses on finding out if academic writing skills taught in the foundation programs are sufficient through the perception of teachers and learners. (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998) expressed that students can't go through their college or university lives without producing essays, summaries, critical reviews, and research papers. This is also evident in the context of Foundation programs and higher education studies in Oman. The study further aims to examine specific writing components perceived by teachers and students as "bridges and gaps" in an attempt to offer alternative approaches towards more robust academic writing output by students. This study is conducted with the purpose of investigating the level of Academic Writing skills of students exiting the Foundation program. Moreover, the study aims to investigate if the academic writing taught in foundation programs is adequate to prepare students for the demands and requirements of degree courses. It will also explore how academic writing is perceived by a purposeful sample of the Omani Foundation. For further validation, students' perceptions shall be triangulated with the perceptions of foundation and post-foundation teachers, along with the heads of the department. Finally, this study will explore the components of academic writing that are perceived as gaps and suggest ways in which they can be bridged. Such components include grammatical range and accuracy, lexical resource, coherence and cohesion, and task accomplishments, along with research skills components to include summarizing, paraphrasing, outlining, note-taking and referencing.

## **3 Methodology**

The methodology used in this study is designed to achieve the aim of finding out if the academic writing taught in foundation programs is sufficient to prepare students for higher education courses. The study followed a mixed-methods research design in collecting data. Qualitative and quantitative methods were used to find out more than mere statistics, as the topic investigated deals with perceptions and attitudes of people, which might make it better for the research to gather data with explanations and expressions of thoughts from the target samples. Creswell (2013) stressed that the quantitative and qualitative research paradigms can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the investigated problem. Thus, the interpretation of the data would be more thorough due to the use of both models in the data collection stage.

The diagram below shows a comprehensive picture of the research design:



#### 4. Findings & Discussion

##### *First Research Question*

**RQ1:** To what extent have the exit-level Foundation program students achieved academic writing skills?

To answer this question, a questionnaire was distributed to students who have completed foundation programs in different colleges and universities in the sultanate to gather information about their academic writing skills achievement considering the main categories involved in answering the research questions of this study. The questionnaire was sent to different colleges and universities to be distributed electronically to their students via emails and other social media platforms. Eighty students participated in the survey. The average age of respondents was between 18 and 21 years old, and this is the actual age of students studying in foundation programs in the Sultanate of Oman as they leave secondary schools at the age of 18. The respondents to the questionnaire were from different colleges and universities around the country. Table 1 shows the numbers of respondents and the names of colleges and universities:

**Table 1:** *The Number of Students in each College / University*

<i>N</i>	<i>College / University</i>	<i>participants</i>
1	Majan University College	1
2	University of Technology and Applied Sciences	13

3	College of Banking and Financial Studies	3
4	International College of Engineering and Management	47
5	Sultan Qaboos University	6
6	Oman College of Health Science	3
7	Military Technological College	1
8	Sohar University	1
9	Saham Vocational College	3

The data collected via the questionnaire for students was tabulated and interpreted. The frequency and percentage of each item were calculated. In answering the second question, it should be mentioned that most respondents possess IELTS band score descriptions ranging from 2 to 5, which reflect the evaluation of their level of writing in terms of academic writing skills components (grammar range and accuracy, lexical resource, coherence and cohesion, and task response) after completing the foundation programs. The results showed that the majority of students are not achieving the full academic writing skills needed when leaving foundation programs. (Refer to the full analysis of the questionnaire.)

### **Second Research Question**

**RQ2:** What is the perception of Foundation and Post-Foundation teachers regarding Omani students' academic writing skills?

The second research question aims to examine the perception of teachers regarding Omani students' academic writing skills. Teachers play a significant role in teaching students the required writing skills to enter higher education. Therefore, a questionnaire version was administered to answer this question and obtain teachers' voices on this issue. This questionnaire consisted of two parts:

Part A: Background information

Part B: What is your perception of students' Academic Writing Skills as they progress to Higher Education?

In part B, which is in a five-point Likert scale format (1. Few students, 2. Some students, 3. More students, 4. Most students, 5. All students), teachers were required to provide an estimation of the number of students that may fall under the following categories: This questionnaire, similar to the students' questionnaire, shows the teachers' perception of the students' progress in the Foundation Program: Academic Writing.

### **Semi-Structured Interviews**

One of the data collection instruments of this research is conducting semi-structured interviews with some teachers who are teaching at foundation programs and post-foundation programs.

(Flick, 2009) stressed that ‘semi-structured interviews are valuable because they allow researchers to explore subjective viewpoints and gather in-depth accounts of people’s experiences.’ Thus, the purpose of using this instrument is to find out more about the topic from the teachers’ perspectives. Sixteen interviews were conducted in different places, and quite a majority of them were conducted online due to the restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic. The teachers interviewed were from various colleges and universities around the country. They are from different nationalities, and their teaching experiences ranged from 3 years to about 32 years. In order to get a clear picture of the topic investigated by these interviews, thematic analysis was used to analyze the data coming from teachers. Three main themes are distributed according to the opinions and lived experiences of the interviewed teachers.

### **Preparation of Foundation Students for Higher Education**

The most repeated topic in all interviews was the role of the writing materials taught in foundation programs in preparing students for higher education requirements. Many teachers agreed that there is insufficient preparation for students due to many reasons, such as the time frame of foundation programmes. One teacher commented that ‘targeting 5.0 IELTS in one year for weak-ability students is unrealistic and not theoretically applicable in an EFL context. Adding that ‘we are focusing on quantity rather than quality to finish the course syllabus, other teachers confirmed that preparing students for post- foundation writing level requires more time and effort. For now, we are preparing students to write a number of essays in different writing styles as suggested by GFP standards. Other teachers pointed to the limited class time where students are supposed to practice their writing as one main cause of the lack of good graduates ready to tackle higher education tasks. A teacher has another opinion in this saying that students who go from level 1 to level 4 have enough preparation because they have been supported from writing paragraphs to writing a full essay. So, foundation programs help in making students ready and equipped with the necessary knowledge of writing.

### **Writing Context in Foundation and Higher Education**

The context theme was important to teachers as they think it is the main key to understanding the dilemma of mastering good writing skills by foundation students. Some teachers who are teaching in higher education pointed out that they are getting quite strong and smart students, but they still suffer in writing. For example, a student can write a very good lab report with all required observations; however, the unclear writing may cost them marks. ‘Due to the nature of our engineering courses, students need to have a good introduction to such contexts,’ added a teacher from higher education. Other teachers said that he is focusing more on the content than the writing because students' work is badly affected by their writing. English teachers at foundation programmes also share the same concerns regarding the contexts taught in the foundation year. The majority of them refer to the nature of general English topics being taught to students. Such IELTS materials and other easy general topics will not lead to competent students for higher education studies, commented a teacher. The head of the foundation programme called for early intervention strategies to make learning more effective. He suggested ongoing reflection and feedback and getting similar context topics for students’ future programmes. Another English teacher calls on higher education institutions to step away from using GFP standards as their guide in designing their curriculum if they want to change.

## **Teachers' Suggestions for Improvement**

The interviewed teachers came up with some ideas and suggestions to improve the situation of foundation students writing. Some suggested minor changes and additions, while others called for dramatic reform in the writing teaching and curriculum adopted in foundation programmes. Many teachers supported the idea of teaching English for special purposes (ESP) to foundation students. 'Students need ESP more than general academic writing' a teacher from higher education commented. An English teacher added that 'Adding writing for specific purposes is the best way to go'. A teacher suggested that benchmarking would help in finding best practices and developing foundation programmes curriculum to suit higher education requirements. Moreover, other teachers believed that establishing committees between foundation teachers and higher education faculty members would better understand the students' needs to excel and improve their writing. Some gave examples of how they adapt this idea at their institutions and how they benefit from such collaboration. Finally, higher education teachers suggested having writing courses for students along with their higher education subjects. 'Writing courses should be part of the bachelor's degree plan' commented a teacher. Integrating writing courses with other skills such as reading or listening was another idea proposed by some teachers that supported their notion that writing is a productive skill that might be difficult to teach alone. A foundation writing magazine and a writing center were also teachers' ideas to encourage learners to practice and enhance their writing skills.

## **5. Recommendations**

Results generated from this research speak loud and clear about the current status of students foundational academic writing. From the results gathered from the questionnaires, interviews, and document analysis, it is safe to conclude that many exiting foundation students are NOT well-prepared to handle the academic writing tasks in higher education. The inadequacy may stem from the entire system of education in Oman. The implications that will be discussed here are the result of the writer's first-hand observation and experience, having been in the Oman academe for so many years as a teacher at Foundation programmes. From the Foundation programme level, students entering the program with an IELTS band 4 level may be able to step up to band five after finishing a year of the Foundation programme. However, many students enter the program with a much lower IELTS band level. For these students, it is quite unrealistic to step up to band five after one year. Still, many of them are allowed to proceed to specialization courses. (Abdad, 1988) expressed that most Arab universities accept students to pursue a college degree despite their weakness in the English language. This is quite observable, especially among private colleges and universities. Oman is not excluded from this contention. Some factors that contribute to the above scenario may include business factors and culture. The income of private colleges and universities is dependent on the number of students. The more students, the better the profit. Because of this, private colleges and universities have the tendency to emphasize quantity rather than quality; thus, standards suffer.

Another important issue is that most institutions need to develop their foundation curriculum as per the real needs of the students inside their educational entities, not as per the requirements of accreditation authorities only. Institutions that follow the minimum accreditation requirements will



not address issues that appear to be of a special nature in local contexts. With the factors mentioned above, it is hoped that the active participation of accrediting agencies such as *Oman Academic Standards for General Foundation Programmes (OAS-GFP)* and the Oman Accreditation Council (OAS) together with the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation can address the issue, as changes have to come from higher authorities. More interviews with teachers will lead to more ideas and suggestions from people in the field. Also, interviewing officials from different authorities would give the discussion an added value as it will consider all stakeholders. This research showed the concerns and recommendations of teachers from both foundation and higher education; however, students' participation was only limited to answering questions on the questionnaire. In addition, the IELTS band mark scoring considers the four macro skills, which are speaking, listening, reading and writing. In this study only writing skills are considered. Any further future study needs to take the above points into consideration when conducting similar research in order to reach deeper inferences that help in better understanding the investigated issue.

## **6. Conclusion**

The current study has dealt with a quite important issue that touches on the quality of foundation programmes in the Sultanate of Oman. The concern about teaching writing at these programmes and the quality of its alumni has been an issue for a long time. This research addressed the concern by asking legitimate questions to be answered using three effective data collection instruments. The first tool was the use of questionnaires, which were distributed to both parties, students and teachers, to get their perceptions on the investigated topic. Semi-structured interviews were the second instrument used in gathering teachers' ideas and lived experiences. The other tool was the document analysis of some samples from foundation students' work. Their samples were marked again and evaluated via appropriate rubrics in order to draw solid conclusions regarding the students writing abilities. These tools led to a great deal of discussion and inferences that were shown in detailed analysis in the results chapter of this research. Teaching implications were generated based on the research findings as well as some recommendations for further research.

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*Note: See Appendices-III for Questionnaire and other related documents*

## Appendices - I

### Appendix A: Information sheet



School of  
Education and English Language

### Information Sheet

Dear participants:

I am Khaloud Al Sadrani, an MA student in the field of Applied Linguistics at Majan College which has a partnership with University of Bedfordshire, UK. My project is about *Exploring factors affecting students' writing performance while studying on the foundation program at Vocational colleges in Oman*.

Writing and learning to write has always been one of the most complex language skills. There is no doubt that writing is the most difficult skills for Foreign and second language learners to master. The study is aimed to find out: (1) difficulties of writing, (2) the factors behind these difficulties and (3) suggestions to overcome these difficulties.

Please note that your participation is voluntary. You have also the freedom to withdraw whenever you feel uncomfortable. The researcher will maintain total confidentiality of your responses, and your data will be anonymous without any indication of your personal identity. All the data will be deleted after getting my grade. Your participation will help us to explore the factors affecting students' writing performance and your suggestions will help us to overcome these difficulties.

For further information please contact me: [khaloud.alsadrani@study.beds.ac.uk](mailto:khaloud.alsadrani@study.beds.ac.uk). You can also contact Dr. Andrew Davidson: [andrew.davidson@beds.ac.uk](mailto:andrew.davidson@beds.ac.uk).

Regards

Khaloud Al Sadraani

Date: 2/4/2021

# Appendix B: Information sheet



## CONSENT FORM

**Project Title** : *Exploring factors affecting students' writing performance while studying on the foundation program at Vocational colleges in Oman*  
**Researcher's name** : Khaloud Al Sadrani  
**Contact details** : khaloud. alsadrani@study.beds.ac.uk

I confirm that every aspects of my assignment follows the BAAL ethical guidelines.

## Brief description

You are invited to participate in a focus group interview by Microsoft Teams platform entitled "*Exploring factors affecting students' writing performance while studying on the foundation program at Vocational colleges in Oman*". Exploring this issue stem from a personal interest in the field of education and motivated by my experience where it witnessed that many students face serious problems in writing. The current study is aimed to find out: (1) writing difficulties, (2) the factors behind these writing difficulties and (3) suggestions to overcome these difficulties. Your participation will help us to explore the factors affecting students' writing performance and your suggestions will help us to overcome these difficulties. Data will be used to accomplish this study, however; other personal information will be anonymous.

I confirm the following...

**Please tick box**

- |  |                          |
|--|--------------------------|
| 1. I have read and understand the accompanying information sheet.                          | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. I have had the opportunity to ask questions.  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. I know that my involvement is voluntary and that I can withdraw my consent at any time. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. I agree to be included in this study.   | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**Yes      No**

- |  |                          |                          |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 5. I agree to being audio recorded.                              | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. I agree to being video recorded.                              | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. I agree to being quoted anonymously in the report document(s) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

\_\_\_\_\_  
Initials of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Place

## Appendix C: Questionnaire questions

**Difficulties in Writing Skills Questionnaire – Bilingual Version**

Dear Participant

You are invited to participate in a web-based online survey entitled “Exploring factors affecting students’ writing performance while studying on the foundation program at Vocational colleges in Oman”. Your participation is voluntary. You also have the freedom to withdraw whenever you feel uncomfortable. The researcher will maintain total confidentiality of your responses, and your data will be anonymous without any indication of your personal identity. Your response will help us to learn more about your difficulties in writing. If you have any questions , please contact Ms. Khaloud Al Sadrani, Department of English, Saham Vocational College : [Khaloud.alsadrani@study.beds.ac.uk](mailto:Khaloud.alsadrani@study.beds.ac.uk).

After reading each statement, Tick (√) to respond to each statement as it relates to you. There is no right or wrong answers for the items in the questionnaire. Your participation in this survey is an indication of your agreement. This survey should take approximately 5 minutes to complete. Thank you in advance for participation.

عزيزي المشارك

أنت مدعو للمشاركة في استطلاع عبر الإنترنت بعنوان "استكشاف العوامل التي تثر على أداء الكتابة لدى الطلاب أثناء الدراسة في البرنامج التأسيسي في الكليات المهنية في عمان". مشاركتك تطوعية. لديك أيضًا حرية الانسحاب متى شعرت بعدم الارتياح ، وسيحفظ الباحث على السرية اقامة لردودك ، وستكون بيفتك مجهولة دون أي إشارة إلى هويتك الشخصية. سيساعدنا ردك في معرفة المزيد عن الصعوبات التي تواجهها في الكتابة. إذا كان لديك أي أسئلة ، فيرجى الاتصال بالسيدة خالد السدراني ، قسم اللغة الإنجليزية ، كلية صحم المهنية: [Khaloud.alsadrani@study.beds.ac.uk](mailto:Khaloud.alsadrani@study.beds.ac.uk).

بعد قراءة كل عبارة ، ضع علامة (√) للرد على كل عبارة تتعلق بك. لا توجد إجابات صحيحة أو خاطئة للعناصر الواردة في الاستبيان. مشاركتك في هذا الاستطلاع هي إشارة إلى موافقتك. من المقترض أن يستغرق استكمال هذا الاستطلاع حوالي 5 دقائق. شكرًا لك مقدما على المشاركة

### Section One:

<p>1. What is your gender? ما هو جنسك؟</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A. Male ذكر <input type="radio"/> B. Female أنثى</p>	<p>2. What is your age? ما هو عمرك؟</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A. 15- 20 <input type="radio"/> B. 20 -25 <input type="radio"/> C. 25+</p>
<p>3. Which level are you in foundation program? ما هو المستوى الذي تدرسه في البرنامج التأسيسي؟</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A. One <input type="radio"/> C. Two <input type="radio"/> B. Three <input type="radio"/> D. Four</p>	<p>4. In relation to your performance how do you rate your level in English writing for this semester? فيما يتعلق بأدائك ، كيف تقيم مستواك في الكتابة باللغة الإنجليزية لهذا الفصل الدراسي؟</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A. Good جيد <input type="radio"/> B. Average متوسط <input type="radio"/> C. poor ضعيف <input type="radio"/> D. Satisfactory مرض <input type="radio"/> E. I don't know لا أعرف</p>

<b>Section Two:</b>		<b>Strongly Agree</b> موافق بشدة (5)	<b>Agree</b> موافق (4)	<b>Undecided</b> محايد (3)	<b>Disagree</b> لا أوافق (2)	<b>Strongly Disagree</b> لا أوافق بشدة (1)
<b>Content \ ideas</b>						
1	One of my problems is lack of ideas about the topics that are given to write. إحدى مشاكلي هي عدم وجود أفكار حول الموضوعات التي يتم إعطاؤها للكتابة.					
2	I have difficulty in writing because I am not familiar with the topic. أجد صعوبة في الكتابة لأنني لست على دراية بالموضوع.					
3	I feel overwhelmed when writing because I don't know how to develop my ideas. أعرف كيف أطور أفكارى أشعر بالإرهاق عند الكتابة لأنني لا.					
4	It is difficult for me to write supporting sentences. يصعب علي كتابة جمل داعمة مع تفاصيل عن المواضيع المطلوبة					
<b>Organization</b>						
5	I face problems in connecting one paragraph with the other. أواجه مشاكل في الربط بين فقرة وأخرى					
6	I have difficulty in organizing my ideas while writing a task. أجد صعوبة في تنظيم أفكارى عند الكتابة.					
7	I have difficulty in making outline before writing. أجد صعوبة في تلخيص النقاط التي أريد تضمينها قبل البدء في الكتابة.					
<b>Vocabulary</b>						
8	By using the simple words in writing make me more confident. إن استخدام الكلمات البسيطة في الكتابة يجعلني أكثر ثقة					
9	Lack of vocabularies make me confused in writing. قلة الكلمات في ذهني تجعلني أشعر بالإرباك في الكتابة					
10	I have difficulty in choosing appropriate vocabulary for different writing genre. أجد صعوبة في اختيار المفردات المناسبة لمختلف أنواع الكتابة.					
<b>Spelling</b>						
11	I face problem to write spelling of the word that is new to me. أجد صعوبة في التدقيق الإملائي للكلمات الجديدة					
12	I get poor grades in writing because of spelling mistakes. أحصل على درجات ضعيفة في الكتابة بسبب الأخطاء الإملائية.					
13	Checking spelling of words take long time for me. التدقيق الإملائي للكلمات يستغرق وقتاً طويلاً بالنسبة لي					
14	If my teacher marks on my spelling errors, I have difficulty to know the correct spelling of that words. إذا قام أستاذي بوضع علامة على الأخطاء الإملائية ، فأنا أجد صعوبة في معرفة التهجئة الصحيحة لتلك الكلمات					
<b>Grammar , sentence structure</b>						
15	My problem in writing is to put the correct tenses which appropriate to the event. مشكلتي في الكتابة هي وضع فعل الأزمنة الصحيحة للحدث المراد كتابته.					
16	Having poor grammar make my writing not so good. ضعف القواعد النحوية يجعل كتابتي ليست جيدة					
17	One of my difficulties in writing is producing a sentence fragment. إحدى الصعوبات في الكتابة هي إنتاج جملة غير مكتملة.					
18	I have difficulty in selecting the appropriate article ( a , an , the) before the nouns . عندما أكتب ، أجد صعوبة في اختيار أدوات النكرة او المعرفة قبل الأسماء . ( an , a , the)					
19	I commit errors in using correct prepositions ( on , in , at, of, etc.) in my writing. لدي أخطاء في استخدام حرف الجر الصحيح في كتابتي.					

- You may be selected for an interview with the researcher Ms. Khaloud. An English teacher from Saham Vocational Colleges. If you agree, please put down your College email ID to contact you. Your contact information will be confidential .

قد يتم اختيارك لمقابلة مع الباحثة السيدة خلود . مدرس لغة انجليزية من صحم الكليات المهنية. إذا كنت توافق ، فيرجى كتابة معرف البريد الإلكتروني الخاص بالجامعة للاتصال بك ستكون معلومات الاتصال الخاصة بك سرية  
College email address: \_\_\_\_\_



**Appendix E: Writing rubric**

Vocational Education Diploma Program  
English Foundation Program  
2014-2015

**Level 3: Marking criteria for Writing Question 2 (13 marks)**

Content/Ideas	0.5-1	1.5-2	2.5 - 3	3.5-4	Marks
	No central theme. Writing is a collection of unrelated sentences. Word count is below 100.	Ideas are somewhat organized, but not very clear. Length is not adequate for development. Word count is between 110 and 130.	Writing is purposeful and focused. It contains some details. Word count is between 131 and 150	Writing is clearly focused. Ideas are well-supported and developed. Word count is around 175.	4
Organization	0.5	1-1.5	2	2.5-3	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No clear topic and concluding sentence. No signal words. No logical sequence of ideas.</li> <li><b>In essays:</b> Writing is disorganized and underdeveloped with no clear introduction, thesis statement, and conclusion. No transitions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Writing provides topic/ concluding sentence. Limited use of signal words. Weak sequence of ideas.</li> <li><b>In essays:</b> Writing provides weak and underdeveloped introduction, thesis statement, and conclusion. Limited use of transitions. Weak sequence of ideas. Ineffective supporting paragraphs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Writing provides topic and concluding sentences. Developed use of signal words. Adequate sequence of ideas.</li> <li><b>In essays:</b> Writing provides adequate introduction, thesis statement, and conclusion. Developed use of transitions. Adequate sequence of ideas.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Effective topic and concluding sentences. Strong use of signal words. Clear and logical sequence of ideas.</li> <li><b>In essays:</b> Writing includes effective introduction, thesis statement, and conclusion. Effective use of transitions. Logical sequence of ideas.</li> </ul>	3
Vocabulary, Spelling	0.5	1- 1.5	2	2.5-3	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited and inaccurate word choice.</li> <li>Many spelling errors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shows some use of varied word choice.</li> <li>Some spelling errors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Purposeful variety of word choice. Use of some specific vocabulary.</li> <li>A few spelling errors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Effective and engaging use of word choice.</li> <li>Very few/no spelling errors.</li> </ul>	3
Grammar and Sentence Structure	0.5	1-1.5	2	2.5-3	
	Many errors in word forms, tenses, articles, prepositions, and pronouns. Lack of subject verb agreement. Evidence of Sentence fragments.	Some errors in word forms, tenses, articles, prepositions, and pronouns. Limited variety of sentence structure.	Few errors in word forms, tenses, articles, prepositions, and pronouns. Adequate variety of sentence structure.	Very few/no errors in word forms, tenses, articles, prepositions, and pronouns. Frequent variety of simple, compound, and complex sentences	3
					<b>Total : 13</b>

Give a zero if:

the student has not written anything.

the student has just copied the text from the question paper or if the text is irrelevant to the topic given.

## Appendix F: Interview questions

### **Interview Questions**

The interview intended to answer the following questions:

1. What are the factors affecting students' writing performance while studying on the foundation program at Vocational colleges in Oman?
2. What should be done to improve students' writing performance at Vocational Colleges in Oman?

### **Focus group Interview: Teachers**

1. How long have you been teaching?
2. As a teacher, are you satisfied with the quality of your students' writing?
3. What makes you to be satisfied or dissatisfied? Whom do you praise or blame?
4. What are the factors affecting students' writing performance while studying on the foundation program at Vocational Colleges?
5. What should be done to improve students' writing skills performance?

### **Interview: students**

1. How do you feel about writing? Do you like it?
2. According to the writing in final exam in this semester, do you think you did well? If yes...why? If no...why?
3. Are you satisfied with the writing sessions conducted by your English teacher? If yes...why? If no...why?
4. Are you satisfied with the study materials used in writing classes?
5. Do you think that teacher's feedback about your writing performance is effective and sufficient? If yes... why? If no...why?
6. The questionnaire revealed your writing difficulties. What are the causes behind your writing difficulties?
7. What should be done to improve your writing in English?



**Appendix H: Writing learning outcomes**

Level One WRITING SKILLS	LOs to be taught by
1. Use the following punctuation conventions: capital and small letters, full stop, comma and question mark and apostrophe.	Quiz 1 Weeks 1-3 <u>LOs (1-2)</u>
2. Form correct words from scrambled letters. (Include days, months, numbers, colours, names of vegetables and fruits ... etc.	
3. Form correct sentence structures (SVO) and (SVC) from scrambled words.	MTE Weeks (1-7) <u>LOs 1-6</u>
4. Construct sentences using linking words (and, but, because, or, so...etc.)	
5.Reorder sentences to form a short coherent paragraph.	
6. Write a descriptive paragraph (50- 100 words) about a person (oneself, family members, friends, teachers ...etc.)	
7. Write a descriptive paragraph (50 - 100 words) about a place: rooms exp. (a bedroom, a classroom, a house, a kitchen ...etc.) (using 'There is/ There are' and prepositions of place).	Quiz 2 Weeks 1-10 <u>LOs (1-7)</u>
8. Write a descriptive paragraph (50 - 100 words) about scenes using 'There is/ There are', prepositions of place and present continuous tense.	LEE Weeks 1-12 <u>LOs (1-8)</u>
<b>Weeks 13 and 14 are for LEE and Results Declaration</b>	

Level Two WRITING SKILLS	LOs to be taught by
1. Revise writing compound sentences using linking words correctly (and, but, because, so, or... etc.)	Quiz 1 Weeks 1-3 <u>LOs (1-2)</u>
2. Write a descriptive paragraph (100-150) about activities and routines (daily, weekly and weekend ...etc.	
3. Write a descriptive paragraph (100-150) about places (villages/ towns/neighbourhood/ cities and countries ...etc.)	MTE Weeks 1-7 <u>LOs (1-4)</u>
4. Write a narrative paragraph of (100-150) words on a biography of a person.	
5. Write a paragraph on past events (last night/ vacation, party, memorable or best day ..etc. of about (100-150) words.	Quiz 2 Weeks 1-10 <u>LOs (1-5)</u>
6. Write a set of sequenced instructions on how to use simple tools and instruments (e.g. fire extinguisher.)*	LEE Weeks 1-12

<b>7. Write a set of multi stage instructions on how to operate or use things (instructions can be bulleted numbered or presented in a paragraph format).</b>	<b><u>LOs (1-7)</u></b>
<b>Weeks 13 and 14 are for LEE and Result Declaration</b>	

Level Three Writing Learning Outcomes	Covered by
<b>1. Demonstrate the ability to outline and write an essay of (100-200) words with an introductory paragraph (including a thesis statement), body paragraphs (including topic sentences and supporting sentences) and a concluding paragraph.</b>	<b>Quiz 1 Weeks 1-3 <u>LOs (1-2)</u></b>
<b>2. Write a <u>narrative essay</u> of(100-200) words with an introductory paragraph (including a thesis statement), body paragraphs (including topic sentences and supporting sentences) and a concluding paragraph.(e.g. story, an important events ...etc.)</b>	
<b>3. Write a <u>classification essay</u> of (100-200) words with an introductory paragraph (including thesis statement), body paragraph (including topic sentences and supporting sentences) and a concluding paragraph.</b>	<b>MTE Weeks 1-7 <u>LOs (1-3)</u></b>
<b>4. Write a <u>descriptive essay</u> of (100-200) words with an introductory paragraph (including a thesis statement), body paragraphs (including topic sentences and supporting sentences) and a concluding paragraph describing graphs, charts and diagrams.</b>	<b>Quiz 2 Weeks 1-10 <u>LOs (1-4)</u></b>
<b>5. Write a <u>Compare and contrast essay</u> of (100-200) words with an introductory paragraph (including a thesis statement), body paragraphs (including topic sentences and supporting sentences) and a concluding paragraph, e.g. <u>(compare and contrast two places, cities, countries, things, situations ..etc.</u></b>	<b>LEE Weeks 1-12 <u>LOs (1-5)</u></b>
<b>Weeks 13 and 14 are for LEE and Result Declaration</b>	

<b>Level Four WRITING SKILLS</b>	
<b>1. Write a cause and effect essay of a (minimum 100- 250) words with an introductory paragraph (including thesis statement), body paragraphs (with a topic sentences and supporting sentences) and a concluding paragraph.</b>	<b>Quiz 1 Weeks 1-3 <u>LOs (1)</u></b>
<b>2. Write a problem/solution essay a (minimum 100- 250) words with an introductory paragraph (including a thesis statement), body paragraphs (including topic sentences and supporting sentences) and a concluding paragraph.</b>	<b>MTE Weeks 1-7 <u>LOs (1-2)</u></b>
<b>3. Write an argumentative essay a (minimum 100- 250) word with an introductory paragraph (including thesis statement), body paragraphs (including topic sentences and supporting sentences) and a concluding paragraph.</b>	<b>Quiz 2 Weeks 1-10 <u>LOs (1-3)</u></b>
<b>4. Write an interpretation of graphs, charts and location maps and comparing and contrasting if required</b>	<b>LEE Weeks 1-12 <u>LOs (1-4)</u></b>
<b>Weeks 13 and 14 are for LEE and Result Declaration</b>	

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## Appendices - II

### Appendix A

#### Task Directions

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#### Listening activity: aiming at awareness and fluency

Graciela Martinez

This is an obligatory listening activity which we'll be carrying out all along this second part of the year in order to raise awareness of connected speech features and in that way, improve fluency.

This is what you need to do:

1. Listen to any podcasts (in English of course) that you like.
2. Choose one
3. Complete the description below:
  1. link
  2. topic
  3. why I like it (it may have to do with topic or pronunciation features)
4. Post it in our class forum and identify and comment on the connected speech features we're dealing with in class.
5. You can also comment on your classmates' podcasts
6. It's compulsory to post at least 2 interventions a month. Feel free to add more

Possible sources: (go for advanced level or native level)

<http://https://podcastsinenglish.com/>

<http://englishconversations.org/>

<https://teacherluke.co.uk/>

I'm sure you can come up with many more!!

This is meant to be a twofold activity: listening practice + pleasure

Looking forward to your posts!!

Ms M





## Appendix C

### Teachers' Feedback and Feedforward

because/ the opposite of addiction/ is not sobriety/ the opposite of addiction / is connection

responder a intervención ▲

 Graciela Martinez - 03/11/2020 12:03

What a powerful talk!!!

check tonality here:

has to be at every level of how we respond to addicts

very well done!!!

responder a intervención

5.12 Two in

**Assimilation /d/**

5.10 Could combine (d+k= g)

responder a intervención ▲

 Graciela Martinez - 27/10/2020 11:20

Tamara

Congrats! Such tidy work!! very useful

The answer to your queries is YES to all of them.

Excellent work!

responder a intervención

#### **Twining:**

- 0:41 "what tips"

#### **Asimilation:**

- 4:26 "thank goodness"
- 4:31 "asked you"
- 6:00 "reminded you"

responder a intervención ▲

 Graciela Martinez - 27/10/2020 11:38

Agustina,

Very interesting audio. When I opened the link, it came with subtitles. Avoid subtitles when you're doing listening comprehension. It won't help as eyes are more powerful than ears, in this area.

good examples of connected speech features.

spelling: careful with <elision>, only one <s> and <assimilation> double <s>

Keep going!!!

responder a intervención

Cecilia Mendez - 25/04/2020 22:09

Podcast: Grimm Grimmer Grimmest

Link: <https://open.spotify.com/episode/4vvKDcJ0GORAVXwyERSk3w?si=7qsiYj-rTCC705V9aIVjzw>

Topic: Storytelling - Rumpelstiltskin

I like it because I like reading. In general, I like most of literary genres, including fairy tales. Last year, I used to listen to these kind of podcast for practicing intonation. During the podcast, Adam Gidwitz (author of A Tale of Dark and Grimm) reads Rumpelstiltskin (one of my favourite fairy tales) aloud for primary school students.

In this podcast we can find a narrator, different character voices and the "spontaneous" interaction with children.

Hope you like it!

responder a intervención ▲



Graciela Martinez - 26/04/2020 01:20

Cecilia

I love fairy tales like this. Did you watch the series Once Upon a Time? All the fairy tales interconnected.

Do you think you can download this podcast and share the download? I don't have spotify, I'm afraid, and would like to listen to it. If you can't, no problem. I'll see what I can do.

Thank you

responder a intervención



Macarena Corazza - 05/05/2020 18:44

Hi Cecilia!

I could listen to it and it's amazing!

After you shared it, I found more of them and now I'm really looking forward to use them in class.

The sounds and how they use their voices to give life to the characters is wonderful!

Thanks for sharing such a nice podcast!

responder a intervención



Graciela Martinez - 06/07/2020 21:02

Now we're coming to the end of this term, I'd like to reflect on all we've done, on all YOU've done.

We started feeling uncertain of what was going to happen with us, with our classes. We made mistakes at the beginning and will surely go on making them but, as teachers, we know mistakes are an essential part of learning, so we accepted them and moved forward trying to improve. We felt tired and overwhelmed but managed to reinvent ourselves and move on.

We didn't need anyone to tell us to work harder because we knew from the very first moment that our success depended only on us and on how much we wanted to achieve. Therefore, we set out to learn and we decided to push our boundaries and go for more. In this way, we managed to contact amazing people and found pleasure in doing so and felt happy to share our findings with the rest of the group. We all felt proud of our classmates' achievements and celebrated them. You also came up with wonderful podcasts which taught us more than sounds and phonetics and always tried to contribute to our classes with respect above all.

Let me tell you that I feel very proud of you and want to praise your commitment, effort and dedication in spite of the hard times we're living in. Leaving aside the academic part of the course, I'd like to say we have become stronger as a group of human beings, regardless of our position, and even if we don't see this now, I'm sure there will be moments we will always remember with affection.

"Every cloud has a silver lining" so goes the proverb and I can tell this IS true.

Thank you all! A big hug,

Graciela

responder a intervención ▲

2 intervenciones más ...



MICAELA BELEN ESCALANTE - 07/07/2020 14:57

Thanks Miss, you are an amazing and inspiring teacher. We are lucky to have you as a teacher. :) Regards.

Mica

## Appendix D

### Students' Community



Cintia Barrios - 25/04/2020 18:34

Nomophobia

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p083sccr>

Hi!! While I was searching for a podcast I came across a word that called my attention. So, I clicked on the link and entered. I realized that I know lots of people who are going under this condition, including me. I hope you enjoy it. (It's quite short but I really like it)

responder a intervención ▲



Gabriela Emilce De Merlier - 25/04/2020 22:33

TRUE!!! I HAVE NOMOPHOBIA!!!!

responder a intervención



Cintia Barrios - 27/04/2020 16:27

Jajajaja Yes, I know!!!

responder a intervención



Viviana Trivellin - 29/04/2020 11:22

1. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9LZj3fNVO0Q>
2. How to be confident in any situation? (body language secrets)
3. I found this video and I choose it because I think that we can learn to be more confident in our classes or life itself. Marisa Peer (the speaker) gives you some topic to how to be more confident in different situations...

I hope you enjoy it!

responder a intervención ▲



Graciela Martinez - 29/04/2020 13:56

simply LOVED it!!!

and it's so much in tune with what I always say.

Could you download it for today's class to share it? and also to work on sounds. There are lots of sounds I'd like to point out.

great contribution

responder a intervención



Emilce Díaz - 30/04/2020 23:13

This is interesting, I have to practice some of the tips that the speaker suggests. It is also attracting the pitch of voice, the ups and downs to make the listener think about the way in which speaks.

I enjoy it.

responder a intervención



Florencia Bravo - 27/05/2020 23:58

Link: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_H8r2lzzo5k](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_H8r2lzzo5k)

Topic: "London accents: RP, Cockney and Multicultural London English"

In this video, these youtubers (actually, they are teachers that use YouTube to deliver their lessons and English content, so, maybe in this context we are a bit of youtubers too haha) compare RP, cockney accent and MLE (Multicultural London English). I found it remarkably interesting because they analyzed interesting features of sounds. They read different sentences and then compared them and analyzed the sounds.

Some highlights:

1. The sentence is "I want a bottle of water": In RP, the /t/ sound is pronounced whereas in both cockney and MLE it is dropped. Regarding RP, they mention that the speaker would even change the structure of the sentence because it would be more polite when asking for water. In MLE the sound can be interchangeably dropped for the sake of emphasis, while in cockney the sound will be always pronounced as a glottal /t/.
2. The sentence is "Happy birthday": This really caught my attention because in cockney accent the /h/ is dropped and I had never heard that (I hadn't read about this accent in depth)
3. The sentence is "My mate is really tall": Lia speaks about how the younger generations of RP speakers started dropping the /t/ sound. And they also mention how in RP they pronounce the dark /l/ while both cockney and MLE drop the /l/ sound and seem to change the vowel sound. Apparently, in cockney they would pronounce the words Paul- Pool and Pull with the same vowel sound.
4. The sentence is "I live in south London": Here they focus on the pronunciation of "th". In cockney and MLE accents they pronounce it with a final /f/ sound while in RP Lia produces the /θ/ sound.

I hope you find it interesting as I did! Enjoy!

responder a intervención ▲



Esteban Lopez Mieres - 28/05/2020 00:03

This is great! I asked Inger Mees about MLE during our meeting because of her answer as regards Cockney accent.

responder a intervención



Florencia Bravo - 28/05/2020 00:41

It's very interesting. I think you will like this youtube channel. Take a look ;)



Julieta Saldaño - 02/06/2020 17:32

<https://youtu.be/xrWXsoXuuKs>

Hello everyone! Who loves Emma Watson's accent? I think most of us! This video is mainly based on how Emma speaks using Contemporary RP.

For example: Emma uses the glottal T when she pronounces the word "kittens". The /t/ sound isn't fully pronounced.

In the pronunciation of the words "matter" and "beauty", she pronounces them using the /r/ sound. In this case she is using a bit of American accent.

Emma also has an UPTALK intonation, every time she finishes an idea it goes up at the end when she speaks.

I like it! Hope you too!

responder a intervención ▲



Esteban Lopez Mieres - 02/06/2020 17:51

I love it Juli! That /r/ that you mentioned is a process called alveolar flapping and yes, it's a feature of North American accent. It's also easier to pronounce it that way!

responder a intervención



Julieta Saldaño - 02/06/2020 18:39

Yes much easier! Thank you for your comment Esteban! ;)

responder a intervención



Florencia Bravo - 03/06/2020 00:04

We posted the same video haha. It's very interesting. I love Emma's accent ;)

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## Appendices - III

### Questionnaire samples

#### A. QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS

##### Part A: Background Information

1. Age: .....
2. College or University: .....

Part B. What is the perception about your level of accomplishment in Academic Writing Skills?  
**Please tick the ONE that bests describe your skill in:**

- A. Grammatical range and accuracy

	Item Statement	
1	I <b>can't</b> use sentence forms at all.	
2	I <b>can't</b> use sentence forms except if I memorize them.	
3	I made <b>little attempt</b> to write sentence forms but I make mistakes in grammar that distorts the meaning of what I want to express.	
4	I <b>can write simple sentences</b> with accuracy and some complex sentences with <b>frequent</b> grammatical and punctuation errors.	
5	I <b>can write complex sentences</b> with <b>some</b> grammatical errors that may affect the meaning of my message.	
6	I <b>can accurately use mixed simple and complex sentences</b> with <b>minor errors</b> in grammar and punctuation.	
7	I <b>can accurately</b> use variety of complex sentences with <b>good</b> command of grammar and punctuation.	
8	I <b>can use wide range</b> of sentence structures with <b>very good</b> command of grammar and punctuation.	
9	I <b>can use wide range of sentence</b> structures with <b>excellent</b> command of grammar and punctuation.	

#### B. Lexical Resource

	Item Statement	
1	I can only use <b>few</b> isolated words in English.	
2	I can only use <b>extremely limited</b> number of vocabulary with spelling errors.	
3	I can only use <b>limited</b> number of vocabulary with spelling errors.	

4	I can only use <b>basic vocabulary</b> with limited control of word formation and spelling.	
5	I can use a <b>range of vocabulary</b> that is minimally adequate for a given task, with some errors in spelling.	
6	I can use <b>adequate range</b> of vocabulary for a given task, with minor errors in spelling.	
7	I can use <b>sufficient range</b> of vocabulary for a given task, with very minor errors in spelling.	
8	I can use <b>wide range</b> of vocabulary with fluency and flexibility, with <b>rare</b> spelling mistakes.	
9	I can use a <b>wide range</b> of vocabulary with <b>full control</b> of spelling and word formation.	

### C. Coherence and cohesion

Item Statement		
1	I fail to communicate any message.	
2	I have very little control of organization features.	
3	I do not organize ideas logically due to improper use of cohesive devices.	
4	I present information and ideas but these are not arranged coherently and there is no clear progression in the response.	
5	I present information with some organization but make inadequate and inaccurate devices.	
6	I arrange information and ideas coherently with the use of effective cohesive devices.	
7	I logically organize information and ideas showing clear progression throughout.	
8	I sequence information logically and manages all aspects of cohesion very well.	
9	I use cohesion skillfully in all paragraphs.	

### D. Task Response

Item Statement		
1	My answer is completely unrelated to the task.	
2	I barely respond to the task .	
3	I attempt to present few undeveloped ideas with no clear position.	
4	I respond to the task in a minimal way with an unclear position to the topic.	

5	I address the task partially with a position but fails to develop it sufficiently.	
6	I address most parts of the task and presented relevant position but conclusion was not clear.	
7	I address all parts of the task with clear position throughout but some supporting ideas may lack focus.	
8	I sufficiently address all parts of the task with a well developed response to the question.	
9	I fully address all parts of the task, presenting a fully-developed position with well-supported ideas.	

- E. Essay Writing (Exam Condition): Given a particular topic, how many words can you write in an hour with proper lay-out , organization, punctuation, sentence structure, grammar and vocabulary?

1	< 100 words	
2	> 100 words but < 250 words	
3	250 words or more	

- F. Report Writing: Given a particular topic, how many words can you write showing evidence of research, note-taking, review, and revision of work, paraphrasing, summarizing, use of quotation and use of references?

1	< 500 words	
2	500 words or more	

- G. Note-taking: Which note-taking technique can you do proficiently? (You may tick more than one)

1	Paraphrasing	
2	Summarizing	
3	Outlining	

- H. Paraphrasing Technique: Which paraphrasing technique can you do proficiently? (You may tick more than one)

1	Changing a clause to a phrase	
2	Changing direct to indirect speech (vice versa)	
3	Changing active to passive voice (vice versa)	
4	Changing word forms	
5	Synonyms	

- I. Summarizing: Which Summarizing practices do you do proficiently? (you may tick more than one)

1	Reading the text carefully noting answers to <i>who, what, where, when questions</i>	
2	Identifying the main idea from supporting ideas.	
3	Keeping the main idea and rewriting it using own words.	

- J. Outlining: Which outlining practice/s do you do proficiently? ? (you may tick more than one)

1	Writing the major points	
2	Writing supporting details under each major points	
3	Using proper numeric and alphabetical system to separate major points from supporting details (I,II,III...1, 2,3... 1a, 1b.1c..)	
4	Using proper indentations to signal major points from supporting ideas.	

- K. Referencing: Which referencing practices do you do proficiently? (you may tick more than one)

1	Making sure that all references that I have used in my report are included in the reference list and bibliography.	
2	Making sure that all Harvard referencing information are in order.. (author(s) name, year of publication, title of the article, title of journal / book, any publication information (volume, number etc.), website accessed, accessed date)	
3	Making sure that proper punctuation is applied in referencing.	
4	Making sure that ideas borrowed from the references are properly cited (in-text citation)	
5	Making sure that the reference list and/ or bibliography comes in a separate page at the end of the research.	



## QUESTIONNAIRE FOR FOUNDATION TEACHERS

### Part A: Background Information

3. Subjects Taught \_\_\_\_\_
4. Years of Teaching in Foundation \_\_\_\_\_
5. College or University: \_\_\_\_\_

**Part B.** What is your perception about the Academic Writing Skills of students as they progress to Higher Education?

Please provide an estimation on the number of students that may fall under the following categories:

1. Few students
2. Some students
3. More students
4. Most students
5. All students

#### A. Grammatical range and accuracy: **Students who**

		1	2	3	4	5
Item Statement						
1	can't use sentence forms at all.					
2	can't use sentence forms except if I memorize them.					
3	made attempts to write sentence forms but I make mistakes in grammar that distorts the meaning of what I want to express.					
4	can write simple sentences with accuracy and some complex sentences with <b>frequent</b> grammatical and punctuation errors.					
5	can write complex sentences with <b>some</b> grammatical errors that may affect the meaning of my message.					
6	can accurately use mixed simple and complex sentences with <b>minor errors</b> in grammar and punctuation.					
7	can accurately use variety of complex sentences with <b>good</b> command of grammar and punctuation.					

8	can use wide range of sentence structures with <b>very good</b> command of grammar and punctuation.					
9	can use wide range of sentence structures with <b>excellent</b> command of grammar and punctuation.					

**B. Lexical Resource : Students who:**

Item Statement		1	2	3	4	5
1	can only use few isolated words in English.					
2	can only use <b>extremely</b> limited number of vocabulary with spelling errors.					
3	can only use limited number of vocabulary with spelling errors.					
4	can only use basic vocabulary with limited control of word formation and spelling.					
5	can use a range of vocabulary that is minimally adequate for a given task, with some errors in spelling.					
6	can use adequate range of vocabulary for a given task, with minor errors in spelling.					
7	can use sufficient range of vocabulary for a given task, with very minor errors in spelling.					
8	can use wide range of vocabulary with fluency and flexibility, with rare spelling mistakes.					
9	can use a wide range of vocabulary with full control of spelling and word formation.					

**C. Coherence and cohesion: Students who:**

Statement		1	2	3	4	5
1	fail to communicate any message.					
2	have very little control of organization features.					
3	do not organize ideas logically due to improper use of cohesive devices.					

4	present information and ideas but these are not arranged coherently and there is no clear progression in the response.					
5	present information with some organization but make inadequate and inaccurate devices.					
6	arranges information and ideas coherently with the use of effective cohesive devices.					
7	logically organize information and ideas showing clear progression throughout.					
8	sequence information logically and manages all aspects of cohesion very well.					
9	use cohesion skillfully in all paragraphs.					

D. Task Response: **Students who:**

	Item	1	2	3	4	5
1	answers unrelated idea to the task.					
2	barely responded to the task .					
3	attempt to present few undeveloped ideas with no clear position.					
4	respond to the task in a minimal way with an unclear position to the topic.					
5	address the task partially with a position but fails to develop it sufficiently.					
6	address most parts of the task and presented relevant position but conclusion was not clear.					
7	address all parts of the task with clear position throughout but some supporting ideas may lack focus.					
8	sufficiently address all parts of the task with a well developed response to the question.					
9	fully address all parts of the task, presenting a fully-developed position with well-supported ideas.					

E. Essay Writing (Exam Condition): Given a particular topic, how many words can students write in an hour with proper lay-out , organization, punctuation, sentence structure, grammar and vocabulary?

Item Statement		1	2	3	4	5
1	< 100 words					
2	> 100 words but < 250 words					
3	250 words or more					

F. Report Writing: Given a particular topic, how many words can students write showing evidence of research, note-taking, review and revision of work, paraphrasing, summarizing, use of quotation and use of references ?

Item Statement		1	2	3	4	5
1	< 500 words					
2	500 words or more					

G. Note-Taking : How many students can perform the following note-taking techniques with proficiency?

Statement		Item	1	2	3	4	5
1	Paraphrasing						
2	Summarizing						
3	Outlining						

H. Paraphrasing: How many students can perform the following paraphrasing techniques with proficiency?

Item Statement		1	2	3	4	5
1	Changing a clause to a phrase					
2	Changing direct to indirect speech (vice versa)					
3	Changing active to passive voice (vice versa)					
4	Changing word forms					
5	Synonyms					

I. Summarizing: How many students can perform the following summarizing practices with proficiency?

Item Statement		1	2	3	4	5
1	Reading the text carefully noting answers to <i>who, what, where, when</i> questions					
2	Identifying the main idea from supporting ideas.					

3	Keeping the main idea and rewriting it using own words.					
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J. Outlining: How many students can perform the following outlining practices with proficiency?

Item Statement		1	2	3	4	5
1	Writing the major points					
2	Writing supporting details under each major points					
3	Using proper numeric and alphabetical system to separate major points from supporting details (I,II,III....1, 2,3... 1a, 1b.1c..)					
4	Using proper indentations to signal major points from supporting ideas.					

K. Referencing: How many students can perform the following referencing practices with proficiency?

Statement		1	2	3	4	5
1	Making sure that all references used in the report are included in the reference list and bibliography.					
2	Making sure that all Harvard referencing information are in order.. (author(s) name, year of publication, title of the article, title of journal / book, any publication information (volume, number etc.), website accessed, accessed date)					
3	Making sure that proper punctuation is applied in referencing.					
4	Making sure that ideas borrowed from the references are properly cited (in-text citation)					
5	Making sure that the reference list and/ or bibliography comes in a separate page at the end of the research.					

### Document Analysis (Analysis of the 15 students sample papers)

The table below provides an overview of the results of the assessed sample writings with the IELTS band descriptor (public version) as the basis.

Sample Essay #	Grammatical Range and accuracy	Lexical Resource	Coherence and Cohesion	Task Response	IELTS BAND SCORE
1	3	3	5	4	3.5
2	3	3	5	4	3.5
3	4	4	5	5	4.5
4	3	3	5	5	4
5	3	4	5	5	4
6	4	4	5	4	4.5
7	3	3	3	3	3
8	3	3	5	4	4
9	3	3	4	3	3
10	3.5	4	6	4	4.5
11	2	2	3	3	2.5
12	4	4	6	5	4.5
13	4	4	5	5	4.5
14	3	3	5	4	3.5
15	3	3	4	3	3
<b>Mean Average</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>3.33</b>	<b>4.73</b>	<b>4</b>	

## **About the Authors:**

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