Understanding Student Preferences for Written Feedback on L2 English Writing Assignments

Simon Aldrich

Center for Global Education and Exchange
Toyo University

Katsuichiro 'Ken' Ohashi

Center for Global Education and Exchange
Toyo University

Understanding Student Preferences for Written Feedback on L2 English Writing Assignments

Simon Aldrich

Center for Global Education and Exchange
Toyo University

Katsuichiro 'Ken' Ohashi

Center for Global Education and Exchange
Toyo University

Abstract

This paper describes the first step in an effort to make the delivery of feedback on students' written work more meaningful and effective. Students at a private Japanese university answered survey questions on their preferences for written corrective feedback (WCF) with regard to clarity, detail, focus, balance, frequency, and connection to assessment. The survey results suggest that students would like clear, detailed feedback on a wide selection of language in their writing. Furthermore, they seem to favor written feedback that addresses individual areas of weakness, as opposed to criteria related to their grades.

Introduction

The fact that studies regarding what constitutes effective feedback on students' written L2 assignments have produced contradictory results (Jamalinesari et al., 2015) is probably not surprising. Amongst both teacher and student bodies, individual attitudes, agencies, and competencies likely influence the degree to which feedback can have a positive effect. For example, on the teachers' side, personal beliefs in the value of feedback, commitment to the profession and/or the goals or success of the institution, and ability to communicate with students will vary internally and from individual to individual. This, of course, will have a big impact upon the quality and consistency of feedback within a writing program. Similarly, for students, belief in the quality and value of the education they are receiving, the level of commitment to their studies, and how they are able to respond to feedback are all variables that could affect its meaningfulness. In addition, there is no guarantee that students' feedback needs match those perceived by teachers (Ping et al., 2003). Hyland (2013) provides an interesting summary of the situation when he notes that feedback in higher education is 'an area of tension between staff and students as universities

grapple to provide effective teaching practices in resource-constrained environments' (p.180). With the above in mind, it seems that insights into what feedback should consist of, and how it should be delivered, are probably best gathered at an institutional, or better still, a departmental level. In the context of this study, teachers belonging to the LEAP department (Learning English for Academic Purposes) at Toyo University in Japan, struggled to reach consensus on delivery of WCF for their IELTS preparation classes. As a result, it was decided that the first step towards clarifying the issue would be to implement a survey in order to ascertain student preferences for WCF.

Background

In order to create a survey that would be manageable, both in terms of data collection, as well as analysis and implementation of results, it was necessary to consider how WCF might be deemed below-par from the students' perspective. A review of the available literature raised a number of areas for investigation including:

- clarity and degree of detail given in written feedback
- breadth of feedback coverage within a single piece of student writing
- balance of negative and positive feedback
- frequency and timing of written feedback
- strength of connection between feedback and assessment

(Adapted from, Leong & Lee, 2018; Lee, 2009)

Starting with clarity and detail, effective WCF should be legible, easy to comprehend, and actionable. The first point is easily ensured through the use of a learning management system (LMS), or any software that enables corrections or comments to be typed. As for comprehension, studies have highlighted the difficulties inherent in adopting a codified system of error correction (Lee, 2009), likewise, single or double word hints meant to convey areas for correction/improvement have proven to be confusing for even L1 student writers (Weaver, 2006). Clearly, a degree of detail is required for feedback to be actionable; to help students understand what they have done well/poorly, and to facilitate continued development of good practice or the ability to self-correct. With L2 writers, especially those of a lower level of ability, this presents a significant challenge. There is the issue of giving feedback in language that is detailed, but not beyond the level of students' comprehension, and furthermore, with uncertainty regarding students' lexical range and grammatical knowledge, there is the selection dilemma of when to provide direct or indirect feedback. In other words, to correct errors directly (direct feedback), or to provide guidance that results in student self-correction (indirect feedback). This is an area of ongoing discussion in the field. Ferris (2006) suggests that indirect feedback is more successful in the long term by helping L2 students reduce errors in later writing tasks, and furthermore, that students

show a preference for indirect feedback, "sensing that this would be more beneficial to them in the long run" (Ferris, 2011 p. 94). However, she recognises that in cases where students are at a lower level of ability, when errors are untreatable, or specific patterns of error are being addressed, then a combination of feedback forms might be more suitable (2011). The first case, which is important in the context of the present study, is also highlighted by Ellis (2009), who claims that lower level students may benefit more from direct feedback due to their lack of linguistic resources. He provides a little more detail in respect to addressing feedback in this scenario, suggesting a two-pronged approach of leading with indirect feedback, then following up with direct if the former fails. Finally, one meta-analysis of studies on the efficacy of WCF found slight, but not significant support for direct feedback, and that low to low-intermediate L2 students benefited the most from WCF in general (Lim and Renandya, 2020).

Again, efficacy of WCF surely depends on the clarity and frequency of the feedback being such that the error is noticed and understood by the student, whether direct or indirect approaches are applied. Moreover, as was mentioned earlier, there are numerous variables specific to a given learning environment, so these too might cloud the issue of which kind of feedback is always the best choice. Consequently, some items in the survey would be required to ascertain students' preferences, thereby providing a more solid basis on which to make decisions on future pedagogical practice.

Setting the breadth of feedback coverage is a task closely connected to the aforementioned direct-indirect dichotomy, wherein the teacher has to select the range of student language to correct or comment on and the frequency with which to do so. For instance, should the teacher draw the student's attention to every kind of error in the text, just those seen as important to the current learning goals, or those errors which the teacher deems are within the student's capacity to comprehend and correct at that particular time. In addition, once this has been decided, should single or multiple instances of the same error be highlighted. With regard to the first point, studies suggest that students desire a more personalized approach from their teachers, with feedback given that is tailored to the needs of individual learners (Leong & Lee, 2018). This is probably not what most teachers want to hear, firstly because it takes the focus away from carefully considered learning goals, and secondly because it requires much more work on their part; work which teachers may feel is ignored by some students (Weaver, 2006). Moving on to the frequency of correction, making a decision on this issue depends on the teacher's appraisal of the students' ability to notice a specific category of error; for as Schmidt (1994) notes on the importance of input in language education, "more noticing leads to more learning" (p.18). Analysis of students' writing and teacher to student discussion of errors can facilitate a better understanding in this regard. However, anecdotally, it does appear that many students' errors are recurring, so it seems reasonable to assume that if a student were already able to notice an error, and therefore subsequent

instances of it, the mistake would not have occurred in the first place. A further concern with not being consistent in flagging errors is that in Brown's (2014) words, "ignoring erroneous language may be interpreted by the student as a green light: therefore, teachers must be careful to discern the possible reinforcing consequences of withholding error treatment" (p.268). Thus, teachers may have to do the work of noticing for them, repeatedly, in order for them to reach the point where they can do it for themselves. The question then is how to balance this need for a long period of consciousness raising, with a desire to not be seen as nagging or nitpicking by bringing multiple instances of the same issue to a student's attention. Clearly, more input from the student side is needed here to alleviate or justify such concerns.

The next area for consideration is also concerned with balance, but this time in respect to treatment of positive and negative aspects of student work. Perhaps it is natural for teachers to focus on errors, to single out what needs to be 'fixed' in students' work. However, an approach that is too heavily weighted towards pointing out what is wrong, and therefore failing to mention what students are doing well in their writing may have a negative impact on motivation. In addition, when providing positive feedback, are more general, but honest and well-intentioned comments such as, 'Good Job!' valued by students, or as Weaver (2006) suggests, are they interpreted as vague and unhelpful? Once again, this is an issue that requires further investigation within specific learning environments.

The next area for analysis is the timing and frequency of feedback. In this instance, frequency refers to the number of times that feedback is provided during the drafting process, and hence, the degree to which it can be considered formative or summative, where formative is ongoing evaluation and summative is terminal (Scriven, 1966). Perhaps most teachers would agree that formative feedback is more meaningful, as it is timely and results in immediate corrective action. For this reason, and if done well, it may also be more memorable, making repetition of mistakes less likely in the future. An additional benefit is that it also functions as a useful diagnostic tool for the teacher, in that it informs decisions on the required speed and direction of content delivery in subsequent classes (Bachman, 1990). In contrast, solely providing summative feedback is maybe viewed as more closely connected to final evaluation and grading. This may or may not be the case, and it could also be argued that summative feedback, by its very nature, carries more weight in the students' minds. No doubt we can all recall an instance of positive or negative feedback on a high-stakes assignment from our school days. Moreover, we can reflect on how this influenced our approach to our future studies. This is especially important when we consider that the end of one language learning course is rarely the end of a student's study of the language.

With an understanding that both these forms of evaluation have their merits, the discussion moves to consideration of their demerits. With regard to formative feedback, from the teacher's perspective, perhaps the key argument against is the difficulty of scheduling and delivering

feedback to often large numbers of students who, naturally, are working at different speeds. As for summative WCF, there is the concern, similar to the one voiced earlier with respect to breadth of feedback coverage, that students may not pay attention to it. Indeed, in this case, maybe there is more strength to this assertion because the work has been completed and the task is already in the students' rearview mirror. For this reason, it might be wise to include inquiries about frequency with those that aim to provide understanding of students' preferences in terms of feedback and assessment.

Finally, some thoughts on the connection between WCF and assessment. To begin with, in reference to the link with frequency, it should be understood that feedback on assessed writing tasks will be received by students who are likely to be more emotional due to the higher stakes involved. As a result, it is possible that how they process and act upon this feedback will differ from normal. Their desire for formative feedback may be heightened, as they are keen to attain an optimum grade. Conversely, the impact of summative feedback might be reduced for some students if they receive a grade that they are happy with, and thus deem the accompanying feedback to be irrelevant. For an example of the latter, Pitt and Norton (2017) quote a student reflecting that "If I've done well then I don't pay as much attention [to feedback] than if I've done really bad on it" (p.511). Their study highlights the need for teachers to recognize students' levels of emotional maturity in respect to how feedback is received.

The topic of assessment also brings us back to the earlier point about students' desire for more personalized feedback. If this is truly their preference, does it follow that they are less concerned with receiving feedback that is specific to a particular writing task, even if the task is graded? To put a positive slant on it, that their personal idea of improvement is more important to them than short-term point gains. If this is the case, to reiterate, acquiescing to requests of this kind from students, would necessitate shifting the focus of assessment away from course goals. With teachers' greater knowledge of specific genres of writing and the language appropriate to them, this seems ill-advised. Once more, before discussions on modifications on feedback commence, a more definitive answer on this issue is required for the particular context of this study.

The above sections include four areas for further analysis that were included in the survey: Clarity of Written Feedback, Balance of Written Feedback, Focus of Written Feedback, and Grade-Related Written Feedback. They are summarised in the following four questions, with frequency, as suggested previously, included as one area of inquiry within the fourth question (see Appendix A for the full survey).

Do students want the feedback they receive to be more clear/detailed?
Do students want feedback that focuses on both positive and negative performance?
What kinds of language use do students want feedback to focus on?

Do students want to see a clearer connection between feedback and assessment?

Methodology

Participants

The participants were university students taking elective English courses at a private university in Tokyo, Japan. 80 students agreed to participate and submitted responses to the questionnaire. Participants belong to 10 different faculties (Table 1) and the majority of them were first and second year students (Table 2). The majority of the participants provided TOEIC scores to display English proficiency that ranged from 225-940, with the highest percentage in the range, 550-780 (Table 3). IELTS scores were inquired about, but the majority of participants have never taken the test before (Table 4).

Table 1

Distribution of Participants by Faculty

Name of Faculty	Number of Participants
Faculty of Business Administration	11
Faculty of Economics	13
Faculty of Global and Regional Studies	16
Faculty of Information Sciences and Arts	2
Faculty of International Tourism Management	6
Faculty of Law	4
Faculty of Letters	7
Faculty of Regional Development Studies	6
Faculty of Science and Engineering	1
Faculty of Sociology	14

Table 2

Distribution of Participants by Faculty

Years at University	Number of Participants
One	25
Two	29
Three	12
Four	12
More than Five	2

Table 3

Distribution of Participant TOEIC Scores

TOEIC Score Range	Number of Participants
225-545	15
550-780	32
785-940	14
No Score	19

Table 4

Distribution of Participant IELTS Scores

IELTS Score Band	Number of Participants
Band 4	2
Band 5	13
Band 6	4
Band 7	2
Band 8	1
No Score	58

Questionnaire

A pool of 46 items was created, and after discussion between the researchers, distilled to a final list of 33 items to be included in the questionnaire. These were divided into the four categories introduced in the background section above: Clarity of Written Feedback, Balance of Written Feedback, Focus of Written Feedback, and Grade-Related Written Feedback. In addition, an initial section was included to collect data on students' faculties and level of English proficiency. The questionnaire was compiled on a Google Form in English. It was then translated into Japanese by one of the researchers (a bilingual speaker of English and Japanese). The translation was further proofread by a non- bilingual Japanese elementary school teacher for the naturalness of the Japanese. Multiple discussions were held between the researcher and proofreader to make sure the nuance of the English wording was not lost in the Japanese translation. The Japanese and English versions were then combined, with the English version following the Japanese (Appendix A). It was then distributed to the participants in this bilingual format. This was to avoid excluding input from non-Japanese students that take the courses. Unfortunately, despite the care taken in preparation, one of the questions was mistranslated, and so will be excluded from the analysis.

Data Collection

The questionnaire was distributed as a link to a Google Form by either an email or a Stream comment on the Google Classroom for the course the students were taking in the fall semester of school year 2022. The researchers and five other teachers in the same department asked the students orally in their course for participation, along with providing a written message briefly describing the purpose of the study.

Results

The questionnaire used for this project was divided into four main categories. For the most part, participants were asked to display their thoughts toward prompts on a four-point Likert scale of strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. Out of the 19 prompts, 6 had no responses

in the 'strongly disagree' category and an additional 9 had less than 5 responses. Because of this, the four categories were consolidated into two categories of 'agree' and 'disagree' to understand the participants' perception of the prompts in a broader sense. The findings from prompts that do not follow the aforementioned Likert scale will be presented in an unconsolidated form. The findings will be presented according to the structure of the questionnaire. A total of 80 students responded to the questionnaire.

Clarity of Written Feedback

66 out of 80 participants displayed their interest in receiving an explanation on how teachers plan to provide written feedback to the class (Table 5). 74 participants stated that they prefer to receive detailed feedback (Table 5). 71 participants answered that they prefer to receive an explanation for the mistakes they make, with 61 of these indicating that they would also like correction (Table 6). 61 participants mentioned that they do not feel that written feedback needs to be handwritten (Table 5).

Table 5

Distribution of Answers to Section 'Clarity of Written Feedback'

Questions	Agree	Disagree
I want my teachers to explain their style of written feedback to the class.	66	14
I want my teachers' written feedback to be detailed.	74	6
Handwritten feedback is better than typed feedback.	19	61

Table 6

Distribution of Answers to the prompt 'When I make mistakes, I would prefer my teachers to...' From Section 'Clarity of Written Feedback'

Answer Choices	Number of Answers
highlight, correct, and explain the mistake	61
highlight and explain the mistake, but not correct it	10
highlight and correct the mistake, but not explain it	5
highlight the mistake, but not correct or explain it	1
not highlight, correct, or explain the mistake	3

Balance of Written Feedback

More than 72 out of the 80 participants agreed that short comments such as 'Good job!' and 'Give examples' are important for them (Table 7). 76 of the participants indicated that written feedback from teachers motivates them to improve their writing, and 54 think that the feedback should focus on errors and weak points (Table 7). 74 of the participants indicated that they want detailed comments on how to improve their writing. The same number of participants confirmed that they do not take written feedback as personal criticism (Table 7). At the same time, 52 out of

the 80 participants also pointed out that they feel teachers need to expend more effort on providing WCF (Table 7).

Table 7

Distribution of Answers to Section 'Balance of Written Feedback'

Questions	Agree	Disagree
Short, positive comments like, 'Good Job!' are important to me.	74	6
Short, critical comments like, 'Give examples.' are helpful.	72	8
I want my teachers to give detailed written comments on how to improve my writing.	74	6
Teachers' written feedback should focus mostly on errors and weak points.	54	26
Teachers' written feedback motivates me to improve my writing.	76	4
Teacher's written feedback feels like personal criticism.	6	74
Based on your past experiences, teachers should put more effort into giving feedback on written work.	52	28

Focus of Written Feedback

55 out of 80 participants indicated that they want feedback on every kind of mistake made in their writing, while only four displayed no interest in written feedback from the teacher (Table 8). 70 participants answered that they want the same mistake pointed out multiple times if made repeatedly in a single paper (Table 9). A large majority of the students said that feedback on vocabulary choice, grammar, spelling, formatting, and content is important (Table 10).

Table 8

Distribution of Answers to Section 'Focus of Written Feedback' Part 2

Questions	Agree	Disagree
I want teachers to give written feedback on every kind of mistake in my writing.	55	25
I don't want written feedback. I only want to know my score.	4	76

Table 9

Distribution of Answers to Section 'Focus of Written Feedback' Part 3

Question	Answers		
	Just once	More than once	Every time
If I make the same mistake many times in a single piece of writing, I want the teacher to correct it.	10	32	38

Table 10

Distribution of Answers to Section 'Focus of Written Feedback' Part 1

Questions	Answers			
	1	2	3	4
How important is it for you to receive written feedback on your vocabulary choices? Please select from 1 (Very important) to 4 (Not important)	35	39	6	0
How important is it for you to receive written feedback on your grammar? Please select from 1 (Very important) to 4 (Not important)	49	28	3	0
How important is it for you to receive written feedback on your spelling? Please select from 1 (Very important) to 4 (Not important)	28	32	16	4
How important is it for you to receive written feedback on your formatting? Please select from 1 (Very important) to 4 (Not important)	53	22	4	1
How important is it for you to receive written feedback on your ideas? Please select from 1 (Very important) to 4 (Not important)	41	30	8	1

Grade-Related Written Feedback

67 of the 80 participants stated that the assessment criteria should be explained to them before they commence writing (Table 11). More than 68 participants indicated that the written feedback from the teacher should not only focus on assessment criteria for the work they produced (Table 11). At the same time, 49 participants showed a preference for written feedback that would help them improve their grade (Table 11). 53 out of the 80 indicated they want timely feedback in order to improve their work, and 45 displayed interest in receiving feedback during the writing process. 43 participants expressed a desire to have discussion with the teacher about the written feedback they receive (Table 11).

Table 11

Distribution of Answers to Section 'Grade-Related Written Feedback'

Questions	Agree	Disagree
I want teachers to explain the assessment criteria to me before I start writing.	67	13
Teachers' written feedback should only focus on assessment criteria for the work.	12	68
I want teachers' written feedback to focus on my personal weak points, not only the assessment criteria.	75	5
Teachers' written feedback should help me know what I have to do to get a good grade.	49	31
I want teachers to return feedback quickly, so I can improve my work.	53	27
I want teachers to provide regular feedback during the writing process.	45	35
I want teachers to discuss written feedback with me.	43	37

Discussion

For ease of understanding, this discussion will be divided into the four categories used in the questionnaire. Suggestions will be made as to how student expectations for each category could be met.

Clarity of Written Feedback

The results show that students have quite high expectations regarding the clarity of the feedback that they would like to receive. Firstly, they would prefer to be given an explanation of how feedback will be given for the written work they do. This means that teachers will need to be clear and consistent in their approach to explaining how WCF will be delivered. Furthermore, in programs where multiple instructors are teaching the same courses, such as that in the context of this study, coordinating this approach could be a way to ensure consistency across classes. This could become a feature of orientation classes at the beginning of the courses.

Secondly, most students express a preference for detailed feedback, and the majority of these would likewise prefer to receive direct feedback. Of course, there are a number of problems with meeting this requirement. As mentioned before, there is the difficulty of providing clear explanations for lower level students. Composing detailed guidance of this kind requires a significant amount of thought and time. Fortunately, one solution could be to make use of the current technology and compile a catalogue of exemplars for common errors. This can be done using an archive such as the comment bank on Google Classroom. An archive shared between teachers containing explanations of common errors with examples would take time to create, but once it was in place, would significantly speed up the process of giving detailed WCF.

Finally, we should not forget the aforementioned idea regarding the value of indirect feedback as a means of facilitating long term improvement (Ferris, 2006), something that appears to be backed up by constructivist theories of learning, wherein learning occurs through doing; in this case, thinking about and correcting one's own errors. Consideration of this point results in a realization that students' expectations regarding direct feedback can be met, but only with a degree of compromise and cooperation. They should understand that exemplars of the kind suggested before will be provided, but not repeatedly. Perhaps teachers could make this explicit in their explanations of WCF delivery at the start of the course. It should be stated clearly that detailed feedback will be given on one, perhaps two occasions for each kind of error, but the onus then is on students to remember the feedback and apply it to errors of the same nature that have been highlighted by the teacher in future texts. To assist in this process, it would be a good idea to have students keep a portfolio of their written work.

Balance of Written Feedback

The results from this section further confirm that students hope to receive detailed feedback from their teachers. Regarding the balance, as might be expected, the majority agree that the focus should mostly be on weak points and errors. However, there is also very strong support for teachers providing short positive and negative comments, and for the proposition that WCF in general motivates them to improve their writing. Connected to this, is the clear assertion that negative comments are not taken as criticism. This suggests a strong desire for guidance of any kind, and that feedback has perhaps not been forthcoming in the past. Thus, the final item in this section of the survey, 'Based on your past experiences, teachers should put more effort into giving feedback on written work' was answered in the affirmative by 52 out of 80 respondents.

Focus of Written Feedback

This section of the survey looked for answers on what kinds of language students would like feedback to focus on, and once singled out, how many times they would like repetitions of an error to be highlighted. The results for the latter allay any teacher concerns that multiple flagging of consistent errors may be conceived as nagging. The majority expressed a desire for this kind of approach (Table 9). In terms of categories of focus, there is not much space between the number of responses requesting attention for each, with all categories seen as important for a majority of students. Grammar was deemed very marginally to be the greatest concern, and spelling, while important, was selected with the lowest majority total of the five categories (Table 10). These results again confirm the students' strong desire for a large amount of WCF, and consequently, a need for further discussion on how to provide this without putting too much strain on teaching staff who already have multiple tasks and responsibilities.

One solution to alleviate this burden was proposed in the final paragraph on clarity of feedback, however, effective use of technology alone may not be sufficient for teachers who have heavy teaching schedules, large class sizes, and expectations to fulfill in terms of research. Therefore, input from other stakeholders, including faculty members with decision making power over teachers' workloads is also required. Fortunately, some institutions, like the one where this study took place, have program coordinators who pay close attention to the working conditions of each teacher, and are quick to provide advice, and to balance teaching schedules across the academic year. This kind of approach should be standard across the profession.

In addition to good management practice, one further suggestion to ensure that students' needs can be addressed without teachers burning out, is to put more emphasis on student-student discovery and discussion of errors. If this is to be done, then it needs to be a feature of the course that is introduced and practiced in the early weeks of classes, and then consistently features throughout the remainder of the semester. Also, the teacher should ensure that there is a clear

understanding of the limitations of what a peer can ask of another. This can be done by providing a list of peer editing questions that enable students to ask each other for help without putting excess burden on one another. There is a need for time to turn this into a meaningful and productive activity where collaborative learning can take place, so it may be sensible to consider it as an integral aspect of the course design that is scheduled to occur on a regular basis.

Taking the above step of encouraging more dialogue between students on feedback and correction has another merit. In the introduction section of this paper, brief mention was made of the possible mismatch between students' and teachers' perceptions concerning areas of focus for feedback. It seems obvious that there will be points of divergence between what students feel they need and what teachers believe are currently the key areas for improvement in students' language proficiency. By giving learners a degree of agency in selecting language to address in peer feedback sessions, the teacher has more justification and leeway to choose the focal point of WCF.

Grade-Related Written Feedback

The section on grade-related feedback seems to have confirmed earlier results that show a preference amongst students for personalised rather than criteria-related feedback. Indeed, 75 out of 80 respondents agreed with the statement, 'I want teachers' written feedback to focus on my personal weak points, not only the assessment criteria.' Moreover, there was also further support for clarity through pre-writing disclosure of feedback delivery, in this case, explanation of the assessment criteria prior to commencing the task. Overall, although the results show that students are concerned about getting a good grade, their primary expectation would appear to be that WCF helps them to improve their general proficiency in written English. To address this, the previous suggestions for teacher action apply.

Regarding the frequency of feedback during grade-related writing tasks, there is majority support, albeit slight, for regular, timely feedback, and for discussion with the teacher about it. Of course, these findings are influenced by what is already happening in the writing classes that students are taking. In some cases, teachers will be actively supporting the students during in-class writing activities, offering advice, negotiating meaning, and prompting or providing corrections. In others, teachers will be giving students a more autonomous learning experience, perhaps in the form of providing the initial input on language, setting the task, then allowing students to complete it without further teacher support. The results from this section of the survey, and the overwhelming desire for feedback voiced throughout suggest that the former approach may be the one required in this particular learning environment.

Conclusion

This was a preliminary study designed to discover the preferences for WCF of students enrolled in elective classes offered by a department focusing on English for academic purposes. For this reason, in addition to the relatively small number of respondents, and the lack of statistical analysis, it would be unwise to extrapolate the findings to other educational contexts. The purpose was essentially to embark upon a pathway to improving the efficacy or WCF within the department. Further steps will be taken in future to analyse the impact of the recommendations made, and how they are received by students and teachers alike.

To summarise and move towards implementation of the suggestions for feedback delivery discussed above, the following action plan has been compiled:

Teachers should:

1. explain to students how WCF will be delivered

2. compile a catalogue of exemplars for common errors

3. provide exemplars once or twice, but not repeatedly

4. flag multiple instances of repeat errors

5. schedule regular, structured, student-student discovery and discussion of errors

6. actively supporting the students during in-class writing activities

7. provide short positive and negative comments on students' writing whenever practical or possible

By design, this list is not exhaustive, nevertheless it still constitutes a significant amount of work for teachers, and thus, once again, it may not be immediately practical in all teaching environments. Certain factors must be in place for delivery, primarily, the aforementioned conditions wherein department coordinators monitor and manage teacher workloads. The 2016 Report of the Independent Teacher Workload Review Group (UK Government, Department for Education, 2016) states in its conclusion that:

> if your current approach [to marking] is unmanageable or disproportionate, stop it and adopt an approach that considers exactly what the marking needs to achieve for pupils. The impact on teacher workload must be taken into account when reviewing, developing and following marking practice and school assessment policies. (p.10)

This recommendation was taken into consideration when writing the action plan.

As teachers, we engage in our work with the students' best interests at heart. However, it can happen that we stray onto the path of easy negativity with regards to WCF. The demands on our time, coupled with the often slow pace of improvement can result in disillusionment and a failure to provide the support that we should. Furthermore, our motivation to review and develop our practices can be dampened by a lack of secure employment and working situations where contract

lengths are insufficient for us to ever see the fruition of the hard work that we put into the programs that we help develop. The plan outlined in this paper is feasible because the working environment supports its delivery. It should be remembered in all institutions that good practice can only occur under good conditions.

References

Bachman, L. F. (1999). *Fundamental Considerations in Language Testing*. Oxford University Press.

Brown, D. H. (2014). *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching, Sixth Edition*. Pearson Education

Department for Education. (2016). Eliminating unnecessary workload around marking: *Report of the Independent Workload Review Group*. Retrieved from https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reducing-teacher-workload-marking-policy-review-group-report

Ellis, R. (2009). Corrective Feedback and Teacher Development. *L2 Journal* 1:3-18. doi: 10.5070/12. v1i1.9054

Ferris, D. R. (2006). Does error feedback help student writers? New evidence on the short- and long-term effects of written error correction. In K. Hyland & F. Hyland (Eds.) *Feedback in second language writing: Contexts and issues* (pp. 81-104). Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press.

Ferris, D. R. (2011). *Treatment of error in second language student writing (Second Edition)*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Hyland, K. (2013b). Student perceptions of hidden messages in teacher written feedback. *Studies in Educational Evaluation* 39:180-187. doi: 10.1016/j.stueduc.2103.06.003.

Jamalinesari, A., Rahimi, F., Gowhary, H. and Azizifar, A. (2015). The Effects of Teacher-Written Direct vs. Indirect Feedback on Students' Writing. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences 192*:116-123. doi:10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.06.018.

Lee, I. (2009). Ten mismatches between teachers' beliefs and written feedback practice. *ELT Journal 63* (1):13-22. doi:10.1093/elt/ccn010 13.

Leong, A. P., & Lee. H. H. (2018). From Both Sides of the Classroom: Perspectives on Teacher Feedback on Academic Writing and Feedback Practice. *The Journal of Teaching English for Specific and Academic Purposes 6* (1):151-164. doi:10.22190/JTESAP1801151L.

Lim, S. C., & Renandya, W. A. (2020). Efficacy of Written Corrective Feedback in Writing Instruction: A Meta-Analysis. *TESL-EJ The Electronic Journal for Teaching English as a Second Language 24* (3):1-26.

Pitt, E. & Norton, L. (2017). 'Now that's the feedback I want!' Students' reactions to feedback on graded work and what they do with it. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education, 42*:4, 499-516, DOI: 10.1080/02602938.2016.1142500

Ping, A. L., Pin, V. T. P., Wee, S., & Nah, H. H. (2003). Teacher feedback: A Singaporean perspective. *ITL-International Journal of Applied Linguistics 139* (1):47-75.

Schmidt, R. (1994). Deconstructing consciousness in search of useful definitions for applied linguistics. *AILA Review 11*: 11-26.

Scriven, M. (1966). *The Methodology of Evaluation. Publication #110 of the Social Science Education Consortium*. Purdue University.

Weaver, M. R. (2006). Do students value feedback? Student perceptions of tutors' written responses. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education 31* (3):379-394. doi:10.1080/02602930500353061.

List of Appendices

Appendix A: Survey

Appendix A

英文ライティング課題の添削指導に関するアンケート Survey on Student Preferences for Feedback on Written Work

英文ライティング課題の添削指導で先生が書くコメントについて、学生がどう思っているのかを調査しています。7分程で終わる内容のアンケートです。ご協力お願いします。アンケートの回答は匿名で扱うので個人情報が漏れることはありません。よろしくお願いいたします。

We would like to find out about LEAP students' preferences for written feedback from their teachers on English language writing assignments. Please take a few minutes to answer the questions below. Rest assured that all of your responses will remain anonymous. Thank you!

所属学部を教えてください。 Which faculty do you belong to?

Faculty of Letters 文学部

Faculty of Economics 経済学部

Faculty of Business Administration 経営学部

Faculty of Law 法学部

Faculty of Global and Regional Studies 国際学部

Faculty of Sociology 社会学部

Faculty of International Tourism Management 国際観光学部

Faculty of Regional Development Studies 国際地域学部

Faculty of Information Networking for Innovation and Design 情報連携学部

Faculty of Human Life Design ライフデザイン学部

Faculty of Science and Engineering 理工学部

Faculty of Information Sciences and Arts 総合情報学部

Faculty of Life Sciences 生命科学部

Faculty of Food and Nutritional Sciences 食環境科学部

学年を教えてください。 What is your year of study?

1年生

2年生

3年生

4年生

5 年以上

TOEIC 試験のスコアを教えてください（お持ちであれば）What is your TOEIC score?
120-220
225-545
550-780
785-940
945-990
未受験

IELTS のバンドスコアを教えてください（お持ちであれば）。＊Band 5.5 の場合は Band 5 と回答ください What is your IELTS score?
Band 1
Band 2
Band 3
Band 4
Band 5
Band 6
Band 7
Band 8
Band 9
未受験

添削指導の明瞭さについて　Clarity of Written Feedback
添削指導のわかりやすさについて教えてください。Making feedback easy for you to understand.

	全くそう思わない Strongly disagree	あまりそう思わない Disagree	ややそう思う Agree	とてもそう思う Strongly agree
先生が行う添削指導でどのようにコメントを書くのか説明してほしい。 I want my teachers to explain their style of written feedback to the class.				

添削指導のコメントは詳細に書いてほしい。 I want my teachers' written feedback to be detailed.				
添削指導のコメントはタイプされたものより手書きの方がよい。 Handwritten feedback is better than typed feedback.				

文に間違いがあった場合、先生には・・・
When I make mistakes, I would prefer my teachers to...

- 間違い箇所を指摘、修正、そしてなぜ間違いなのか説明してほしい。
  highlight, correct, and explain the mistake
- 間違い箇所を指摘し、なぜ間違いなのか説明してほしいが、修正は不要。
  highlight and explain the mistake, but not correct it
- 間違い箇所を指摘、修正してほしいが、なぜ間違いなのかの説明は不要。
  highlight and correct the mistake, but not explain it
- 間違い箇所を指摘してほしいが、修正や、なぜ間違いなのかの説明は不要。
  highlight the mistake, but not correct or explain it
- 間違い箇所の指摘、修正、なぜ間違いなのかの説明は全て不要。
  not highlight, correct, or explain the mistake

添削指導のバランスについて　Balance of Written Feedback
ライティングの良い点・改善できる点に対する添削指導のコメントについて教えてください。Feedback on good and bad aspects of your writing.

	全くそう思わない Strongly disagree	あまりそう思わない Disagree	ややそう思う Agree	とてもそう思う Strongly agree
「よくできました（Good job!）」といった短いポジティブなコメントが書いてあることは個人的に大事だと思う。 Short, positive comments like, 'Good Job!' are important to me.				
添削指導では、良い点と悪い点の双方に詳細な説明を書いてほしい。 I want my teachers to give detailed written comments on the good points of my writing.				

添削指導では、「例を示せ (Give examples)」のように必要な修正を簡潔な言葉で書いたコメントは役にたつと思う。 Short, critical comments like, 'Give examples.' are helpful.				
添削指導のコメントでは、どうすればライティングを改善できるのか詳細に書いてほしい。 I want my teachers to give detailed written comments on how to improve my writing.				
添削指導のコメントは、ライティングの誤りや弱点に焦点を絞って書いてほしい。 Teachers' written feedback should focus mostly on errors and weak points.				
添削指導のコメントは、ライティングをもっと上手に書けるようになりたいというモチベーションを上げてくれる。 Teachers' written feedback motivates me to improve my writing.				
添削指導のコメントは、書いた内容ではなく先生が私の人格を称賛もしくは否定しているように感じる。 Teacher's written feedback feels like personal criticism.				
これまで経験した英語教育を思い返すと、先生はライティングの添削指導でコメントを書くことにもっと力を入れた方がいいと思う。 Based on your past experiences, teachers should put more effort into giving feedback on written work.				

添削指導の焦点について　Focus of Written Feedback

言語要素（文法や単語）に関する添削指導に対して思うことを教えてください。Feedback
　　on different kinds of language use.

	とても重要　Very important			全く重要ではない　Ｎｏｔ important
ライティングで使用した単語に関する添削指導（単語の適切さや類義語）は、どの程度重要だと思いますか。当てはまるものを「1とても重要」から「4全く重要ではない」の中から選んでください。 How important is it for you to receive written feedback on your vocabulary choices? Please select from 1 (Very important) to 4 (Not important)	1	2	3	4
ライティングで使用した文法に関する添削指導は、どの程度重要だと思いますか。当てはまるものを「1とても重要」から「4全く重要ではない」の中から選んでください。 How important is it for you to receive written feedback on your grammar? Please select from 1 (Very important) to 4 (Not important)				
ライティングで使用した単語のスペリングに関する添削指導は、どの程度重要だと思いますか。当てはまるものを「1とても重要」から「4全く重要ではない」の中から選んでください。 How important is it for you to receive written feedback on your spelling? Please select from 1 (Very important) to 4 (Not important)				
ライティングで使用した文章構成に関する添削指導は、どの程度重要だと思いますか。当てはまるものを「1とても重要」から「4全く重要ではない」の中から選んでください。 How important is it for you to receive written feedback on your formatting? Please select from 1 (Very important) to 4 (Not important)				

ライティングで書いた文章の内容に関する添削指導は、どの程度重要だと思いますか。当てはまるものを「1 とても重要」から「4 全く重要ではない」の中から選んでください。 How important is it for you to receive written feedback on your ideas? Please select from 1 (Very important) to 4 (Not important)				
ライティングの添削指導では、全ての誤りをコメント付きで指摘してほしい。 I want teachers to give written feedback on every kind of mistake in my writing.				
ライティング課題で同じ誤りを繰り返し行なっていた場合、先生にどの程度指摘してほしいですか。 If I make the same mistake many times in a single piece of writing, I want the teacher to correct it.				
課題に対する点数がわかればいいので添削指導は必要ない。 I don't want written feedback. I only want to know my score.				

添削指導と成績について　Grade-related Written Feedback

総合成績に占める割合が高い課題に関する添削指導について教えてください。Feedback on written work that has a big impact on your final grade.

	全くそう思わない Strongly disagree	あまりそう思わない Disagree	ややそう思う Agree	とてもそう思う Strongly agree
ライティング課題を書き始める前に採点基準を説明してほしい。 I want teachers to explain the assessment criteria to me before I start writing.				

添削指導のコメントは採点基準に関係する点に限定されるべきだ。 Teachers' written feedback should only focus on assessment criteria for the work.				
添削指導のコメントは採点基準に関係する点だけでなく、ライティングの弱点についても書いてほしい。 I want teachers' written feedback to focus on my personal weak points, not only the assessment criteria.				
添削指導のコメントはどうすれば良い成績が取れるのかに焦点を当てて書かれるべきだ。 Teachers' written feedback should help me know what I have to do to get a good grade.				
ライティング課題を改善できるように添削指導は早く返却してほしい。 I want teachers to return feedback quickly, so I can improve my work.				
ライティングの途中経過を定期的に添削指導してほしい。 I want teachers to provide regular feedback during the writing process.				
ライティングの添削指導はディスカッション形式で行ってほしい。 I want teachers to discuss written feedback with me.				