The Centrality of Cognitively Diagnostic Assessment for Advancing Secondary School ESL Students’ Writing: A Mixed Methods Study

by

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Abstract

The primary purpose of this investigation was to examine the effects of cognitively diagnostic feedback (CDF) on secondary school English as a second language (ESL) students’ writing development using a validity framework. CDF is information that is generated by diagnosing gaps in learners’ cognitive processing and strategy use in a specific domain, to guide learners towards desired goals. A diagnostic rubric for assessing writing (DRAW) was developed through an iterative process involving teachers and students, founded in both theory and curriculum, and used to generate CDF. Key validity assumptions were identified related to the use of DRAW in secondary school classrooms. These assumptions were used to generate inquiry questions that guided the investigation addressing the diagnostic potential of DRAW, the effect of students’ perceptions of DRAW feedback on their writing development, the interaction between students’ perceptions of DRAW feedback and their goal orientations, anxiety, and self-efficacy, and the influence of teachers on students’ use of feedback.
Using a mixed methods research design, evidence was gathered from three Grade 10 classrooms comprising a total of 52 ESL learners and their teachers. DRAW was used to generate CDF providing students with strengths and areas for improvement on their ideas, vocabulary, grammar, organization, mechanics, and sentence fluency. Students’ perceived understanding, reflection, perceived usefulness, and intent for future use of the CDF were measured through a survey and structured interviews. Students’ use of the CDF was evaluated across writing samples at multiple times, and examined in relation to their goal orientations, writing anxiety and self-efficacy. Teachers’ use of DRAW was also evaluated through observations and interviews. Multiple sources of evidence were used to warrant claims about DRAW practice: 1) DRAW provided cognitively, diagnostically rich information about adolescent students’ writing compared to competing feedback sources used in these classrooms; 2) Students’ perceptions of DRAW feedback varied according to self-efficacy, writing anxiety, and goal orientations; 3) DRAW feedback had a positive effect on students’ writing skill development; 4) Teachers’ assessment beliefs and feedback practices influenced and shaped students’ perceptions and use of feedback and contributed to their writing performance; and 5) Teachers valued DRAW.
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Chapter 1
Research Introduction

1.1 Research Overview

In the inaugural issue of the journal, *Assessing Writing*, Huot’s (1994) editorial draws attention to the lack of literature focusing on the assessment of students’ writing in classrooms. Since the inception of the journal 20 years ago, the scholarly field of second language (L2) writing and its assessment has experienced a marked increase (Silva, 2013). While there is a plethora of L2 writing research studies concentrating on adult students in post-secondary contexts, there are limited investigations focusing on secondary school-aged learners (Biber, Nekrasova, & Horn, 2011; Leki, Cumming, & Silva, 2008). Rarer still are ecologically valid studies of students’ writing development in secondary language classrooms with a focus on assessment feedback (Cumming & Riazi, 2000; Lee, 2013; Rackoczy et al., 2013). Feedback effects are frequently studied in laboratory contexts (Deci, Koestner, & Ryan, 1999; Shute, 2008) with a focus on written corrective feedback examined through experimental designs. As Lee (2013) articulates: “...very little is known about what actually happens in the classroom when teachers respond to errors in student writing” (p. 108). In response, this study is an exploration of secondary students’ perceptions of and use of assessment feedback, its effect on their writing development, as well as the role of teachers in this process. At its core, this dissertation is about the generation and use of writing feedback. The obvious question the interested reader may ask is: ‘Why feedback?’

One of the reasons for this attention to feedback is that it is essential to students’ writing development (Biber et al., 2011; Ferris, 2003; Hyland, 2003; Montgomery & Baker, 2007). Students crave feedback from their teachers who, in turn, spend countless hours providing it (Hyland, 1998). This focus on feedback is rooted in teachers’ belief in its formative power; however they struggle with the time that it takes to provide it. Goldstein (2005) suggests that while this process will likely remain time-consuming, it can become more effective. There is a proliferation of research on feedback in the field of L2 writing (e.g., Cumming, Kantor & Powers, 2002; Ferris, 2013; Ferris & Roberts, 2001; Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 1996; Lee, 2014; Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Montgomery & Baker, 2007; Sachs & Polio, 2007; Shohamy, 1992; Van...
In a recent comprehensive review of feedback in L2 writing, Hyland and Hyland (2006) uncovered over 200 papers on the topic. A more recent review of second language writing feedback investigations evidenced a rise of research in feedback writing studies with a spike between 2000 and 2004 followed by a downturn in the number of investigations in the years following it (Biber et al., 2011). Despite the decline, there continues to be high interest in research in feedback and its relationship with students’ writing development, because of its great potential to positively contribute to students’ outcomes.

Although there exists an expansive collection of research, there remains little consensus and many unanswered questions about what constitutes effective feedback in writing (Biber et al., 2011; Hyland & Hyland, 2006; Leki, Cumming, & Silva, 2008). Much of the research in L2 writing feedback has focused on whether errors in writing have been addressed (directly or indirectly), and if the errors have been corrected or not (Biber et al., 2011). Biber et al. (2011) recently conducted a comprehensive, systematic meta-analysis spanning across 25 years of research on L2 writing feedback. Their results provided key information about the emerging patterns of the effectiveness of feedback, indicating that it is challenging to provide feedback that helps students to improve the content of their writing. Potential reasons for this difficulty may be because the research attention has not been on evaluating the type of feedback based on the degree to which it helps students to identify cognitive gaps. This type of feedback is referred to as cognitive feedback (Balzer, Doherty, & O’Conner, 1989; Butler & Winne, 1995). Biber et al.’s extensive review made no mention of cognitive feedback. Seemingly, cognitive feedback has not been a focus of research in the field of L2 writing.

Other research in L2 feedback has investigated its effectiveness based on the content of feedback (e.g., Polio, Fleck, & Leder, 1998; Sheppard, 1992); tone of feedback (e.g., Hyland & Hyland, 2001); type of feedback (e.g., Bitchner, Young, & Cameron, 2005; Ferris, 2006; Robb, Ross, & Shortreed, 1986), and source of feedback (Brakel Olson, 1990; Kamimura, 2006). Leki et al. (2008) distinguish between descriptive and evaluative approaches to L2 writing feedback research as having taken a descriptive or evaluative approach. They explain:

Descriptive approaches have asked: What responding practices do certain teachers use? What aspects of writing do they attend to? What occurs in this process? What preferences for feedback on their L2 writing do students have? Evaluative approaches have asked:
What aspects of writing should teachers focus on? What are the results of their doing so? (p. 83)

Despite these multiple areas of feedback research, the primary focus of much of the investigations has been on error correction (Biber et al., 2011; Van Beuningen, 2010).

Arguably, the most important facet of assessment feedback is its formative power. That is, the potential of feedback to guide writers through the process of their writing for advancing their skill development (Black & Wiliam, 1998). With this great potential and the many unanswered questions about the characteristics of effective feedback, I hypothesized about other types of feedback (other than feedback focusing on error correction) that could contribute to students’ writing development. I not only drew from the feedback literature, but also from the literature on diagnostic assessment (Alderson, 2005; Hartz & Roussos, 2008; Huhta, 2010; Jang, 2005; Leighton & Gierl, 2007; Nichols, Chipman & Brennan, 1995) which is based on a cognitive model of learning to arrive at decisions about students’ mastery across a set of skills. Importantly, these cognitive models are based on theories of learning, and provide formative feedback to guide learning across students’ weaknesses while also highlighting their strengths (Jang, 2005; 2008). Cognitively diagnostic feedback (CDF) (Jang & Wagner, 2014) brings together the strengths of formative feedback with cognitively-based theories of diagnostic assessment. CDF is information provided to learners based on gaps in their cognitive processing and strategy use (rather than gaps in their knowledge). My goal in this investigation was to examine the effects of CDF (Jang & Wagner, 2014) on secondary school-aged language learners’ writing development. In order to achieve this primary research purpose, I adopted an effect-driven approach (Fulcher & Davidson, 2007).

The term, effect-driven, was coined by Fulcher and Davidson (2007) in an attempt to respond to the necessity for a pragmatic approach to investigating test use and outcomes of testing (or assessment) activities. They offer the follow definition of the approach: “Effect-driven testing implies that as part of the design process we look into the future to picture the effect we would like the test to have. We then structure our test development to achieve this effect” (Fulcher & Davidson, 2007, p. 371). I applied this effect-driven approach to this research investigation by looking into the future to the positive potential of CDF for providing effective feedback in authentic classroom contexts, for advancing students’ writing development, and
guiding teachers with their provision of effective, formative feedback. The so called ‘real world’ research context (i.e., secondary school English as a second language (ESL) classrooms) increased the ecological validity of the investigation and the extent to which the findings would potentially be applicable to other English language writing classrooms. I hypothesized that CDF could be optimally generated from a diagnostic rubric for assessing writing (DRAW) which would allow for diagnosis of strengths and areas for improvement of students’ cognitive writing processes and strategies. Certainly, such an effect-driven approach includes inherent research assumptions, the most obvious being that cognitively-rich, diagnostic feedback can be generated from a rubric. I approached additional assumptions relevant to this research investigation through an argument-based validity framework (Kane, 1992; 2006). Before discussing these assumptions, I first provide an overview of the framework.

1.2 Validity Framework

I approached this research investigation through the lens of a validity framework, specifically using an argument-based approach to validity (Kane, 1992; 2006) because of the centrality of validity in all assessment acts (American Educational Research Association (AERA), American Psychological Association (APA), & National Council on Measurement in Education (NCME), 2014; Koretz, 2008), and because of the opportunities this approach provided to evaluating research assumptions and using them as the basis to generate research questions. Before delving into this approach, it is worthwhile providing an abbreviated overview of the development of validity over the last century.

Validity has a long evolutionary history in the field of assessment beginning with the conception that a test is valid for anything with which it is correlated (Guilford, 1946; Kelley, 1927; Thurstone, 1932). In other words, validity was originally reduced to a criterion-based model. This scientific approach to validity was eventually deemed insufficient and by 1954, when the first version of the professional standards for educational and psychological testing (then called the Technical Recommendations for Psychological Tests and Diagnostic Techniques) (AERA, APA, NCME, 1954) was published, validity was defined as comprising four attributes: construct, concurrent, predictive, and content. This conception of validity as both fragmented and a test property eventually evolved into types of evidence rather than types of validity, and a unitary perspective of validity gradually emerged and was captured in Messick’s
(1989) landmark chapter on validity. The publication began with the following statement:
“Validity is an integrated evaluative judgment of the degree to which empirical evidence and theoretical rationales support the adequacy and appropriateness of inferences and actions based on test scores or other modes of assessment” (Messick, 1989, p. 13). Therefore, consideration of actions taken following a test or an assessment, whether it pertains to the use of scores or feedback, interpretations from them, or impact on learners as a consequence of participating in the assessment act or completing an evaluation, are of prime importance. Messick’s chapter brought together the conception that validity includes value implications and social consequences along with construct-related evidence.

This approach to validity was supported in the subsequent edition of the Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing (AERA, APA, & NCME, 1999) in which it is stated that “Validity refers to the degree to which evidence and theory support the interpretations of test scores entailed by proposed uses of tests” (p. 9). These perspectives highlight the significance of interpretations requiring validation, and delineate validity as a process rather than as a property of a test or instrument. Critiques of a Messickian validity approach (e.g., Shepard, 1993) suggest that this conception does not adequately promote a unitary theory of validity, but a different fragmentation of it whereby values and social consequences are distinct from test score interpretations. Shepard (1993) suggested that validity inquiries be organized around a single question: “What does the testing practice claim to do?” (p. 429), an approach that she connected to Cronbach (1988) who drew from the field of program evaluation and summarized his position on the topic: “Validation speaks to a diverse and potentially critical audience; therefore, the argument must link concepts, evidence, social and personal consequences, and values” (p. 4). Cronbach’s work was the basis for Kane’s (1992, 2006) argument-based approach to validity.

An argument-based approach to validity (Kane, 1992, 2006) represents a more contemporary view, comprising interpretative arguments as the framework to validate test scores or evaluation outcomes. Interpretative arguments are developed to suggest how uses and inferences from tests may be used in evaluations. Integral to the development of the arguments are statements of the series of assumptions and inferences derived from observations of performance followed by the resultant actions. The act of validation involves the evaluation of these arguments, and is formally defined through validity arguments (Cronbach, 1988). This view of validity is also supported in the most recent edition of the Standards for Educational and
Psychological Testing (AERA, APA, & NCME, 2014) in which the use of validity arguments is promoted to integrate evidence for the evaluation of test score interpretations.

According to Kane (1992), an argument-based approach to validity involves four main processes: 1) Making decisions on statements that are to be based on test scores; 2) Indicating specific inferences and assumptions that result from the test scores, and linking them to the decision statements; 3) Presenting any competing interpretations; and 4) Seeking evidence to warrant the inferences and assumptions made in the interpretive arguments that were proposed, and addressing possible counterarguments. It is not sufficient to simply construct interpretative arguments, but they also need to be evaluated.

Kane (1992, 2006) identifies three criteria for the evaluation of interpretative arguments: clarity of the argument; coherence of the argument; and, plausibility of inferences and assumptions. Clarity of arguments demands that arguments be clearly written (as suggested by the appropriately named criterion), and include sufficient details about inferences and assumptions to provide support for the construction of the argument. Furthermore, Kane (1992) warns of the dangers in ignoring implicit assumptions. Coherence of arguments refers to the completeness and logic of the arguments. The final criterion, plausibility of inferences and assumptions, acknowledges that interpretative arguments cannot be proven to be true, but it is necessary for them to be considered plausible. Kane (1992) succinctly states: “The plausibility of the argument as a whole is limited by its weakest assumptions and inferences” (p. 528).

Kane (2006) also highlights the importance of context stating that validity arguments are specific to individual situations. The particular contexts of interest in this investigation were secondary school ESL classrooms in a large urban centre in Canada, and more specifically, the processes within that are associated with second language writing development, and assessment feedback. Within this context, there were multiple stakeholders, primarily students and teachers. Jang (2005) contends that Kane’s view of interpretative arguments is somewhat simplistic as it does not account for the agents who are impacted by the consequences of “argumentation activities” (p. xix). Jang asserts that arguments cannot simply be a series of observations to be interpreted within a context, but rather, interpretive practices need to be directed towards their subsequent use and effect. This view espouses Fulcher and Davidson’s (2007) effect-driven approach adopted in this investigation. Consequently, I applied Kane’s framework to evaluate validity assumptions related to the generation and use of CDF, while also considering the future
effects of the research on the central agents at the focus of this investigation, namely teachers and students. The assumptions formed the basis for inquiry questions that guided the investigation. I briefly introduce the assumptions and inquiry question in the following section, and further elaborate on them in Chapter 2 by examining the theoretical issues underlying them.

1.3 Research Assumptions and Inquiry Questions

In order to investigate students’ use of CDF, it first must be generated which I propose to do through the development and application of a diagnostic rubric for assessing writing (DRAW). Accordingly, several assumptions related to these processes emerged, the first being the features of the diagnostic feedback generated from the rubric (henceforth referred to as DRAW feedback) are consistent with principles of effective and diagnostic feedback thereby benefiting students’ writing development. Secondly, it is assumed that DRAW feedback possesses features that differ from current writing feedback practices in tenth grade English language classrooms which (may) contribute to students’ writing development. Finally, another key assumption that warranted investigation is that DRAW feedback is relevant to the Ontario secondary school learning context. In other words, DRAW feedback is relevant to the specific context of use. These assumptions are related to the characteristics of DRAW feedback; however, this dissertation is not only about the generation of CDF, but also about students’ responses to it and their use of it. Investigating students’ use of DRAW feedback gave rise to additional assumptions.

A fundamental premise underlying this research is that students’ receipt and use of feedback are individualized; thus, any action they take to use feedback will be dependent on this response. As Raimes (1991) aptly stated: “There is no such thing as a generalized ESL student” (p. 420). Accordingly, one of the related assumptions is that students’ responses to DRAW feedback will, indeed, vary. Certainly, there are a multitude of factors that may influence students’ responses to DRAW feedback. I put forth the conjecture that students’ responses to the feedback are influenced by motivational characteristics, and that these variables may be adequately represented by their writing anxiety, goal orientations, and self-efficacy of writing. Finally, in order for DRAW feedback to have a positive impact on students’ writing skill development, it is assumed that students will use the feedback.
The assumptions discussed thus far are all related to the generation of DRAW feedback for use in tenth grade ESL classrooms, as well as its receipt by students. An implicit assumption has been that DRAW feedback will positively affect students’ writing development. Although seemingly obvious, it is an extremely important assumption that needs to be made explicit. Essentially, this assumption is about the power of CDF (generated from DRAW) to affect students’ writing in a positive way.

A final set of relevant assumptions emerging from this investigation is related to teachers’ responses to DRAW. Teachers are the primary agents in classrooms who assess students, provide feedback, support and create a classroom culture that impacts students’ learning and development (Rea-Dickins, 2004). Their actions certainly influence students in the classroom (Griffiths, 2007). Therefore, this investigation, which explores students’ responses and uses of DRAW feedback in authentic contexts, must also examine the integral contributions teachers make.

I identified four assumptions that capture essential facets of the complexities and interconnections between teachers, students, and DRAW feedback. Namely: 1) Teachers possess individualized beliefs about assessment and qualities of ‘good’ writing that contributes to their assessment and feedback practices; 2) Teachers’ writing feedback practices may be dependent on their diagnostic competence for assessing writing; and 3) The feedback that students value and use is congruent with the feedback that teachers deliver; and 4) DRAW provides teachers with diagnostically useful feedback about their students’ writing skill mastery.

The overarching inquiry goal of this study was to investigate the effects of CDF on secondary school ESL students’ writing development using a validity framework. Based on an evaluation of these assumptions I propose the following seven research questions to address the inquiry goal:

1. What sub-skills and descriptors comprise a cognitively Diagnostic Rubric for Assessing Writing (DRAW) of adolescent English language learners?
2. What is the diagnostic potential of DRAW for generating cognitively diagnostic feedback about adolescent students’ writing skill development in comparison with other sources of writing feedback in secondary schools?
3. (a) What are adolescent students’ perceptions of DRAW feedback?
(b) How do adolescent students’ anxiety, self-efficacy of writing, and goal orientations interact with their perceptions of DRAW feedback?

4. To what extent do students’ perceptions of DRAW feedback affect their writing skill development?

5. What are the characteristics of secondary school teachers’ writing assessment beliefs and feedback practices?

6. To what extent are adolescent students’ perceptions of feedback writing skill performance shaped by their teacher’s assessment beliefs and feedback practices?

In order to respond to these research questions, I conducted the research in authentic classrooms in which students had the opportunity to engage with the CDF, and I had the opportunity to observe, document, and collect data related to students’ perceptions and uses of the feedback, as well as its effects on their writing development. Furthermore, the ‘real’ classroom context provided the opportunity to engage teachers in the research and gather evidence related to their perceptions of the feedback and its effect on their practice. Such a complex research endeavour demanded a research design that would give voice to the multiple agents involved in the research, and also provide multiple sources of evidence to evaluate validity arguments; therefore, I chose to employ a mixed methods design (e.g., Creswell, 2003; Greene, 2007; Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, & Turner, 2007).

In her book, *Mixed methods in social inquiry*, Greene (2007) shares her ‘mixed methods’ story detailing the evolution of her values, beliefs, and assumptions which guide her current philosophies as a researcher in social inquiry. She then invites all her readers to do the same in an effort “…toward reflective and engaged mixed methods practice” (p. 60). While this dissertation is ultimately about understanding relationships between students’ writing development and feedback, it is also a telling of my mixed methods story. I invite you, the reader, to engage with my story.

1.4 Terminology

Before concluding this chapter it is necessary to raise an important note about the terminology I use in this dissertation. It is common practice in studies of English language learners’ writing development to refer to the students’ second language (L2) writing as
recognition of the writing development and proficiency that is being acquired in students’ additional language. However, this term does not necessarily acknowledge the possibility that students may be learning English not as a second, but as a third, fourth, fifth or more language. Therefore, my use of the term L2 in this dissertation possibility (and likely) and refers to students’ writing development in recognition of the diversity of students’ language backgrounds in this ever increasing globalized context.

I also use the term English language learner (ELL) as defined by Ontario’s Ministry of Education (2007). They use the term to refer to students for whom English is an additional language or profoundly different from the variety of English used for instruction in Ontario classrooms. English as a second language (ESL) refers to the programming offered by Ontario schools to assist ELLs with advancing their English language proficiency.

1.5 Overview of the Dissertation

This research investigation is discussed in eight chapters. This chapter has provided an introduction to the research topic, the rationale for the research, the validity framework used to articulate and evaluate validity assumptions and inquiry questions, and the methodology through which it is being investigated. In Chapter 2, I delve more deeply into the research assumptions relevant to the investigation and introduce the reader to the relevant literature which framed this investigation, and which also contributed to the interpretation of the research evidence. I discuss the detailed methodological approaches to the investigation in Chapter 3, and identify the participants and research contexts. Chapters 4, 5, and 6 and 7 engage readers with the results from various facets of this research investigation exploring the inquiry questions in turn. Finally, in Chapter 8, I provide an overview of the results and a discussion based on their implications.
Chapter 2
Theoretical Background and Issues

This research investigation brings together an exploration of writing assessment in secondary school English language learning classrooms, the information that is generated from writing assessment (i.e., feedback), and the use of it by students. As such, through this research I explore the relationships between assessment, feedback, and the primary classroom agents, teachers and students, and specifically, how these dynamics contribute to students’ English writing development. This research highlights my particular interest in the contribution of cognitively diagnostic feedback (Jang & Wagner, 2014) for advancing students’ writing development whilst examining intrapersonal and contextual variables that affect its perception and use.

The term cognitively diagnostic feedback brings together the concept of ‘cognitive feedback’ with the act of diagnosis. Feedback, in general, is any information provided to students following an assessment task. This information can take on many forms including grades, check marks, comments, rewards (e.g., stickers), and corrections. In contrast, cognitive feedback focuses on addressing students’ cognitive processes and strategies in order to address conceptual gaps (Balzer et al., 1989; Butler & Winne, 1995) rather than providing outcome-based information to students. This feedback provides learners with specific information to help them to confirm or tune their understanding of a topic, and/or add missing knowledge, help students replace misconceptions or restructure past knowledge based on new information (Butler & Winne, 1995).

The term diagnosis is frequently associated with the medical field in which patients seek an examination of specific symptoms related to ailments. In classrooms, this examination translates to an evaluation of students’ educational performance. In contrast to the symptoms that are used in medicine to achieve a diagnosis, teachers collect information about students using multiple sources of evidence such as checklists, classroom-based tasks, tests, and presentations (among many others) to diagnose students’ learning needs. I first encountered this fitting analogy in Jang (2005) who stated: “The goal of diagnosis in the educational context is to bring about some changes in students’ learning” (p. 2) thereby highlighting not just the diagnostic act of
identifying students’ learning needs, but rather, focusing on the *use* of the information to affect change.

Thus, CDF is information that is generated by diagnosing gaps in learners’ cognitive processing and strategy use in a specific domain, and providing feedback to learners that alert them to these gaps to guide them towards reaching a desired goal thereby promoting its use. When the domain is second language writing, CDF focuses on identifying writers’ cognitive processes and strategies, rather than knowledge gaps, to direct students to strengths and areas for improvement in their writing.

In Chapter 1, I introduced the argument-based validity framework (Kane, 1992, 2006) that I used to identify validity assumptions that are critical to evaluating interpretations related to the generation and use of CDF for the purposes of advancing students’ writing development. Warranting or rejecting any subsequent claims first necessitates a critical examination of the theoretical underpinnings of the pertinent constructs and issues. Therefore, the focus of this chapter is the exploration and critical examination of the issues underlying them. The assumptions and relevant issues are subsumed under four relevant categories which capture the multiple facets of the investigation: diagnostic assessment of writing; relationship between motivation and feedback perceptions; power of feedback; and, teachers’ assessment beliefs and feedback practices.

### 2.1 Diagnostic Assessment of Writing

I proposed to investigate students’ use of CDF through the development and application of DRAW. I introduced three assumptions related to the development of CDF through DRAW: 1) The features of the CDF generated DRAW are consistent with principles of effective and diagnostic feedback thereby benefiting students’ writing development; 2) DRAW feedback possesses features that differ from current writing feedback practices in tenth grade English language classrooms which (may) contribute to students’ writing development; and 3) DRAW feedback is relevant to the Ontario secondary school learning context. These assumptions give rise to several pertinent questions that necessitate elaboration and discussion: What is meant by the term diagnostic assessment?; What is the nature of the L2 writing construct that is being diagnostically assessed?; and What constitutes cognitive feedback that is generated from diagnostic assessment? I now present literature relevant to each of these questions in turn.
2.1.1 Defining Diagnostic Assessment

Diagnostic information is gathered through diagnostic assessment. According to Huhta (2010) diagnostic assessment in the field of language assessment is not well established. There is little research in the area, and many inconsistencies in its definition (Alderson, 2005). Alderson (2005) states that a common area of misunderstanding rests with the confusion of tests with diagnostic purposes and placement tests. Based on a synthesis of available literature, Alderson identifies the following multiple features of diagnostic tests which include: identification of learners’ language strengths and weaknesses; focus on weaknesses (areas to develop/improve upon) rather than strengths; provision of a pathway to remediation on further instruction; provision of detailed feedback which can be acted upon; provision of immediate, or almost immediate results; have little or no stakes attached to them; and, induce minimal anxiety nor other affective barriers to performance.

Alderson (2005) adds the caveat that some of these characteristics are contradictory, and that they are not to be understood as definitive features of diagnostic assessment, but rather, a delineation of a research agenda. He summarizes these characteristics to provide a working definition of diagnostic assessment in second/foreign language assessment:

Diagnostic tests are designed to identify both strengths and weaknesses in a learner’s knowledge and use of language. Focusing on strengths will enable the identification of the level that a learner has reached, and focusing on weaknesses or possible areas for improvement should lead to remediation or further instruction. Moreover, diagnostic tests should enable a detailed analysis and report of responses to tasks, and must give detailed feedback which can be acted upon. Test results and feedback should be provided as soon as possible after the test…The content of diagnostic tests may be based on material which has been covered in instruction or which will be covered shortly. Alternatively, it may be based on a detailed theory of language proficiency. (Alderson, 2005, pp. 256-257)

This definition identifies the salient features of diagnostic assessment and firmly situates it as a type of assessment for learning (Assessment Reform Group, 2002; Black & Wiliam, 1998; Earl & Katz, 2006; Stiggins, 2007).

Assessment for learning identifies a broad category of contemporary assessments practices including formative, diagnostic, and dynamic assessments. The Assessment Reform
Group (ARG) (2002) distinguishes assessment for learning from assessment of learning whose purpose is based on accountability (e.g., reporting of grades). The ARG has contributed to the theoretical underpinning of assessment for learning by introducing 10 guiding principles of this approach to assessment. According to the ARG, assessment for learning is: part of effective planning; focuses on how students learn; is central to classroom practice; is a key professional skill; has an emotional impact; affects learner motivation; promotes commitment to learning goals and assessment criteria; helps learners know how to improve; encourages self-assessment; recognizes all achievements. These principles highlight that assessment for learning is not solely teacher driven, but rather, its successful facilitation rests on the interaction with, and engagement of, learners in the process (e.g., through self-assessment).

The terms assessment for learning and formative assessment are often used interchangeably, and distinctions between diagnostic and formative assessments are sometimes opaque. In fact, Alderson’s (2005) aptly stated definition of diagnostic assessment does not necessarily highlight the differences between diagnostic and formative assessments.

The term, formative assessment, was coined by Scriven in 1967 in the field of program evaluation to distinguish it from summative assessments and since Black and Wiliam’s (1998) seminal review of empirical investigations of formative assessment, the term and concept have garnered much interest. Broadly, it is an assessment that informs teaching and learning (Dann, 2002). Therefore, the main focus is on the influence of the assessment on classroom practices, but not necessarily the processes through which they occur (Dann, 2002; Leung, 2004). Frey and Schmitt (2007) make the distinction that formative assessment often refers to the formation of behaviours that promote learning, not the formation of learning itself. While there is no single comprehensive list of the characteristics of formative assessment, six key attributes emerge throughout the literature: 1) Information from assessments are used to improve teaching; 2) Learners receive feedback; 3) Teachers and students share learning goals; 4) Students are involved as self- and peer-assessors; 5) Students play an active role in learning (not passive recipients); 6) Marking is only in the form of comments (Black, 2009; Black & Wiliam, 1998, 2008; Black et al, 2003; Harlen & Winter, 2004; Rea-Dickins & Gardner, 2000; Rea-Dickins, 2001; Wiliam, 2000).

There are many commonalities among this list of characteristics of formative assessment and the qualities of diagnostic assessment. However, one of the primary distinctions rests with
the conception that diagnostic assessments allow inferences to be made about learners’ cognitive skill development, and are based on theoretical models of language learning (Huhta, 2010; Jang, 2005; 2009; Leighton, 2009); formative assessments lack this theoretical basis.

Huhta (2010) offers an approach to compare diagnostic and formative assessments using two bases of comparison: the underlying rationale (e.g., theory based), and the quality and quantity of feedback. Huhta compares diagnostic and formative assessments along two continua: less to more detailed content and feedback, and assessment based on course or curriculum to assessment based on theory, models or frameworks. He also includes other types of assessments (placement, proficiency, summative, and dynamic) in the model. Huhta’s model illustrates that both formative and diagnostic assessments have the potential to provide information that generates detailed feedback, but formative assessment is rooted in course or curricular content, while diagnostic assessments are based on theoretical models, as mentioned above. Huhta adds that another distinguishing aspect of formative and diagnostic assessments is that the latter is concerned with identifying underlying reasons for learning problems, a feature that is not actualized in formative assessment. DRAW aims to fulfill both these purposes by targeting curricular writing goals, while rooted in theory thereby targeting this gap. In order to achieve these goals, DRAW uses a curricular-based language assessment framework as its foundation, and augments it by drawing from the theoretical literature on L2 writing.

Diagnostic assessment is exemplified on a large scale through DIALANG, a computer-based, individualized, language assessment test (Alderson, 2005; Alderson & Huhta, 2005). DIALANG is based on the scales of the Common European Framework of Reference (Council of Europe, 2001). This project illustrates the potential of using a diagnostic framework to identify learners’ master/non-mastery of skills, an approach that may be applied to the use of writing descriptors on rating scales to score writing (such as DRAW). This information may be used by teachers to serve a formative purpose (Jang, 2009) by providing teachers and students with detailed, individualized information on which they may base their actions.

Another example of a diagnostic assessment that includes a writing assessment is the Diagnostic English Language Needs Assessment (DELNA) (University of Auckland, 2014). DELNA is used to assess university students’ academic English language proficiency using tasks in reading, writing, and listening. The writing tasks assess students’ writing skills based on three broad categories: 1) Fluency, defined as coherence, cohesion, and adherence to academic style;
2) Content, which addresses the ideas in students’ writing; and 3) Grammar and Vocabulary which focuses on students’ vocabulary range, sentence structures and their accuracy, as well as spelling to a small extent. After diagnosis, students receive a description of their proficiency according to a band score accompanied by descriptions of skill performance at the band. The bands range from Band 4, as ‘very limited user’ to Band 8 and 9, ‘proficient or highly proficient user’.

Both of the aforementioned examples are diagnostic writing assessments for adult learners. There are numerous other examples of writing assessments for younger learners which are used to gather diagnostic information about students’ English language writing proficiency, but they differ in the quality of feedback that they provide. The Educational Testing Service’s (ETS) Criterion® (ETS, 2014) is an online writing evaluation system which provides immediate feedback to students and teachers using an electronic rater. Feedback is generated in six writing skills: grammar, usage, mechanics, style, organization, and development. A holistic score is provided in each category as well the number of errors made and corresponding feedback for the errors. While it has been shown that the accuracy of the feedback is comparable with human raters, one of the distinguishing characteristics appears to be the focus of the feedback. It appears that the e-rater focuses on the quality of writing such as linguistic accuracy and textual features as opposed to content (Lim & Kahng, 2012) possibly failing to adequately address the essays’ argumentation, logic or coherence. In a recent study, Long (2013) examined the differences among teacher and Criterion® generated feedback and found that teachers’ primary focus was on essay content and paid little or no attention to mechanics and style, particularly syntax and sentence length, both addressed by the e-rater. His conclusion was that both types of feedback were valuable but clearly distinguishable. Long did add the caveat that Criterion® would be less beneficial for scoring longer essays where writing features such as organization, transition, and argumentation would need to be addressed.

In summary, diagnostic assessment serves to generate information about students’ skill development that serves to guide improvement, thereby serving as assessment for learning. Importantly, diagnostic assessment is rooted with a strong theoretical foundation such that the feedback that is provided serves to address students’ cognitive skill processes and address conceptual gaps. In order for this information to serve a formative function and be beneficial in classroom contexts, it also needs to be rooted in curriculum. Also important are the key features
of the feedback that is generated that distinguish it from other types of assessment, including the idea that feedback is not provided as a total score, across multiple sub-skills to illustrate students’ differential performances across a domain. Pertinent to this research investigation is the theoretical basis of second language writing. In the next section of this chapter, I explore the nature of the L2 writing construct that is being diagnostically assessed.

2.1.2 Writing in an Additional Language

The study of second language writing is relatively new (Silva & Matsuda, 2001), and has seen rapid growth and research development in the last 35 years (Leki et al., 2008). According to Silva (2013), second language writing (which is not necessarily limited to writing in English or a second language) is the focus of over 2800 journal articles, 100 monographs, 900 doctoral dissertations, and 150 collections and proceedings. Clearly, there is great and burgeoning interest in the field. Despite the ever growing body of research the multidimensionality of this complex construct has not been captured in any single framework (Cumming, 1998, 2001a, 2002; Cumming et al, 2000). As Cumming (2001a) aptly states:

Unfortunately, as we all know, there is no generally agreed-on definition of this construct, let alone any substantiated model that is vying for this status. I know all too well myself, from having tried over several years to start to construct, with little empirical success, such a model in one setting (see Cumming & Riazi, 2000). Moreover, in recently reviewing the past 5 years’ published research… I was only able to affirm that research has recently highlighted the multidimensionality of L2 writing. (p. 214)

The importance of striving to define the writing construct has been articulated by Grabe (2001) who suggests that a model of the L2 writing construct, with wide reaching agreement, would allow for: more comparability of research findings, opportunities for convergence of research, and also a common set of descriptors and terminology. Grabe articulates the goals of describing the writing construct as striving to:

…describe what writing is; how it is carried out as a set of mental processes; how it varies (both cognitively and functionally) across tasks, settings, groups, cultures, and so forth; how it is learned (and why it is not learned); and how it leads to individual differences in performance. (p. 41)
Interestingly, this perspective looks at the influence of writing on individual students and contexts rather than the reverse or a possible bidirectional relationship. Cumming and Riazi (2000) also articulate the importance of writing models as they contribute to educational standards in teaching and learning contexts. At the same time, they alert readers that not many models of writing exist and contrast it with empirical work in oral aspects of language development.

This conversation may also be contextualized in the field of assessment by revisiting the earlier discussion about diagnostic assessments and the necessity for them to be grounded in theory. Simply put, a theory of writing would contribute to accurate and effective assessment of students’ writing ability by informing the writing sub-skills and cognitive processes to be evaluated, and on which students would be provided feedback in specific contexts and tasks. In fact, it is not only diagnostic assessments which require a robust theoretical grounding, but all assessments.

As discussed, writing is multifaceted. Understanding the construct as it relates to teaching and learning may be viewed from three broad dimensions: the text, the writer, and the sociocultural context in which the text is written (Cumming, 2001b; Hyland, 2009). Associated with each of these dimensions are micro and macro features, which together, comprise independent aspects of writing in a second language that can contribute to the teaching and learning of second language writing.

A textual orientation to understanding writing focuses on writing as a product and analyzing the features of it which contribute to its form. When texts are viewed as products, they are seen as distinct from context and the writers who create them and the readers who interpret them. As such, the text is reduced to linguistic and stylistic elements such as grammatical accuracy and clarity of expression as primary criteria for evaluating quality (Hyland, 2009). Accordingly, in this approach, teachers would be responding to students’ writing errors as opposed to how meaning is expressed. In some ways, this writing approach presents similarities to e-raters such as Criterion® which count lexical and syntactical attributes, and focus less on meaning of the text.

In a textual orientation, texts may also be viewed as discourse (Hyland, 2009; Ramanathan & Kaplan, 2000) in which they are no longer disembodied from the context in and
for which they are produced. Rather, the text serves a communicative function that views writing more than the sum of its surface features, but rather, as a mode of transmitting writers’ goals. In fact, it is the notion of text as discourse that contributes to an understanding of genre in writing.

Rather than viewing writing from the perspective of the text, the second dimension to teaching and learning writing considers it from the perspective of the writer (Cumming, 2001b; Hyland, 2009; Kobayashi & Rinnert, 2008). Instead of examining the features of texts that exemplify high quality or highly accomplished writing ability, this perspective considers how writers approach writing tasks, and the skills that they need to possess in order to produce high quality writing. Therefore, the focus is not on the text, but the writing process.

Within this perspective there are several ways in which writing may be viewed. One way is that of the writer as creator, i.e., an individual who engages in the creative task of writing. According to this view, a teacher’s role is to facilitate skill development by guiding, and providing opportunities to write as opposed to directing and providing models. In contrast, writing may be viewed as a cognitive process which involves non-linear recursive activities. One of the most influential of cognitive models was put forth by Flower and Hayes (1981) in which writing is identified as involving three primary sub-processes: planning, translating and reviewing. This somewhat scientific approach to writing provided a highly influential pedagogical approach that teachers adopted as they saw its potential for use with both novice and experienced writers alike (Hyland, 2009), but which was more effectively realized by the latter (Cumming, 1989; Sasaki, 2002). However, the research on the uses of these processes is sometimes contradictory which Hyland (2009) suggests can be attributed to many of the studies being limited by small sizes in singular, specific contexts. Silva (1993) summarized some of the key findings related to process-oriented writing research and suggested that, in general, L2 writers plan and reflect less than L1 writers, but they revise more frequently. Additionally, L2 writers have greater difficulty with goal-setting and producing writing.

Another cognitive model of writing that has garnered much attention is that introduced by Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987) who were prompted to offer an alternative view of writing based on what they refer to as a “bifurcation” in the literature which considers writing as both a difficult task to master, and one that is also a natural byproduct of language development. To commensurate these two contrasting views of writing as both easy and difficult, they suggested a
two model framework of writing. Bereiter and Scardamalia refer to these two models as knowledge telling and knowledge transforming.

A knowledge telling model is based on writing performance that is the result of learners’ actualization of writing skills based on competencies acquired through their social experiences. Accordingly, it explains the process of less-skilled writers who engage in less planning, and revision, and whose primary goal is a re-telling of the information that they already possess. In contrast, knowledge transforming is more complex than a simple transfer of linguistic acumen, but also a “reprocessing of knowledge” (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987, p. 5-6). This model explains the processes of more skilled writers who use writing tasks as opportunities to engage in analyzing problems, planning, goal setting, and reflection. These cognitive processes allow them to engage with the text to write and rewrite, applying new ideas.

The primary advantage of viewing writing as a cognitive process is that it shifts the focus from the production of a final piece of text, to a process which involves multiple cognitive processes which can be pedagogically supported and which recognizes individual differences in writing. At the same time, Hyland (2009) suggests that this approach is not without its problems. In particular, the approach ignores contextual influences, and does not place enough importance on writing conventions associated with different writing communities (e.g., academic writing). Similarly, Deane et al. (2008) suggest that the knowledge telling approach assumes that writing has a single goal: to express knowledge in response to a task without taking into account the reader or any other contextual variables that influence the writing. Further, it is still uncertain as to whether such cognitive, process-based approaches lead to vastly greater writing improvement (Hyland, 2009).

A third perspective on writing views it as a social act. This sociocultural view places focus on the reader (versus the text and writer that have been discussed) as the audience for writing (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996). As such, writing is seen as performance (Hyland, 2009). Hayes (1996) also proposed a socially situated view of writing based on a complete revision of the Flower and Hayes (1981) model in which motivational, contextual and learning variables were incorporated to the model to account for the individual and socio-cultural variables that contribute to writing. As Hayes explains:

…writing depends on an appropriate combination of cognitive, affective, social, and physical conditions if it is to happen at all. Writing is a communicative act that requires a
social context and a medium. It is a generative activity requiring motivation, and it is an intellectual activity requiring cognitive processes and memory. No theory can be complete that does not include all of these components. (p. 5)

Grabe (2001) asserts that Hayes’ (1996) and Grabe and Kaplan’s (1996) models of writing are strikingly similar; however, the Grabe and Kaplan model pays greater attention to the role of communicative competence (Bachman, 1990; Canale & Swain, 1980) in writing. As Grabe articulates, neither model is specific to L2 writing development and contexts.

According to Zeungler and Miller (2006), the cognitive and sociocultural views of writing are incompatible as they view learning from completely different perspectives; however efforts to integrate the two still persist (Kobayashi & Rinnert, 2008). Notably, Weir (2005) proposes a framework for a socio-cognitive approach to test validity which he applies to the assessment of second language writing (Shaw & Weir, 2007). A socio-cognitive approach brings together the cognitive dimension of language use, and views this usage as a social rather than wholly linguistic endevour. The framework for validating writing tests based on this framework involves three major temporal components: test taker characteristics, response, and score/grade qualities. Each component addresses cognitive processes and linguistic skills associated with writing, task demands (both contextual and linguistic), rating issues, consequences of scores (e.g., effect on individual, washback effects), and criterion-related values such as comparisons with other measures and with future performance (see Weir, 2005, p. 47 for the detailed, multi-componential framework).

Weir (2005) proposes a series of questions that need to be addressed by test developers or users. These questions are presented in Table 1 alongside my rephrasing of the questions for application in the context of this dissertation and the diagnostic assessment of writing for the provision of cognitive feedback.
Table 1

*Questions Posed to Test Developers and Users Based on a Socio-Cognitive Framework of Writing*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original Questions Posed by Weir (2005, pp 48-49)</th>
<th>Application of Questions to this Investigation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How are the physical/physiological, psychological and experiential characteristics of candidates addressed by the test?</td>
<td>How are the physical/physiological, psychological and experiential characteristics of students addressed by DRAW?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are the contextual characteristics of the test task and its administration situationally fair to the candidates?</td>
<td>Are the contextual characteristics of the writing tasks and its administration fair to adolescent language learners in secondary school classrooms in Ontario?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are the cognitive processes required to complete the tasks interactionally authentic?</td>
<td>Are the cognitive processes required to complete the tasks interactionally authentic?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How far can we depend on the scores on the test?</td>
<td>To what extent does DRAW provide diagnostically useful information about students’ writing skills?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What impact does the test have on its various stakeholders?</td>
<td>What impact does DRAW feedback have on teachers and students?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What external evidence is there that the test is doing a good job?</td>
<td>What external evidence is there that DRAW feedback has a positive effect on students’ writing development?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this investigation, I adopt this socio-cognitive perspective of writing as the theoretical basis for the development of DRAW. As I discussed earlier, DRAW aimed to generate cognitively diagnostic feedback targeting students’ cognitive processes and strategies. Accordingly, a view of writing from a purely textual perspective ignores this view. It limits the writing to linguistic features. While a view of writing from the writer’s perspective adopts this cognitive perspective, it ignores the intrapersonal variables that a writer brings to a text, as well as the influences of contextual variables (e.g., teachers). Writers do not write in a vacuum. Writers are not devoid of emotions, or motivation. Writers produce texts in specific contexts, for specific purposes, actions which are mediated by their intrapersonal characteristics. Therefore, I
also recognize this individuality by investigating how students’ motivation influences their perceptions and uses of DRAW generated feedback.

This brief overview of writing in a second or additional language has served as an introduction to the complexities of the writing construct and the theoretical models used to describe it. As discussed earlier and aptly articulated by Cumming (2001b), there is no single agreed upon framework that captures its multidimensionality which has implications for the diagnostic assessment of writing and provision of feedback to help students advance their writing development. It is wholly possible that striving for a singular definition of writing may not be possible because of the multiple contexts in which writing takes place, the unique relationship that readers have with writing (Hyland, 2009), the multiple genres of writing that exists, and the individual differences among learners which include (but are not limited to) affective, motivational, and cultural dimensions. At the same time, current models of writing provide a theoretical grounding for research, and are much needed, especially for diagnostic assessment (and feedback) which need(s) to have a sound, theoretical basis. Writing may be viewed from the perspective of the text, the writer, or the reader which consider the surface features of writing, cognitive dimensions, and socio-cultural perspectives respectively. It should also be acknowledged that these theoretical models are rooted in L1 writing with limited applicability to L2 contexts. A socio-cognitive framework brings together the three theoretical views of writing (although some believe them to be incommensurate), and is the theoretical approach adopted in this research study.

Thus far, I have explored various dimensions of diagnostic assessment and the construct of writing that is to be assessed. Therefore, the discussion has focused on what is being assessed and how, leaving the third facet of the relationship still to be examined: use which is, of course, related to feedback. This final facet is associated with the third question I posed in relation to the research assumptions: What constitutes cognitive feedback that is generated from diagnostic assessment? An exploration of theoretical issues related to this question is addressed in the next sub-section.
2.1.3 Generating Cognitively Diagnostic Feedback (CDF)

I began this chapter by discussing my interest in investigating the impact of CDF on learners’ writing development. In this forthcoming discussion, I situate CDF within the feedback literature and discuss its characteristics.

Feedback can be characterized according to a variety of types and modes of delivery (e.g., oral, written). Feedback on students’ writing may be categorized as direct (or corrective) in which writers’ errors are explicitly identified alongside its corrected form. In contrast, if errors are identified, but the correct form is not provided, the feedback is characterized as indirect (or facilitative) (Bitchener, Young, & Cameron, 2005; Black & Wiliam, 1998). The delivery of indirect feedback is sometimes accompanied by linguistic error codes which teachers use to both draw students’ attention to the errors, and also facilitate the process of giving feedback. This practice can be extremely demanding and time-consuming for teachers. The possible downside of using error codes is that students may perceive them to be too cryptic or indirect; therefore, not leading to improvements in students’ writing (Ferris, 2003). The research remains inconclusive about the benefits of direct versus indirect feedback over time, and specifically which type will lead to greater accuracy in students’ writing. However, there are numerous studies on L2 writing that purport that there are increased benefits of indirect feedback (Ferris et al., 2000; Ferris & Helt, 2000; Lalande, 1982). At the same time, Chandler (2003) suggests that direct error correction results in more accurate revisions, although students believe that they learn less from them.

One of the most pressing issues regarding feedback is its efficacy. Despite the potential ‘power’ of feedback (Hattie and Timperely, 2007), numerous studies have found feedback to be either unbeneficial or even detrimental to learning (Kluger & DeNisi, 1996; Mory, 2004) citing concerns with feedback that lacks specificity and feedback that is focused on grades, particularly in relation to others (Butler, 1987; Kluger & DeNisi, 1996). Kluger and DeNisi’s (1996) meta-analysis of feedback interventions also revealed a negative impact of feedback that does not address goal setting, is discouraging, is delivered orally, praises, and threatens students’ self-esteem. In another publication, Bitchener et al. (2005) report on the accuracy of the use of targeted linguistic forms resulting from three feedback conditions: oral, direct written, and no feedback. These conditions did not demonstrate statistically significant effects on accuracy when the target linguistic error categories were not differentiated.
Guénette (2007) discusses some of the controversies and debates over the effectiveness of corrective feedback (e.g., Fathman & Wally, 1990; Ferris, 2004; Ferris & Roberts, 2001; Truscott, 1996). She suggests that the discrepancies in the research may be attributed to methodological and research design differences which use and consider different variables in studying outcomes (e.g., proficiency level, tasks). Hyland and Hyland (2006) agree with this evaluation suggesting that some feedback research (particularly on types of feedback) has produced conflicting findings due to differences in student populations, types of writing tasks used, types of feedback generated, and varying research methods.

Biber, Nekrasova, and Horn’s (2011) meta-analysis of the effectiveness of feedback specifically for L2 writing development uncovered three general findings: 1) English language learners are receptive to feedback from multiple sources (in addition to teachers); 2) Feedback on content is as valuable as feedback on form; and 3) Written comments are a more effective form of feedback than error identification even when the focus of the task is on development of grammatical accuracy. As stated in the introduction to this chapter, their extensive review does not discuss cognitive feedback indicating a lack of attention to it in L2 writing and feedback research.

The review of much of the literature on feedback reveals a tendency to focus on learning outcomes (e.g., right or wrong binary decisions) rather than cognitive processes and strategies (Jang & Wagner, 2014). There is an overreliance on knowledge and accuracy and learners are left without direction guidance on how to advance their performance (Butler & Winne, 1995). Cognitive feedback (Balzer et al., 1989; Butler & Winne, 1995) lies in contrast to such feedback, by directing learners to gaps in their performance based on their cognitive processing and strategy use (Butler & Winne, 1995). Furthermore, cognitive feedback can also address students’ beliefs (Butler & Winne, 1995) which directs students to gaps in their conceptual misunderstanding.

The term cognitively diagnostic assessment (Jang & Wagner, 2014) refers to cognitive feedback that is generated from diagnostic assessment of students’ performance based on learners’ mastery (or non-mastery) of cognitive processes and strategies. By targeting students’ cognitive processing, CDF also contributes facilitating the development of their self-regulated competence. As Butler and Winne (1995) explain:
For all self-regulated activities, feedback is an inherent catalyst. As learners monitor their engagement with tasks, internal feedback is generated by the monitoring process. That feedback describes the nature of outcomes and the qualities of the cognitive processing that led to those states. We hypothesize that more effective learners develop idiosyncratic cognitive routines for creating internal feedback while they are engaged with academic tasks. For example, by setting a plan for engaging in a task, a learner generates criteria against which successive states of engagement can be monitored. In some cases, when a discrepancy exists between current and desired performance, self-regulated learners seek feedback from external sources such as peers' contributions in collaborative groups, teachers' remarks on work done in class, and answer sections of textbooks. (p. 246)

CDF bears some similarities to a class of feedback referred to as ‘formative feedback’ and which is defined as information that serves to guide learning by communicating feedback that modifies students’ thinking or behaviour (Nicol & MacFarlane-Dick, 2006; Sadler, 1998; Shute, 2008). Formative feedback is not limited to written or oral feedback in any particular learning domain. Rather, it serves to enhance learning by targeting the development of students’ conceptualizations and skills. Based on a review of feedback research (albeit not in the field of second language studies), Shute (2008) puts forth a set of guidelines describing the characteristics of formative feedback which should: focus on the task, not the learner; focus on cognitive feedback to enhance learning as opposed to error correction; be scaffolded or presented in manageable chunks; be clear and specific and linked to goals; be simple; help learners make the connection between performance and goals; be unbiased; promote a “learning” goal orientation; and, be provided after students have completed tasks.

The comparison between cognitive and formative feedback raises similar issues as those discussed earlier regarding formative and diagnostic assessment. The primary defining characteristic of formative feedback is that it serves to improve students’ performance by targeting their knowledge and skills. However, there is no discussion of the grounding of the feedback, and whether it should be situated in curriculum or theoretical conceptions or both.

Hattie and Timperely (2007) use the terms feed up, feedback, and feed forward to describe the dimensions of a feedback loop that concretizes the relationship between teaching and learning and assessment in the classroom to lead to positive change. Figure 1 illustrates the
interrelationships and demonstrates how feedback is integral to learners’ skill and cognitive development at all stages of learning.

Associated with ‘feeding up’ is the process of goal setting in which students (and teachers) set goals for learning (and instruction) to advance skill development. Progress made towards those goals is assessed through a variety of classroom-based methods and subsequent ‘feed back’ is delivered to address the gaps between students’ goals and their current level of achievement. Subsequently, students and teachers engage in planning to address the gaps leading to positive change, and the cycle continues. It is the hypothesis and foundational assumption underlying this research investigation that it is through the provision and use of cognitively diagnostic feedback that the potential of feedback in this loop can be fully realized to advance students’ writing development.

Three questions guide the feedback processes in the multidimensional feedback loop. These questions: Where am I going?; How am I going to get there?; and Where to next? may operate at one of four levels: task performance; process of understanding how to do a task; regulatory or metacognitive process; and at the self/personal level (Hattie & Timperley, 2007).
The task and process understanding levels refer to the cognitive processing underlying the task. In other words, they relate to the knowledge and skills required to understand and perform the task. The metacognitive processes are related to self-regulatory processes related to learning and engaging in tasks (and with feedback), while the final level places an evaluative and affective focus on the individual learner. Ultimately, feedback (and the decision to use it) is situated in a reflective self-regulatory process which Winne (2001) describes as a process of metacognitive monitoring.

Metacognitive monitoring is the key to self-regulating one’s learning (Butler & Winne, 1995; Winne, 1996, 1997) because without the cognitive evaluations it creates about differences between a current profile of work on a task and goals that specify standards for a satisfactory product, there is no guidance about how to regulate learning. (p. 159)

Metacognitive monitoring is a central component of self-regulatory behaviours and provides a pathway to understanding the effects of feedback on students. There are four phases involved in metacognitive monitoring, all of which involve information processing (Winne, 2001). In the first phase, learners perceive a task by processing information related to it. In the second phase, learners set goals and create a strategy for addressing those goals. Phase three involves actually proceeding with actions related to accomplishing the task. A fourth phase is an optional phase; in this phase learners may make adaptations to their plans that structure their self-regulatory behaviours (Winne, 2001).

Central to these self-regulatory behaviours is learners’ perception during processing (Ilgen, Fisher, & Taylor, 1979; Rakoczy et al., 2013). Ilgen, Fisher and Taylor (1979) applied these ideas specifically to feedback processing and proposed a four-stage model of the effect of feedback on individuals involving: perception of feedback; acceptance of feedback; desire to respond to feedback, and intended response. The first stage, perception, is related to an individual’s perception of the accuracy of provided feedback. Subsequently, acceptance of the feedback follows, based on the individual’s perception. Individuals may choose to accept the feedback (or reject it) based on their belief of its accuracy regardless of the veracity of their belief. The desire to respond is the third stage of feedback which can be influenced by numerous factors. As I have discussed, this dissertation explores the hypothesis that individuals’ learning
orientations influence this response. The fourth stage of this feedback framework is categorized as intended response and makes an explicit connection between feedback and goal-setting.

These models of perceptions and individuals’ information processing during task engagement provides a pathway to understanding the students’ responses to CDF. Accordingly, the framework presented in Figure 2 illustrates this process and provides framework for measuring students’ responses to CDF.

![Figure 2. A Framework of DRAW Feedback Processing.](image)

In summary, feedback in writing is complex with multiple facets which include: the characteristics of the feedback, the purposes for which it is generated and delivered, and its source. Feedback research across all learning domains (not necessarily limited to L2 writing) has demonstrated that not all types of feedback interventions have the desired outcome of advancing students’ writing development. To a great extent, the literature on L2 writing feedback research has focused on the effectiveness of feedback, and specifically corrective feedback which has resulted in mixed findings. Furthermore, the focus remains predominately on learning outcomes
rather than cognitive processes and strategies. Research on cognitive feedback in L2 writing remains scant, and many questions regarding feedback in L2 writing research remain unanswered (Hyland & Hyland, 2006). These gaps have guided my path in this dissertation. At this point in the discussion, I now revisit the original question posed at the outset of this section: What constitutes cognitive feedback that is generated from diagnostic assessment?

One of the primary challenges in generating and providing CDF is that there is no theoretical basis for it. As such, the development of DRAW is much needed and can fulfill this purpose by drawing from the literature to: 1) Address both students’ strengths and areas for development; 2) Target features of writing to initiate cognitive skill development versus knowledge acquisition; and 3) Promote autonomy in the writing process through students’ self-generation and use of feedback. Jang and Wagner (2014) present a starting point for the development of such a theory by consolidating the various features of feedback and agencies involved along a continuum ranging from evaluative feedback at one end and cognitive feedback at the other.

Generating CDF necessitates identifying writing sub-skills on which students will be given feedback. It is imperative to identify writing skills that students need to master in order to produce high-quality writing as opposed to characterizing quality writing through assessment of various skills (Deane et al., 2008). Furthermore, this research is situated in a specific curricular context in which students are learning and in which they will have to write a high-stakes, standardized literacy exam; therefore writing skills that are relevant to and integral for use in such curricular contexts need to be explored.

Many different writing skills that have been used in rating scales to assess L2 writing. A wide range of these resources were reviewed and the writing sub-skills employed in them were compiled and summarized in Appendix A. The sources reviewed and cited in Appendix A are primarily based on rating scales used in higher education contexts and those used for placement purposes (including major standardized exams), but a few represent scales used in secondary learning contexts. Furthermore, both holistic and analytic scales are included in the summary. The use of a holistic scale results in the provision of feedback as a single score based on a holistic impression of writing skills, while analytic scales allow raters to evaluate different writing sub-skills separately, thereby producing multiple scores.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluative</th>
<th>Cognitive</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Purpose</strong></td>
<td>To reward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To punish</td>
<td>To improve performance</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Content</strong></td>
<td>Summative descriptions on overall quality of student work</td>
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<td><strong>Grain size</strong></td>
<td>Coarse</td>
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<td><strong>Agency</strong></td>
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*Figure 3. Continuum of Types of Feedback (Jang & Wagner, 2014, p. 697) (Reproduced with permission from Wiley).*

Holistic scales are limited in their potential for providing diagnostic information to students (Weigle, 2002), and have been identified as being particularly detrimental for use with English language learners (Hamp-Lyons, 1995; 2007). One of the primary disadvantages of holistic scales for use with this population is that students’ writing sub-skills develop at different rates; therefore, providing a single score does not highlight their strengths, nor does it identify the areas in which they need improvement. Furthermore, interpreting the feedback from holistic ratings may be challenging for students (Weigle, 2002). In contrast, analytic scales have the potential to provide students with information about their writing performance across multiple criteria, and allow them to gain an understanding of their (potentially) differential sub-skill development. Furthermore, analytic scales may be more helpful to ELLs as they can capture students’ differential patterns of skill development (Knoch, 2009). However, analytic scales must be used as intended, i.e., multiple sub-scores should not be collapsed into a single total score.
which would diminish all of its diagnostic feedback potential. Holistic scales remain popular, particularly in high-stakes testing contexts, as they are much more cost effective (Weigle, 2002).

When compiling the information in Appendix A, I attempted to be as true as possible to the terms used in the original scales. Therefore, there is some overlap in some of the sub-skills. For example, some scales use cohesion and/or coherence as skill(s) in the place of organization, while other scales define the features differently and opt to value one, the other or both. The information in Appendix A also includes a line of ‘totals’ in which the frequency of each sub-skill used in the various scales was tallied. The totals clearly illustrate the predominance of five sub-skills used to evaluate (and consequently define) the construct of writing: content/ideas, grammar, organization, mechanics, and vocabulary. This information is pertinent to identifying the writing sub-skills on which DRAW can be based and from which cognitively diagnostic feedback is generated.

This section of the chapter has addressed key theoretical issues pertinent to the first set of research assumptions focusing on the diagnostic potential of DRAW feedback. Together, these three interrelated components address: 1) the principles of assessment on which DRAW is based; 2) the theoretical foundation of L2 writing and the sub-skills measured by DRAW; and 3) the characteristics of CDF generated by DRAW. The review has highlighted a gap in the use of diagnostic assessment in secondary contexts, a lack of attention to CDF, and has also illustrated the complexities in efforts to deconstruct L2 writing. In the next section, I examine the literature relevant to the second set of assumptions related to this investigation.

### 2.2 Relationship between Motivation and Feedback Perceptions

While the previous section explored themes related to the characteristics of DRAW feedback, this section is centralized around issues related to students’ responses and uses of DRAW feedback. In Chapter 1, I introduced three key validity assumptions that address students’ interactions with DRAW feedback: 1) Students’ responses to DRAW feedback will vary; 2) Students’ responses to DRAW feedback are influenced by motivational characteristics, and that these variables may be adequately represented by their writing anxiety, goal orientations, and self-efficacy of writing; and 3) Students will use DRAW feedback. I begin an exploration of the theoretical issues relevant to this set of assumptions with a discussion on the relationship between students’ motivation and their responses to feedback.
As far back as 1972 (Gardner & Lambert), there has been research evidence suggesting that variability in language learners’ achievement may be attributed to motivational factors and that motivation guides learners towards achieving goals. Motivation theories serve to explain the reason(s) underlying an individual’s decision making (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011) and differences in perceptions in variable contexts (Bandura, 1997; Pajares, 1996). As Dörnyei and Ushioda explain, motivation involves dynamically changing and cumulative ‘arousal’ in people that act upon their cognitive and motor processes in different ways. The study of motivational variables is at the same time both complex and limiting. It is complex because there is no single comprehensive theory of motivation that encapsulates all the facets of and relationships among motivational variables. At the same time, the use of motivational variables to explain relationships is limiting because it is unlikely that such linear models will be able to wholly capture the cognitive, affective, and contextual variables contributing to students’ behaviour (Dörnyei & Ushioda).

Dörnyei (1994) conceptualized L2 motivation in terms of three levels: language, learner, and learning situation. He explained that each of these motivational levels represented distinct components of motivation related to students’ learning. Specifically, the language refers to the facets of the second language itself including the culture, community, and associated benefits of its acquisition. The learner level referred to the individual characteristics of the language learner, and finally, the learning situation level referred to the contextual aspects of classrooms that motivate language learning in classrooms. Feedback offered by teachers is situated within this latter level, and somewhat within the language level; however, students’ individualized responses to the feedback are related to the learner level. The rationale for separating motivation into these three distinct levels was described by Dörnyei & Ushioda (2011):

…they [the three levels] seem to have a vital effect on overall motivation independently of each other; that is, by changing the parameters at one level and keeping the other two dimensions constant, the overall motivation might completely change. For example, the same learner in the same learning situation might show a strikingly different degree of motivation depending on what the target language is. Similarly, when the target language is the same, the same learner’s motivation can show vast differences as a function of the learning situation (consider, for example, the effect of a good or a bad teacher). In other words, each of the three levels of motivation exerts its influence independently of the
others and has sufficient power to nullify the effects of the motives associated with the other two levels. (pp 52-53)

Application of these conceptualized levels of motivation to this research study has the potential to guide research of individualized responses to feedback highlighting the necessity of focusing on motivation at the learner level. As the target language is English across the three contexts of study, and within each classroom level, there is consistency in the course, teacher, and group relations (within a single classroom); then, evaluating individualized responses to feedback is potentially best targeted at the learner level. At the same time, it is necessary to acknowledge that the context does have an integral role on students’ motivations, and that a focus only on learners devoid of the context in which they learn is limiting. In fact, current approaches to motivation recognize the dynamic relationship between the student and the context in which they are learning (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011; Ellis, 2007; Ushioda, 2009). Therefore, while a focus on the learner is vital to understanding students’ responses to feedback, it is also imperative to examine such individualized reactions within and in relation to the context in which they are happening.

In the field of second language writing, a focus on the role of individual differences has been neglected (Kormos, 2012). As Kormos (2012) articulates:

This lack of attention to individual factors both in SLA [second language acquisition] and L2 writing research is surprising, as writing is a complex process that requires the skilful co-ordination of a large number of cognitive and linguistic processes and resources (Hayes, 1996; Kellogg, 1996). (p. 390)

In this study, Kormos focused on the role of individual differences in the process of second language writing, and not the use of assessment feedback.

The need for a focus on individual differences in feedback research studies was highlighted by Bitchener and Ferris (2012) who suggested that investigations of learners’ cognitive and motivational profiles could serve to explain how students would benefit from different types of feedback. Ferris and Hedgcock (2005) further highlight that effectiveness of feedback can only be evaluated when also considering individual differences in learners including motivation. However, there are few studies that delve into these relationships.
Much of the motivation literature in education is concerned with the relationship between motivational constructs and achievement (and aptly uses the term ‘achievement motivation literature’ (Elliot & Dweck, 2005). In this research investigation, I was interested in the contribution of motivational variables to explain students’ relationship with feedback, and how this dynamic may ultimately contribute to achievement in students’ writing. As such, I was interested on how motivational variables can be used to contribute to an individualized understanding of feedback leading to differences in achievement. The question remains: What aspects of individuals’ motivations are integral to understanding students’ responses to feedback?

The study of motivation has focused on both cognitive processes (e.g., goals, self-efficacy), as well on learners’ affective characteristics. It is the relationship between motivation and goal setting that presents an ideal avenue into investigating individualized responses to feedback, because it is through an understanding of students’ goal structures of language learning motivation that students’ responses to and pursuit of specific choices may be investigated (Ushioda, 1998). Therefore, motivation may be conceptualized as students’ efforts towards the pursuit of goals. Furthermore, goal setting is one of the primary processes necessary for self-regulated learning (Pintrich, 2000; Zimmerman, 2008) and has influence on students’ motivation (Kormos, 2012).

Self-regulated learning is an active process of learner goal setting followed by attempts to monitor, regulate, and control cognition, motivation and behaviour (Pintrich, 2000). According to Pintrich & De Groot (1990) understanding individual differences in students' classroom performance and engagement rests in understanding the connection between the components of self-regulation and motivation. They suggest that motivation comprises three primary components:

(a) an expectancy component, which includes students’ beliefs about their ability to perform a task, (b) a value component, which includes students’ goals and beliefs about the importance and interest of the task, and (c) an affective component which includes students’ emotional reactions to the task. (p. 33)

Highly relevant to this dissertation is the component of this theoretical framework that addresses students’ goals. Students seek feedback in order to address learning goals (Ashford &
Cummings, 1983), a process which may be extensively influenced by their goal orientations (VandeWalle & Cummings, 1997). Furthermore, effectiveness of feedback may depend on their relationship with students’ personal goals (Rakoczy, Harks, Klieme, Blum & Hochweber, 2013). Accordingly, students’ goal orientations (Dweck, 1986) provide a framework through which issues of motivation may be investigated.

Goal orientations refer to individual’s development or demonstration of ability and may be conceptualized in terms of performance standards (Locke & Latham, 1990) or as dimensions of personality which result in differential reactions in learning and achievement contexts (Dweck, 1986; Dweck & Leggett, 1988). According to this latter framework, learners can hold a mastery or performance goal orientation toward tasks. Mastery-oriented learners tend to enjoy challenging tasks to enhance their skills and competence whereas performance-oriented learners aim to demonstrate their competence to others seeking positive responses (performance prove orientation) or avoiding negative judgements (performance avoid orientation) (VandeWalle, 2003; VandeWalle, Cron, Slocum Jr, 2003).

The difference between mastery- and performance-oriented learners is further exhibited in their responses to feedback, particularly when faced with challenging tasks. Mastery-oriented learners seek these challenging tasks (they are often bored when a task is not demanding), and look for feedback as they engage with them (Jang & Wagner, 2014). Furthermore, this learning orientation is associated with an incremental theory of learning in which ability is considered to be malleable; that is, a learner’s ability can be developed through persistence and effort (VandeWalle, 2003).

In contrast, performance-oriented learners want to demonstrate their success by avoiding challenging tasks; these learners simply want to avoid failure (Jang & Wagner, 2014). Performance-oriented learners prefer outcome feedback (Dweck & Leggett, 1988). Descriptive, CDF that targets their areas for improvement may be perceived as threatening to their self-esteem and incite anxiety (Jang & Wagner, 2014). Performance-oriented learners may view ability as a fixed entity (Bandura & Dweck, 1985; VandeWalle, 2003) reflecting a low self-perception of their abilities. Furthermore, because performance-oriented learners tend to view ability as a fixed, the effort that they expend may be limited while mastery orientated learners tend to equate expenditure of effort with success. (VandeWalle, 2003). VandeWalle (2003) succinctly explains the differences in different learners’ responses to feedback:
With a learning [mastery] goal orientation, there is a tendency to view feedback as useful, diagnostic information about how to correct errors and how to develop the competencies needed for task mastery (Farr, 1993). With a performance goal orientation, however, feedback is viewed as an evaluation and judgment about the self and revealing of one’s competency level (Bobko & Colella, 1994; Kanfer, 1990). Negative feedback can be especially devastating when one holds a strong performance goal orientation because such an unfavorable judgment conflicts with the goal of appearing competent. (p. 585)

At the same time, conceptions of performance orientations are often based on ‘normative standard of competence’ (Elliot & Moller, 2003) in that the focus of goals is achievement relative to others.

VandeWalle (2003) synthesised research in the field of goal orientation and feedback (although not in the context of second language research), and provided both a summary and conjectures of the different ways in which performance- and mastery-oriented learners respond to feedback. Specifically, VandeWalle (2003) considered differences in learners’ frequency of feedback-seeking, methods and timing of seeking feedback, types of feedback sought, and sources of feedback. In general, the research indicated that mastery-oriented learners tend to seek feedback more frequently than performance-oriented learners, a finding that can be attributed to the associated cost and value (e.g., error correction, task failure) of the feedback seeking. VandeWalle distinguished two methods of feedback seeking behaviour: monitoring and inquiry. Monitoring refers to the process of gathering feedback information through a process of observation from the environment and of others. Inquiry, as the term suggests, involves an active process of seeking and asking for feedback. Performance-oriented learners tend to favour the monitoring process as a method of seeking feedback, because of the potential costs associated with negative feedback, while mastery-oriented learners engage in both types of processes. Further, while mastery-oriented learners prefer the feedback to be immediate, performance-oriented learners do not always desire such immediacy, particularly after a negative performance. The reason for this difference rests in the finding that performance-oriented learners do not seek negative feedback after unfavourable performances.

As discussed above, feedback may address students’ outcomes or target cognitive processes and strategies. According to VandeWalle’s (2003) synthesis, performance-oriented
learners prefer outcome feedback, while mastery oriented learners favour the cognitive feedback. This finding is related to the preference for the timing of feedback sought by these two types of learners. As discussed, performance-oriented learners prefer immediate feedback only after favourable performances and delayed feedback after unfavourable ones. Therefore, feedback on processes is potentially less needed and less beneficial after a successful performance. Finally, VandeWalle asserts that mastery-oriented learners seek feedback from experts, while performance-oriented learners have less interest in the level of expertise of the person providing feedback. It is suggested that the reason for this difference is that performance-oriented learners prefer that their errors not be recognized, and a person with less expertise would be less likely to recognize them. In the classroom context, this may translate to performance-oriented learners being more favourable to peer and self-assessments than master-oriented learners.

VandeWalle’s (2003) distinctions between mastery and performance-oriented in their responses to feedback places these learners at somewhat extreme opposites of a continuum from an adaptive response pattern seeking frequent immediate, process-oriented feedback from experts to a maladaptive response pattern of seeking low frequency, outcome feedback from sources other than experts. Seemingly, there is an implication that performance goals should not be pursued (Elliot & Moller, 2003; Sideridis, 2003). However, there are two important and relevant points that need to be raised. First, VandeWalle’s (2003) findings were based on a multitude of empirical research from both education and the business sector, and all the implications discussed are directed to a managerial context. Second, and as VandeWalle (2003) also acknowledges, these two goal orientations are not mutually exclusive. In other words, learners may at the same time possess varying combinations of high and low levels of the two performance and mastery orientations. As VandeWalle (1999) articulates:

The pursuit of performance goals is not completely negative for performance. Rather, the problem with a performance goal orientation arises when a focus on validating ability becomes so important that it drives out learning goals (Dweck, 1999). The dominance of a performance goal orientation can be especially problematic when a task is dynamic and complex, new skills must be learned, and the transfer of learned skills to a new task is required. (p. 584)
In this recent discussion, I have discussed a dichotomy between mastery and performance goal orientations, and have not delved into the distinctions between the two types of performance orientations (i.e., performance prove and performance avoid) introduced and discussed earlier. Elliot and Moller (2003) conducted an extensive review of literature on performance goal orientation examining the construct thorough empirical, theoretical, and meta-theoretical approaches revealing mixed findings on their influence on motivation. In other words, adopting performance goal approaches have potentially positive as well as negative consequences. From the empirically-based literature they provided several key findings from the review including: 1) performance prove orientations have a direct relationship with several positive variables including: “challenge construal, competence valuation, effort, performance aspirations, performance attainment, self-efficacy, and surface processing (which is adaptive in many achievement contexts)” (p. 341); and 2) Performance orientations have a ‘null relationship’ with variables such as feedback seeking, anxiety, and self-regulation of learning. Elliot and Moller summarize their findings by suggesting that while performance prove goals show both positive and negative relationships with some variables and there are also likely some negative consequences of adopting these goals, the empirical evidence supporting their negative impact is not significant and needs further research.

Elliot and Moller’s (2003) theoretical analysis of performance goal orientations suggests that performance prove goals provide individuals with motivation through competence feedback which is both valuable yet also positions people as vulnerable. For example, they may distract individuals from pursuing mastery orientations in a drive for performance-related achievement. Finally, a meta-theoretical perspective places performance prove goals in a highly positive light.

The mixed effects of performance prove goals on motivation has been further discussed in literature (Urdan, 2010) with some research pointing to a positive impact of performance prove goal orientations on various outcomes such as self-efficacy, self-regulation, and achievement (e.g., Elliot & Harackiewicz, 1996; Roeser, Midgely, & Urdan, 1996; Wolters, Yu, & Pintrich, 1996), with others indicating a negative impact (e.g., Elliot & Dweck, 1988; Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Urdan & Midgley, 2003) on aspects such as affect, and cognitive processing. Further, there is no clear and definitive characterization of the performance prove construct (Elliot, 2005; Urdan, 2010). Definitions range from constructions that may include ability goals, outcome goals, and normative goals. Further, performance prove goals are sometimes treated as
stable and static, and variable at other times (Urdan, 2010). Additionally, some research has been conducted in laboratory settings with participants engaging in prescribed tasks, while other investigations have been conducted in authentic classroom contexts (Barron & Harackiewicz, 2001). Such variance may contribute to the mixed findings.

Another interesting and noteworthy aspect of performance prove goals is the mixed relationship that exists with mastery goals. Understanding these complexities contributes to understanding how students perceive DRAW feedback. As discussed, many research investigations clearly delineate performance and mastery goals; however significant and positive relationships between performance prove and mastery goals have also been uncovered (Elliot & Church, 1997; Harackiewicz, Barron, & Elliot, 1998; Barron & Harackiewicz, 2001) possibly indicating that these goal orientations are pursued simultaneously (Urdan, 2010). Accordingly, such a multiple goal perspective is incommensurate with the notion of adaptive versus maladaptive consequences of adopting mastery or performance prove goal orientations respectively but endorses the theory that pursuit of both of these goals is most adaptive (Barron & Harackiewicz, 2001).

Barron and Harackiewicz (2001) propose four hypotheses to explain the possible interactions among performance and mastery goal orientations. The first, additive goal hypothesis, suggests that mastery and performance goals will have independent and positive effects on an achievement outcome. An interactive goal hypothesis purports that the adoption of both mastery and performance goals has an additive effect in that students possessing both these goals are advantaged in the pursuit of their achievement goals. A third hypothesis, specialized goal hypothesis, conjectures that mastery and performance goals have ‘specialized’ impact on different outcomes (e.g., interest in a topic, achievement scores). Finally, Barron and Harackiewicz (2001) propose a selective goal hypothesis which suggests that students choose the most relevant goal, either performance or mastery, at different times (rather than simultaneously) in order to maximize the potential advantages in specific contexts and for various purposes. These results are perhaps best summarized by Urdan (2010) who stated:

From the research examining multiple goals, it appears that mastery goals are predictive of some outcomes and performance goals are predictive of others…More research on the combined effects of mastery and performance goals, over time, under success and failure
conditions, and with populations of different ages is needed before conclusions can be drawn. (p. 542)

Furthermore, these research investigations have focused on achievement outcomes rather than the effects of multiple goals on the receipt and use of assessment feedback in classrooms. Accordingly, there is a need to pursue further investigations into the influence of performance prove goals on motivations, as well as its relationship with mastery goal orientations, and particularly in the area of feedback use.

Through the review of relevant literature, the discussion thus far has attempted to highlight the importance of the study of goal orientations and their potential role in understanding students’ motivations and responses to feedback. Integral to understanding students’ motivation to use feedback is also students’ beliefs about learning and themselves. These self-efficacy beliefs contribute to shaping and moderating students’ moderating goals (e.g., performance or mastery orientations) (Bandura, 1997) and learning (Elliott & Dweck, 1988). In general, higher self-efficacy has been related to mastery goal orientations (Middleton & Midgley, 1997; Midgley & Urdan, 1995; Pajares, Britner, & Valiante, 2000) while lower self-efficacious beliefs are associated with performance avoidance goal orientations (Hidi & Harackiewicz, 2000; Middleton & Midgley, 1997; Pajares et al., 2000). Therefore, examining self-efficacy is integral to understanding students’ motivational profiles (Bong, 2004; 2008).

Motivational constructs cannot be limited to cognitive traits. The importance of affective variables and their contribution to understanding students’ motivations in academic contexts is a relationship which has been frequently ignored (Turner, Meyer & Schweinle, 2003). As Graham (1991) articulated:

A viable theory of motivation for educational psychology must be able to incorporate emotions. After all, the classroom is a place of multiple affective experiences with motivational significance, including those feelings associated with achievement success or failure, as well as acceptance or rejection by others. (p. 16)

Anxiety has been demonstrated to be negatively related to performance (e.g., Pintrich & De Groot, 1990). However, Seipp’s (1991) meta-analysis of anxiety and academic performance indicated that this relationship is quite complicated, and in fact, her findings showed that the correlation between these two constructs ranged from extreme negative to positive. In another
study, Rouxel (1999) demonstrated that the role of anxiety on performance is dependent upon students’ domain knowledge. Drawing from secondary students’ self-reports, Fox and Cheng (2007) found that secondary school language learners experienced more anxiety during a high-stakes test, than their first language counterparts. Clearly, the role of anxiety plays *some* role, but the nature of that role remains unclear. Furthermore, classroom learning involves a complex set of interactions in an environment which includes both cognitive and social elements (Ellis, 2007). Consequently, these contexts are rife with emotions which cannot be ignored in an examination of individual’s motivations. In fact, context has a pivotal role on every facet of assessment (Jang, 2014).

Bronfenbrenner (1994) suggests that learners are affected by different systems around them. These ‘ecological’ systems include the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem which describe the environment around learners. Each system moves progressively away from the learner who is at the centre suggesting less immediate influence of the system on the individual. Jang (2014) applied this theory to a teaching, learning and assessment context. Accordingly, the microsystem includes a student’s peers, parents and teachers. This system has the most direct influence and impact on a student. The second level, the mesosystem, involves the interactions between the components of the mesosystem. Therefore, this system includes home and school. The subsequent systems move further away from the student and include the community and extended family (exosystem), and finally, educational policy, assessment culture, and cultural beliefs (macrosystem). Any part of the system can have a negative or positive impact on learners. It is important to recognize that teachers and classrooms are in the two closest levels to students thereby having the most direct influence on students contributing to the context in which students’ motivations are realized (and influenced).
In summary, students’ motivational profiles may be used to investigate students’ responses to feedback. The constructs that comprise these profiles include both cognitive and affective components situated in specific learning contexts. In general, there has been a lack of attention paid to individual variables in second language learning contexts (Kormos, 2012) and particularly in students’ use of feedback. Figure 4 provides a summary of the relationships discussed in this section of the chapter. I now focus on discussing literature related to the next set of assumptions.

2.3 Power of Feedback

The purpose of generating DRAW feedback and investigating its use by students was ultimately related to understanding its effects on tenth grade ESL students’ writing development with the assumption that this feedback will positively affect students’ writing development. The
theoretical issues that underpin this assumption have, for the most part, been already discussed as this assumption marries many of aforementioned topics and issues. Essentially, this assumption is about the power of CDF (generated from DRAW) to affect students’ writing in a positive way. Therefore, one of the theoretical issues underlying this assumption is the characteristics of effective feedback. These features have been discussed, and in fact, are the foundational components of this study as I put forth the assumption that feedback generated from DRAW possesses the diagnostic potential (in comparison to other feedback sources) to advance students’ writing.

A second theoretical component integral to this assumption pertains to students’ use of CDF generated from DRAW. In the previous section, I reviewed various motivational factors that contribute to understanding students’ individualized responses to feedback.

A third facet of this assumption is related to L2 writing and the question of how to measure writing development. As this study is, in part, devoted to the development of an assessment rubric, its use for tracking students’ writing development is warranted. Other commonly used criteria for evaluating writing development are devoted to textual features such as grammatical accuracy, and counting changes in aspects of the writing such as number of clauses per T-unit, content words, and modalities (Leki et al., 2008; Hyland, 2009). While valuable, this approach disengages the text from the reader and places a focus on error correction rather than cognitive feedback.

Certainly, writing development is directly related to how writing is taught and assessed. For example, in a process approach to writing, development can be measured not only within a single script, but across drafts. The features within each text whether it be grammatical accuracy, fluency, organization, or complexity (to name a few) that can be used to assess writing and provide feedback are the same that may be used to evaluate development. The set of assumptions being investigated address the central role of teachers as agents of assessment and as an integral part of students’ learning context.

2.4 Teachers’ Assessment Beliefs and Feedback Practices

In Chapter 1, I discussed four assumptions related to the relationship between the use of DRAW in secondary school ESL classrooms, and teachers’ roles as assessors and classroom
agents. The first two assumptions were related to some of the factors that would possibly contribute to teachers’ responses to, and uses of DRAW, specifically, their beliefs and assessment practices. I articulated the first assumption as: Teachers possess individualized beliefs about assessment and qualities of ‘good’ writing that contributes to their assessment and feedback practices. The second assumption stated: Teachers’ writing feedback practices may be dependent on their diagnostic competence for assessing writing. The third assumption focused on the integral role that teachers have in the classroom as feedback providers, and targeted the relationship between their practices and students’ feedback beliefs. This assumption stated: The feedback that students value and use is congruent with the feedback that teachers deliver. Finally, the fourth assumption was related to the potential value of DRAW feedback to teachers. This assumption stated: DRAW provides teachers with diagnostically useful feedback about their students’ writing skill mastery. A review of the theoretical issues underpinning these assumptions is the focus of this section of Chapter 2.

As the review of the literature in this chapter has demonstrated, there is much research on feedback in second language writing including teachers’ provision of it; however, there has been little focus on the relationship between teachers’ beliefs and their feedback practices (Lee, 2008; Yin, 2010). Borg (2001) defines teachers’ beliefs as:

…a term usually used to refer to teachers’ pedagogic beliefs, or those beliefs of relevance to an individual’s teaching. The areas most commonly explored are teachers’ beliefs about teaching, learning, learners; subject matter (i.e., EFL [English as a foreign language] or language), self as a teacher, or the role of a teacher (Calderhead, 1995). (p. 187)

Notably absent from this definition is teachers’ beliefs about assessment and feedback.

Of the limited studies that have delved into this area, some interesting and noteworthy results have emerged. For example, Davison (2004) conducted a comparative study of secondary school ESL teachers’ assessment practices in Hong Kong and Australia to examine teachers’ assessment beliefs, attitudes and practices. Based on the results, Davison proposed a cline for mapping teachers’ assessment beliefs. At one end of the continuum is the teacher as **assessor as technician** referring to a belief of assessment as mechanistic and procedural. Moving along this continuum is **assessor as interpreter of the law, assessor as the arbiter of community values**, and finally, at the other end of the continuum is **assessor as God** referring to teachers who are
student-focused, and evaluate using intuition and unconcerned with inconsistencies. Possible application of these assessor profiles to writing feedback would indicate that at one extreme end of the continuum teachers writing feedback would be text-focused and based on a checklist of criteria (assessor as technician), while at the other end of the continuum teachers’ assessment practices would possibly be based on holistic impressions of students’ writing and not necessarily bound by any predetermined set of criteria. Interestingly, Yin (2010) suggests that the view of teachers as technicians elicits a notion of them as ‘instruments of assessment’ rather than agents of assessment.

In another study, Lee (2009) investigated the relationship between secondary school language teachers’ beliefs and their feedback practices and uncovered 10 mismatches between the two using data from interviews, questionnaires, and a feedback analysis of teachers’ marked scripts. These 10 mismatches were identified as: 1) Teachers pay most attention to language form but they believe there’s more to good writing than accuracy; 2) Teachers mark errors comprehensively although selective marking is preferred; 3) Teachers tend to correct and locate errors for students but believe that through teacher feedback, students should learn to correct and locate their own errors; 4) Teachers use error codes although they think students have limited ability to decipher the codes; 5) Teachers award scores/grades to student writing although they are most certain that marks/grades draw student attention away from teacher feedback; 6) Teachers respond mainly to weaknesses in student writing although they know that feedback should cover both strengths and weaknesses; 7) Teachers’ written feedback practice allows students little room to take control although teachers think students should learn to take greater responsibility for learning; 8) Teachers ask students to do one-shot writing although they think process writing is beneficial; 9) Teachers continue to focus on student written errors although they know that mistakes will recur; and 10) Teachers continue to mark student writing in the ways they do although they think their effort does not pay off.

This list of mismatches reveals that teachers are aware of what constitutes effective feedback in writing, yet their practices are not consistent with their beliefs. While this study is extremely valuable in highlighting these differences, its focus is solely on teachers as agents of assessment, and not on the effect of these practices on students’ learning and skill development.

In a subsequent investigation, Lee (2011) calls for a ‘feedback revolution’ to address these mismatches and asserts that in order for students to advance their learning, teachers need to
change their feedback practices; however Lee questions their readiness. Based on 48 teachers’ responses to a questionnaire, Lee identified a series of factors that inhibit change in their feedback practices. The obstacles to change include: lack of support from administrators and parents, constraints such as workload, doubts that change would lead to positive outcomes, and lack of training with teachers highlighting their need for professional development. This latter challenge identifies the need for teachers to have the ability to interpret and describe students’ writing development. Edelenbos and Kubanek-German (2004) refer to this ability as well as its use to inform subsequent instruction (hence contributing to students’ language development) as ‘diagnostic competence’. According to these scholars, diagnostic competence precedes assessment because it encompasses the skills that teachers need in order to be able to assess. They suggest that diagnostic competence is a combination of skills such as observing, interpreting, designing, measuring, and scaffolding, alongside a “pedagogical attitude towards the learner” (Edelenbos & Kubanek-German, 2004, p. 277). Consequently, teachers can provide meaningful, effective feedback if they possess and are able to evoke diagnostic assessment competence.

In summary, I am investigating the assumptions that pertain to teachers’ assessment beliefs and feedback practices, and their influence on shaping students’ perceptions and use of DRAW feedback. Presently, there is a gap in the language assessment literature in examining the relationships between teacher beliefs and feedback practices. Some existing research indicates that a discrepancy exists between teachers’ beliefs and practices, and also identifies a continuum on which teachers with different beliefs may be placed. Research also indicates that in order for teachers to be effective at using information to advance students’ skill development, they need to possess diagnostic competence.

2.5 Summary

I have presented and reviewed critical theoretical background relevant to the examination and evaluation of four sets of assumption being investigated in this research which subsequently informed the generation of seven inquiry questions that guided the research. Together, the assumptions and questions address the fundamental purpose of this investigation which was to examine the effects of DRAW feedback on secondary school ESL students’ writing
development. Therefore, the overarching inquiry goal was related to the validity of DRAW practice in this context.

The common thread weaving through the discussion of assumptions and related review is cognitively diagnostic feedback, and specifically, the need to investigate its contribution to second language writing development. CDF has not been studied in L2 writing, and in fact, few studies have investigated writing development in secondary language classrooms. In any feedback study, it is integral to recognize the potential mediating role of motivational variables in the receipt and perception of feedback. The next chapter presents the methodological choices I made throughout this investigation.
Chapter 3
Research Methodology

In this research study, I investigated the relationship between English language learners’ writing development and assessment feedback from a diagnostic rubric for assessing writing. Exploring such a complex, multifaceted relationship necessitated the use of a mixed methods research design to give voice to multiple stakeholders to examine the interaction of multidimensional variables in authentic teaching, learning and assessment contexts.

Mixed methods research is an approach employing both qualitative and quantitative methods of inquiry within a single study (Creswell, 2003; Greene, 2007; Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, & Turner, 2007). A mixed methods research design provides the opportunity to employ multiple methods to engage with multiple perspectives through different ways of knowing to gather evidence to evaluate validity claims.

Greene (2007) refers to the mixing of methods as a process of mixing ‘mental models’ wherein these models refer to “…the set of claims, understandings, predispositions, and values and beliefs with which a social inquirer approaches his or her work” (p. 53). Accordingly, mixed methods research invites multiple mental models within an inquiry process to collectively respond to research questions and generate an understanding of the constructs and relationships being investigated. As such, there is an acceptance that such mixing may result in converging evidence across multiple methods, but it also invites engaging with difference and juxtaposition of ideas thus contributing to contradictions and divergence. I welcomed such multiplicities, and aimed to engage with them dialectically.

3.1 Research Design Overview

The research design was guided by efforts to answer seven research questions investigating the relationship between students’ perceptions and uses of DRAW feedback and their writing development, as well as factors mediating and contributing to this relationship. These questions were based upon the key validity assumptions related to the use of DRAW in secondary classrooms. The inquiry questions guiding the research are:

1. What sub-skills and descriptors comprise a cognitively Diagnostic Rubric for Assessing Writing (DRAW) of adolescent English language learners?
2. What is the diagnostic potential of DRAW for generating cognitively diagnostic feedback about adolescent students’ writing skill development in comparison with other sources of writing feedback in secondary schools?

3. (a) What are adolescent students’ perceptions of DRAW feedback?
(b) How do adolescent students’ anxiety, self-efficacy of writing, and goal orientations interact with their perceptions of DRAW feedback?

4. To what extent do students’ perceptions of DRAW feedback affect their writing skill development?

5. What are the characteristics of secondary school teachers’ writing assessment beliefs and feedback practices?

6. To what extent are adolescent students’ perceptions of feedback writing skill performance shaped by their teacher’s assessment beliefs and feedback practices?

These research questions were addressed in two interrelated research phases. During Phase 1, DRAW was developed and its diagnostic potential was investigated in comparison to other sources of writing feedback used in secondary classrooms. In the second phase of the research investigation, students’ and teachers’ perceptions and uses of DRAW were investigated, as well as the effect of DRAW on students’ writing development. Such complex research purposes necessitated the use of multiple methods with the results synthesized and integrated at all stages.

Mixed methods research designs are applied in many disciplines and sectors including the health sciences and nursing, evaluation, and of course, education (Creswell, 2009; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Within these fields of study, numerous mixed methods typologies have emerged including: initiation, expansion, development, complementarity, triangulation (Greene, Caracelli & Graham, 1989); holistic, transformative, and iterative (Greene & Caracelli, 1997); parallel mixed model and sequential mixed model (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998); sequential exploratory, sequential explanatory, and concurrent nested (Creswell, Plano Clark, Gutman, & Hanson, 2003; Creswell, 2009), and transformative (Mertens, 2010). Each of these designs has specific features characterized by the purposes for which methods are mixed, the timing or sequence in which different qualitative and quantitative data are collected, the weight or priority that is given to the different methods; and how and when mixing actually happens (Creswell,
The purposes of this research design intersected with more than one of the mixed methods typologies, specifically, expansion, complementarity and triangulation.

Greene et al. (1989) state that the reason to use an expansion mixed methods design is to “extend the scope, breadth, and range of inquiry by using different methods for different inquiry components” (p. 269). As the relationships being investigated were complex, involved multiple types of agents (i.e., students and teachers), and took place in an authentic setting, the use of different and multiple methods were used to provide a comprehensive understanding of the perceptions and uses of DRAW in secondary school classrooms and its impact on students’ writing development.

Mixed methods for complementarity also informed the research design in this study. Through complementarity, results from one method are used to elaborate on or expand findings from another method (Jang, Wagner & Park, 2014). Surveys were used to gather students’ perceptions of DRAW feedback, and understand their learning orientation profiles. The constructs underlying these data were also understood through interviews with students. Furthermore, students’ use of DRAW feedback contributing to their writing development was evaluated both through analysis of students’ writing scripts at different time points, as well as through analyses of interviews, and survey data. Accordingly, a complementarity design provided the opportunity to gather different types of data to inform multiple interrelated aspects of the research questions. Therefore, different types of analyses were mixed to integrate and synthesize findings across methods. No priority was given to any one type of data.

Finally, data across both phases of the research investigation were used for triangulation purposes. Namely, the evidence from different types of data sources were used to confirm findings, and provide a complete response to the research questions. Table 2 summarizes the multiple facets of the research design including the data sources associated with each research question, the participants involved, and the data analysis strategies employed. Following this summary, I discuss the developmental work that initiated this research investigation before delving into the details of each of the design phases. It should be noted that pseudonyms have been used in place of the names of the participants, and the names of schools, locations, and some data sources have been withheld to ensure their anonymity.


Table 2

**Overview of Research Design**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Research Questions</th>
<th>Data Sources</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Analyses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1     | What sub-skills and descriptors comprise a cognitively Diagnostic Rubric for Assessing Writing (DRAW) of adolescent English language learners? | • Steps to English Proficiency Assessment Framework  
• Published L2 writing rating scales  
• Teachers’ feedback | Teachers (N=3) | • Iterative process of identifying writing traits and descriptors relevant to the ESL classroom |
|       | What is the diagnostic potential of DRAW for generating cognitively diagnostic feedback about adolescent students’ writing skill development in comparison with other sources of writing feedback in secondary schools? | • Exemplars of writing rubrics  
• Students’ pre-measure writing scripts based on OSSLT (news report and opinion essay)  
• DRAW scores  
• OSSLT rubric-based scores | Students (n=52) Teachers (N=3) | • Comparison of characteristics of feedback sources using qualities of cognitively diagnostic feedback  
• Scored students’ writing scripts using DRAW and OSSLT rubrics; compared and evaluated the information generated about students’ sub-skill writing performance |
| 2     | What are adolescent students’ perceptions of DRAW feedback?  
How do adolescent students’ anxiety, self-efficacy, and goal orientations interact with | • Learning orientations survey responses  
• Student writing scripts  
• DRAW feedback survey responses | Students: Learning orientations survey (N=75) mid-point writing scripts (n=52) | • Analyses of surveys (characteristics of scales, descriptive statistics)  
• Statistical analyses (e.g., correlation, regression) |
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Research Questions</th>
<th>Data Sources</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Analyses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>their perceptions of DRAW feedback?</td>
<td>• Student structured interviews</td>
<td>Feedback survey (n=44) Interviews (n=30)</td>
<td>• Structured interviews analyzed with open-coding and with targeted coding of feedback variables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To what extent do students’ perceptions of DRAW feedback affect their writing skill development?</td>
<td>• Learning orientations survey responses • DRAW feedback survey responses • Student structured interviews • Post-measure writing performance • Classroom-based writing performance</td>
<td>Students: Learning orientations survey (N=75) Mid-point writing scripts (n=52) Feedback survey (n=44) Interviews (n=30) Post-measure writing (n=17) (opinion) Post-measure writing scripts (n=19) (news report)</td>
<td>• Various data analyses approaches examining the differences between students’ mid-point writing performance and post-measure/classroom-based writing performance integrated with analyses of student interviews and feedback perceptions • Examined impact of DRAW feedback responses and goal orientations on students’ performance qualitatively, and using non-parametric and descriptive statistics • Correlational analyses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What are the characteristics of secondary school teachers’ writing assessment beliefs and feedback practices?</td>
<td>• Teachers interviews • Writing scripts scored by teachers</td>
<td>Teachers (N=3)</td>
<td>• Qualitative analyses of interviews-open and target coded • Analysis of scored writing scripts according to feedback type, frequencies and sub-skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase</td>
<td>Research Questions</td>
<td>Data Sources</td>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>Analyses</td>
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<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To what extent are adolescent students’ perceptions of feedback shaped by their teacher’s assessment beliefs and feedback practices?</td>
<td>● Teacher interviews • Students’ pre-writing scored writing scripts</td>
<td>Teachers (N=3) and Students (n=52)</td>
<td>● Comparison of characteristics of teachers’ feedback practices and students’ writing sub-skill performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To what extent does adolescent students’ writing skill development vary according to their teachers’ assessment beliefs and feedback practices?</td>
<td>● Teacher interviews (semi-structured and think-aloud) • Scored writing scripts (by teachers) • Students’ scored pre- and post-writing samples</td>
<td>Teachers (N=3) Students (sample size varied depending on data source)</td>
<td>● Qualitative analysis of think-aloud and semi-structured interviews to identify teachers’ beliefs about: qualities of writing, valued traits, and feedback beliefs • Feedback analysis of writing assignments evaluated by teachers • Analysis of students’ writing development in comparison with teachers’ feedback beliefs and practices</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Initially three sets of students and their teachers from three classrooms in School A were participating in the study. All of the students were in the same grade and ESL level. All of these students completed the learning orientation survey, but the two of the classrooms opted out of the research project. Therefore, the sample size for this survey is greater than for any other data source.*
3.2 Research Contexts

In Ontario, all students must pass the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) (Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO), 2014b). This standardized test assesses if students have acquired the reading and writing skills identified up to the end of the Grade 9 Ontario Curriculum. Passing this test (or taking an equivalent course if the student is unsuccessful) is a condition of high school graduation. As such, this high-stakes curricular-based test contributes to the writing instruction and learning in tenth grade classrooms (Hillocks, 2002). One of the reasons that I chose to work with students in Grade 10 was because of the focus on writing (and reading) development in this grade level and the potential benefits of the research to students during this pivotal time.

In Ontario, secondary students receive English language instruction in sheltered classrooms. Students are placed in one of five ESL levels (ranging from the lowest level, A, to the highest level, E) depending on the level of their overall English language proficiency. Typically, specialized ESL teachers facilitate these courses. It is not uncommon for some of the students in the higher levels to take mainstream English classes concurrently.

After receiving ethical approval at both the institutional and school board levels, I attended a school board meeting of all ESL teachers in Ontario where I was provided with the opportunity to discuss my proposed research ideas and invite teachers to participate. I recruited three tenth grade ESL teachers, all from the same large urban centre in Ontario, all of whom expressed their desire to work with me on this proposed research investigation. The recruitment process began in the fall of 2011, and my work in the three research sites took place between January and June 2012. I will henceforth refer to these three research contexts as Classroom A, Classroom B, and Classroom C. A brief summary of some of the characteristics of these three sites is provided in Table 3.
Table 3  
*Characteristics of Research Sites*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Site</th>
<th>Brief Contextual Description</th>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classroom A</td>
<td>• ESL E class</td>
<td>$n = 13$</td>
<td>Celina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Affluent area of the city</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Semestered school</td>
<td>Large fraction of Filipino students in the class (and in the school)</td>
<td>ESL teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Negative and fearful relationship with assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10 years of teaching experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom B</td>
<td>• ESL D class</td>
<td>$n = 20$;</td>
<td>Nicole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Affluent area of the city</td>
<td>18 students from Chinese background</td>
<td>Curriculum leader and department head for ESL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Non-semestered school</td>
<td></td>
<td>Positive relationship with assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Aspired to be in administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10 years teaching experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom C</td>
<td>• ESL E class</td>
<td>$n = 22$</td>
<td>Angie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Students from low(er) socio-economic backgrounds</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Non-semestered school</td>
<td>Some of the students in the class did not attend school regularly because they held full-time employment positions</td>
<td>ESL department head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Positive relationship with assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>15 years of teaching experience</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.2.1 Classroom A

Classroom A was situated in a school in an affluent part of the city. The school prided itself on its strong academic reputation. According to information from the school board (citations are not added to maintain anonymity), the school comprised a total of 953 students in 2012 of which 475 (50\%) of the students spoke a primary language other than English. Of the school population, there were 132 (14\%) students identified as living in Canada between 3 to 5 years, and 85 (9\%) who had lived in Canada for 2 years or less. The number of students identified as ELL was relatively low despite the large number of non-first language English speakers. For example, the data from EQAO about tenth grade students at the time of the 2012 OSSLT administration reveals that there were 212 students in the school who were eligible to write the test for the first time, and of these students 37 (17\%) were identified as ELL. It should be noted that there were an additional 86 students who had been previously eligible to write the test (these students may have been previously unsuccessful, had deferred writing the test, or been absent during administration), and of these students 42 (49\%) were ELLs.

Celina was the teacher in Classroom A. She had been teaching for 10 years and clearly loved her work. Her students responded extremely positively to her. Her motivation for participating in the research study was two-fold: 1) To help her students achieve better writing outcomes; and 2) To learn more about assessment. During one of our first meetings, Celina described her negative feelings about assessment, mainly stemming from a lack of confidence about its implementation. Part of this lack of confidence had arisen when she had received a negative review during a teacher performance appraisal (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010) which was particularly critical of her assessment and evaluation practices and resource materials.

There were 13 students in Celina’s class, 6 of whom were of Filipino descent. The remaining students originated from various countries such as China, Iran, and Russia. Although the ESL department was relatively small in the school, they were extremely active in creating a positive environment for all the ELLs in the school by organizing special trips, and hosting events such as monthly pancake breakfasts.

There was an intense culture of academic success in School A; however, there was not much explicit focus on preparing students for the OSSLT. When I asked Celina about it, she told me that there was not much focus at the school level on preparing students for the test; it was simply not a concern. Most of the preparatory work that I witnessed came just a few weeks
before the exam administration, beginning with a school wide assembly during which students learned about the details of the test. Celina also worked on preparing her students for the test at this time by focusing on the longer writing tasks, and assigning tasks to help students augment their skills. Figure 5 presents School A’s performance on the OSSLT in the years 2010, 2011, and 2012 illustrating that between 86% and 91% of the students who wrote the OSSLT in these years were successful. These data were compiled from information provided by the EQAO. The specific reference is not cited to protect the anonymity of the schools participating in this research investigation. Unfortunately, only overall results were made available; results distinguishing students’ writing from reading performance were not reported.

The school’s results demonstrate that the students outperform the average successes at both the school board and provincial levels. Such high performance rates might explain why there was not much focus on preparatory work for the OSST. However, English language learners’ success on the OSSLT does not match that of their mainstream peers. Figure 6 illustrates these results which indicate that between 59% and 70% of ELLs achieved success on the OSSLT in the same three years. In fact, the ELLs achievement in 2011 was lower than the performance of students at both the school board and provincial levels.

![Figure 5](image-url)

*Figure 5. Percentage of students successful on the OSSLT across research sites, the school board and provincial levels.*
Figure 6. Percentage of ELLs successful on the OSSLT across research sites, the school board and provincial levels.

Note. There were two data points (School B-2010, and School C-2011) for which there were no results reported and not available from EQAO.

3.2.2 Classroom B

Classroom B was also situated in an affluent part of the urban city comprising a student population whose parents had high demands for their children’s academic success. The school consisted of 1032 students in 2012 of which 631 (61%) were identified as learning a first language other than English. Only a small fraction of the student population had lived in Canada less than two years or less (2%). Fifty-three (5%) of the students had lived in Canada between three to five years.

According to EQAO data, there were 260 students in Grade 10 at School B who were first-time eligible to write the test of which only 19 (7%) were ELLs. This statistic may be compared to the percentage of first-time eligible tenth graders at the school board and provincial level which were 9% and 5% respectively. There were 51 students at School B who were previously eligible to write the OSSLT of which 18 (35%) were ELLs. Forty-four per cent of these students were successful.

Classroom B was taught by Nicole, a curriculum and department head at her school. Nicole possessed 10 years of teaching experience, and frequently chose to participate in school and board pilot projects. She had aspirations to pursue a path to administration. In fact, during our conversations, she would often use language that indicated her familiarity with policy
documents such as *Growing Success*, the province’s assessment, evaluation and reporting document (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010).

There were a total of 20 students in Classroom B of which 18 were of Chinese descent. Unlike the other two classes participating in the study, Classroom B was an ESL-D level course. At many schools, only students in ESL-E level courses write the OSSLT; however, students in the lower D level also write the test at School B.

There was a school-wide concern about literacy scores at School B. Teachers worked together to strategize preparatory work for the students, and engaged in activities such as moderated marking to enhance their ability to ready their students for the test. Beginning a few months before the administration of the test, students were invited to participate in lunch time tutorials to prepare them for the test. Figures 5 and 6 illustrate the OSSLT results from all participating students at School B, and the ELLs respectively from 2010 to 2012. Both sets of results illustrate that the students at this school outperformed students at the board and provincial levels.

### 3.2.3 Classroom C

Classroom C was distinctly different from the other two research sites. It was situated in a school in the centre of the city which housed students from various districts including some with high refugee populations and families at lower socio-economic levels. The 2012 school population data indicated that there were 1081 students attending the school of which 779 (72%) spoke a primary language other than English. The number of students who were born outside of Canada and had resided in the country for 2 years or less totaled 96 (9%), and 118 (11%) had lived in Canada between 3 and 5 years. There was no single cultural group that was predominant in the school, but simply walking along the hallways of the school clearly reflected the diverse and multi-ethnic environment of the school.

The school was a hub of cultural and extra-curricular activities; most days that I visited the school, I encountered school advertisements for a variety of activities such as homework clubs and multi-cultural food fairs. There were 22 students in Classroom C, an ESL-E level class, representing numerous language and cultural backgrounds. Some of the students in this classroom faced challenges at home that made it difficult for them to either attend class (e.g., some students held full-time jobs) or to focus on their studies. For example, there was one
student from a refugee family who was at risk of being sent back to her home country. I witnessed her devoting much time and energy fundraising for a lawyer to assist her and her family to prevent this fate (she was successful).

Angie taught this ESL class and was an extremely devoted teacher who truly cared about her students and their achievements. She had over 15 years of teaching experience and was definitive about her ideas of writing development, and assessment practices. I believe that she chose to participate in this research project because she viewed the research activity as an additional opportunity to advance her students’ writing development.

Angie had excellent rapport with the students in her classroom and often used humour as a way of connecting with them and gaining their trust. The students responded extremely positively to her humour and style of teaching. As the ESL department head, Angie was involved with coordinating many additional opportunities for the ESL students in the school. One such activity was the facilitation of an after-school OSSLT literacy preparatory class for all ESL students in the school. She facilitated this optional, drop-in class twice a week for approximately 40 minutes where she would provide ESL students with reading and writing instruction, focusing on the types of tasks demanded by the OSSLT. She also provided students with snacks (e.g., granola bars, juice boxes) during the sessions. She began instructing these tutorials in November, almost six months prior to the administration of the test. These classes were extremely well-attended.

I witnessed more evidence of preparation and much more time, focus and energy devoted to preparing the students in Classroom C for the OSSLT than in the other two schools. However, the OSSLT data in Figures 5 and 6 demonstrate that the students in this school underperform compared to students in both Schools A and B, and also in comparison to students at the board and provincial levels. It should be noted, however, that there was a vast improvement between the ELLs’ success rates between 2010 and 2012, demonstrated by a 13% increase.

In 2012 there were 145 students who were previously eligible to write the OSSLT. Of this total, 53 (37%) were ELLs; 45% of these students successfully passed the test during this test administration.

One notable characteristic of all three teachers was their active role in advocating for English language learners at their respective schools. During almost every conversation that I had with Celina, Nicole, and Angie, their care and compassion for the students was evidenced, as
was their efforts to help their students achieve positive outcomes both emotionally and academically.

### 3.3 Instruments and Protocols

Various instruments were used to measure students’ writing performance and the constructs of interest in this study. Namely, I developed and used: writing measures; a diagnostic rubric for assessing writing (DRAW); a DRAW feedback survey; a learning orientation survey; and interview protocols. Each of these instruments and their development is discussed in turn. Subsequently, I discuss the treatment and analyses of data generated from these instruments.

#### 3.3.1 Writing Measures

I used three writing measures (pre-, mid-, post-) to assess and track students’ writing skill performance. The pre- and post-writing measures were external to the classroom and based on former iterations of the OSSLT long writing tasks in which students are required to write a new report and an opinion-based essay in response to related prompts (EQAO, 2012a). Students were asked to complete both the news report and the opinion-based essay. Exemplar prompts used in this research investigation are included in Appendix B.

Students’ mid-point writing development was based on an opinion-based writing task that was specific to each classroom context. That is, I worked with each teacher to identify a classroom writing task that would appropriately serve as the basis for students to receive detailed cognitively diagnostic feedback based on DRAW. The writing task necessitated that students write an opinion-based essay that was long enough to allow for an accurate assessment of students’ writing performance (i.e., a minimum of five paragraphs). Furthermore, the writing task needed to be completed early enough in the semester that the students would have an opportunity to use the feedback on subsequent assignments. These requirements were met in both Classrooms A and C; however, there were some challenges in Classroom B (e.g., students were committed to other in-class projects) and the assignment on which the DRAW feedback was based occurred later in the semester and not at the mid-way point.
3.3.2 Writing Scale: Development of DRAW

The development of a writing scale for scoring writing and generating CDF involved two phases and participation of teachers and students. I begin with a discussion of the first phase, the pilot study.

3.3.2.1 Pilot Study

The impetus for the development and research related to DRAW emerged, in part, from my work as a graduate assistant at the initial stages of my doctoral studies. Prior to beginning my dissertation research, I worked for several years on a research investigation involving a validation process of a language assessment framework, entitled Steps to English Proficiency (STEP) (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2012). STEP is a six level (or step), descriptors-based language proficiency development continua designed as a framework for teachers to assess and track the English language development of Ontario’s English language learners in grades 1-12. The continua are organized according to the language domain assessed (oral communication, writing, and reading and responding), and grade cluster (grades 1-3, 4-6, 7-8, and 9-12). The descriptors comprising the continua are assessor-oriented (Alderson, 1991); that is, their primary function is to guide the teacher (assessor) to the salient aspects of observable performance at each level or step.

The STEP assessment framework provides descriptions of students’ observable behaviour (OLB) across five ‘elements’ which are based on the Ontario Ministry of Education’s curricular objectives for secondary students. These elements are: Developing and Organizing Content; Form and Style; Language Conventions; and Revising. Some of these aforementioned elements are further delineated, and descriptions of students’ OLB are provided for each of them. Table 4 includes the complete set of elements, their subcomponents and corresponding descriptors for assessing secondary students’ writing.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Sub-component</th>
<th>Step 1</th>
<th>Step 2</th>
<th>Step 3</th>
<th>Step 4</th>
<th>Step 5</th>
<th>Step 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Developing and Organizing Content</td>
<td>Organize ideas and information</td>
<td>Organize ideas using single words and phrases, and L1</td>
<td>Organize ideas or information, using teacher-provided graphic organizer</td>
<td>Sort and organize ideas and key information, using a familiar organizer</td>
<td>Organize ideas, using a self-selected strategy.</td>
<td>Organize information from a variety of sources, using a self-selected strategy</td>
<td>Organize information from multiple sources, using an effective strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Form and Style</td>
<td>Incorporate a variety of text forms and features in writing</td>
<td>Follow a teacher-generated model to write a short text</td>
<td>Write a short paragraph, using simple compound sentences and high frequency words on a familiar topic</td>
<td>Write about a familiar topic, using linked paragraphs and a specific text form</td>
<td>Write multi-paragraph texts in a variety of forms</td>
<td>Identify and use text forms appropriate for specific writing purposes</td>
<td>Write more complex texts, using a range of forms appropriate to purpose and audience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Conventions</td>
<td>Choose words that convey specific meaning and add interest to the writing</td>
<td>use appropriate vocabulary from a list with visual support for simple writing tasks.</td>
<td>use key content words in writing from various subject areas</td>
<td>choose key subject-specific words to write about a topic</td>
<td>use expressive and subject specific vocabulary to write in a variety of forms</td>
<td>choose academic vocabulary to write for a specific purpose</td>
<td>select vocabulary to engage the audience and enhance purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write with fluency using a variety of sentence structures</td>
<td>write simple sentences following a model provided by the teacher.</td>
<td>write compound sentences, using and, but, and or</td>
<td>replace high-frequency words with lower-frequency equivalent; write linked complex sentences; incorporate some transition words to show</td>
<td>use a variety of simple, compound and complex sentences to compose linked paragraphs</td>
<td>use a variety of low-frequency words; use a variety of sentence structures to write for different purposes</td>
<td>use a variety of sentence structures to elaborate ideas and enhance meaning.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table: OLB Across Steps

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Sub-component</th>
<th>Step 1</th>
<th>Step 2</th>
<th>Step 3</th>
<th>Step 4</th>
<th>Step 5</th>
<th>Step 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Element</td>
<td>Sub-component</td>
<td>OLB Across Steps</td>
<td>OLB Across Steps</td>
<td>OLB Across Steps</td>
<td>OLB Across Steps</td>
<td>OLB Across Steps</td>
<td>OLB Across Steps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use grammatical structures appropriate to the purpose</td>
<td>use some simple elements of English grammar</td>
<td>use some elements of English grammar in simple and compound sentences</td>
<td>use parts of speech to strengthen writing</td>
<td>write incorporating a larger variety of grammatical structures</td>
<td>apply learned language structures and conventions to new writing</td>
<td>communicate meaning precisely, using specific grammatical structures</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spell familiar and unfamiliar words, using a variety of strategies</td>
<td>write familiar words and key personal information</td>
<td>use common sound-symbol patterns to write high-frequency words</td>
<td>write subject-specific words by referring to lists and resources</td>
<td>write subject-specific words, using conventional spelling rules</td>
<td>write unfamiliar words, using student selected resources</td>
<td>write unfamiliar words, using spelling conventions and a variety of strategies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During my work on this research project, I recognized the many benefits of STEP including: 1) STEP reflected a global assessment movement that uses descriptors-based language proficiency scales as a framework for assessing students’ English language proficiency. Such descriptors-based language proficiency scales reflect a shift and expansion in the purposes of assessment from a testing culture to an authentic language assessment context (Brindley, 2001; Chalhoub-Devill, 2003; Shepard, 2002); 2) STEP was aligned with the Ontario curriculum to facilitate its use by teachers, and create opportunities for teachers to use the framework to align their instruction to promote students’ English language development (Cummins et al, 2009); and 3) STEP filled a large gap, because prior to its development there was no protocol for assessing students’ English language development. While STEP greatly benefited teachers and students, I also recognized that there was unfulfilled potential with the use of STEP, particularly in the type of feedback generated from it.

Pollitt and Murray (1996) identify one function of descriptive proficiency scales as being diagnosis-oriented. Diagnosis-oriented scales serve to provide detailed diagnostic feedback to teachers and learners. The importance of diagnosis-oriented scales was aptly described by Brindley (1998) who suggested that these scales “are relevant to particular purposes of language
use in particular contexts” (p. 134), and provide opportunity to investigate the extent to which performance on the tasks are related to language competence. Therefore, diagnosis-oriented scales have great potential in classrooms for teachers to use for the evaluation and advancement of students’ language learning skills. STEP continua were not designed to fulfill this function and provide such diagnostic feedback, but they did offer the possibility.

STEP was developed by teachers and for teachers to assess and track the English language development of students. I noted that little attention had been paid to the potential of STEP as a framework by which students could assess their progress and participate as agents of assessment (Rea-Dickins, 2004). Ideally, any formative assessment, like STEP, should comprise two core activities: a perception or understanding by the student that there is a knowledge or skill gap in her/his current state and desired goal(s); and, the actions taken by the learner to close the gap (Black & Wiliam, 1998). One method by which such information could be generated would be through student self-assessment, and another through diagnostic feedback practices that alert students to such gaps in their current state of performance and a future goal (Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Sadler, 1989). As such, my interest was piqued by the possibility of tapping into the potential of STEP as the basis for the development of a descriptor-based rubric that would have diagnostic potential for generating CDF to inform students’ writing proficiency development, and specifically at the secondary level. Therefore, my focus was limited to one of the STEP continua that described language writing development across six steps in the curricular context of grades 9 to 12.

Before engaging in this dissertation research, I conducted a small pilot study to investigate the potential of STEP descriptors as the basis for a self-assessment rubric. During this pilot phase of the research, I generated student self-assessment rubrics using the STEP descriptors. It should be noted that at that time I did not use the version of STEP that was subsequently used in the main phases of the dissertation research, and which teachers now use. STEP was in the process of being revised at this time; therefore, I only had access to an older version of STEP. In my subsequent dissertation research, I used the revised (and most current) version of STEP.

For the pilot study, I made minimal changes to the language of the descriptors in the development of the self-assessment rubrics focusing only on modifying the descriptors such that they were worded as ‘can-do’ self-assessment statements, similar to the style of such descriptors
in the Common European Framework of Languages (Council of Europe, 2001). I recruited 5 students from a Grade 10 classroom in a large Toronto school to engage in concurrent think-aloud interviews (Ericsson & Simon, 1984; 1993) as they used the STEP-based, can-do statements to self-assess a piece of their school-based writing.

The verbal protocols and the resulting self-assessment data primarily revealed that STEP, in its then current form, was not ideally suited as a source to generate a self-assessment rubric. All the students consistently over-estimated their writing ability. In fact, there was little variability in the students’ self-evaluations across all the different sub-categories of the rubric; students primarily situated themselves at a STEP six (the highest level) across all the categories. My evaluation of their writing indicated their writing skills were not as developed as they had indicated. I speculated that part of the reason for this finding was that the descriptors were not written in student-friendly language; therefore students may not have been able to distinguish among the salient features of different descriptors. Additionally, STEP was not developed to be used on a daily basis to assess a single assignment, but rather it was meant to be used to periodically assess students’ language proficiency development by using multiple sources of student performance as evidence, not just a single task or assignment. Therefore, the descriptors may have been providing information about writing skill development at too large a grain size to allow students to identify gaps in their writing skill development. This information helped to inform the development of DRAW.

3.3.2.2 DRAW Scale Development

DRAW was informed by STEP (i.e., curriculum) and also by theory. As discussed in Chapter 2, effective feedback encompasses three parts of a feedback loop: feed up, feed back, and feed forward (Hattie & Timperely, 2007). Each of these facets corresponds to the questions: ‘Where am I going?’, ‘How am I going to get there?’, and ‘Where to next?’, respectively. Therefore, effective feedback needs to be situated in the targeted instructional context such that it provides students with relevant information about gaps between their current level of performance and a desired future goal, and it provides students with the opportunity to reflect and plan for use of the feedback. Therefore, it was necessary for DRAW to be able to address each of these three components of the feedback loop. Furthermore, DRAW needed to generate feedback that helped students to replace misconceptions or restructure past knowledge.
Therefore, DRAW feedback needed to provide information about students’ skills and strategies that reflect the multidimensionality and cognitive complexities of writing rather than fine-grained syntactic error diagnosis or coarsely detailed summaries of their performance. Herein, I describe the development of DRAW, beginning with the use of STEP descriptors as the basis for the development of DRAW.

Table 4 illustrated the list of elements and sub-categories comprising STEP. This content reveals that the process of students’ writing is meant to be assessed by the STEP descriptors, not just the product. In other words, these elements capture each phase of students’ writing process from pre-writing to generating a draft, and finally to revising this product. Since DRAW needed to be used to assess an individual piece of writing (i.e., a product) and not the complete process, some of the sub-categories could not be used to assess students’ written scripts for the generation of diagnostic scores, and were eliminated. For example, neither the process of generating ideas, nor the revision to the writing product could be assessed from a single work product. However, it is recognized that these processes are integral to guiding cognitive skill development and self-regulation of learning; therefore these components were incorporated in other aspects of the study. The categories from STEP that were used to assess students’ writing are illustrated in Table 5. Note that the organizational element was subdivided into two separate categories to delineate the organization of writing from its content.

Table 5

Elements and Subcategories used in the Assessment of Students’ Writing Scripts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Sub-component</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organizing Content</td>
<td>Organize ideas and information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing Content</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Conventions</td>
<td>Choose words that convey specific meaning and add interest to the writing;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Write with fluency using a variety of sentence structures;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use grammatical structures appropriate to the purpose;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spell familiar and unfamiliar words, using a variety of strategies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In addition to the need to both delineate one of the elements and not use others, there existed additional challenges with using STEP for providing CDF for students’ writing (note that some of these issues emerged during the pilot phase of the study). First, STEP was not designed to be used on a daily basis to assess students’ work; therefore, it does not lend itself (easily) to being adapted or modified by teachers. Teachers would require a high degree of assessment literacy and competence, as well as knowledge of the L2 writing construct (i.e., do they define it as a unified construct or multi-componential?), to do so.

A second challenge for the use of STEP for providing CDF to students is that there is no facet of STEP that addresses the content of the essay with respect to the extent to which the writer has been able to fulfill task requirement. Another key issue is that within each element of STEP (e.g., organization), there is generally only one aspect that is evaluated across the six steps (e.g., organizing ideas), because it is generalized across multiple tasks and genres of writing. This lack of specificity may pose challenges to teachers who want to focus on organizational features associated with a specific genre of writing (e.g., news reports, expository essays).

Another issue with using an unrevised version of STEP for generating CDF is related to the relevance of the sub-component and related descriptors related to spelling unfamiliar words. At the secondary level, students often have access to spell checkers in word processing software, and a variety of resources in class such as electronic and paper dictionaries. There is not a frequent need to develop strategies for writing unfamiliar words using spelling conventions. Lastly, another issue related to the spelling element is that the associated descriptors ask the assessor to evaluate if a student has used a resource or a strategy to spell words. Again, these descriptors refer to a process, and cannot be assessed from a final work product.

In an effort to develop DRAW, a local rating scale (with STEP as its foundation), and one that could be used to provide diagnostic feedback to students, several modifications and/or additions were made to the STEP descriptors. This approach is supported by Alderson (1991) who stated that a scale cannot be used for a new purpose without modifications (and validation of its use). The process of change included two main activities. First, teachers across the three classroom contexts were invited to use STEP (without any modifications), and give feedback on its use for evaluating specific writing assignments and giving feedback to students. All three teachers highlighted positive features of STEP, but also suggested modifications because of the lack of specificity of the descriptors for a specific writing task (since they were designed to
assess students’ progress over time), and also they offered suggestions to additional features of writing that they value that could be used to include in STEP. These features reflected both their current practices as well as writing features that they value.

Second, I referred to the literature on L2 writing development and other existing rating scales (reviewed in Chapter 2) to determine what features of writing are integral and used to evaluate students’ writing. Table 6 summarizes the elements and the descriptors used to evaluate students’ writing in order to provide CDF about their strengths and areas for improvement.

Table 6

*Diagnostic Rubric for Assessing Writing (DRAW) Descriptors*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Sub-component</th>
<th>Student can…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Developing and Organizing Content</td>
<td>Organize ideas and information</td>
<td>Organize ideas using single words and phrases, and L1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Organize information from a variety of sources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Organize content so that the essay has five paragraphs: an introduction, three supporting paragraphs and a conclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Organize ideas so that the strongest argument is in the final supporting paragraph, and the weakest argument is in the middle supporting paragraph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Write an introductory and concluding sentence for each paragraph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Summarize the main ideas in the concluding paragraphs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Restate the thesis statement in the conclusion in a new way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Include sentences in each paragraph that are related to the same idea (i.e., a paragraph with one unified idea, and not off-topic)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Clearly illustrate her/his opinion in the opening paragraph (fulfills main purpose of the task)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Clearly write a thesis statement that explains the purpose of the paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Include content or examples that provide evidence to support thesis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Conventions</td>
<td>Choose words that convey specific meaning and add interest to the writing (Vocabulary)</td>
<td>Use appropriate vocabulary words to clearly express meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Select vocabulary to engage the audience and enhance purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Use a variety of low-frequency words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Use key subject-specific words to write about the topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Use academic vocabulary to achieve her/his purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Can write simple sentences</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Since the descriptors would be used to assess students’ essays to generate feedback profiles, the categories needed to be more student-friendly and also needed to be aligned with the way in which their teachers give them feedback (i.e., their rubrics). Furthermore, as discussed above, the writing traits needed to be situated in theory to reflect the current understandings and assessment of L2 writing. Recall that Chapter 2 included a review of writing skills used to assess L2 writing; this discussion was also used to inform the development of DRAW. Thus, the descriptors were categorized according to the following sub-skills: ideas (IDEA), organization (ORG), vocabulary (VOC), sentence fluency and structure (SEN), mechanics and grammar (MEC). The set of descriptors was then presented to each teacher who reviewed them and provided feedback on their comprehensiveness. This process of DRAW scale development is
summarized in Figure 7. The resulting diagnostic rubric for assessing writing included 30
descriptors distributed among six writing sub-skills and is presented in Table 7.

![Diagram of the process of development of DRAW](image)

*Figure 7. Process of Development of DRAW.*

Figure 7 illustrates that DRAW was informed by teachers, students, context, and theory. Based on a review of the literature, and using STEP as a foundation, a series of descriptors were identified that together captured essential features of writing across multiple sub-skills for generating CDF. Students’ feedback informed this scale development through a pilot study advising on the grain size of the descriptors and their interpretability. A draft of the rating scale was used by teachers to assess students’ writing who gave feedback on: 1) The relevance of the scale to their teaching context; 2) Its ease of use; 3) The adequacy of its interpretability by students; 4) The extent to which it represented the writing construct; and, 5) The potential of the feedback generated for students.

While the combination of writing sub-skills used to categorize the descriptors in DRAW are not necessarily identical to those used in another writing scale, they are consistent with criteria that are used in many commonly used rating scales including those used by major English language testing companies (as discussed in Chapter 2) (e.g., Attali, 2004; Jacobs, Zinkgraf, Wormuth, Hartfiel, & Hughey, 1981). Most importantly, they represent a divisibility of the writing construct that is both theoretically defensible, and authentic to its context of use: the secondary ESL classroom in Ontario.
In DRAW, the ideas sub-skill refers to the content in students’ writing, and the extent to which students have generated and developed ideas that are aligned with the purpose of the writing task, and clearly demonstrate their ideas. The organization sub-skill refers to the ways in which the content is presented at the sentence, paragraph, and essay levels. It encompasses the notions of cohesion and cohesiveness that contribute to the structure of an essay. Vocabulary refers to the types and variety of words used in students’ essays, and their ability to use a word appropriately to convey an intended meaning within a specific context of use. The vocabulary sub-skill also involves recognition of the variety of vocabulary used by writers and their use of academic vocabulary to convey meaning. Sentence fluency and structure refers to the efficacy in crafting sentences, as well as the variety and complexity of the types of sentences used to convey the content. Mechanics refers to the technical and structural conventions that contribute to the overall accuracy and meaning of a text. Mechanical aspects of writing include capitalization, spelling, and punctuation. Finally, grammar refers to the application of the language ‘rules’ that govern the use of English writing. Grammar is multi-componential and complex; the specific facets of grammar used to evaluate students’ efficacy in the sub-skill was determined by teachers who focused on: verb-tenses, use of prepositions, word order, and articles as indicators.

DRAW is based on a socio-cognitive theory of writing which recognizes writing as both a cognitive and social act wherein the skills and descriptors underlying DRAW target students’ cognitive processing and strategy use for communicative purposes. As discussed, DRAW was developed through an iterative process beginning with the STEP secondary writing assessment scales, and gathering feedback on it from students and teachers, revising it, and then seeking feedback on it again from teachers.

DRAW was used to score three sets of students’ writing performance: 1) standardized pre-writing scripts based on the OSSLT; 2) Mid-point writing scripts from opinion-based, classroom tasks used to generate cognitively diagnostic feedback profiles; and 3) Standardized post-measure writing scripts based on the OSSLT.
Table 7

**Organization of Descriptors According to Feedback Categories**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Writing sub-skill</th>
<th>Descriptor</th>
<th>Writer can…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ideas</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>Clearly illustrate her/his opinion in the opening paragraph (fulfills main purpose of the task)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Clearly respond to prompt (not off-topic)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>Clearly write a thesis statement that explains the purpose of the paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>Include content or examples that provide evidence to support thesis (and is not off-topic)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>Provide examples to add details and illustrate opinion (and is not off-topic)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>Include information from a variety of sources (may include background knowledge)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organization</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>Organize content so that the essay has five paragraphs: an introduction, three supporting paragraphs and a conclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td>Organize ideas so that strongest argument is in the final supporting paragraph, and weakest argument is in the middle supporting paragraph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td>Summarize the main ideas in the concluding paragraph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td>Restate the thesis statement in the conclusion in a new way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td>Include sentences in each paragraph that are related to the same idea (i.e., a paragraph with one unified idea, and not off-topic)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td>Write a transition sentence at the end of every paragraph (except the conclusion paragraph) to introduce ideas in the next paragraph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td>Write an introductory sentence for each paragraph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td>Write a concluding sentence for each paragraph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vocabulary</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td>Use appropriate vocabulary words to clearly express meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td>Select vocabulary to engage the audience and enhance purpose (e.g., use of adjectives to add details)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
<td>Use a variety of low-frequency/academic words to achieve her/his purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sentence Fluency</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
<td>Write simple sentences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
<td>Use transition words such as <em>and, but, or</em> to make compound sentences (within a sentence)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td>Incorporate some transition words (e.g., moreover, furthermore, additionally) to show relationships between ideas in linked sentences (between different sentences)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
<td>Use a variety of simple, compound and complex sentences to compose linked paragraphs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mechanics</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
<td>Capitalize words correctly (e.g., the first word in every sentence proper nouns)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
<td>Correctly spell most of the words in the writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
<td>Use contractions correctly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
<td>Use commas, periods, colons, semi-colons and other punctuation correctly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grammar</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
<td>Use the correct verb tense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
<td>Use correct word order</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td></td>
<td>Use prepositions correctly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td></td>
<td>Write sentences with correct subject-verb agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td>Use articles correctly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.3.3 DRAW Feedback Survey

A feedback survey was designed to measure students’ immediate responses to DRAW feedback, namely, to students’ CDF profiles. Students received this survey after having an opportunity to read and review their feedback profile, and also complete the part of the profile entitled ‘Next Steps’ in which they articulated their areas for improvement in their own words and devised a plan for addressing them. The survey aimed to measure four aspects of students’ responses to DRAW feedback: perceived usefulness; perceived understanding; intent for future use; and perceived accuracy.

As I discussed in Chapter 2, feedback may be conceptualized as a multidimensional loop consisting of three phrases: feed up, feed back, and feed forward which correspond to three questions guiding the effectiveness of feedback (Hattie & Timperley, 2007) and how feedback is perceived by students. A four stage feedback processing framework was proposed which served as the basis for measuring students’ responses to DRAW feedback: perceived understanding of DRAW feedback, reflection on DRAW feedback, perceived usefulness of DRAW feedback, and intent for future use of DRAW feedback.

The questions categorized as targeting students’ perceived understanding directly asked students if they understood the feedback category and its feedback, and were measured on a three point scale: yes, maybe, no. Additionally, the survey posed questions used to evaluate the extent to which students reflected on the accuracy of the feedback. For example: In the Vocabulary category, do you agree with the strengths? Students selected from a list of four response options: strongly agree; agree; disagree; and, strongly disagree.

The questions comprising ‘perceived usefulness’ simply asked students to use a four-point scale to indicate the extent to which the feedback subsumed under each sub-skill was helpful to them. For example: Do you think that getting feedback on ideas will help your writing? The response options were: a great deal; a lot; a little; and not at all. Finally, there were questions aimed at capturing the extent to which students intended to use DRAW feedback. For example: If you agree or strongly agree with the feedback about your organization, will you use it to revise your essay? The response options were: definitely yes; probably yes; probably no; and, definitely no.

The survey also included a few open-ended questions including: Which feedback category is least/most helpful to you? Are there other feedback categories that would be helpful
to you? The survey is presented in Appendix C. These data were analyzed to capture students’ responses to DRAW feedback and build feedback profiles of students for subsequent analyses.

### 3.3.4 Learning Orientations Survey

I investigated the claim that students’ interactions with feedback are mediated by various motivational variables. I was particularly interested in examining the interactions between students’ perceptions and use of feedback and students’ goal orientations, writing self-efficacy, social goals, task values, and writing anxiety. All of these traits address a facet of students’ motivation for learning, and together, they have the potential to contribute to students’ self-regulation of their writing (Butler & Winne, 1995; Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Therefore, I hypothesized that understanding students’ individual patterns or profiles of these learning behaviours would possibly help me to understand: 1) whether different/distinct learning profiles exist; 2) if these profiles could help me to understand students’ receipt and use of feedback and writing development.

As discussed in Chapter 2, each of these variables contributes to understanding the motivational learning orientations of individual students. Henceforth, I use the terms motivational and learning orientations synonymously to refer to the group of intrapersonal variables that have the potential to mediate students’ responses to and use of feedback. In order to measure these orientations, a survey was constructed by adapting various well-established measurement scales. Three goal-orientation variables- mastery, performance prove and performance avoid- were measured by using sub-scales from the Pattern of Adaptive Learning Scales (PALS) (Midgley et al., 2000). Additional sub-scales PALS and Pintrich and DeGroot’s (1990) Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ) were used to construct the self-efficacy scale of the learning orientations survey. Task value variables were adapted drawing on work from Bong (2001), Eccles, Vida and Barber (2004), and Pokay and Blumenfeld (1990). Task values are the interplay between four aspects of ‘value’ that students place upon successful mastery of a task and include the value of the rewards and engagement in the task (in this case L2 writing and English language learning) (Dornyei, & Ushioda, 2011). The four aspects have been identified as: 1) Attainment value: personal importance of mastering a skill; 2) Intrinsic value: interest in subject/skills related to L2 writing and learning English and the enjoyment of
performing the task; 3) Extrinsic value: relationship between task and students’ goals; and 4) Cost: The negative component related to the task, e.g., time, effort (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002).

Variables to measure students’ social goals were adapted from Wentzel (1993). Social goals address the contextual aspect of goals, i.e., the notion that goals are “socially derived constructs that cannot be studied in isolation of the rules and conventions of culture and context” (Wentzel, 2000, p. 106). While task goals refer to the relationship between the student and the academic task, social goals refer to students’ “social relationship goals”, i.e., gaining approval from parents, teachers, and creating relationships with teachers and classmates. (Wentzel, 1999).

Finally, I wanted to measure a facet of students’ affect, since a focus on cognitive aspects of motivation does not capture the emotional variables that may contribute to students’ motivation to learn (Pintrich, Smith, García, & McKeachie, 1993). Daly and Miller (1975) suggested that writing anxiety was the most salient of all affect variables related to the assessment of students’ writing development. As such, items related to students’ writing anxiety were included on the survey and drawn from Daly and Miller’s (1975) writing apprehension scale.

The survey items were measured on a five point scale ranging from ‘not true at all’ to ‘very true’. Table 8 summarizes the features of the learning orientations survey. The complete survey is included in Appendix D.

Table 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summary of Learning Orientations Survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Construct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mastery Goal Orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance Prove Goal Orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance Avoid Goal Orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Efficacy of Writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task Value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Anxiety</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.3.5 Background Survey

Students across all the classrooms also completed a background survey in order to gather general demographic information about the students (e.g., gender, birthday, country of birth), as well as information about their language use (e.g., home and social language use), and their literacy practices outside of school. This survey is illustrated in Appendix E.

3.3.6 Interview Protocols

There were three interview protocols that were developed and implemented in this research project: 1) Student interview protocol; 2) Teacher think-aloud protocol; and 3) Teacher final interview protocol. Each of these instruments are discussed in turn.

Students’ perceptions of DRAW feedback were measured using the DRAW feedback survey (as discussed above). Additionally, I aimed to probe more deeply into students’ reactions to the feedback, and also learn about their perceptions and uses of other types of assessment feedback through a structured interview. The interview involved five parts addressing these issues: 1) Gathering students’ reactions to and impressions and interpretations of DRAW feedback; 2) Understanding students’ perceived benefits and uses of classroom-based rubrics; 3) Understanding the types of feedback strategies that students value and the extent to which they use them, focusing on the type, focus, and source of feedback; 4) Discovering students’ self-perceptions of their overall writing ability in English and in their first and other languages; and 5) Asking students to rank the type of feedback that they most value (e.g., teachers’ comments; self-assessment, scores/grades). This protocol is included in Appendix F.

One of the research purposes of this dissertation was to understand teachers’ beliefs about feedback and assessment. Therefore, I gathered evidence about teachers’ practices through my observations and direct questioning, and I also developed a think-aloud protocol which asked each teacher to think aloud as they read a series of academic essays that had been evaluated with scores and/or comments. I created these stimuli using authentic essays written by three different English language learners at a high-intermediate level of English language proficiency. Each essay possessed different feedback conditions, encompassing different grain sizes, purposes and content of the feedback as discussed in Jang and Wagner (2014). Table 9 summarizes the feedback qualities of each of the three essays.
Table 9

*Feedback Characteristics of Essays for Teacher Think-Aloud Interviews*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Essay</th>
<th>Student’s Name</th>
<th>Grain Size</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sam</td>
<td>Excessively</td>
<td>Mainly grammar and mechanics</td>
<td>Identify and correct errors</td>
<td>Two scores: grammar and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>detailed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Manny</td>
<td>Coarse</td>
<td>Overall evaluative comments</td>
<td>Praise</td>
<td>Single score</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Mia</td>
<td>Fine-grained</td>
<td>Identify cognitive gaps and conceptual errors</td>
<td>Guide improvement</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although I had regular and frequent discussions with teachers throughout the data collection period, I also wanted to conduct a final, semi-structured interview during which I aimed to gather teachers’ opinions and reflections about their participation in the study, and learn if they had experienced any changes in their opinions about feedback and assessment, and if they would change any of these practices in the future. This interview protocol is included in Appendix G.

3.4 Data Collection and Analyses of Data Sources

There were two primary groups of participants in this research investigation: students and teachers. These participants collaborated with me in various research activities generating evidence used to respond to inquiry questions. Figure 8 delineates the timeline of the research activities in which these two groups participated. It should be noted that these activities occurred concurrently, represented in the figure by the adjacent flow charts.
3.4.1 Learning Orientation and Background Surveys

At the start of the research project, the learning orientations survey and background questionnaire were administered to all the students across the three classrooms, as well as in two additional tenth grade ESL students in School A. These two additional classrooms also comprised learners at the ESL-E levels (the highest level). Initially, the students in these two additional classrooms were to serve as a control group (they were not receiving DRAW feedback); however, the teachers in these classrooms decided not to continue their participation in the study. A total of 74 students completed the two surveys. Composite variables were created for each of the constructs measured by the learning orientation survey. These variables were created by attributing a value to each of the responses on the survey from one to five, and taking an average score across the responses to the items comprising each sub-scale. Some items were reverse-coded to account for negatively worded items. Inter-item correlations were used to refine
the scales. Cronbach’s alpha was used to evaluate the scale’s reliability. Table 10 provides the
descriptive statistics for each of the scales measured by the learning orientation scale. All the
sub-scales except for writing anxiety and performance avoid demonstrated high internal
consistency with alpha in the range of .83 to .86. The writing anxiety and performance avoid
scales presented acceptable alpha coefficients albeit lower than the other sub-scales. One
potential reason is that several of these items were negatively worded; consequently, students
may have found them to be confusing.

Table 10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Number of Items on Scale</th>
<th>Item Means</th>
<th>Cronbach α</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Writing Self-Efficacy</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Goals</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3.82</td>
<td>.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task Value</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4.16</td>
<td>.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Anxiety</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2.82</td>
<td>.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mastery Goal Orientation</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4.01</td>
<td>.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance Prove Goal Orientation</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance Avoid Goal Orientation</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As part of instrument validation bivariate correlations were conducted to examine the
relationships between the variables. These results are presented in Table 11 revealing a variety of
statistically significant relationships. Some expected correlational relationships include a
negative relationship between writing anxiety and self-efficacy ($r = -0.37, p = 0.01$) and task value
($r = -0.27, p = 0.05$), as well as a positive relationship between the two performance goal
orientations ($r = 0.62, p = 0.01$). Mastery goal orientation was also positively and significantly
correlated with the performance orientations, albeit not strongly. The relationship between
mastery and performance prove construct could be supportive of some of the mixed findings in
the literature indicating its positive effect on various achievement and self-efficacy outcomes
(see Chapter 2 for a full discussion). This supposition is supported by the positive and significant
relationship between self-efficacy and performance prove ($r = 0.41, p = 0.01$), but not with
performance avoid. Self-efficacy was also positively and significantly correlated with mastery goal orientation ($r = .51, p = 0.01$). It is not easy to speculate on why mastery and performance avoid constructs were positively related.

Several more relationships warrant discussion. First, social goals was positively related to almost every construct. As a consequence, I decided to remove this variable from further analyses as I did not believe it would contribute to understanding variability in students’ perceptions of feedback. Second, I also removed task value from further analyses as it demonstrated a very high significant relationship with mastery goal orientation ($r = .84, p = 0.01$) indicating that they are not distinguishable. Therefore, students’ motivation or learning variables included the following variables: self-efficacy of writing, writing anxiety, and the three goal orientation constructions: mastery, performance prove, and performance avoid. These variables were used for subsequent analyses to respond to the inquiry questions related to students’ individualized responses to DRAW feedback.

Table 11

Correlations between Learning Orientation Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Self-Efficacy</th>
<th>Social Goals</th>
<th>Task Value</th>
<th>Writing Anxiety</th>
<th>Mastery</th>
<th>Performance Prove</th>
<th>Performance Avoid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-Efficacy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.46**</td>
<td>.45**</td>
<td>-.37**</td>
<td>.51**</td>
<td>.41**</td>
<td>.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Goals</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.64**</td>
<td>.012</td>
<td>.65**</td>
<td>.44**</td>
<td>.53**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task Value</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-.27*</td>
<td>.84**</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Anxiety</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-.22</td>
<td>-.003</td>
<td>.35**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mastery</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.31**</td>
<td>.28*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance Prove</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.62**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance Avoid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Note. $N=74$. 
The data from the background survey were used as explanatory variables were used to determine if they contributed to understanding students’ responses to DRAW feedback (discussed below).

3.4.2 Classroom Observations

During all my site visits, I kept detailed observational notes, and conducted informal interviews with the teachers, and gathered samples of teachers’ rubrics, and scored writing samples. All of the observational and informal interview data were used to understand the assessment context. I analyzed the data through content analysis to understand: 1) the assessment culture in the school and the classroom; 2) teachers’ beliefs about assessment, and general assessment and feedback practices; 3) teachers’ beliefs about writing development; and 4) impact of the OSSLT (e.g., preparatory activities). The content analysis was directed with specific codes also used in the analysis of teachers’ semi-structured interviews (discussed below). As such, the common coding scheme provided an opportunity to augment and/or substantiate findings across multiple data sources through common themes and classifications. Additional codes were identified and applied to classify the results, specifically: assessment culture (competitive/mastery); OSSLT impact (classroom discussion; in-class tasks; after school/lunchtime preparatory activities).

Teachers’ rubrics were reviewed through deductive content analysis. I examined the features of the rubric and the diagnostic potential of the feedback generated from them by using the characteristics of feedback type discussed in Chapter 2: content, purpose, and grain size.

3.4.3 Scoring Students’ Writing Performance

The students in Classrooms A, B, and C (n=52) completed the two pre-writing measures. Both the writing measures were scored using: 1) DRAW; and 2) OSSLT Scoring Guides (EQAO, 2012a). As discussed, DRAW descriptors easily lent themselves to modifications/adaptations in order to generate a diagnostic assessment rubric specific to the task. Therefore, there were two versions of DRAW used to score each of the opinion and news report pre-measures. There were also two OSSLT rubrics that were specific to each of the two writing tasks, one for the opinion essay and one for the news report task. As expected, the appropriate
rubric was matched to the writing measure in order to generate OSSLT scores. The results of students’ performances are presented in Chapter 4.

As discussed, a total of 30 descriptors distributed across six sub-skills comprise DRAW thereby allowing for generation of sub-scores associated with each sub-skill as well as a total score across all of the skills. In order to generate these scores, students’ mastery/non-mastery of each of the DRAW descriptors was evaluated. In other words, a dichotomous decision was made about whether the student had met the performance criterion of each descriptor or not.

In contrast, the OSSLT rubrics rely on holistic scales in which multiple criteria are evaluated together. The news report rubric provided six performance categories to distinguish students’ written products with each category awarded a score of 10. Therefore, students achieved one of six possible scores: 10, 20, 30, 40, 50, or 60. OSSLT provided two rubrics to assess students’ opinion-based writing scripts, one for evaluating ‘topic development’ and the other for ‘conventions’. Students’ performance on topic development also ranges across 6 performance categories scored in 10 point increments allowing them to earn a score between 10 and 60. Conventions are scored between 10 and 30 across 3 performance categories, each also scored in increments of 10 points.

The pre-writing measures were also scored by a second rater: an experienced ESL writing teacher. The teacher possessed a Bachelor’s degree in English and a Master’s in Education. She had been a college-level writing teacher for 11 years, before beginning to teach L2 writing. She has been teaching L2 writing to beginner, intermediate and advanced learners for 8 years. An initial comparison of the agreement rate of our scoring indicated that there was an 85.2% agreement between the ratings using DRAW. All discrepancies among our ratings were discussed and appropriate changes were made to the mastery/non-mastery decision of the relevant descriptors.

The pre-writing scores were used for multiple purposes: to investigate the diagnostic potential of DRAW for generating cognitively diagnostic feedback in comparison with other feedback models, and also as an external measure of students’ writing performance in order to evaluate students’ writing development which served as the basis for investigating students’ writing development.
3.4.4 Generating DRAW Feedback Profiles

Diagnostic feedback profiles \((n=52)\) were generated for each student using their mid-point writing scripts generated from a classroom-based opinion essay. I refer to this essay as their mid-point writing performance. Students’ essays were scored using DRAW, and summaries of students’ performance across each of the six sub-skills captured by the rubric were generated. Students were deemed to have mastered a sub-skill if over 60% of the descriptors associated with it had been mastered. This cut-off point was established following principles of cognitively diagnostic modelling and associated procedures for determining mastery cut off points (see Jang, 2005). Students who had successfully mastered less than 40% of the descriptors comprising a sub-skill were identified as non-masters. Students who performed in between these ranges were deemed to be in transition and ‘on the way to mastering the skill’. In addition to these sub-skill level mastery decisions, individualized writing feedback was also generated using DRAW descriptors to identify learners’ strengths and areas for improvement across each of the six writing sub-skills.

I aimed to optimize the presentation of the feedback so that students would be able to easily read it to understand the conceptual gaps in their writing across the six sub-skills. I referred to various guidelines for best practices in assessment score reporting (e.g., Goodman & Hambleton, 2004; Ryan, 2006), and, specifically, to results from cognitively diagnostic assessments (Jang, 2005; Roberts & Gierl, 2010). Consequently, each individualized cognitively diagnostic profile presented results in multiple formats (e.g., graphic, narrative); avoided jargon; ensured that the feedback was organized and uncluttered by presenting the information in multiple sections; used a graph to present comparisons of sub-skill development in terms of mastery, approaching mastery, and non-mastery; directed students to strengths across each of the six sub-skills, and also presented areas for improvement; and presented a summary of students’ performance. The resulting feedback profile captured these qualities through four sections: Summary comments; Feedback analysis; Detailed feedback report; and Next steps. I further elaborate upon each of these features and their content in Chapter 4. A sample profile is included in Appendix H.
3.4.5 Feedback Survey and Student Interviews

After receiving the feedback profiles, students completed the DRAW feedback survey \((n=44)\) which aimed to capture their immediate perceptions about their perceived understanding, reflection, perceived usefulness, their intentions for its future use. All the students were also asked to complete a planning/goal setting section of the feedback profile in which they were asked to write down their areas for improvement in their own words and propose strategies for addressing the errors across each of the sub-skills.

Each feedback variable was measured through a combination of questionnaire items; therefore composite variables were created (based on students’ average response) for each of them. Descriptive statistics were calculated for each composite variable, and bivariate correlations were conducted to evaluate the relationships between them. These results are reported in Chapter 5.

Additionally, I conducted structured interviews with students across all three classrooms in order to delve more deeply into their perceptions of DRAW feedback in order to substantiate and further understand the characteristics of each of the feedback variables. I also used the opportunity to gather information about students’ opinions about other types of classroom assessment and feedback practices, and their strategies for using feedback.

A total of 30 students were interviewed: 13 students from Classroom A (i.e., all the students); 3 students from Classroom B, and 14 students from Classroom C. All of the students’ interviews were transcribed and coded using NVivo qualitative software (Version 10) (QSR, 2014). Again, a deductive coding approach was used, applying each of the feedback variables as pre-determined codes, as well as specific references to any writing sub-skill. Specifically, students’ responses to questions about DRAW and classroom feedback were coded using the same feedback categories used to construct the feedback survey. In other words, the transcripts were coded according to students’ perceived understanding, reflection, perceived usefulness, and intent for future use. Additionally, I re-analyzed the transcripts inductively using open-coding to identify any emergent themes related to students’ perceptions and use of feedback. The following codes emerged: self-perception of writing ability; feedback perceptions (self-assessment); feedback perceptions (peer-assessment); feedback perceptions (grades); feedback perceptions (benefits to writing skill development); mastery/performance prove/performance avoid goal orientation; self-efficacy; affective response to feedback; feedback strategy use; and perception
of teacher’s feedback. Some of the data were quantized (e.g., students’ feedback strategy use). These results are presented in Chapter 5.

3.4.6 Teachers’ Semi-Structured and Think-Aloud Interviews

Teacher’s semi-structured and think-aloud interviews were transcribed. The semi-structured interviews were analyzed inductively using NVivo software (Version 10, QSR, 2014). Codes were grouped into themes and categorized. Both deductive and inductive approaches to analysis were used to code teachers’ think-aloud data. First, structured codes were used to code teachers’ responses according to the content and type of feedback that each they valued. Additionally, the interviews were openly coded to uncover themes related to teachers’ feedback beliefs and values. Codes included: evidence of domain knowledge; beliefs about effective feedback, delivery of feedback, academic writing, specificity of feedback, timing of feedback, provision of scores, self- and peer-assessment; influence of assessment policy on practice; beliefs about DRAW feedback; and self-reflection on assessment and feedback.

3.5 Analytic Approaches to Inquiry Questions

In the previous sections, I discussed approaches to analysis of specific data sources. In the following sub-sections I elaborate on the data analysis approaches I took to address specific research questions.

3.5.1 Students’ Individualized Responses to DRAW Feedback

In order to investigate students’ individualized responses to DRAW feedback, I investigated the relationship between students’ learning orientations and their perceptions of DRAW feedback, I conducted a series of multiple regression analyses using the identified feedback variables as outcome variables, and students’ learning orientations as predictors. The learning orientation constructs used in this analysis were informed by the correlational analyses discussed above (section 3.4.1).

I also evaluated the correlational relationship between students’ achievement scores, DRAW score and skill mastery performance with the feedback variables to determine if any other relevant predictors should be entered into a regression model. Because of the small sample
sizes, I limited the predictor variables used to fit the model to the data by drawing from the results of these correlation analyses.

These data are presented in Table 12. The skills included in Table 12 represent students’ mastery/non-mastery of each of the six DRAW sub-skills. The rationale for including these performance-based variables stemmed from the hypothesis that students’ performance may have had an influence on students’ perception of feedback and contributed to the variance. Recall that the interviews with students revealed that they had affective responses (both positive and negative) to DRAW feedback.

Table 12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>DRAW Score</th>
<th>Achieve Score</th>
<th>IDEAS</th>
<th>VOC</th>
<th>ORG</th>
<th>MEC</th>
<th>GRM</th>
<th>SEN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Understanding</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.31*</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>-.19</td>
<td>-.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>-.25</td>
<td>-.18</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>-.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Usefulness</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>-.22</td>
<td>-.14</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>-.41**</td>
<td>-.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intent for Future Use</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td>-.38*</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>-.39*</td>
<td>-.09</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Note. n=40.

The results of the correlational analysis indicated that a statistically significant relationship existed between students’ perceived understanding of feedback and mastery of ideas sub-skill ($r = .31, p = .05$), as well as students’ perceived usefulness of DRAW feedback and mastery of the grammar sub-skill ($r = -.41, p = .01$). Two significant correlations were revealed between students’ intent for future use of DRAW feedback and mastery of vocabulary ($r = -.38, p = .05$), and grammar mastery ($r = -.39, p = .05$). No significant correlations were observed for the process of reflecting on DRAW feedback.

Drawing from the results of the correlational analyses, I proceeded to build regression models for the feedback variables in order to investigate the predictive power of the learner orientation and performance variables in explaining the variance in responses to DRAW feedback. Different independent variables were entered into each model depending on the
correlational analysis as the sample sizes were not large. The process of reflection in the feedback trajectory was omitted from this analysis as there were no variables which were significantly correlated with this outcome. Further, I used students’ interviews to complement these analyses and provide a richer understanding of the results. These analyses are discussed in depth in Chapter 5.

3.5.2 Effect of DRAW feedback on Students’ Writing Development

One of the primary purposes in this dissertation was to investigate the extent to which students’ perceptions of DRAW feedback affected their writing development. Therefore, examining the effect necessitated gathering evidence of students’ writing after they had received DRAW feedback and investigating the extent to which writing improvements (if any) could be attributed to DRAW. Therefore, I developed OSSLT-based post-writing measures similar to the ones that the students completed as a pre-measure of their writing ability. The purpose of these post-measures was to serve as an external measure of students’ writing performance, and also as a basis of comparison to investigate the differences in students’ writing development after receiving DRAW feedback. Unfortunately, not all of the teachers in the three classrooms were able to administer the post-writing measures for various reasons, the central reason being due to the extremely demanding time of the school year which necessitated attending to many curricular-related tasks and projects. A total of 17 students from Classrooms A and B wrote at least one of the two OSSLT-based writing measures (n=12 in Classroom A; n=5 in Classroom B).

In addition to these writing samples, I had also gathered additional writing samples from students across all three classrooms that were completed after students had received DRAW feedback. From Classroom B, I had a set of opinion-based writing scripts that were based on students’ completion of a summative writing task at the end of the semester. These assignments were scored by their teacher, Nicole; however, I also scored them using DRAW. A total of 13 scripts were used for analyses as these were the number of students who had also completed the DRAW feedback survey. From Classroom C, I had received six students’ writing scripts that were revised final copies of the writing performance on which students had received DRAW feedback.
The effect of DRAW feedback across the three classrooms was investigated, first calculating the differences between students’ DRAW profile writing score and their post-writing. Subsequent analyses included: 1) Conducting bivariate correlations between the difference in students’ writing scores and with the four variables representing students’ perceptions of DRAW feedback; and 2) Conducting non-parametric analysis using cross-tabulations between the feedback variables and the change in students’ writing scores. In this case, the feedback variables were dichotomized as low or high which depended on students’ responses being lower or higher than the overall mean of composite variable. Finally, descriptive analyses were conducted, investigating the relationship between students’ goal orientations and their perceptions of DRAW feedback. These results are presented in Chapter 6.

In addition to these group level analyses, I conducted some within class data analyses to expand upon, and complement the findings at the group level. Because of differences in the types of data generated in the three classrooms, different approaches were taken to analyzing individual students’ cases in the classrooms. In every case, I drew from all analyzed data available which included some combination of: 1) Students’ writing performance at various time points; 2) Learning orientations survey results; 3) Feedback survey results; 4) Structured interview data (analyzed as described above); 5) Observational data; and 6) DRAW feedback profiles. The data were evaluated separately and integrated to generate profiles and explain feedback use and patterns of writing sub-skill development.

There were also some additional DRAW-related classroom activities that informed the effect of DRAW feedback on students’ writing development. As I discussed earlier, part of the impetus for conducting this research investigation came from my work on the STEP research project and from the recognition that students did not have an active role in the use of the assessment. In other words, they were being assessed, but had not opportunity to act as agents of (self) assessment. Therefore, I collaborated with all of the teachers in the three classrooms to initiate adaptations of DRAW that could be used as self- and peer-assessment rubrics. Although all three teachers were extremely positive about it, the self- and peer-assessment activities primarily took place in Classrooms A and C. Unfortunately, I was not provided with all of the self-assessment data that was generated in these classrooms that would have allowed for in-depth analyses of these processes and investigation of potential discrepancies between students’ self-
perceptions of their writing skills and external evaluations of them. However, I used the data that I had to inform and discuss individual student cases.

3.5.3 Teachers’ Feedback Practices and Beliefs

I aimed to understand teachers’ assessment beliefs and feedback practices and how they contributed to students’ writing performance. These purposes were addressed through the analyses of multiple types of data which included teacher interviews, and think-aloud protocols. Additionally, I also conducted a feedback analysis of scored writing samples from each of the classrooms to document teachers’ pre-DRAW writing feedback practices. The previous two data sources were discussed earlier.

The feedback analysis was guided by the approach described in an investigation by Lee (2008) in which she analyzed ‘feedback points’ on students’ essays and categorized them according to the focus of the feedback, purpose of the feedback, and written commentary. Since DRAW is based on a cognitively diagnostic assessment framework, I chose to analyze the feedback accordingly (i.e., using similar categorizations) in order to provide a comparison between their written feedback practices and DRAW feedback. Using the scored writing scripts from each classroom, I categorized each instance of feedback (e.g., comments, circles, underlines, codes, scores) according to the type, focus and purpose of the feedback. These data constituted a documentation and reflection of teachers’ feedback practices as well as the foci and purposes of the feedback. I coded each feedback point once within each category of analysis; however, some feedback points were relevant to subsequent categories, and were coded again accordingly.

In order to investigate the relationship between teachers’ feedback practices and students’ perceptions of feedback, I compared students’ writing skill performance across each of the classrooms with the results of the feedback analyses. Similarly, I also compared the results of the feedback analyses with students’ responses to the DRAW feedback survey (n =44) to examine the relationships among them across the three classrooms.
3.6 Summary

The data collection and analysis methods described in this chapter served to provide evidence for responding to seven inquiry questions related to the development, use and effect of feedback generated from a diagnostic rubric for assessing writing. These methods reflect a mixed methods inquiry and analysis approach in which multiple methods and perspectives were pursued with the purposes of uncovering converging and diverging evidence to respond to the research questions identified in this dissertation. Namely:

1. What sub-skills and descriptors comprise a cognitively Diagnostic Rubric for Assessing Writing (DRAW) of adolescent English language learners?
2. What is the diagnostic potential of DRAW for generating cognitively diagnostic feedback about adolescent students’ writing skill development in comparison with other sources of writing feedback in secondary schools?
3. (a) What are adolescent students’ perceptions of DRAW feedback?
   (b) How do adolescent students’ anxiety, self-efficacy of writing, and goal orientations interact with their perceptions of DRAW feedback?
4. To what extent do students’ perceptions of DRAW feedback affect their writing skill development?
5. What are the characteristics of secondary school teachers’ writing assessment beliefs and feedback practices?
6. To what extent are adolescent students’ perceptions of feedback writing skill performance shaped by their teacher’s assessment beliefs and feedback practices?

The first two research questions address the development process and investigation of the diagnostic potential of DRAW which constituted the first phase of the study. The subsequent research questions target the use of DRAW with the multiple agents in the study which encompassed the second phase of the study.

All research investigations face challenges; this one is no exception. One of the primary challenges that I faced during this research process was to accept that I could not control every event that transpired in the classrooms. I had aimed to gather identical sets of data from students and teachers in each of three participating classrooms, but I was unprepared for the numerous realities of the classrooms which prevented teachers from always following my desired timelines
or to complete a task. It is an understatement to say that teachers are busy. Their dedication and commitment to their students is inspirational. Therefore, some of my analyses were limited by the data that was available to me, and not all students participants engaged in every research activity. However, this challenge is at the same time a strength, because it is through the differences in the data that I was able to generate a multiplicity of perspectives in an ecologically valid setting.

The results are presented in the subsequent four chapters of this dissertation. Chapter 4 presents the results of Phase 1; Chapter 5 addresses the results pertaining to the research questions focusing on the student agents in this research study. Chapter 6 examines the effect of DRAW on students’ writing development and, finally, Chapter 7 presents the results investigating the final two research questions focusing on teachers.
Chapter 4
Diagnostic Potential of a Diagnostic Rubric for Assessing Writing (DRAW)

In this chapter I present and evaluate the evidence gathered to respond to the research question: What is the diagnostic potential of DRAW for generating cognitively diagnostic feedback about adolescent students’ writing skill development in comparison with other sources of writing feedback in secondary schools? To respond to this question, multiple sources of feedback used in the three classrooms were compared to DRAW, a CDF model of feedback. Additionally, students’ pre-measure writing scripts were scored using DRAW as well as OSSLT rubrics to compare the information generated about students’ writing skill performance. The chapter is organized into two major sections. First, I discuss commonalities and differences between classroom and OSSLT writing rubrics, and DRAW. Next, I assess students’ compositions using each of these rubrics and compare the features of the feedback generated from each them.

4.1 Comparison between Classroom and OSSLT Writing Rubrics, and DRAW

There were two primary sources of writing feedback in the three tenth grade ESL classrooms at the focus of this study: teachers’ self-generated rubrics and OSSLT rubrics (2014a). The rubrics teachers used were based on curricular frameworks, as well as their beliefs and experiences which served to individualize the ways in which they assessed students’ writing and provided them with feedback. In contrast, the OSSLT (EQAO, 2012a; 2012b) is an externally developed, minimum-competency test developed to measure tenth graders reading and writing skills. The OSSLT rubrics are developed to determine students’ successful or unsuccessful efforts at meeting provincial standards. To a varying extent, all of the teachers in this investigation prepared their students for the OSSLT administration that was to take place close to the end of the academic year, and used multiple resources provided by the OSSLT developers (including the writing rubrics) to provide writing feedback to the students. DRAW feedback represented a third source of writing feedback that was introduced in the three classrooms.
I compared these three types of writing rubrics according to their features (e.g., descriptors), as well as the characteristics of the feedback generated from them. Specifically, the following criteria were used to compare and ultimately evaluate the diagnostic potential of DRAW: the content of the feedback; the writing sub-skills targeted; the purposes of use; the specificity of the feedback generated from them; the rubrics’ applicability to other tasks; the extent to which the feedback promotes students’ self-regulation of writing; the characteristics of the rubrics’ descriptors; the timing of the delivery of the feedback to students, and the features of the presentation of the feedback. In the following sub-sections, I elaborate on each of the feedback features; however, before proceeding, it is imperative that I state that the purpose of the subsequent discussion is to examine the characteristics of the rubrics in detail, and not to compare the practices of teachers across classrooms.

Table 13

*Features of Rubric-based Feedback in ESL Classrooms*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feedback Feature</th>
<th>Teachers’ Rubric Feedback</th>
<th>OSSLT Rubric Feedback</th>
<th>DRAW Feedback</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>• Cognitive strategies; knowledge processes</td>
<td>• Summative descriptions of overall quality of work</td>
<td>• Cognitive strategies; cognitive gaps; knowledge processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Sub-skills</td>
<td>• Content/Ideas, Organization, Vocabulary, Grammar, Mechanics, Sentence Fluency</td>
<td>• Content/Ideas, Organization, Conventions</td>
<td>• Content/Ideas, Organization, Vocabulary, Grammar, Mechanics, Sentence Fluency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Priority varied depending on teacher</td>
<td>• Linked to curriculum</td>
<td>• All skills given equal priority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Linked to curriculum</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Linked to curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Consistent with theories of second language writing development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>• Formative and summative</td>
<td>• Summative</td>
<td>• Formative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specificity</td>
<td>• Ranging from coarse, to fine-grained to extremely detailed</td>
<td>• Coarse</td>
<td>• Fine-grained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Written feedback is generalized depending on score</td>
<td>• Individualized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Consistent across different writing skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applicability to other writing tasks</td>
<td>• Somewhat to a great extent depending on type of rubric (i.e.,)</td>
<td>• A little</td>
<td>• To a great extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback Feature</td>
<td>Teachers’ Rubric Feedback</td>
<td>OSSLT Rubric Feedback</td>
<td>DRAW Feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summative or Formative</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Self-Regulatory Strategies           | • Formative rubrics refer to planning (e.g., outlining) and process of writing | • Directing students to next steps to improve writing | • Directing students to next steps to improve writing
|                                       |                           |                       | • Guidance to monitor learning |
|                                       |                           |                       | • Promoting self-reflection   |
| Feedback Descriptors                  | • Use quantifiers and/or modifiers | • Address multiple skills | • Each capture a distinct writing feature |
|                                       | • Sometimes focus on a single distinct writing feature; sometimes address multiple features | • Present overall judgment |                              |
| Timing of feedback                    | • Varied depending on teacher, but often within one-two classes | • Approximately three months after writing the test | • Within one-two classes |
| Presentation                          | • Rubric checked off | • Report which includes score, descriptive skill summary, guide to next steps | • Report which includes summary comments, overall skill summary report (graphic and descriptive), descriptive list of strengths and areas for improvement; next steps prompts |
|                                       | • Accompanied by a score | | |
|                                       | • Frequently accompanied by additional written feedback on assignment | | |

4.1.1 Purposes, Content and Writing Sub-skills of Rubrics

**Teachers’ Rubrics.** I gathered representative rubrics uses in Classrooms A, B and C and analyzed the criteria included in each rubric. These rubrics were used for both formative and summative purposes and typify the sources of writing feedback in secondary classrooms developed and used by teachers. Based on my analyses, I identified the writing sub-skill that was being targeted associated with each of the criteria. An example rubric with this analysis is illustrated in Table 14. Additional representative rubrics from all of the classrooms and used in this analysis are included in Appendix I.
Table 14

*Classroom A: A Typical Rubric used to Assess an Opinion Essay*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Skills^a</th>
<th>&gt;1</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Knowledge and Understanding</strong> (writing)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thesis statement is clear, and accurate</td>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Very Limited</td>
<td>Limited</td>
<td>Some</td>
<td>Considerable</td>
<td>High/ Very High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective use of topic and concluding sentences in all body paragraphs</td>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Very Limited</td>
<td>Limited</td>
<td>Some</td>
<td>Considerable</td>
<td>High/ Very High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Thinking and Inquiry (socio-cultural)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting sentences in each paragraph provide at least two effective examples/ quotations</td>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Very Limited</td>
<td>Limited</td>
<td>Some</td>
<td>Considerable</td>
<td>High/ Very High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All examples are followed by complete explanations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Application (writing)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed outline, rough copy (with appropriate revisions)</td>
<td>Process of writing</td>
<td>Very Limited</td>
<td>Limited</td>
<td>Some</td>
<td>Considerable</td>
<td>High/ Very High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quotations and references are punctuated correctly</td>
<td>Mechanics</td>
<td>Very Limited</td>
<td>Limited</td>
<td>Some</td>
<td>Considerable</td>
<td>High/ Very High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communication (writing)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective use of transitional words</td>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>Very Limited</td>
<td>Limited</td>
<td>Some</td>
<td>Considerable</td>
<td>High/ Very High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All paragraphs maintain clarity (stay on topic)</td>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Very Limited</td>
<td>Limited</td>
<td>Some</td>
<td>Considerable</td>
<td>High/ Very High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective use of grammar, sentence structure, punctuation, and spelling</td>
<td>Mechanics; Grammar; Sentence Fluency</td>
<td>Very Limited</td>
<td>Limited</td>
<td>Some</td>
<td>Considerable</td>
<td>High/ Very High</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

^aNote. This column was not part of the original rubric

Both similarities and differences were evident among the representative rubrics used by the teacher participants. Namely, all three rubrics demonstrated the teachers’ attentiveness to the content of the writing, and the way in which the content is communicated. This finding was confirmed during a conversation with Celina about her opinion on what constitutes high quality writing during which she stated:

*Oddly enough, not grammar. I often look for depth of analysis and insights conveyed more so than the structure. I don’t know if it’s the number of years of hearing and seeing...*
broken English that allows me to get beyond the surface obstructions, but I look at what is the student trying to convey about their topic.

The extent to which the categories in the rubrics were delineated and described for evaluating students’ writing varied across the three teachers’ rubrics. Table 15 summarizes the characteristics of these rubrics across the three classrooms.

Table 15

Characteristics of Writing Rubrics used by Teachers in Classrooms A, B and C

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher/Classroom</th>
<th>Writing Sub-skills/Domains</th>
<th>Scoring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Celina Classroom A</td>
<td>- Knowledge and understanding&lt;br&gt;- Thinking and inquiry (socio/cultural)&lt;br&gt;- Application (writing)&lt;br&gt;- Communication (writing)</td>
<td>- Each sub-skill evaluated across one of four levels&lt;br&gt;- Evaluative performance criteria differentiated by quantifiers&lt;br&gt;- Score summarized in two categories: writing and socio-cultural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicole Classroom B</td>
<td>- Topic sentences state main idea/opinion&lt;br&gt;- Body sentences give examples to support topic&lt;br&gt;- Concluding sentences restate main idea&lt;br&gt;- Ideas are written clearly&lt;br&gt;- Writer has defended position</td>
<td>- Each sub-skill evaluated across four levels&lt;br&gt;- Evaluative performance criteria: needs improvement; satisfactory; meets expectation; commendable&lt;br&gt;- Single score summarizes performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angie Classroom C</td>
<td>- Content:&lt;br&gt;- Introduction and conclusion&lt;br&gt;- Examples&lt;br&gt;- Specific names, ages, places, topic and concluding sentences&lt;br&gt;- Quotations&lt;br&gt;- Writing:&lt;br&gt;- Transitions&lt;br&gt;- Spelling and vocabulary&lt;br&gt;- Verb tenses&lt;br&gt;- Punctuation of quotations&lt;br&gt;- Sentence variety&lt;br&gt;- Subject-verb agreement&lt;br&gt;- Capitalization</td>
<td>- Each sub-skill evaluated across four levels&lt;br&gt;- Descriptors used to describe expected performance&lt;br&gt;- Key words used in descriptors:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Table 15, the column titled, ‘Writing Sub-skills/Domains’, provides information about how the descriptors within the different rubrics were categorized. For example, in Celina’s classroom, the organizing categories comprised: Knowledge and understanding; Thinking and inquiry (socio/cultural); Application (writing); Communication (writing) which represent a direct
application of the Ontario Ministry of Education (MOE) assessment guidelines for secondary school ESL and English literacy development courses (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2007). This document explains that teachers’ assessments need to be valid and reliable, and one of the criteria for ensuring these qualities is for teachers to use assessment and evaluation strategies that “are based both on the categories of knowledge and skills and on the achievement level descriptions given in the achievement chart” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 31). The ‘achievement chart’ to which the guidelines refer have specific intended purposes which include: 1) providing a common framework which captures all elements of curricular expectations; 2) guiding the development of additional assessment tools, such as rubrics; 3) assisting teachers with instructional planning; 4) helping teachers to provide “meaningful” feedback to students; and 5) providing the categories and criteria which may be used to evaluate students. Furthermore, the achievement chart is not specific to writing, as it is expected that ESL courses blend four strands of learning (listening and speaking, reading and writing) and does not identify specific knowledge or cognitive skills associated with knowledge or understanding any of the delineated categories. Therefore, it is left to individual teachers to identify specific skills across the learning strands, and apply them to their assessment and feedback.

In Classroom B, the rubrics used for summative purposes are also closely aligned with the Ministry’s curricular guidelines. However, the rubrics used for formative purposes are not organized using these categories, but use specific criteria that focus predominately on the content of the writing as well as the writing process.

The rubrics used in Classroom C also exhibit some characteristics that are consistent with Ontario’s curricular guidelines (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2007). However, they also possess features that distinguish them from these guidelines, as well as the rubrics used to generate feedback in in the other two classrooms. Similar to Classrooms A and B, and consistent with the provincial guidelines are that the criteria employed in the rubric to evaluate students’ writing are primarily focused on two of the categories identified in the guidelines, namely, Knowledge and Understanding, and Communication. However, one of the primary differences between Classroom C’s rubrics and the other classroom’s rubrics is the number of categories that are used to evaluate students’ writing. The typical rubric used in Classroom C uses 12 different criteria to generate feedback on students’ content/ideas, sentence fluency, grammar, mechanics, vocabulary, and organization. The other rubrics from Classrooms A and B apply between six and
nine categories depending on the purpose for which the rubric is being used to generate feedback. Furthermore, some of the categories used in Classroom C’s rubrics are specific to a particular task (an assignment in which students were asked to write a descriptive essay about their future self). For example, one of the categories is *Specific names, ages, places.* This category may not necessarily be applicable across different writing tasks.

These results reveal that the rubrics used in these classrooms all address cognitive writing strategies and knowledge processes associated with writing; however, the extent to which they are delineated across purposes and tasks varies across the three classrooms (e.g., formative versus summative).

**OSSLT Rubrics.** In contrast to the classroom-developed rubrics, the OSSLT rubrics were designed for summative purposes, but the rubrics (as well as the test) contributed to the writing instruction and learning in Ontario’s tenth grade classrooms, and provide another source of feedback in this context.

To a varying extent, all of the teachers in this investigation prepared their students for the OSSLT administration that was to take place close to the end of the academic year. The teachers’ primary focus was on preparing students for the news report and opinion writing piece through in-class writing tasks; however, students also engaged in additional preparatory activities including: 1) After-school literacy programs whose sole purpose was to help students to prepare for the test; 2) Modelling of exemplar writing pieces that were awarded full scores; and 3) Self-assessment activities in which students used the OSSLT rubrics to assess their writing. While all students in the three schools practiced the writing tasks, and learned from exemplars, only students in School C were offered an after-school literacy program, and students in School B were the only ones who engaged in self-assessment tasks using the OSSLT rubrics. However, all students were introduced to the OSSLT rubrics in order to learn about the writing expectations demanded of them. Consequently, the OSSLT test is, in part, responsible for driving the L2 writing instruction and learning in these school contexts, a phenomenon that has been previously documented (Shohamy, 1992).

Following the OSSLT administration, students receive a feedback report that lets them know that the writing skills that are tested on the OSSLT match those that they learn in their course and that they need to demonstrate the following writing skills: Developing a main idea with sufficient supporting detail; Organizing information and ideas in a clear and understandable
manner; and Using conventions (spelling, punctuation, grammar) appropriately and in a manner
that does not distract the reader (EQAO, 2012a, p. 2). Therefore, the OSSLT writing tasks are
primarily assessing students’ content/ideas, organization, and mechanics and grammar in writing.
The rubrics from which this feedback on students’ writing is derived, and which teachers and
students use in the classroom are included in Appendix J for both the opinion essay and news
report.

In contrast to the analytic rubrics that have been discussed thus far, the OSSLT rubrics
are examples of holistic rubrics in which a piece of writing is evaluated in its entirety and given a
single overall score; there are no sub-scores for different writing sub-skills. The OSSLT opinion
essay rubric does, however, offer two rubrics: one for assessing the ‘topic’, and the other for the
‘writing’. The former is used to provide an overall judgment of students’ content and
organization, and the latter assesses students’ ‘conventions’, and the extent to which such errors
interfere with communication. As noted above, conventions refer to students’ grammar, spelling,
and punctuation use. The rubric used to assess students’ news reports relies on a single holistic
rubric that assesses content and organization. Neither rubric specifically addresses students’ use
of vocabulary or sentence fluency.

**DRAW.** DRAW was introduced to these classrooms to provide formative feedback based
on students’ use of writing knowledge, skills and strategies, as opposed to fine-grained categories
representing discrete knowledge (e.g., morphological errors, semantic errors) or generalized
scores across a task. As such, students’ cognitive writing processes were informed and guided by
such diagnostic feedback. These cognitive writing skills and strategies are relevant to the Ontario
curriculum, and consistent with current theories of L2 writing. As discussed, writing is a
complex construct whose multidimensionality has not been captured in any single framework
(Cumming, 1998, 2001a, 2002; Cumming et al, 2000). While this multidimensionality allows
specific writing sub-skills to be identified and consequently diagnosed for the provision of
specific feedback, the lack of a unifying framework poses challenges to identifying which skills
to diagnose. In other words, there is no clear consensus on which writing sub-skills should be the
basis for provision of feedback for optimally advancing students’ writing development.
Accordingly, I addressed this issue in developing DRAW by: 1) Reviewing the relevant literature
on second language writing and assessment; 2) Using Steps to English Proficiency as a basis on
which to develop DRAW descriptors such that they would be specific to the teaching and
learning English language classroom context in Ontario; and 3) Working in collaboration with teachers to ensure that that their beliefs and experiences about effective writing feedback was incorporated into the feedback.

Six writing sub-skills were identified that together represented the construct of second language writing in the Ontario, Grade 10 ESL context: content/ideas (IDEA), vocabulary (VOC), organization (ORG), sentence fluency and structure (SEN), mechanics (MEC), and grammar (GRM). Each of these sub-skills is defined by descriptors that capture what learners can do. There are a disproportionate number of descriptors among the sub-skills reflecting the focus on content and organization apparent in most second language writing classrooms (Leki & Carson, 1997; Weigle, 2002), as was evidenced in the other models of feedback discussed in the previous section.

4.1.2 The Rubrics’ Descriptors

One of the purposes of descriptors used in a rubric is to inform and guide students to the criteria being used for effective performance across a given category, domain or sub-skill. The previously discussed achievement chart used by the Ministry of Ontario (2007) to inform teachers’ assessment practices uses various quantifiers (e.g., limited, some, considerable) to describe the degree to which performance characteristics have been ‘effectively’ achieved. The curriculum document provides the following explanation:

What constitutes effectiveness in any given performance task will vary with the particular criterion being considered. Assessment of effectiveness may therefore focus on a quality such as appropriateness, clarity, accuracy, precision, logic, relevance, significance, fluency, flexibility, depth, or breadth, as appropriate for the particular criterion. (Ontario Ministry of Education, pp 33-34)

This recommendation was actualized similarly in the three classrooms at the focus of this study. As illustrated in Table 15, the performance across the descriptors in the typical rubric used in Classroom A are evaluated according to five levels ranging from a ‘very limited’ to a ‘high/very high’ level of performance. Similarly, in Classroom B, the performance levels are described using qualifiers; however, the terms used to evaluate relative performance vary. For example, performance is described as ranging from ‘needs improvement’ to ‘commendable’ and ‘limited
effectiveness’ to ‘high degree of effectiveness’. In Classroom C, performance is delineated across four performance levels that are distinguished using quantifiers to compare either the actual or relative occurrence or application of a skill or strategy. For example, the use of none, few, several or multiple supporting examples or transition words.

One issue that arises when qualifiers are used is that the resulting feedback may not necessarily provide students with the information that they need in order to understand the difference or the gap between their current state of performance and a future goal (Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Sadler, 1989). In other words, students may not have specific information about how their teacher perceives the differences between achieving a level 1 and level 2 (for example), because the qualifiers (and sometimes quantifiers) emphasize relative performance, and do not necessarily identify students’ strengths and areas for improvement. Certainly, teachers consistently articulate their expectations for the highest levels of achievement, but the differences among and between the lower levels are not explicitly articulated through the rubric, and the resulting feedback that students receive. Students require specific feedback that contains task-specific descriptions of expected performance at each level (Tierney & Simon, 2004; Wiggins, 1998). As one student, Emil, stated in an interview:

*Here, I think it’s like useless [the rubric], because it doesn’t say how your work is supposed to be. It doesn’t make your work easier. You still have to create something and you cannot copy it from rubric.*

Another issue that may arise when quantifiers are used to describe varying levels of performance is that the feedback is open to variable interpretation by students since they are presenting students’ relative performance achievement. Students’ interpretation of the feedback, and their understanding of what constitutes a ‘limited’ or ‘some’ degree of effectiveness may vary depending on the student, the class in which they are participating, and/or the teacher who is facilitating the class. Another student’s (Amy) comments highlighted this issue:

*Everybody [teachers] have [sic] different opinion and...let’s say whenever a teacher says that I’m wrong on something or I didn’t, I need improvement probably thinking myself “Oh, I think it's good enough” but then, well it's actually, it depends on the experience because I think what the teacher said, that they do have their...um...ways, or, they have the ways to teach you. ‘Cause I’m more likely learning different kind of writing, writing skills from different teachers, I don’t like learning from only one teachers cause often when I go to tutoring, when a tutor teach me how to learn how to write an essay’s totally different, and the structure that the teacher teaches me, is different from what the tutor taught me, so I need different examples from teachers so that I can group my ideas and then use it to try and do my best.*
This quotation illustrates one student’s belief that different teachers have different expectations and understandings of what constitutes effective writing, and she incorporates this belief in her interpretation of feedback.

**OSSLT.** As explained in the previous section, the OSSLT rubrics provide overall descriptions of performance to assess content and organization in one rubric and errors in conventions in the other for the evaluation of performance on the opinion essay. A single rubric is used to assess students’ news report performance. The descriptors differentiate performance across six levels which are distinguished through a combination of qualifiers and quantifiers as well as the presence or absence of a criterion. For example, a ‘Code 20’ descriptor states: “The response is related to the prompt and expresses and supports an opinion, but the opinion is unclear or inconsistent. There are insufficient supporting details: too few or repetitious. There is limited evidence of organization” (EQAO, 2012a). The next level descriptor, ‘Code 30’ explains: “The response is related to the prompt and expresses a clear opinion. There are insufficient and/or vague supporting details or the connection of the details to the opinion is not always clear. There is evidence of organization, but lapses distract from the overall communication” (EQAO, 2012a). This example illustrates that the differences between the two levels are determined by ‘clear’ versus ‘unclear’ opinion; ‘insufficient and/or vague supporting details’ vs ‘sufficient supporting details’; and finally, ‘evidence of organization with lapses that distract vs organization that is mechanical and does not distract’. Certainly, when raters use this rubric to evaluate the standardized exam, they are trained to ensure that there is a common understanding, interpretation, and application of the rubric; however, when this rubric is used in a classroom for and with students for preparation, it may not necessarily be applied, nor interpreted as consistently.

**DRAW.** There are 30 descriptors that comprise DRAW which together describe the cognitive skills and strategies comprising six L2 writing sub-skills relevant to the Ontario Grade 10 learning context. The descriptors comprising DRAW were focused on what students ‘can do’, adopting a philosophy reflected in other language proficiency scales such as the Common European Framework of References for Languages (Council of Europe, 2001), and World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) (WIDA, 2014). This approach is a departure away from models of assessment that do not provide an avenue for learners to recognize their strengths
and achievements and focus solely on gaps or ‘deficiencies’ in students’ work. Accordingly, the DRAW descriptors provide an avenue for students’ to recognize their writing strengths.

Each of the descriptors comprising DRAW aims to capture distinct and independent features of writing which could be used to diagnose students’ writing skill in terms of their strengths and areas for improvement (Alderson, 2005). These descriptors do not rely on different proficiency levels to distinguish among students’ writing performance on a particular criterion (as some of the rubrics described). Therefore, anyone using the rubric (teacher or student) will be able to evaluate the mastery or non-mastery of the cognitive writing skills and strategies individually. Determining mastery is based solely on the extent to which a text demonstrates the quality characterized by a descriptor; there are no comparisons to be made among or between different proficiency levels.

4.1.3 Presentation, Timing and Specificity of the Feedback Generated

The teachers in each classroom presented students with feedback in slightly different ways which was partly dependent on the purpose of the task and the uses of the rubric (e.g., formative or summative). Regardless of the task and purpose, students in all three classes always received the rubric with check marks to indicate their performance level across the different categories comprising the rubric and a score. In Classroom A, students frequently received overall comments on their writing performance as well as a score. Comments were more likely to be provided on summative rather than formative tasks. Classroom B’s students received brief comments on the rubric subsumed under each category summarizing features of their writing. Summative tasks also included comments interspersed throughout the writing script. In Classroom C, the rubric was always accompanied with students’ writing scripts with detailed corrective feedback and sometimes overall comments which were at times descriptive, and at other times praising or both.

It is apparent that the specificity of the feedback varied depending on the classroom, the purposes of the assignment, and the rubric that was used. The feedback ranged from coarse (e.g., summative descriptions of students’ writing performance) to fine-grained (e.g., descriptive comments alerting students to gaps in their cognitive writing skills) to excessively detailed (e.g., corrective error correction).
Students received the feedback at different times depending on the classroom. In Classroom C, students almost always received the feedback within one day. In general, the students received the writing feedback within several days of completing a task.

**OSSLT.** Upon completion of the OSSLT examination, all students receive individualized reports that detail their performances. These reports are delivered to students approximately three months following the test administration. In addition to indicating if the student was successful or not, the report includes: 1) Score information including: the student’s score, number of questions attempted, the school’s median score, and the provincial median score; 2) The student’s literacy scores from previous EQAO administrations in Grades 3 and 6; 3) A summary of the curricular skills that the OSSLT tested; and 4) Recommendations for ‘Next Steps’ for how to use the test results. The information provided in this latter category varies depending on if the student was successful or unsuccessful on the test. Figures 9 and 10 illustrate the information that students receive. The ‘Next Steps’ in the OSSLT report highlights the need to follow-up on the results with a teacher (or principal) regardless of a student’s performance (i.e., meeting the test’s success criteria or not). Additionally, this section lets students know that the OSSLT results are only one indication of students’ literacy profile. Students also receive feedback about their reading performance, details of which are not pertinent to this study.

Figure 9. Next Steps Guide to Students Successful on the OSSLT (EQAO, 2012a).
The feedback report that students receive lets students know that the writing skills that are tested on the OSSLT match those that they learn in their course and that they need to demonstrate the following writing skills:

- Developing a main idea with sufficient supporting detail;
- Organizing information and ideas in a clear and understandable manner and
- Using conventions (spelling, punctuation, grammar) appropriately and in a manner that does not distract the reader (EQAO, 2012a, p. 2)

Although the score that students receive is specific, the remainder of the feedback generated from the OSSLT rubrics is coarse. The written comments are generalized depending on students’ scores and based on individual students’ scores. This mode of reporting is due, in part, to the holistic nature of the rubrics.

Weigle (2002) suggests that there are two primary disadvantages of using holistic rubrics to provide feedback for language learners. She points out that a single score does not provide students with adequate diagnostic feedback about their writing ability, because many language learners develop different writing sub-skills at variable rates. For example, a student may excel at content development, but struggle with organizing the content, while another student may excel at producing a grammatically correct piece of writing, but struggle with sentence fluency. Weigle (2002) also explains that holistic rubrics are not as easily interpretable since different raters may
be using different criteria to score a piece of writing. While there are two holistic rubrics used for the opinion essay, allowing students to receive slightly more specific feedback, the news report is assessed using only a single holistic rating scale.

**DRAW.** The goal of DRAW feedback was to generate feedback that was neither excessively detailed, nor coarse, but fine-grained. Students received feedback across each of these sub-skills to guide their writing development, as opposed to receiving a single score. As discussed, this feedback did not provide syntactic level error correction, nor did it provide summative generalizations of the writing, but fine-grained strengths and areas for improvement organized by the six writing sub-skills.

Students’ DRAW feedback was delivered to them in the form of a report within one or two classes after completing the writing assignment on which the feedback was based. A sample of this report is included in Appendix H. The report possessed several key elements: Summary comments; Feedback analysis; Detailed feedback report; and Next steps.

The Summary comments provided students with feedback that was specific to the task, and summarized the overall strengths and areas for improvement in the writing using specific references to the task. The purpose of these comments was to provide students with an introduction to the report and provide an overview of the feedback to guide their understanding and interpretation of the feedback.

The Feedback analysis section provided students with a skill profile summary (consistent with psychometric cognitively diagnostic modelling approaches which generate mastery/non-mastery skill classes). Students were provided with a summary of their performance on six writing sub-skills: Ideas, Organization, Vocabulary, Sentence fluency, Mechanics, and Grammar. Their performance across each of these skills was evaluated across one of three levels: Needs improvement; You are showing improvement- keep on working to continue improving; and You are on your way to mastering this skill. This information was also presented graphically. On the second page of the feedback report, the ‘Detailed feedback’ provided students with their strengths and areas for improvement for each of the six writing sub-skills. This information aimed to provide students with feedback that addressed the conceptual gap between their current level of performance and a future goal (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). The feedback targeted specific writing features derived from the DRAW rubric, but did not use exemplars specific to the task, so that the feedback could be generalized to other writing contexts. For example, ‘Your
conclusion does not summarize all of the main points of your essay’; and ‘In most sentences your words are ‘just right’, and clearly explain your meaning’.

The final section of the feedback profile, Next steps, targeted students’ self-regulatory behaviours and learner autonomy. It encouraged students to write down the areas of their writing upon which they wished to improve, and also to record strategies and plans detailing how they would improve upon them. A blank chart, organized by each of the six sub-skills, was included for the students. Figure 11 and 12 illustrate two students’ completed charts.

![Figure 1. Julius’s Next Steps.](image-url)
These two students selected some of the weaknesses that they wished to improve, and revised them (in their own words) to include in the chart. They then identified strategies such as asking friend, referring to the internet, and reading aloud to improve their writing skills. One of the key features of these DRAW sub-skills and their associated descriptors is that they generate feedback at both local and global levels, which are facets of writing revisions used to distinguish expert and inexpert writers (Hayes, 1996). Inexpert writers tend to focus their revisions at local levels such as word and sentence level errors, while expert writers revise global errors which include content and organizational concerns. According to Hayes (1996), the reasons for these differences may be attributed to students’ reading skills, working memory, and/or their (in)ability to attend to global errors.
4.1.4 Potential of Rubrics’ Feedback to Promote Self-Regulatory Strategies

All of the feedback generated from the rubrics have the potential to promote and support students’ self-regulated learning behaviours to advance their writing (Nichol & MacFarlane-Dick, 2006). Specifically, the classroom rubrics directed students to planning, and guided them through a process of writing. Receiving feedback on drafts of a writing task served to guide them towards monitoring their writing development.

The OSSLT feedback reports direct students to ‘next steps’ and the process of goal setting. Therefore, students are encouraged to take action following feedback in order to advance their skill development.

DRAW feedback also serves to advance students’ self-regulated learning behaviours not only by focusing on learners’ cognitive processes and strategies, but also with the inclusion of the ‘Next Steps’ as part of the feedback report. This section of the report guided students’ goal setting and subsequent actions to help them advance their writing skill development. Furthermore, the rubric itself was developed so that it was easily adaptable to self- and peer-assessment rubrics.

In all three classrooms, teachers used modified versions of DRAW (in the form of checklists) to provide students with the opportunity to self- and peer-assess their writing. These practices allow students to generate their own feedback, alerting them to the conceptual gaps in their writing, and thus promoting their development as autonomous learners and writers.

One integral aspect of promoting learner autonomy through the use of rubrics is ensuring that the rubric is comprehensible to learners. DRAW was developed with STEP as its basis; one of the foundational revisions made to STEP was to simplify the language so that learners would be able to understand and engage with it.

4.2 Assessing Students’ Writing Performance using Rubrics

The previous sections of this chapter examined the features of the three different sources of writing feedback in Classroom A, B and C, both in terms of the characteristics of the rubrics, and also the feedback generated from them with the goal of examining the relative diagnostic potential of DRAW. I gathered further evidence to respond to this question by assessing students’ pre-writing performance using DRAW and the OSSLT and examining qualities of the feedback generated from them.
4.2.1 Comparing Feedback Generated from DRAW and OSSLT Rubrics

Both DRAW and OSSLT rubrics were used to score students’ (N=48) pre-writing scripts generated from the opinion essay and news report prompts. The results are illustrated in Figure 13 and Figure 14 respectively. Figure 13 presents students’ mean writing score across each of the sub-skills assessed in DRAW (see Chapter 3 for a detailed explanation) for the two writing tasks. Figure 14 also displays students’ mean scores across the categories assessed by the OSSLT rubrics.

The DRAW assessment provides diagnostic information about students’ skill mastery development across six writing sub-skills. In contrast, the feedback about students’ writing performance using the OSSLT rubrics is less informative; the opinion-based essay provides information about two categories (topic development and conventions), and the news report rubric provides only a single score.

The sub-skills information based on DRAW is fine-grained providing a complex view of students’ writing profile, while the OSSLT feedback is more coarse, reducing students’ writing performance to one or two categories of performance. The two categories used in the OSSLT rubrics to assess students’ opinion-based essays are also not independent writing features which may be subsequently used to provide students with specific, fine-grained strengths and areas for improvement.

The writing assessment using DRAW reveals that students generally, achieved higher mean scores on the news report than the opinion-based essay. However, their pattern of skill mastery is identical across the two writing tasks demonstrating that DRAW is sensitive to different types of genres, providing diagnostically useful information about the pattern of students’ writing development. The differences in the means may be due to a prompt effect or an instructional effect. Nonetheless, DRAW revealed that students’ writing sub-skill mastery demonstrated a hierarchy in the following order: mechanics, sentence fluency, ideas/content, vocabulary, grammar, and organization. This sensitivity across writing tasks was (expectedly) not observable for the OSSLT results as different rubrics were used to assess the different types of writing.
The purpose of this comparison was not to critique the OSSLT rubrics; rather, I aimed to use this comparative analysis to provide evidence to evaluate the claim and assumptions about the diagnostic potential of DRAW.

**Figure 13.** DRAW assessment of all students’ opinion essays and news reports.

**Figure 14.** OSSLT Rubric Assessment of Students’ Opinion Essays and News Reports.
4.3 Summary and Claim

The primary purpose of this chapter was to respond to the question: What is the diagnostic potential of DRAW for generating cognitively diagnostic feedback about adolescent students’ writing skill development in comparison with other sources of feedback in secondary schools? Features of typical feedback models of classroom and OSSLT rubrics were analyzed, as well as characteristics of DRAW. Additionally, the latter two types of rubrics were used to evaluate students’ pre-writing performance. Table 16 summarizes the findings. Note that the comparison among the three types of rubrics is based on the extent to which they possess characteristics aligned with cognitively diagnostic feedback described in Chapter 2.

Table 16

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feedback Characteristic</th>
<th>Teachers’ Rubrics</th>
<th>EQAO Rubrics</th>
<th>DRAW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identifies strengths &amp; areas for improvement</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applicable to other writing tasks</td>
<td>Variable</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Addresses cognitive skills</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easily translatable into self-assessment rubrics</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specificity of feedback is consistent across different sub-skills</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitates students’ self-regulation</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjectivity of performance descriptors used to generate feedback are minimized</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on the findings, I put forth the claim that DRAW feedback provides cognitively, diagnostically rich information about students’ writing development in comparison to other sources of writing feedback used in Ontario’s secondary ESL classrooms. Challenges to the claim and underlying assumptions in this chapter may emerge because of the necessity to use analytical judgments in addition to comparisons of the rubrics based on empirical data. In as far
as possible, the results were based empirically through analysis of observational data, teacher interviews, and analysis of students’ performance data. However, there was no opportunity to investigate teachers’ use of OSSLT rubrics. The participating teachers did not use the rubrics as part of their assessment routines, and did not have the additional time to devote to using them for this research investigation. Chapter 5 delves into research questions related to this use of DRAW feedback and students’ writing development.
Chapter 5
Students’ Perceptions of DRAW Feedback

One of the primary purposes of this research study was to investigate students’ perceptions of DRAW feedback and the extent to which it affected their writing skill development. This purpose is addressed through two research questions: 1) What are adolescent students’ perceptions of DRAW feedback?; and 2) How do adolescent students’ anxiety, self-efficacy of writing, and goal orientations interact with their perceptions of DRAW feedback? I gathered evidence to respond to these questions using students’ responses to a learning orientation survey, as well as a DRAW feedback survey. Additionally, I evaluated the results from students’ structured interviews, and their mid-point writing performance. This chapter begins with a discussion of the results from the analysis of students’ DRAW feedback survey. I then present analyses which examined the relationship between students’ individual variables (e.g., goal orientations) and their feedback responses.

5.1 Students’ Perceptions of DRAW Feedback

As discussed in Chapter 3, four feedback variables were used to capture students’ perceptions of DRAW feedback. Together, these variables projected a pathway through which students received, understood, reflected upon, and made decisions about its usefulness for future use. Overall, students had a positive response to the DRAW feedback expressing that they perceived an understanding of the feedback ($M = 1.87, SD = 0.20$), reflected on it positively ($M = 3.48, SD = 0.36$), perceived it to be useful ($M = 3.28, SD = 0.47$), and intended to apply the feedback to future writing ($M = 3.61, SD = 0.41$). As discussed in Chapter 3, students’ perceived understanding of DRAW feedback was measured on a scale from zero to two, while all the other feedback variables were measured on a scale from one to four. Although there was variability in the students’ responses, it was not extensive which was possibly indicative of students’ strong positive reaction to DRAW feedback as well as demonstrating face validity of the feedback to students.

The relationship among these DRAW feedback variables was evaluated using bivariate correlations demonstrating statistically significant correlations between all of the variables. The results are illustrated in Table 17. Perceived understanding of feedback was positively and
strongly correlated with: students’ reflection, \( r = .48, p < .01 \), perceived usefulness, \( r = .41, p < .01 \), and intent for future use of DRAW feedback, \( r = .54, p < .01 \). The remaining feedback variables also demonstrated a strong degree of positive relationships. Students’ reflection was strongly and positively correlated with perceived usefulness, \( r = .52, p < .01 \), and with intent for future use of DRAW feedback, \( r = .67, p < .01 \). This latter relationship was the strongest among all of the feedback variables. The only relationship between the feedback variables not yet addressed is the one between students’ perceived usefulness of DRAW feedback and intent for its future use which also demonstrated a strong and significant positive relationship, \( r = .55, p < .01 \).

Table 17

Correlations between DRAW Feedback Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Perceived Understanding</th>
<th>Reflection</th>
<th>Perceived Usefulness</th>
<th>Intent for Future Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Understanding</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.48**</td>
<td>.41**</td>
<td>.54**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.52**</td>
<td>.67**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Usefulness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.55**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. \( n=40 \).

Students’ structured interviews (\( n=30 \)) about DRAW feedback supported the survey findings, and were used to substantiate and elaborate upon each of the four feedback variables measured in the survey. The interviews contributed to understanding the characteristics of each of the variables as well as the relationships amongst them, providing a more detailed lens into students’ responses to DRAW feedback. I now elaborate on these findings by discussing the analyses related to each of the four DRAW feedback variables.

5.1.1 Perceived Understanding of DRAW Feedback

Students’ trajectory of DRAW feedback responses was initiated with students’ perceived understanding of it. Recall that I provided students with multiple types of information on their DRAW feedback profile, comprising feedback in the form of summary comments, a graphical representation of their performance across six writing traits, as well as a detailed list of their
strengths and areas for improvement across each of the writing sub-skills. During their interviews, students revealed that their perceived understanding of the feedback was based primarily on the latter two pieces of information. Students most frequently read the chart that provided an overview of their performance and then proceeded to read the finer-grained details about their sub-skill performance. In many cases, students either did not notice the summary comments, or simply chose not to read them. As one student explains during our conversation:

Maryam: Did you read the summary comments?
Amy: Probably not.
Maryam: Probably not. Can you tell me why?
Amy: I thought it was ‘cause...uh...an introduction of what the report is.

Amy’s response highlights one reason why the summary comments were not as frequently read. Other students also noted that they had not seen the comments or simply chose not to focus on them. Overall, students’ perceived understanding of DRAW feedback was characterized primarily by their responses to the graphical representation and detailed information about their skill performance, and not the summary comments.

As the focus of DRAW feedback was on students’ specific writing sub-skills, their understanding of them was also shaped by how students defined/understood the meaning of each sub-skill and also focused on the skills they most valued. My conversation with Emil helps to illustrate these points:

Emil: Um, I think most of them [feedback] are on my weaknesses not strengths ‘cause I think most of them are kind of similar. If I have weakness in ideas obviously I will have weakness in my organization, and then in my vocabulary I will have weakness, and they're related to each other.

Maryam: Why do you think that?

Emil: ‘Cause I think there is, ‘cause I think your paragraphs or entire essay whatever, every single word is related to each other and you can, if you have some mistake in the first or second sentence, so your following weakness...uh, work is going to be wrong and will have some mistakes.

As Emil explained, he believed that all of the sub-skills are dependent on each other and that each sub-skill could not be mastered independently; therefore, his understanding of DRAW feedback was shaped by this belief. Another student, Silvio, explained his response to the feedback:
The first thing I says [sic] was it was pretty good. There are three of them [sub-skills] which are the maximum, like three, and the other three are too, are pretty good. I thought ideas are three so I think that was good, and vocabulary was three too. It was pretty good. The mechanics I'm not really sure what mechanics are but they're three so that was good, and organization was two, and sentence was two, and grammar was two. I'm not sure about the mechanics.

In this brief excerpt Silvio revealed that that upon looking at his overall performance on each of the sub-skills, he was pleased. However, he was not sure of what was meant by ‘mechanics’ but since his performance on the sub-skill was high, he was not concerned.

Another example elucidating the mediating role of students’ writing beliefs on their understanding of feedback was demonstrated during Zian’s interview:

Well the most [important] part is the mechanic[s] and grammar. It shows that really how to improve my grammar on writings [sic], ‘cause, you know, how [sic] grammar tests I can do it all right, but when I write my own then it becomes a problem. So you see I need to double check it.

Zian’s comment is reflective of the majority of the participating students’ beliefs about the writing sub-skills: most of the students placed greatest important on the grammar sub-skill. Similarly, in the survey, when asked: Which writing category is most helpful to you?, students most frequently reported grammar. Organization was the second most frequently reported as being the most important sub-skill on which students wanted feedback.

Another integral facet of students’ perceived understanding of feedback was the extent to which students’ understanding of DRAF feedback was consistent with its intended meaning. In other words, did students’ understanding of DRAF feedback differ from how the sub-skills were defined in the literature and how I intended them to be interpreted? During the structured interviews, I had asked students to explain, in their own words, how they interpreted the meaning of each sub-skill. I coded all of the students’ (n=31) responses across each of the sub-skills according to one of six categories: 1) A ‘Match’: the student’s interpretation of the category matched my definition of the sub-skill; 2) A ‘Mismatch’: the student had a different understanding of the category than I did; 3) ‘Confounded’: the student’s response combined characteristics of more than one sub-skill in her/his definition. This categorization can also be considered a mismatch; 4) ‘Partial’: the student provided a response that partially captured the meaning of the sub-skill as I had intended; 5) ‘No understanding’: the student expressed that they did not know the meaning; or 6) ‘No response’: the student did not know and chose not to
speculate on the qualities of the sub-skill. Examples of responses classified under each of these categories are included in Appendix K which provides the coded responses from the students in Classroom A. Note that these representative responses are the students’ verbatim responses which were not edited for grammar, and are presented as the students expressed them.

I calculated the percentage of each of the six codes within each of the sub-skills. The resulting analyses are illustrated in Table 18. As evidenced in the charts, there was some degree of discrepancy between students’ understandings of the sub-skills and their intended definition. In particular, the sentence fluency, mechanics and grammar revealed that over half of the responses demonstrated either some level of confusion, lack of knowledge, or misunderstanding about the intended meaning of the sub-skill. Overall, across all six sub-skills, the students’ responses indicated a 42.2% match, 21.1% partial understanding, 15.6% mismatch, 11.1% confounded, 8.3% no understanding, and 1.7% no responses. This finding has significant implications for the provision of feedback in classrooms and the way that information is conveyed to students. Furthermore, these findings were carefully considered and used in the evaluation of evidence about students’ perceptions and use of DRAW feedback.

Table 18

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categorization</th>
<th>Writing Sub-Skill</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Match</td>
<td>73.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mismatch</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confounded</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partial</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Understanding</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In summary, perceived understanding of DRAW feedback is characterized by students’ interpretation of the feedback which is influenced by the feedback on which they choose to focus, and mediated by their beliefs about the importance of each writing sub-skill. Furthermore, students also have an individualized interpretation of writing sub-skills.
5.1.2 Reflection on DRAW Feedback

Before students decided on the extent to which DRAW feedback is useful to them, they reflected on its accuracy based on their perceived understanding of it. This reflective process was characterized primarily by the extent to which students agreed or disagreed with the feedback. Students may reflect positively or negatively (i.e., agree or disagree with the feedback). Consequently, in the subsequent phase of the feedback process (perceived usefulness), students may accept, modify, or reject the DRAW feedback. My interview with Arvin helps to exemplify the reflective process. I began the interview by asking Arvin to think back to when he first received his DRAW feedback profile and to share with me his reactions and what he was thinking. Below is an excerpt of our conversation:

*Arvin:* Alright. OK. The first [sic] I was thinking back then was “Oh! Ideas, organization and mechanics was so high; it was above my expectations. And like vocabulary and grammar is hard to do for me, because I know that. I think for me that [sic] I’m not so good at this point- at this category. Sentences for me is kind of low, because like, I know how to make sentences why did I get this and that? I was like checking “Yeah, there’s a lot of fragments, what happened to me?”

*Maryam:* So when you said you were checking, what were you checking?

*Arvin:* My paper, I’m comparing it to this. My written assignment. I was comparing it.

*Maryam:* Ok, so then you compared your feedback to your writing assignment.

*Arvin:* Yeah, I was like “really? This is high, ok.” I was like, um...but I focused on the sentences, ‘cause I was expecting more of it, then, those two, vocabulary and grammar. Comparing it, I was like “um yeah, true, true” and then I read the strengths and weaknesses of everything.

Arvin explained that before he looked at his feedback, he had specific expectations about his writing performance: he had anticipated a lower outcome on ideas, organization and mechanics, but a higher outcome on sentence fluency. His performance on the vocabulary and grammar sub-skills matched his expectations as those are both aspects of writing with which he believed that he struggled. Arvin continued to explain that he compared the DRAW feedback with his writing assignment, presumably to check the accuracy of the feedback. Based on the comparison, and his beliefs about his writing strengths and weaknesses, Arvin came to the conclusion that the feedback was accurate. This excerpt not only highlights Arvin’s reflective process, but also the relationship between his evaluation of the feedback and his beliefs about his writing ability. The
mediating role of students’ feedback beliefs was repeatedly demonstrated throughout students’ interviews as it was the primary criterion by which students evaluated the veracity of DRAW feedback.

While the majority of students agreed with the feedback, there were several students who rejected the feedback. Amy is an example of someone who stopped valuing the information because she disagreed with it. She was a high performing student, and identified by her teacher as one of the strongest (if not the strongest) writer(s) in her class. Her self-evaluations of her writing were not consistent with the DRAW feedback she received (which reflected her high performance); therefore, she found DRAW feedback lacking. She was seeking more critical and constructive feedback, and also looked for more examples. Therefore, she said that she “lost interest” in the DRAW feedback. Below is an excerpt from our conversation:

Amy: Well back to the question you just asked me, “Is there anything I disagree [sic]?” Probably like the organization and stuff. ‘Cause I don't think I have a good organization, I be [sic] like “Oh, not that organization,” probably like, organization means the paragraph how the structures, right?

Maryam: Yes.

Amy: Yeah so...

Maryam: And the whole essay as well.

Amy: And the whole essay. Well actually what, I do think I have a pretty good organization, but not with the content.

Maryam: Right.

Amy: I think that I do a good job on content as-you know how teacher love seeing people write an essay with deep thinking? They want the meanings behind the story, dig up lots of, I don't know, they want everything; they want critical thinking and I just can't do it.

Maryam: Of course you can.

Amy: I don't know. Well I can, but whenever I do it I'm not sure if I'm right, I'm not sure if it's strong enough to write it so I can just write it, whenever I write an essay I gots [sic] lots of format I tend to spread out even the first sentence, I can't write it, I just stare like for two hours an I'm like “Ohhhhhhh! It's so hard to write an essay.
Clearly, Amy was striving to master her writing skills and had definitive opinions about her writing strengths and areas for improvement as well as the type of feedback she needs to guide her. Because DRAW feedback did not confirm her beliefs, she rejected it.

One final aspect of the reflective component of students’ responses to DRAW feedback that emerged in a few of the interviews was the relationship between DRAW feedback and emotions. Below are segments from interviews with two students: Michael and Rachelle. Michael’s interview demonstrates a negative affective response to the feedback as a result of poor writing performance, while Rachelle illustrates a positive response:

*Michael:* I like it [DRAW feedback] but some of them are not like, I don't want to see it.

*Maryam:* Why not?

*Michael:* ‘Cause it [sic] bad, bad for me. Like it's bad, I don't know. I think that I, I like to hear the ideas thing but in organization I just get a one.

Michael was expressing his disappointment in his poor performance in organizing his writing. He repeatedly stated that it was ‘bad’, and stated that he simply did not want to even read about the feedback. I would hypothesize that when a student reflects so negatively on feedback that it is unlikely for them to be able to proceed to accepting the feedback and finding it useful. The feedback is rejected. However, Michael’s response was rare; a positive, affective response was more frequently observed as demonstrated from Rachelle’s interview:

*I never knew mechanics would be that good. I'm kinda proud of myself.*

Rachelle’s brief statement illustrated that while the DRAW feedback did not match her expectations, it had generated a positive emotional response from her. She felt proud. Again, I would conjecture that such a favourable response would likely increase the likelihood of a student proceeding to use the feedback.

In summary, reflection on DRAW feedback constitutes students’ evaluation of the accuracy of the feedback leading to their acceptance, rejection or modification of the feedback. This reflective process is partly dependent on students’ beliefs about their writing ability, and may also elicit an affective response through which they engage with the feedback.
5.1.3 Perceived Usefulness of DRAW Feedback

The value of DRAW feedback is not inherent, but rather, dependent on its perceived usefulness. In other words, feedback is only effective if it is used, and its use is dependent on the extent to which students perceive it to be beneficial for advancing their writing.

As discussed, students’ surveys revealed an extremely positive perception of the usefulness of DRAW feedback. Students’ interviews also confirmed this finding, but they also provided a lens into more specific characteristics of the feedback that contributed to its perceived usefulness. By far, the most dominant theme that emerged with respect to usefulness was the value of the identified weaknesses in their writing. Repeatedly, students confirmed how much significance they placed on this information. Below are several quotations from students illustrating this point:

Temel: I cared about what I was not good at.
Maryam: Why?
Temel: ‘Cause I wanted to improve it.
Maryam: Did you care about what you were good at too?
Temel: Yeah, but not as much as weakness.

Jailin: I think it's weakness that are most important because strengths only make me feel better and show me what I'm doing well. Weakness [sic] show what I can do better on my work and to improve my work and shows which point I need to improve, so weaknesses.

Maryam: Did you read the strengths too?
Adi: Yeah, some strengths.
Maryam: You didn't read them all?
Adi: No.
Maryam: How come?
Adi: ‘Cause I thought I should look at my weakness first and improve them.

As I discussed earlier, students most frequently reported on the feedback survey that receiving feedback on grammar was most useful to them. The relationship between their beliefs about their writing performance and the usefulness of DRAW feedback was again evident within this category of feedback, as students frequently focused on and most valued the writing sub-skills which they believed required most improvement. At the same time, some skills were less valued. One student, Alice, discussed how feedback on mechanics was not as useful to her:

Alice: Well, most of them are useful. But mechanics...

Maryam: It’s not useful?
Alice: It’s not that useful but it’s OK... but it’s still...

Maryam: Tell me why it’s not useful.

Alice: I don’t know but I think it’s like ... I don’t know. We type in a computer so we have spelling mistakes. Mechanics are important too but I think it’s not that.... It’s important.

During our interaction, Alice highlighted the issue that oftentimes students use word processing programs to write the essays which do the work of identifying their spelling mistakes. Accordingly, she found feedback on the mechanics sub-skill to be less useful that on the other writing traits. Although the relationship between students’ beliefs about writing skills and usefulness of feedback was evident from the interview analysis, it was not clear if students’ perceptions of the quality of their writing and its weaknesses was based on solely on their self-evaluations or from external agents (e.g., teachers, peers) or both.

Additionally, students discussed various features of DRAW feedback that they perceived to be useful: 1) multiple writing sub-skills are addressed; 2) feedback is applicable to other assignments; and 3) great amount of details were offered about their writing. At the same time, multiple students suggested that the feedback would have been more helpful if specific examples or models were included to demonstrate high quality writing.

In summary, perceived usefulness of feedback refers to the value that students place on DRAW feedback and the extent to which they believe that it will help to improve their writing skills. Perception of usefulness is dependent on students’ reflections about the accuracy of the feedback. In other words, students are likely to perceive the feedback more useful (and accept it) if they agree with it. Perceived usefulness is also related to students’ beliefs about the traits in writing which are most important.

5.1.4 Intent for Future Use

The intention to use DRAW feedback on subsequent drafts is the final phase of the projected feedback pathway. According to the proposed trajectory, the intent to use DRAW feedback is entirely dependent on the previous perceptions and reflections on feedback, as it is only after understanding, reflecting on the accuracy of the feedback, and perceiving its usefulness that students proceed to set goals for using the feedback or choosing to dismiss it, partly or entirely. Intent for using feedback provides the pivotal connection between provision
and use. Students’ interviews contributed to understanding two central qualities related to the intent for future use of DRAW feedback: 1) Students’ decision-making processes to set goals for using the feedback; and 2) Strategies that students adopt for using the feedback.

Students’ positive response for intent for use of DRAW feedback was predicated on wanting to improve their writing, addressing feedback with which they agreed, and striving to achieve higher outcomes. Recall that the final component of students’ DRAW feedback profiles was a section titled ‘Next Steps’ in which students were encouraged to write, in their own words, specific weaknesses they wished to improve and identify strategies for addressing them. During the interviews, I asked students to explain why they chose specific areas to target as goals for their ‘next steps’. Not surprisingly, students indicated that they set goals and priorities based on what they perceived to be the area(s) which required the most improvement. As with the other feedback categories, the relationship between students’ beliefs and feedback use was central. The following excerpts from interviews with several students exemplify students’ goal setting:

Maryam: How did you pick out these weaknesses? Did you go back to the feedback or was it just from your own opinion?
George: I went back to the feedback.
Maryam: And how did you decide what the most important ones were to put on here [next steps]?
George: When I write an essay and these are like the hard parts, the complicated parts for me.

Sadia: I just went back and checked what’s wrong with what I did.
Maryam: And which one [feedback] did you pick? How did you decide? Sometimes there are two weaknesses or three.
Sadia: I just looked at the more important one.

Maryam: How did you decide what to write here [next steps]? Because you didn't write everything.
Rachelle: I choose the ones, the most, the least thing I did good.

Maryam: How did you think: “ok I'm going to use this when I do my next draft, but I'm not going to use this. I'm going to use this and this, but not this, or do you use it [DRAW feedback] all?”
Temel: It actually depends on my writing so...like if I'm gonna change the whole paragraph, which means I don't have to choose all the things that, all the weakness that I have...and I'm trying to improve all of them, like do all, not just skip this one, who cares?

Together, these responses represent students’ decision-making processes for selecting feedback on which they chose to focus when using DRAW feedback. Specifically, students chose to
address feedback that: was ‘complicated’ or challenging to them; prioritized as being most important; and directed them to their lowest performance.

Analysis of students’ interviews also revealed five main strategies that students employ when they intend to use feedback in the future: 1) Re-reading DRAW feedback before beginning another assignment; 2) Referring to DRAW feedback while working on a new task; 3) Discussing the feedback with their teacher; 4) Memorizing the feedback; 5) Focusing on the areas which need the most improvement and using that to set goals. Stella’s quotation exemplifies one of these strategies:

*I use it, like I try to memorize what are my weaknesses and when I next write an essay, I try to improve on them.*

Together, these four variables, perceived understanding, reflection, perceived usefulness, and intent for future use, contribute to understanding students’ perceptions of DRAW feedback, and the processes by which students interact with it. Table 19 provides a summary of central features characterizing the four feedback components.
### Table 19

**Characteristics of DRAW Feedback Variables**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DRAW Feedback Variable</th>
<th>Perceived Understanding</th>
<th>Reflection</th>
<th>Perceived Usefulness</th>
<th>Intent for Future Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Characteristics</td>
<td>• Frequently based on summary chart and list of strengths and areas for improvement • Mediated by students’ understanding of each skill • Placed focus on skills they most value</td>
<td>• Reflect on the accuracy of the feedback: the extent to which they agree or disagree with DRAW feedback • Reflective process is partly dependent on students’ beliefs about their writing abilities • Reflective process may elicit an affective response</td>
<td>• Related to students’ reflections on feedback • Feedback on areas for improvement are perceived more useful than strengths • Value of feedback is connected to their beliefs about which skills are most important and which skills require improvement</td>
<td>• Students’ choose to use feedback by prioritizing the ones they most value, targeting ones that pose them the most challenge and/or the ones they believe are most important; and those which address areas in which they demonstrated the lowest performance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 5.2 Relationship between Students’ Learning Orientation and Perceptions of DRAW Feedback

Thus far, the results have demonstrated that there is an overall positive perception of DRAW feedback, and that there is also variability within students’ responses specifically addressing the first validity claim emphasized in this chapter. The second central claim being evaluated focuses on explaining this variability by asserting that students’ individualized responses are mediated by motivational variables. Addressing this claim and its underlying assumptions necessitated examining the contribution of motivational/learning variables in two
ways: 1) investigating the influence that these variables had on students’ perceptions of feedback; thus, (potentially) contributing to its variability; and, 2) exploring their role as mediators between students’ use of feedback and their writing development.

In Chapter 3, I introduced four constructs that together comprise students’ motivational variables; I refer to them as students’ learning orientations. These orientations include students’ self-efficacy, anxiety, and three goal orientation variables: mastery, performance prove, and performance avoid. In order to explore the relationship between students’ perceptions of feedback and these learning orientation variables, I conducted bivariate correlations to determine if there were any statistically significant relationships between them. Table 20 presents these results.

Table 20

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Anxiety</th>
<th>Self-Efficacy</th>
<th>Mastery</th>
<th>Performance Prove</th>
<th>Performance Avoid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Understanding</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>-.26</td>
<td>-.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection</td>
<td>-.19</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>-.28</td>
<td>-.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Usefulness</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>-.19</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>-.42**</td>
<td>-.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intent for Future Use</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>-.30</td>
<td>-.34*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Note. n=40.

The analyses revealed that statistically significant correlations between two learning orientation variables and DRAWP feedback variables: 1) A negative and moderate relationship between the performance prove construct and students’ perceived usefulness of DRAWP feedback \( r = -.42, p < .01; \) and 2) A moderately strong and negative relationship between the performance avoid construct and intent for future use of DRAWP feedback, \( r = -.34, p < .01. \) As noted earlier, this finding (a negative relationship between performance avoid and performance prove orientations and use of feedback) is expected and supported in previous research investigations. Surprisingly, mastery goal orientation did not demonstrate a significant relationship with the feedback variables. This finding may be a consequence of high face validity of the feedback, wherein actual use of DRAWP feedback may be mediated by mastery goal orientation.
In order to delve deeper into the learning orientations’ power to predict students’ responses to DRAW feedback, I conducted a series of linear regression analyses using each of the feedback variables as outcomes and various predictor variables. Because of the small sample size, I limited the predictor variables used to fit the model to the data by drawing from the results of the correlation analyses discussed in Chapter 3. The process of reflection in the feedback trajectory was omitted from this analysis as there were no variables which were significantly correlated with this outcome.

5.2.1 Perceived Understanding of DRAW Feedback

To build a predictive model of perceived understanding of DRAW feedback, I entered two independent variables, mastery of the ideas sub-skill and the performance avoid learning orientation construct, with a sample of 41 students into a hierarchical linear regression model. Both these variables emerged as significant predictors which together explained 21% of the variance in the feedback variable. The model is represented by:

\[
Perceived \text{ understanding of feedback} = 2.13 - 0.11(\text{Performance Avoid}) + 0.14 (\text{Ideas mastery}) \tag{1}
\]

Table 2.1 provides the statistical details of the model represented by equation 1. It should be noted that the standard errors in the table are based on bootstrapping as the model was found to violate biases and assumptions without the use of robust methods.

The model illustrates that students who had mastered the ideas sub-skill had a higher perceived understanding of DRAW feedback. Furthermore, students’ performance avoid orientation demonstrated a negative relationship with the outcome indicating that students with stronger performance avoid orientations have lower perception of understanding DRAW feedback. In other words, as performance avoid orientation increases, students’ perceived understanding of DRAW feedback decreases.
Table 21

**Linear Model of Predictors of Perceived Understanding of DRAW Feedback**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>R²</th>
<th>Predictors</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bᵃ</td>
<td>Standard Error</td>
<td>β</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 1</td>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>0.31</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ideas Mastery**</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2</td>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>2.13</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ideas Mastery**</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>0.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Performance Avoid</td>
<td>-0.11</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>-0.34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*aBased on 1000 bootstrap samples.

bIdeas was entered as dichotomous variable with 0=non-mastery and 1=mastery.

Note. n=41.

5.2.2 Perceived Usefulness of DRAW Feedback

Two variables, grammar mastery and performance prove goal orientation construct, were entered into a hierarchical linear regression model to investigate their predictive power on the perceived usefulness of DRAW feedback (n=41). The grammar skill mastery variable was entered first, followed by the performance prove variable producing a significant model explaining 30% of the variance. The $R^2$ change between the two steps was approximately 13%.

$$Perceived \text{ usefulness of feedback} = 4.11 - 0.14 \text{ (Grammar mastery)} - 0.34(\text{Performance prove}) \tag{2}$$

Table 22 presents the statistical information about the model which was checked for evidence of bias, and assumptions of linearity (between predictors and the outcome), independence of errors, homogeneity of variance (homoscedasiticity), and normality of error distributions.

This regression model illustrates that there is a negative relationship between the feedback variable and students’ performance prove orientation. Therefore, as students demonstrate an increased orientation along the performance prove continuum, their perceived understanding of DRAW feedback is lower. Similarly, the grammar sub-skill also demonstrated a negative relationship with the outcome variable. A possible explanation could be simply that if
students had mastered the grammar skill, then they did not believe that the feedback was useful to them.

Table 22

| Linear Model of Predictors of Perceived Usefulness of DRAW Feedback |
|---------------------------------------------------|--------|-------------------|------------------|--------|
| R²                   | Predictors                                                                 | Unstandardized Coefficients | Standardized Coefficients | p     |
|                      | B     | Standard Error    | β               |        |
| Step 1               |       |                   |                 |        |
| .166                 | (Constant) | 3.45              | 0.09            | .000   |
| step 1, p = .007     | Grammar Mastery b | -0.38             | 0.13            | -0.41  | .007  |
| Step 2               |       |                   |                 |        |
| .299                 | (Constant) | 4.11              | 0.26            | .000   |
| step 2, p = .001     | Grammar Mastery b | -0.34             | 0.13            | -0.36  | .012  |
|                      | Performance Prove | -0.25             | 0.09            | -0.37  | .010  |

aBased on 1000 bootstrap samples
bGrammar was entered as dichotomous variable with 0=non-mastery and 1=mastery.

Note. n=41

5.2.3 Intent for Future Use of Feedback

A third linear regression analysis was performed to investigate the predictive power of three variables: performance avoid learning orientation, grammar mastery and vocabulary mastery on the intent for future use of DRAW feedback. The latter of these three variables did not emerge as a significant predictor in the sample of 40 students and with the use of forced entry method. The resulting model (based on 1000 bootstrapped samples) explained 27.6% of the variance and is presented by equation 3. The model’s statistical information is presented in Table 23.

\[
\text{Intent for future use of feedback} = 4.46 - 0.33(\text{Grammar mastery}) - 0.23(\text{Performance avoid})
\]  

(3)

The results of this regression model, represented by equation 3, are similar to that of the perceived usefulness of DRAW feedback. In both models, one of the performance orientation variables (performance avoid in this model, performance prove in the previous) and the grammar master variable are negative predictors of the feedback outcome. This result may be possibly explained by drawing upon the proposed feedback trajectory that was used to explain students’
processing of DRAW feedback which hypothesized that if students found the feedback beneficial, they would be likely to intend to use it in the future (and vice versa).

Table 23

Linear Model of Predictors of Intent for Future Use of DRAW Feedback

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
<th>Predictors</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>$p$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$p = .15$</td>
<td></td>
<td>Grammar Mastery</td>
<td>-0.31</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>-.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$p = .28$</td>
<td></td>
<td>Grammar Mastery</td>
<td>-0.33</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>-0.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Performance Avoid</td>
<td>-0.23</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>-0.36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$^a$Based on 1000 bootstrap samples

$^b$Grammar was entered as dichotomous variable with 0=non-mastery and 1=mastery.

Note. $n=41$

5.3 Summary and Claims

In this chapter, I presented results from students’ responses to structured interviews and surveys to explain and elaborate upon students’ responses to DRAW feedback. Their responses were analyzed through a proposed trajectory of feedback processing involving students’ perceived understanding, reflection, perceived usefulness, and intent for future use of DRAW feedback. Overall, students had positive responses to the feedback. Regression analyses were used to explain the variances in their responses to three of DRAW feedback variables. Twenty-one percent of the variance in students’ perceived understanding of DRAW feedback was explained by the mastery of the ideas sub-skill variable and performance avoid goal orientation. Students’ mastery of the grammar sub-skill and performance prove orientation explained 29.9% of the variance in students’ perceived usefulness of DRAW. Finally, 27.6% of the variance in students’ intent for future use of DRAW feedback was explained by students’ mastery of the grammar sub-skill and performance avoid orientation. Not all of the predictor variables had
positive relationships with the outcome variables. As expected, both performance orientation variables all had negative relationships with the associated feedback outcome variable. Based on the evidence, I assert the claim that students’ perceptions of DRAW feedback vary according to their performance goal orientation and writing sub-skill mastery. In the next chapter I discuss the effects of DRAW feedback on students’ writing development.
Chapter 6
Effects of DRAW Feedback on Students’ Writing Development

This chapter responds to the research question: To what extent do students’ perceptions of DRAW feedback affect their writing skill development? In order to respond to the question, multiple data sources were used, applying various data analysis approaches to examine the differences between students’ writing performance at two different time points. These results were integrated with analyses of students’ structured interviews, as well as their responses to the DRAW feedback and goal orientation surveys in order to gather evidence to respond to the research inquiry question. I begin by presenting the analysis of the effect of DRAW feedback on changes in students’ writing development. I then, draw upon data at the classroom level to elaborate upon and substantiate the group level evidence.

6.1 Effect of DRAW Feedback on Writing Development

In Chapter 5, I presented analyses, that together, showed that students had an overall positive response to DRAW feedback, but also that their perceptions were individualized and varied according to their skill mastery performance and performance learning orientations. Understanding this variability in students’ perceptions and responses to feedback helps to inform how and if student students will use feedback, and guides the inquiry into the effects of DRAW on students’ writing skill development. Before delving into the (potential) effects of DRAW feedback, I first examined students’ writing performance to determine if there were any improvements in their writing sub-skills over time.

6.1.1 Changes in Students’ Writing Performance

The change in students’ writing sub-skills were evaluated at three time points using students’ pre-writing, mid-writing (on which students received DRAW feedback), and post-writing performance measures. Students’ writing scripts were scored using DRAW, and average scores across each writing sub-skill, as well as their overall performance across all the skills were evaluated for the 17 students who had completed all writing tasks at the three time points. These results are illustrated in Table 24. These descriptive results illustrate that there was an increase in
performance across all sub-skills and overall score between the mid-point (the writing task on which students’ DRAW profile was based), and the post-writing time. Similarly, there was an increase in all the scores between the other times points (e.g., between pre- and mid-, and pre- and post-) for the overall score, and for all writing skills except mechanics and grammar. I further investigated these results to determine if any of the differences were statistically significant.

Table 24

*Students’ Sub-Skills Writing Performance at Different Time Points using DRAW*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Writing Sub-Skill</th>
<th>Writing Performance at Time Points (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pre-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideas</td>
<td>48.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>45.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>29.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentences</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanics</td>
<td>86.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar</td>
<td>61.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Score</td>
<td>50.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. n=17.*

A repeated measures analysis of variance (ANOVA) revealed that there was a significant effect of time on students’ writing score, $F(1.17, 16.34) = 52.6, p = .000, \omega^2 = .63$. The reported degrees of freedom were corrected using Greenhouse-Geisser tests ($\varepsilon = .58$) because of the violation of Mauchly’s test of sphericity $\chi^2(2) = 16.25, p = .000$.

Planned contrasts with a Bonferroni adjustment revealed that there was a significant increase in students’ scores between the pre-writing measure ($M = 50.4, SE = 19.5$), and the mid-writing scores ($M = 58.2, SE = 13.8$), $p = .001$. There was also a significant increase between students’ mid-point writing score and their post-writing score on the opinion essay ($M = 68.1, SE = 12.4$), $p = .000$. Finally, there was also a significant difference between students’ pre-writing and post-writing scores revealing a mean difference of 47.0, $p = .000$.

Repeated measures ANOVA was also conducted to investigate statistical differences with each writing sub-skill at the three different points. Two sub-skills demonstrated a significant effect of time on the students’ writing scores, namely, ideas and organization with medium to large effect sizes. These results are summarized in Table 25.
Another repeated measures ANOVA was conducted to investigate the effect of time on students’ writing development using the DRAW news report pre- and post-writing measures as factors (instead of the opinion essay) \((n = 16)\), as well as the students’ mid-point writing score. The results indicated that there was, indeed, a significant effect, \(F(2, 30) = 32.1, p = .000, \omega^2 = .35\). Post-hoc analyses with a Bonferroni adjustment were also conducted to investigate the statistical differences between the three time points. Results revealed that there was a significant increase in students’ scores between the pre-writing measure \((M = 62.5, SE = 14.4)\), and their post-writing score on the news report \((M = 78.3, SE = 7.9)\), \(p = .000\). There was also a significant increase between students’ mid-point writing scores \((M = 57.5, SE = 13.4)\) and their final post-measure scores, \(p = .000\). There was no significant difference between students’ news report pre-measure scores and their profile scores.

Table 25

*Summary of Significant ANOVA Results for Writing Sub-skills Measured at Different Times*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-skill</th>
<th>Degrees of Freedom/F-ratio</th>
<th>Significance</th>
<th>Sphericity</th>
<th>Contrasts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ideas</td>
<td>F(2, 28) = 9.67 (p = .001) (\chi^2(2) = 1.38, p = .50)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Significant increase between pre- ((M = 47.8, SE = 32.0)) and mid-writing scores ((M = 71.1, SE = 25.6)), (p = .05, r = .58)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ORG</td>
<td>F(2, 28) = 5.34 (p = .011) (\chi^2(2) = 0.28, p = .87)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Significant increase between pre- ((M = 47.8, SE = 32.0)) and post ((M = 81.1, SE = 25.1)), (p = .00, r = .38)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.1.2 Effect of DRAW Feedback

In order to investigate the potential impact of DRAW feedback, I examined students’ writing outcomes in relation to their perceptions of the usefulness of DRAW feedback and their intent to use it in the future. I chose to focus on these two feedback variables because according to the hypothesized feedback trajectory, it is at these phases of the processing that students decide to accept, modify or reject feedback and subsequently choose to make revisions. Furthermore, I conducted bivariate correlations between the change in students’ writing performance and the feedback variables. The change in writing performance was calculated as the difference between students’ scores on the mid-writing score and their post-writing measure. Note that for Classroom C, I did not have any OSSLT scripts; therefore, I used DRAW generated scores from the final drafts of the essay which they wrote after receiving DRAW feedback on an earlier draft of it (i.e., mid-writing script). The correlational analysis revealed a strong and significant relationship between this gain score and students’ future intent for using DRAW feedback ($r = .41, p < .005, n = 31$). The finding in itself indicates that DRAW feedback had a positive impact on students’ writing development.

I investigated the potential effect of DRAW feedback by exploring the association between the change in students’ writing and the students’ perceived usefulness and intent for future use of DRAW feedback. These three variables were dichotomized according to a low/high change in writing score (based on the average gain), or low/high perceived responses to the feedback variables (based on the average response from the feedback survey) from a total of 21 students across the three classrooms. In order to calculate ‘average change’, I computed the difference between students’ mid-point writing performance and the post-writing measure or task. I then calculated the average of all students’ gains (positive or negative) in scores to ascertain the ‘average gain’.

The results indicated that there was a significant association between the perception of feedback usefulness and students’ lower or higher than average change in their writing score, $\chi^2(1) = 6.11, p = .024$. The significance value is based on Fisher’s Exact test as two cell counts violated assumptions (see Field, 2013 and Pallant, 2010 for rationales for this treatment of assumptions). A value of $\phi = .539, p = .024$ indicated that there was a large effect of perceived usefulness of feedback on students’ change in writing score. The odds ratio revealed that the odds of students having a higher than average change score was 15 times greater when they had a
high perception of DRAW feedback than when they had a low perception. Figure 15 illustrates these results using the specific number of students who were included in each category.

Figure 15. Cross-Tabulation of Students’ Perceived Feedback Usefulness and Change in Writing Development.

Figure 15 shows that 85.6% of the students who were identified as perceiving the feedback to be less useful showed less than average improvement in their writing, while in contrast, 71.4 % of students who perceived DRAW feedback to be useful were identified as showing higher than average gains in their writing.

The analyses of the association between students’ change in writing scores and the intent for future use of DRAW feedback did not yield any statistically significant results, likely due to the small sample size.

In summary, there are two key sources of evidence that warrant the claim that DRAW feedback had a positive effect on students’ writing development. First, the results demonstrated a very strong, significant association between students’ perception of the usefulness of DRAW feedback and the change in their writing score between the mid-point writing measure (after which they received feedback), and the post-writing measure. The association revealed that students who had a highly positive perception of the usefulness of the feedback were more likely to achieve higher than average improvements in their writing. Second, correlational evidence
indicated that there was a strong and positive relationship between students’ intent for future use of feedback and the change in their writing scores between the mid- and post-writing measures. Again, as students’ intent for using DRAW feedback increased, so the amount of change observed in their writing scores.

As I have discussed, the perceptions of DRAW feedback are also influenced by students’ learning orientations which contribute to understanding the variability in students’ responses to DRAW feedback. Figure 16 summarizes the complexities of the relationships between the feedback variables, learning orientations, and students’ writing development. The figure illustrates a proposed trajectory of students’ perceptions of DRAW feedback beginning with perceived understanding, followed by a phase of reflection, then perception of usefulness, finally concluding with intent to use the feedback in the future. The order in which the variables are presented is hypothetical and requires further empirical testing. Performance and learning orientation variables contributed to explaining the variance in three of these feedback variables. The constructs in red font are negative predictors of the dependent variable; the percentages refer to the portion of variance explained. These percentages should not be viewed as cumulative; each percentage represents the findings of the regression analyses from Chapter 5 (see equations 1 to 3). Finally, the figure also illustrates the correlational relationship between the feedback variables in the proposed trajectory as well as their relationship with students’ change in writing. Unless otherwise indicated, the values represent correlation coefficients.
Figure 16. Proposed Relationship between Feedback, Performance and Learning Variables and, Students’ Writing Development Score.

6.2 Students’ Writing Development: Classroom-Level Evidence

Thus far, all the evidence presented in this chapter has focused on data from students across all three classrooms; I have purposefully not distinguished among students in different classrooms as the focus of the analyses is not to compare students in different learning contexts, but rather investigate learners’ perceptions of DRAW feedback, its effect on writing development, and the role of intrapersonal motivational characteristics that possibly influence them. As I have discussed, small sample sizes, in some cases, posed limitations to the statistical analyses partly because not all three teachers and their students engaged with the research collaboration in exactly the same way. Such differences are to be expected in ecologically valid
contexts. At the same time, these differences have provided me with the rich opportunity to substantiate the evidence presented thus far by drawing from data at each of the classroom levels, particularly related to the relationship between learning orientation and use of feedback. In some cases, these data serve to triangulate; in others they provide a complementarity purpose. Therefore, I now use data at the classroom level for these purposes, seeking to augment evidence to respond to the inquiry questions at the focus of this study. The purpose is not to compare students’ performance, responses and DRAW effects across classrooms.

6.2.1 Effect of DRAW Feedback: Contributions from Classroom A

The effect of DRAW feedback on students’ writing development was further investigated with the data from students in Classroom A. In this classroom, 10 students had completed the post-writing measure for the opinion essay, and 12 students had written the news report post-writing measure. At the whole group level, analysis of students’ writing development on the news report was not possible as students in the other two classrooms had not completed the post-writing task associated with it. The results of a cross-tabulation exploring the relationship between these students’ perceptions of feedback usefulness and their writing development are illustrated in Figures 17 and 18.

![Figure 17](image.png)

*Figure 17. Cross-tabulation of Classroom A students’ perceived feedback usefulness and change in writing development based on opinion essays.*
Figure 18. Cross-tabulation of Classroom A students’ perceived feedback usefulness and change in writing development based on news reports.

The results in Figures 17 and 18 illustrate that when students had a higher perception of the usefulness of feedback, they more often demonstrated a higher than average improvement in their writing development. Conversely, students who perceived the feedback to be less useful, more frequently experienced a less than average improvement in their writing. In fact, when examining the students’ opinion writing development, the results showed that all the students who perceived the feedback to be less useful experienced less than average improvement in their writing. While the sample sizes were too small to produce a significant Chi square statistic, the findings are consistent with the whole group data presented in the previous section. Notably, the data in this classroom demonstrated the same pattern of results for both the opinion-based writing task and the news report.

The small student sample in this class provided a few advantages, one of which being that it allowed for a detailed examination of each students’ perception of feedback in relation to their individual writing development in order to further explore the potential impact of DRAW. Table 26 presents a feedback and learning orientation profile for each student, as well as information about the changes in their writing score between the profile writing and their post-measure opinion essay and news report scores. Recall that students received DRAW feedback based on their mid-point writing task.

Each student’s feedback profile represents a classification of zero or one across each of the four feedback variables based on the students’ feedback surveys (perceived usefulness,
perceived understanding, intent for future use, and accuracy). Students’ responses in each of the categories were identified as high or low (based on average responses). For example, a student with a DRAW feedback profile of 1111 had a high perceived understanding of the feedback, reflected on it positively finding it accurate, perceived it to be useful, and intended to use it in the future. A similar approach was taken to generate students’ learning orientation profiles across anxiety, mastery goal orientation, performance prove goal orientation, performance avoid goal orientation, and self-efficacy of writing. Based on these classifications, I identified a dominant goal orientation if possible. For example, Minoo’s learning orientation revealed a 10100 pattern indicating that she is dominantly mastery-oriented. Some students’ profile patterns revealed that they were dominant in multiple orientations. In these situations, I revisited their survey data and identified the pattern of their responses. For example, George was a definite performance-oriented learner with a skill profile of 00110. His survey data revealed that the average of his responses across the performance prove questions was higher than that of performance avoid. It should be acknowledged that students’ goal orientations are on a continuum, and classifying them into dichotomous categories may sometimes mask the likelihood that their goal orientations are represented by both dominant and non-dominant orientations.

Students’ skill mastery profiles were evaluated by examining students’ writing performance across each sub-skill. If a student had mastered 60% or more of the descriptors comprising the sub-skill, then they were assigned a ‘1’ for mastery. Students with less than 60% mastered were given a ‘0’ to indicate non-mastery. This skill mastery profile is only provided for the opinion essay as their mid-point writing task was opinion-based. The column titled ‘Skill Change’ shows the difference between the number skills mastered on the post- and mid-writing tasks.
Table 26

Classroom A Students’ Profiles and Writing Development Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Name</th>
<th>DRAW Feedback Profile</th>
<th>Learning Orientation Profile</th>
<th>Dominant Orientation</th>
<th>Writing Skill Mastery Profile-Mid (Opinion)</th>
<th>Writing Skill Mastery Profile-Post (Opinion)</th>
<th>Overall Improvement (%)</th>
<th>Sub-Skill Improvement</th>
<th>Change in News Report Score (Higher or Lower than average)</th>
<th>Change in Opinion Writing Score (Higher or Lower than average)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minoo</td>
<td>1-1-</td>
<td>10100</td>
<td>PP</td>
<td>001001</td>
<td>101110</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>IDEA, ORG, GRM</td>
<td>Higher</td>
<td>Higher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silvio</td>
<td>1111</td>
<td>01101</td>
<td>M&gt;PP</td>
<td>010100</td>
<td>000110</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>GRM</td>
<td>Higher</td>
<td>Higher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamiz</td>
<td>1111</td>
<td>01101</td>
<td>M&gt;PP</td>
<td>010101</td>
<td>101101</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>IDEA, ORG #</td>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>Higher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alyssa</td>
<td>1111</td>
<td>11010</td>
<td>PA</td>
<td>111010</td>
<td>N/A #</td>
<td>N/A #</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rizal</td>
<td>1111</td>
<td>00100</td>
<td>PP</td>
<td>001110</td>
<td>100101</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>IDEA #</td>
<td>Higher</td>
<td>Lower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leah</td>
<td>1111</td>
<td>10000</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>001000</td>
<td>010110</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>VOC, GRM</td>
<td>Higher</td>
<td>Lower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rachelle</td>
<td>0101</td>
<td>11111</td>
<td>M&gt;PP&gt;PA</td>
<td>000100</td>
<td>110101</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>IDEA, VOC, SEN</td>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>Lower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julius</td>
<td>1111</td>
<td>10111</td>
<td>PA&gt;PP</td>
<td>011111</td>
<td>111111</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>IDEA</td>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>Lower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alice</td>
<td>1111</td>
<td>11110</td>
<td>M&gt;PP</td>
<td>001101</td>
<td>111101</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>IDEA, VOC</td>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>Higher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arvin</td>
<td>0100</td>
<td>00000</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>011110</td>
<td>111110</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>IDEA</td>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>Lower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stella</td>
<td>0111</td>
<td>11110</td>
<td>M&gt;PA&gt;PP</td>
<td>000110</td>
<td>111111</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>IDEA, VOC, ORG, SEN</td>
<td>Higher</td>
<td>Higher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George</td>
<td>0000</td>
<td>00110</td>
<td>PP&gt;PA</td>
<td>010011</td>
<td>N/A #</td>
<td>N/A #</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Higher</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*There was one other student in the class who is not included here because he was frequently absent throughout the semester and did not write the pre-writing measures.

*bIn the order of: Perceived understanding, Reflection, Perceived usefulness, and Intent for future use.

*cIn the order of: Anxiety, Mastery (M), Performance prove (PP); Performance avoid (PA); and Self-efficacy (SE) of writing.

*dIn the order of: Ideas, Vocabulary, Organization, Mechanics, Grammar, and Sentence Fluency.

*eBased on total number of skills mastered.

*fStudent did not write the post-measure.

*gWriting demonstrated improvement in these skills, but also demonstrated lack of mastery in other skills previously mastered.
The results in Table 26 illustrate that the majority of the students (7 out of 12 or 58%) in Classroom A exhibited a highly positive DRAW feedback profile of 1111. Of these seven students, three achieved higher than average writing development on their opinion essay and another three also demonstrated the same success on their news report. Only one student achieved higher development on both writing pieces. One student, Alyssa, with a highly positive feedback profile, had only completed the news report, and achieved a lower than average score on her news report, and was a performance avoid learner. It is notable that this student was also unsuccessful on her OSSLT exam.

Leah was the only other student in the class to fail the OSSLT exam; she achieved a lower change on one writing piece, and higher on the other. Leah’s skill mastery profile showed that she continued to struggle with ideas, organization and sentence fluency across both writing tasks. Leah did not have a dominant goal orientation, but she did highly value DRAW feedback. During her interview, Leah confirmed this finding as she repeatedly expressed the perceived benefits of it to her. In response to my direct question about her overall opinion of the feedback, Leah emphatically stated:

*It’s very, yeah. Very helpful.*

She further elaborated:

*I’m not like, very good at writing so if I get comments, I have an idea what did I do well or not so much.*

This quotation not only highlights Leah’s feedback-seeking behaviour, but it also illustrates her lack of confidence in her writing abilities. In fact, throughout her interview, Leah demonstrated low self-efficacy beliefs about her writing abilities as illustrated by the following quotations:

*If I have a lot of ideas, I’ll be doing better in writing.*

*It’s my opinion, I don’t know if it’s right or if it’s wrong* [in response to a question about the value of self-assessments].

When I asked Leah if there was any aspect of the DRAW feedback with which she disagreed, she was quick to respond with a ‘no’, and stated that she planned on focusing on all of the areas for improvement. Throughout the interview, Leah did not express any negative comments about the feedback, and clearly demonstrated her anxiety about her writing abilities. All of these data, together, serve to illustrate the complex relationships between students’
perceptions and use of DRAW feedback, its effect on their writing performance, and the role of learning orientations as mediators.

Another student, Julius, achieved lower than average change on both writing pieces, but part of the reason for this finding may be because Julius was a highly accomplished writer, and achieved high scores on all of his writing measures (i.e., pre-, profile, and post-) and had demonstrated mastery across almost all the skills at the time points. Therefore, he had achieved mastery in most of the writing skills early in the semester and was unlikely to exhibit high change scores. Interestingly, Julius was a predominantly performance-oriented learner.

In this classroom, the majority of the students were extremely responsive to DRAW feedback. There were two students, Arvin and George, whose feedback profiles showed that they perceived DRAW feedback less favourably. Unfortunately, George did not write the opinion-based post-writing measure; therefore, his skill profile change was not determined; but Arvin’s showed lower than average gains on his overall writing performance. Furthermore, George was clearly a performance-oriented learner, while Arvin exhibited a flat (00000) learning orientation. It is possible that he was either ambivalent or simply a unique individual that did not demonstrate a strong inclination toward any goal orientation. These findings add support to the results of the correlation analyses (at the whole group level) illustrating that students’ performance orientations had a negative association with students’ responses to DRAW feedback, and specifically with students’ perceived usefulness of DRAW feedback, and their intent for its future use.

I re-visited my interview with George to delve deeper into these findings. One of his comments specifically corroborated his performance goal orientation:

*Sometimes if the grade’s too high and there’s [sic] some mistakes, you don’t look at the mistakes because I know I got a high mark.*

In this quotation, George was demonstrating his belief that his feedback would not be important if he had achieved a high score. Rather, he was primarily concerned with his performance as reflected by the score, and not necessarily by the underlying skills. DRAW feedback did not provide students with an overall score; therefore, one of the reasons that George may have found the feedback less beneficial could have been because he was not provided with the type of feedback he was seeking.

During another part of our interview we discussed the strengths and areas for improvement that were identified in George’s feedback profile. He told me that he found the
feedback helpful, but that there were aspects of it with which he disagreed. I asked him to identify all the points with which he disagreed, and I discovered that they were all the weaknesses in the writing, not the strengths, which again is an indication of his performance orientation. I asked George how he would address or use feedback with which he disagreed. George stated:

*Maybe sometimes I ignore it. Or, yeah. I ignore it sometimes if I don’t agree with it.*

George’s response provides an illustration of the relationship between students’ reflection of the accuracy of the feedback, and its usefulness for future use. In other words, because George did not agree with the feedback, he chose to ignore it.

Rachelle was the only remaining student whose feedback profile was not entirely favourable which also prompted me to delve into her interview transcript. Rachelle’s learning profile orientation indicates that she has no dominant goal orientation, but unlike Arvin, she was at the high end of each of the continua. At the same time, her survey responses also indicated that she possessed anxiety. When I first asked Rachelle about her initial reaction to the DRAW feedback, she immediately focused on the graphical summary chart which indicated that she had mastered the mechanics skills. She stated:

*I never knew that “Mechanics” would be that good. I’m kind of proud of myself.*

Rachelle’s statement that she was proud of herself could be an indication that she was seeking external validation of her performance. During another part of the interview, Rachelle illustrated her anxieties about writing. I had asked Rachelle to explain her interpretation of one of her areas for improvement which she had articulated as: “I need to improve my confidence in writing similes”. I asked Rachelle what she meant by ‘confidence’. She responded:

*I did some of the similes but I am scared of putting it because I think it doesn’t make sense.*

Rachelle’s response indicates that she worries about her performance, and is anxious about making mistakes which possibly has an impact on her writing performance. In fact, she is highly concerned about her performance as she expressed to me that while she values both written feedback and writing scores equally, she will always look at the score first.
The data from students in Classroom A contribute to further understanding the effects of DRAW feedback on students’ writing performance by demonstrating that: 1) Students with performance orientations are less likely to find DRAW feedback helpful, and are less likely to intend to use it in the future; and 2) In general, students with performance orientations show lower achievement scores; and 3) In general, students who perceive DRAW feedback to be more useful, and intend to use it achieve higher than average scores more often than students who find DRAW feedback less helpful; and 4) The relationship between perceptions of feedback and its use are extremely complex, and necessitate delving into the contribution of students’ motivational characteristics to evaluate their role as mediators.

6.2.2 Effect of DRAW Feedback: Contributions from Classroom B

As I have discussed, the variability in the types of data that I was able to gather from and within each classroom provided a rich opportunity to seek converging and supporting evidence to warrant the central claims in this chapter. Consequently, analyzing data at the classroom level was not as simple as adopting an identical approach to data analyses in Classrooms A, B, and C simply because of the variability in the types of data that I was able to gather from and within each classroom. Again, it was these differences that provided the opportunity to triangulate and complement the evidence presented at the whole group level.

While I had virtually a complete data set for all the students in Classroom A, the same was not true in the context of Classroom B (or C). Specifically, in Classroom B only a few students had completed the post-writing measure, and I only had the opportunity to interview three of the students about their responses to DRAW feedback. Therefore, in this classroom, I used DRAW to score a set of students’ essays that they had written at the end of the semester for summative purposes, and used these scores as a final writing measure. These data could not be used at the whole group level; ideally, all the students in this classroom would have completed the standardized OSSLT task that I had developed. However, they provided an opportunity to gather evidence about the effects of DRAW feedback within this classroom.

In order to investigate the effects of DRAW feedback, I first compared the differences between students’ performance on the DRAW-scored set of students’ essays that were written at the end of the semester according to students’ responses on each of the four DRAW feedback survey categories: perceived understanding, reflection, perceived usefulness, and intent for future
use. The distribution of students among these categories is illustrated in Table 27 and their performance results are illustrated in Figure 19.

Table 27

*Distribution of Students among Lower and Higher Perceptions or Intention for Use of DRAW Feedback Categories*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DRAW Feedback Category</th>
<th>N: Lower Perception/Intent for Use (%)</th>
<th>N: Higher Perception/Intent for Use (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Understanding</td>
<td>8 (62)</td>
<td>5 (38)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection</td>
<td>8 (62)</td>
<td>5 (38)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Usefulness</td>
<td>7 (54)</td>
<td>6 (46)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intent for Future Use</td>
<td>8 (62)</td>
<td>5 (38)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. n=13.*

These data show that across all the four feedback categories, there were consistently more students who perceived the feedback to be less useful and had less intent for its future use.

A set of students’ summative essays, completed after they received DRAW feedback, was scored using DRAW. The students’ performance according to these four feedback categories is illustrated in Figure 19 and shows that the students who perceived DRAW feedback to be more useful and had intent to use it in the future, outperformed their peers who had a lower perception of it and less intent for its use. Recall that in the previous whole group analyses, these two variables were the ones that were significantly related to students’ improved writing performance. However, this same trend was not observed in the other two feedback categories, and particularly in the reflection where there was an apparent large discrepancy among students’ writing performance; students who reflected less positively on DRAW feedback (and likely perceived the feedback to be less accurate) outperformed those who reflected more positively. In order to delve further into these findings, I turned to students’ goal learning orientation profiles, focusing only on the students who responded to the feedback survey.
Thus far, all of the evidence has revealed that there are complex relationships between students’ learning orientations, perceptions of feedback and its use for advancing writing skill development. Both regression and correlational analyses revealed that students’ performance orientations were predictive of and strongly (and negatively) correlated with students’ perceived usefulness and intent for future use of DRAW feedback. The correlations also showed that students’ mastery goal orientation was related to their self-efficacy of writing, but not directly related to the DRAW feedback categories. Consequently, I used Classroom B data to further investigate the relationship between students’ performance goal orientations and their responses to feedback. This analysis revealed that the students in Classroom B consistently demonstrated higher mean responses, and therefore more positive, perceptions of feedback when they were identified as low versus high performance prove or performance avoid goal-oriented individuals. These results are summarized in Figures 20 and 21.

An independent samples t-test also revealed that, on average, there was a statistically significant difference between the mean of students’ perceived usefulness of DRAW feedback when in a low ($M = 3.29$, $SE = 0.14$) versus high performance prove goal orientation ($M = 2.67$, $SE = 0.16$). This difference, 0.62, 95% CI [0.17, 1.07] was significant $t(13) = 2.98$, $p = .01$, and represented a large-sized effect, $r = .64$. This finding adds support to the predictive power of performance prove goal orientation in explaining the variability in students’ feedback responses.

*Figure 19.* Students’ Performance on a DRAW-Scored Task (Post-Feedback) as a Function of their DRAW Feedback Responses.
Figure 20. Classroom B Students’ Mean Responses to DRAW Feedback Categories Based on their Performance Prove Goal Orientation.

Figure 21. Classroom B Students’ Mean Responses to DRAW Feedback Categories Based on their Performance Avoid Goal Orientation.

A notable finding in the data from the students in this classroom was the overall negative response to DRAW feedback in comparison to the whole group. Once again, I reiterate that the purpose of these analyses was not to compare data across classrooms, but to use the analyses to
augment and substantiate the evidence about students’ perceptions and use of DRAW feedback. Therefore, these students’ comparatively negative response provides an avenue to further investigate the variability in students’ perceptions of DRAW feedback. Accordingly, I generated these students’ feedback profiles based on their responses to the DRAW feedback survey. Table 28 illustrates the DRAW feedback profiles of the 13 students in Classroom B who completed the feedback survey.

Table 28

**DRAW Feedback Profiles of Students in Classroom B**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>DRAW Feedback Profile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lilly</td>
<td>0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lei</td>
<td>1100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jenny</td>
<td>0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jiang</td>
<td>1111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quan</td>
<td>0101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kang</td>
<td>0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amy</td>
<td>0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wen</td>
<td>1110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jianyu</td>
<td>0110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yuan</td>
<td>0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cindy</td>
<td>0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xueqin</td>
<td>0011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ming</td>
<td>0000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Six out of the 13 students demonstrated a flat DRAW feedback profile indicating that they had, on average, a low perception of DRAW feedback across all of the feedback. There was only one student who perceived DRAW feedback beneficial across all four of the groupings. Therefore, it is likely that for the majority of the students, any gains seen in their writing is likely not (and disappointingly) an effect of DRAW feedback. Although I only had the opportunity to interview three students in this classroom, their responses helped to explain the negative DRAW feedback response. All three students had a flat feedback profile, but different goal orientations.
Amy was the first student whom I interviewed. She was one of the top performing students in the classroom. During all of my classroom observations, I noted that Amy was consistently on-task, asked relevant and pertinent questions, and strived to excel. Her learning orientation profile indicated that she did not have a dominant goal orientation; rather, she demonstrated high across all three of mastery, performance prove, and performance avoid orientations. Her final achievement score revealed that she had achieved the highest grade in the class with a score of 92%. One of the first questions I asked Amy during my interview with her was about her reaction to the DRAW feedback profiles. Amy began by telling me that she was initially excited about receiving DRAW feedback because she thought that it was a “report” designed just for her. Then, Amy became hesitant and reluctant to share her opinion with me. After assuring her that I welcomed her opinion regardless of whether or not it was favourable, she proceeded to share with me her critique of the feedback profile:

The first time that I see it, 'cause you show us that there's feedback comments on the back, so I expect that there's gonna be some specific error that I made. But then when I look at it, it just like um... some, you piled up some error that I made, but not specifically. Yeah, like 'cause I knew that, 'cause we are ESL learners, and I know that my grammar has problems. I got lots of mechanic problems. I know lots of sentence structure that doesn't make sense. I knew it, but when I looked at this report I don't get what I want to see is that actual correction that I need to learn from. What I'm expecting is, like, I thought you were giving us a paragraph with all the correction on it.

Amy highlighted the discrepancy between her expectations for the content of feedback, and the actual feedback that she received. Namely, Amy had been expecting direct, corrective feedback which specifically documented all of her errors and guided her corrections explicitly. However, with DRAW feedback she did not receive such fine-grained feedback, but rather strengths of her writing and areas for improvements which were focused at the level of the sub-skill, not specific errors. She explained that she knew that her writing needed improving across all of the areas that were highlighted, but she wanted more.

Amy further elaborated:

Let's say Ms. A, she thinks that probably because we are ESL learners she's being more general [generous] on us, yeah, for some typical tiny mistake. Probably, she won't tick it off; she won't take marks off, but compared to English teacher- she thinks that my structures are not; it's ok, but the content is not good enough. So, sometimes I'm a little bit struggle on it when I'm writing 'cause I'm not sure which ones the good one, which
ones the better for me to write it. I obviously I don't know how to write professional writing, and it took me a long time to finish a piece of essay, let’s say the one that we just wrote in class, I didn’t do a preparation at home and it took me like a whole night to figure out how to write it. I was thinking the comment that the English teacher gave me... and I'm trying to use it as an example while I'm writing an essay, 'cause I don't want to make a mistake again. So, if I were, reading this report probably I won't learn much stuff from this report, 'cause I know that what I'm not good, but I wanted examples from this so I can learn from it.

Amy’s comments are illuminating in many ways. First of all, she was drawing attention to the challenges faced by ELLs in secondary schools who are developing their writing competencies. Amy pointed out the that there are different expectations for ELLs in sheltered classrooms versus mainstream classrooms, and in fact, she drew upon the error correction that she received in the mainstream classrooms to guide her writing.

Second, Amy commented on her perception that the foci of feedback differed between ESL and mainstream classrooms. She noted that small structural mistakes are ignored by her ESL teachers, but that there is a great emphasis on content. In contrast, her mainstream English teacher would not ignore any grammatical or other structural mistakes related to her writing.

Third, Amy identified the characteristics of feedback that would be ideal for helping her improve her writing. Again, noted that she seeks specific, direct error correction that can serve as exemplars to guide her future writing. DRAW feedback was not fine-grained enough for her. Interestingly, Amy did not question any of the DRAW feedback; she agreed with all of it. However, she simply did not find it beneficial to advancing her writing.

Finally, Amy’s comments throughout her interview demonstrated a mastery goal orientation. She made comments indicating that she was seeking feedback in order to master her writing skills, and would spend time poring over exemplars and previous work in order to understand her errors in order to improve upon them and her writing performance. She made no references to grades or being motivated at all by scores. All of her discussions with me were focused on the types of feedback that would help her to improve her writing skill mastery. These findings are possibly indicative that highly motivated students may need additional linguistic feedback in addition to DRAW feedback.
6.2.2.2 Kang

Kang was an extremely interesting learner. The first day that I met him during my classroom observation, he came up to me and asked me about this research project and how the information would be used. He was concerned about his grades, and wanted to demonstrate his writing skills. During any class when the students would receive an assignment, he would always stay after class to speak with Nicole about the results and ask targeted questions about the writing areas on which he had lost marks. It was not clear to me at the time if his actions were motivated by mastery or performance-driven goals. However, after speaking with Nicole, and also having additional interactions with him, I realized that Kang was possibly motivated by both sets of goals. In fact, his learning orientation profile indicated that he was both a mastery and a performance avoid-oriented learner. Interestingly, he also had low self-efficacy of writing. Kang achieved a final grade of 82% in this ESL course.

As I mentioned, I only had the opportunity to interview three students in Classroom B, partly because the students were so busy with in-class assignments and tasks, that there was no instructional time that could be taken away from the students to allow them to participate in interviews with me. However, Kang volunteered to stay after school to speak with me, because he greatly wanted the opportunity to talk about his DRAW feedback profile. As I mentioned, Kang would regularly take time after each class to speak with Nicole about any returned assignments.

During our interview I began by asking Kang to tell me on what aspects of the profile he first focused and what he was thinking at the time. Kang told me that he first looked at the ‘Feedback Analysis’ section in which his performance on each sub-skill was summarized graphically according to one of three performance levels. Kang explained:

*I looked at the chart. I was thinking I took a look at the highest mark here, organization. I look at sentences, mechanics and I see the two lowest and I trying to find what makes it so low so I look at your comment here.*

Kang then began to question me about some of the feedback that I had given him. He was interested in learning how to improve the skill, but at the same time, he was extremely concerned with the specific facets of his writing that had contributed to the performance level decisions reflected in the ‘Feedback Analysis’ section of his DRAW feedback profile. He would ask me to
identify the aspects of his writing that had contributed to his lower scores on various sub-skills.

He questioned me on multiple aspects of the feedback on the profile:

*I look at my weakness so this two aspect: ideas and grammar. Especially ideas. I know I have grammar mistakes because it's a long in class essay. Of course you would make some mistake in grammar, so I didn't know my grammar first. Then, I look at ideas 'cause in my rough draft I wrote many good examples. I search from the book many good [sic]. I don't know- I wonder why it's only two marks. I didn't write the quotation, but I use the real good instance from the book.*

In this quotation, Kang revealed there was a discrepancy between his opinion of his writing performance, and that which was reflected on the DRAW profile. Kang explains that he expected that a long in-class essay would certainly contain numerous grammatical mistakes, but he did not understand why he had been awarded a performance level of ‘two’ for his ideas when he had included numerous authentic examples from the novel about which he was writing. Kang continued to question me on multiple aspects of his feedback profile including all of the areas for improvement which he either did not completely understand or with which he disagreed. He was concerned with both understanding the basis for the feedback, and also with understanding how it contributed to his score, reflecting his performance orientation.

As the interview progressed, it became evident that Kang viewed me as an expert on writing, and proceeded to ask me for advice on how to improve his writing focusing on all the sub-skills that had been highlighted on the DRAW profile. It was clear to me that part of his motivation for wanting to be interviewed by me was to gain this one-on-one feedback, partly to seek advice on how to improve his writing, and partly to clarify the discrepancies between his self-assessment of his writing performance and the DRAW assessment.

One of the most intriguing parts of the interview occurred at its conclusion. After I thanked for Kang for his time, he returned the thanks by telling me that he appreciated the DRAW feedback and that he was impressed by the specificity of it. He was delighted to receive and use such feedback. However, he also told me that the feedback could be improved:

*I will use it [DRAW feedback]. It's very helpful. To me I think it's helpful. I highly recommend giving one or two instance of each aspect to make it better. ’Cause sometimes-not you- but sometimes if you say ‘well organized’, that's rubbish. ‘Sentence not clear’: ’it doesn't connect to your thesis’, it's rubbish. This feedback was more helpful than the other one.*
Therefore, Kang was expressing a sentiment similar to that expressed by Amy. While he appreciated the feedback, he believed that it could be further improved by adding exemplars to the feedback. He believed that general comments that were not specific to the written script were not helpful, or as he phrased: rubbish; although he was quick to add that he was not referring to DRAW feedback.

6.2.2.3 Ming

Ming was the last student I interviewed from Classroom B. Ming’s learning orientation profile indicated that he was both a mastery and a performance avoid learner. Like Amy and Kang, he also demonstrated a flat feedback profile indicating that he did not greatly value the DRAW feedback. However, Ming was also the lowest performing of the three students; his overall achievement grade in the course was 67%. Nicole had also previously expressed that she suspected that Ming struggled with learning disabilities, although he had not been formally diagnosed. Ming also shared that he believed himself to have, as he phrased, “a disability of writing”. He attributed this belief to his ability to speak and read well in both Mandarin (his first language) and in English, but his inability to write in either language (according to him). He told me that he is even unable to type in English. Furthermore, Ming believed that the primary reason that I was interested in interviewing him was because of his disability and how it would provide me with a unique perspective on writing that I would want to hear. I assured Ming otherwise.

When we first began our interview, Ming immediately began asking me about the performance level results on the feedback profile and started to provide evidence from his assignment explaining why the results were not accurate:

*Ideas write...’cause I write a lot of ideas and writing piece. I think I write 9: 3 main points; 12 ideas I think, 3 is main point and 9 is support points, so I don’t get it why you like give so low ideas. And the conclusion stuff, I think I have a title and ending, I think I did write that. So that's my question.*

Interestingly, Ming’s perception of what constitutes quality of ideas was based on quantity. In other words, it seems that Ming believed that as long as sufficient ideas were expressed in a text, then the writing warranted a high score.
Ming continued to question me on the veracity of the feedback by presenting more examples of areas of discrepancy between his opinion of his writing performance and the DRAW feedback:

*Yeah, and then I look to second page and look at it, and I see ‘not organized’, ‘not supporting body detail’, but I think I did. And ideas, I can bet I did write a lot ideas for the things. I think I write the most pages in the class ‘cause my words like very big and space a lot. I think I... two pages double side, I think, I forget. And circled, I just like take it and put it in my bag and leave. When I got home I take it out and I just got one ideas so...*

Ming was describing that he scored a ‘one’ on the ideas sub-skill in the Feedback Analysis section of the DRAW profile, and was questioning its accuracy. He explained that he had written many ideas, and in fact, he had probably written more than any other student in the class. He also highlighted other points (e.g., organization and supporting details) with which he disagreed. Again, Ming was equating the quality of writing with quantity. Furthermore, he was comparing his performance to that of his peers, which is consistent with a performance learning orientation.

Our discussion in the interview made it clear that Ming’s knowledge of academic writing required further development. He questioned me on numerous other points of his essay, and as I explained to him the source of and the rationale for the feedback, he began to understand the feedback, and demonstrated to me how he could apply it. It was clear that Ming required one-on-one conferencing in order to understand DRAW feedback and realize its potential benefits for him and how he could apply it to his writing.

During Ming’s interview, he also discussed the role of significant people in his life (e.g., his parents, girlfriend), and revealed how they served as external sources (or lack) of motivation for him.

*When I was born I was stuck in China with my family so my mom and dad treat me really well. Like, if I want something they get it for me. And in school actually, is a pass mark, I’m happy with it, and the writing...I write very ugly in Chinese. ‘Cause probably nobody gave me pressure or something. Nobody would like: ‘Hey do your work or something.’ But my Mom told me you have to work and do this and that, but I just never listen. Now, I get older, I think about future, right. My girlfriend change me a lot, ‘cause in grade, since I got here I was like being a bad boy. I skip a lot, fights, swear. I spend half my time in school in office, and is like, school like grade 5 to 6 or 7. Since I came to [School B] and still I just like play a lot, I skip a lot with my friends. In grade 10 almost 11, I met my girlfriend, and she, like, told me to do this and do that. You have to do this, you cannot skip. If I skip then she beat the s#*t out of me.*

Ming’s reflections are extremely revealing about his past and current experiences and how they
might have contributed to his goal orientations. As Ming discussed, he lived a privileged life in China and acquiring minimal passing grades was sufficient, as there was no pressure for him to perform. After his move to Canada, he continued to not strive academically and engaged in delinquent behaviour. However, as he discussed, Ming changed his ways recently after maturing and realizing that he needed to be concerned about his future, and specifically, after partnering with a girlfriend who cared about his academic endeavours and had high expectations for him. Therefore, it is likely that these cumulative experiences would have contributed to Ming’s performance avoid goal orientation, and its role in his academic achievement.

These three illustrative cases explain these students’ less favourable responses to DRAW feedback, and provide evidence to support the claim that there is a relationship between students’ perceptions of feedback and their learning orientations. It is also notable that all three of the students (like the majority of the students in the class) were of Chinese descent, necessitating a closer examination of the cultural factors that may have contributed to the reception of and perceptions of DRAW feedback. These three students’ responses indicated that there were three main concerns with DRAW feedback: 1) it was not fine-grained enough to provide specific, directive feedback to guide error correction and serve as exemplars for future writing tasks; 2) there was a discrepancy between students’ self-perception of writing skills and how their abilities were reflected using DRAW; and 3) there was a lack of understanding about what constitutes effective academic writing. The next section draws from students’ writing development in Classroom C to gather evidence for the validity claims and assumptions in this chapter.

6.2.3 Classroom C Writing Development

The data in Classroom C provided me with the opportunity to analyze and add to the evidence evaluating the claim about the effect of DRAW feedback on students’ writing development. The data in this classroom required a slightly different approach to analysis. As I have acknowledged earlier, some of my analyses have been limited by gaps in the data; none of the students in this class wrote either of the OSSLT-based final writing tasks, nor did I have access to a complete set of students’ writing tasks. While all three teachers participating in the study believed in a process approach to teaching writing, Angie, Classroom C’s teacher, was particularly passionate in her belief and implementation of this approach to teaching writing. During the time I spent collecting data in this classroom, the students were assigned a task of
writing a multi-paragraph, opinion-based essay about their future self. The students had to write three drafts of the essay all of which were graded by Angie. The first draft of the essay was also the same writing script that I used to provide students with DRAW feedback. Students then had the opportunity to revise the essay based on the feedback that they had received. Angie graded the essay again using a more simplified rubric (as it was a final draft). Angie provided me with copies of this final version of six of the students’ assignments, which I also scored using DRAW. Table 29 provides detailed information about each of the six students’ scored writing assignments.

The column labeled ‘Writing skill profile’ in Table 29 provides a writing skill profile of each student’s mastery (or non-mastery) based on each of the writing sub-skills addressed in DRAW (Ideas, Vocabulary, Organization, Mechanics, Grammar, and Sentence fluency). Students’ were identified as having mastered a sub-skill if they had achieved mastery on more than 60% of the descriptors comprising it. For example, the ‘ideas’ sub-skill was evaluated using six descriptors. Students scored either a one (mastered) or a zero (not mastered) on each of the descriptors. Therefore, students could score a maximum score of six if their writing evidenced their mastery of each of the writing qualities identified in the descriptors. Students would have to achieve a minimum of four out of six to achieve mastery of the ‘ideas’ sub-skill overall. In Table 29, it may be observed that Takumi’s writing script (on which DRAW feedback was based) illustrated that he had achieved mastery of two of the six sub-skills: vocabulary and mechanics; therefore, his writing profile appeared as 010100.

The subsequent column in Table 29, profile writing score, is the percentage of the total descriptors that students mastered on their profile writing task. This same writing task was also scored by Angie; her scoring (in addition to descriptive feedback) was presented to students as a mark out of 50 derived from a score for ‘content’ and ‘writing’. ‘Writing’ refers to both the mechanics and the grammatical qualities of the essay, as well as students’ vocabulary usage. The rubric on which these scores were based was discussed in Chapter 4 and was presented in Appendix I. Angie’s score on this essay and the DRAW score may be compared as they are both based on the same piece of writing. In every case, Angie’s rubric score was higher than that on DRAW. I remind the reader that although the DRAW scores are provided here for the purposes of this discussion, the students did not receive this DRAW score; their sub-skill scores were used to determine one of the three levels of achievement for each of the sub-skills: Needs
You are showing improvement; keep on working to continue improving; and You are on your way to mastering this skill.

The scores of students’ revised draft of their writing are presented in the subsequent columns in Table 29. The column labeled ‘Teacher’s score on revised writing’ illustrates Angie’s score based on her rubric, and the column titled ‘Post-Draw score’ is my evaluation of the same essay using DRAW. The ‘Post-writing’ skill profile is the mastery/non-mastery profiles of students’ writing based on this revised draft of the essay. The final two columns in Table 29 provide a summary of the change in students’ writing development based on DRAW and Angie’s score.

Several observations may be made from the information presented in Table 29. Four out of the six students showed improvement on their DRAW score between the profile writing assignment, and their revised assignment. One student showed no change, while one student’s score decreased. Four out six students also demonstrated an improvement across their writing profiles indicating that they had mastered writing skills on this assignment that had not been previously mastered.

Using the teacher’s scores as the basis for comparison reveals that two out of six students showed improvement between two drafts of writing while four students’ scores decreased. It should be noted that the teacher used a different rubric to score the two drafts, and the purpose of the evaluations was slightly different. The first rubric was extremely detailed while the second rubric was somewhat more abbreviated. The differences may possibly be attributed to the different purposes the two rubrics served. The former was used to provide detailed feedback to students on a first draft of their composition to guide their revision process, while the second rubric was used to provide feedback on a subsequent draft that would not likely not have warranted such detailed feedback. The students were told that the main evaluation criterion for the second draft was to demonstrate that their second draft had incorporated “all corrections” from both the teacher and their peer. The peer assessment rubric was also based on DRAW. During conversations with me, Angie had stated that she assigned a mark to every task that she collects from students. She explained that students expected to be graded on assignments, and that without a score, students simply would not put forth their best effort.
Table 29

Selected Classroom C Students’ Writing Development Based on Teacher Scores and DRAW

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Writing skill profilea</th>
<th>Profile writing score (%)</th>
<th>Teacher’s score on first draft</th>
<th>Teacher’s score on revised writing</th>
<th>Post-writing skill profile</th>
<th>Post DRAW score (%)</th>
<th>Summary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Content /20 (%)</td>
<td>Writing /30 (%)</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Content/5 (%)</td>
<td>Writing/10 (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Takumi</td>
<td>010100</td>
<td>53.3</td>
<td>16 (80)</td>
<td>25 (83)</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>4 (80)</td>
<td>7.5 (75)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gretta</td>
<td>110110</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>15 (75)</td>
<td>21 (70)</td>
<td>72</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tika</td>
<td>000000</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>13 (65)</td>
<td>20 (67)</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>3 (80)</td>
<td>6 (60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zian</td>
<td>110101</td>
<td>53.3</td>
<td>18 (90)</td>
<td>26 (87)</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>4.5 (90)</td>
<td>7.5 (75)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danial</td>
<td>110000</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>13 (65)</td>
<td>15 (50)</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>3 (60)</td>
<td>5 (50)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edward</td>
<td>000100</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>9 (45)</td>
<td>15 (50)</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>3 (60)</td>
<td>5 (50)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on mastery/non-mastery in the order of Ideas, Vocabulary, Organization, Mechanics, Grammar, and Sentence fluency writing sub-skills
As noted and illustrated in Table 29, there was a discrepancy in students’ writing development (i.e., whether students writing score improved or decreased) when comparing the results from DRAW with the teacher’s scores. I speculate that one of the differences is due to Angie’s use of two different rubrics to score the different essay drafts. The second rubric was simply not as fine-grained as the first and used for a different purpose, while my scoring was based on the detailed DRAW both times. Therefore, it is plausible that the differences between the changes observed in students’ writing differed between my evaluation and the teacher’s simply because Angie’s second rubric did not provide as fine-grained analysis of students’ writing as her first rubric did, and students’ sub-skill development may not have been as easily observable.

One key observation that is integral to investigating the validity claim that DRAW feedback had an effect on students’ writing development is the evidence that the majority of students’ writing improved over time following feedback, and there was also evidence of gains in students’ writing skill profiles. Of course, it should be acknowledged that students would have used both DRAW and teacher feedback to make subsequent revisions. Therefore, I delved deeper into their perceptions of and reaction to DRAW to evaluate the extent to which they might have used this feedback and how their learning orientations interacted with their use of feedback. I drew from additional data sources including students’ interviews, and their feedback and learning orientation survey responses. The next section discusses the results of these analyses and presents several illustrative case studies of these students who each demonstrate different responses to feedback and adopt different learning orientations.

6.2.3.1 Takumi’s Case

*Background.* Takumi is a Japanese-born, soft-spoken diligent student who was 17 years old when I met him. He had moved to Canada from Japan approximately eight months earlier. He spoke only Japanese at home with his family, although his father was originally of Filipino descent and also spoke Tagalog. Takumi attended after-school literacy classes and hoped to attend university after finishing secondary school. He estimated that he spent between one to three hours per week engaging with literacy activities not associated with school. Takumi classified himself as an excellent writer in Japanese, but only fair in English.

*Feedback Perceptions and Use.* I asked Takumi to rank (in order of importance) which type of feedback he most valued: grades/scores on assignment, teachers’ comments; peer
feedback, and indirect corrective feedback, Takumi told me that he most valued teachers’
comments, and least valued peer feedback. Note that I did not use the term ‘indirect corrective
feedback’ with Takumi. Rather, I used the phrase, ‘circling/underlining errors’. Indirect
corrective feedback was second most valued, followed by grades or scores. His primary strategy
for revising writing was to refer to teachers’ feedback, although he also referred to other sources
such as textbooks or the internet for help. On some (rare) occasions he referred to previous
essays to guide his work.

Takumi was provided with DRAW feedback on an opinion-based essay in which he
described himself in the future, including features such as details about his family life and his
career. On this piece of writing, Takumi demonstrated that he had mastered two skills,
vocabulary and mechanics, but was still developing his ideas, organization, grammar, and
sentence fluency. Using his feedback survey results, I created a feedback profile to describe
Takumi’s reaction to DRAW feedback. This profile is illustrated in Table 30. Note that this
Table also includes information about Takumi’s learning orientations which will also be
discussed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feedback Variable</th>
<th>Perceived Understanding</th>
<th>Reflection</th>
<th>Perceived Usefulness</th>
<th>Intent for Future Use</th>
<th>Feedback profile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High/Low Categorization</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1111</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 30
Takumi’s DRAW Feedback and Learning Orientation Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Orientation Variable</th>
<th>Anxiety</th>
<th>Mastery</th>
<th>Performance Prove</th>
<th>Performance Avoid</th>
<th>Self-Efficacy</th>
<th>Learning Orientation Profile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High/Low Categorization</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>01001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Takumi’s feedback profile is a summary of all of his responses to the four feedback
variables that were introduced earlier in this chapter. Recall that each variable is a composite of a
series of questions that address each category of feedback. I compared Takumi’s average
responses to each of the feedback variables with the mean response from all of the students. In the instance that Takumi’s response was higher than the group mean, I categorized his response as ‘high’ and assigned a value of ‘1’. If any of his responses had been lower than the group mean, I would have categorized his response as ‘low’ and assigned it a value of ‘0’. Therefore, there were a total of 16 different possible feedback profiles representing a feedback continuum. Takumi’s feedback profile placed him at the high end of the continuum as he had a high perception of the usefulness of DRAW feedback, believed that he understood it, intended to use it in the future, and also perceived it to be accurate.

When I interviewed Takumi about his reaction to DRAW feedback, he confirmed that he found DRAW feedback extremely helpful. I asked him to tell me which aspects he found particularly helpful, and how he used the information. Below is a portion of the transcript of our conversation:

Maryam: Which of this information did you find most useful? Did you use it all or some of it or none of it?

Takumi: Basically, all of them are good to me. But weakness point is more important things because I have to write correctly.

Maryam: When you were writing your final draft, did you use it [DRAW feedback]?

Takumi: I keep it, a reminder.

Takumi also told me that he particularly valued detailed feedback on grammar as he believed it to be one of his weakest skills. As Takumi stated, he referred to DRAW feedback which was with him as he made revisions. He was a student who greatly valued comments and descriptive feedback. In response to a question about his opinion on the value of scores versus written comments, Takumi stated:

I don’t think the mark, yeah, because I have to write correctly so Ms. W make sure about my grammars or words which is correct or incorrect. So it’s important to me.

This response is also indicative of a mastery learning orientation. As I have discussed, I was also interested in gathering evidence to support claims about the mediating role of students’ learning orientations to the use of DRAW feedback. Table 30 also presents Takumi’s learning orientation profile. This profile was constructed from his responses to the survey previously discussed, and the high/low score categorization was applied using the same approach as was used for creating the feedback profile. The resulting profile illustrated that Takumi was indeed a mastery-oriented
learner with high writing self-efficacy, and low anxiety. His learning orientation profile exhibited low orientation towards both performance prove and performance avoid. As I have discussed elsewhere in this dissertation, self-efficacy beliefs may influence students’ goal orientations (Elliot & Harackiewicz, 1996), and students with mastery goal orientations tend to exhibit higher self-efficacy beliefs, while students with performance orientations, particularly those who adopt performance avoid goals, tend to have lower self-efficacy (Middleton & Midgley, 1997; Midgley & Urdan, 1995; Pajares, Britner, & Valiante, 2000).

Takumi’s learning orientation and feedback profiles provide evidence suggesting that there was indeed a positive relationship between his adopted goal orientation and high self-efficacy and his positive perception of DRAW feedback. This positive relationship may have had an effect on his writing development which showed improvement based on DRAW. Takumi mastered all writing sub-skills on the writing task with the exception of organization.

6.2.3.2 Eva’s Case

**Background.** Eva is passionate about dancing, and is motivated to become professional dancer. In fact, she was a finalist on a national, televised dance competition, *So You Think You Can Dance*, in her home country of Armenia. Eva was born in Canada, but moved to Armenia with her Armenian-born parents when she was a baby. She had been living in Canada for approximately six months when I first met her. Eva speaks Armenian at home, but is also able to read and write in Russian and Ukrainian. She’s an active user of social media platforms such as Facebook, and spends a great deal of time texting, watching YouTube, and playing video games. She also enjoys reading fiction and newspapers; on average she spends between three to five hours a week engaged in extra-curricular reading and writing activities. She believed herself to be an excellent writer in Armenian, and a ‘good’ writer in English.

**Feedback Perceptions and Use.** During our interview, Eva ranked the type of feedback she most values as being: teachers’ comments, grades/scores, indirect corrective feedback, and peer comments. I also asked Eva what type of feedback she valued most, descriptive or grades. Below is an excerpt from our transcribed conversation:

*Maryam: What's more important to you, the comments or the mark?*

*Eva: Well the comments are helping me to improve the further writing, but the mark is just my mark that will go to my report card!*
Maryam: Yeah. So which one's more important, or are they the same?

Eva: They're the same, they're both important for me. But like it depends which way you are looking at it, if you're looking from the way you want to get a good mark on your report card then you will look on your mark, but if in the way that you want to learn more you have to look at the comments.

Maryam: Ok, and which way are you looking at it?

Eva: Both ways.

Eva was expressing her awareness of the different purposes for different types of feedback, and she articulated that depending on the situation, she responded to feedback differently. This perspective was also evidenced by her learning orientation profile that is illustrated in Table 3.1. Note that Eva did not clearly present a performance orientated or mastery-oriented profile, but demonstrates high tendency towards all three. Interestingly, Eva’s survey demonstrated that she held high writing anxiety with low writing self-efficacy beliefs.

Table 3.1

Eva’s DRAW Feedback and Learning Orientation Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feedback Variable</th>
<th>Perceived Understanding</th>
<th>Reflection</th>
<th>Perceived Usefulness</th>
<th>Intent for Future Use</th>
<th>Feedback profile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High/Low Categorization</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Orientation Variable</th>
<th>Anxiety</th>
<th>Mastery</th>
<th>Performance Prove</th>
<th>Performance Avoid</th>
<th>Self-Efficacy</th>
<th>Learning Orientation Profile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High/Low Categorization</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11110</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Eva’s feedback profile (presented in Table 3.1) illustrates that she was at virtually the opposite end of a feedback continuum as Takumi. Her survey responses indicated that her reflections on DRAW feedback, perceived usefulness of, and intentions for using it in the future, were all low. The only feedback variable that was categorized as high was her perception of
understanding the DRAW feedback. Therefore, she believed that she understood all of the DRAW feedback, but did not seem to value it indicating, possibly, that her improvement in her skill profile was not an effect of DRAW feedback. Evidence supporting this finding also emerged from my interview with Eva which revealed that she was primarily using feedback from her teacher. An illustrative excerpt of our conversation is presented below:

Maryam: Did you find this [DRAW feedback] profile helpful?

Eva: Yes, I just, no. I didn't use it but I saw which ones are, like, my highest. Where my most, how do you say? Strengths. I just saw where my good and where my bad and why.

Maryam: Tell me why you didn't use it.

Eva: No. I just read it once and after, I told you, I'm just lazy. I'm just not going back and see, I just like to do and go over it.

M: But you did use Ms. W's comments.

Eva: Yeah, because we had to correct it.

Maryam: Oh, but this [DRAW feedback] is about your writing too. I just want understand; there's nothing wrong with your not using it, I just want to know why you didn't use it.

Eva: Just I was lazy.

Maryam: That's perfectly fine.

Eva: That's worse.

Eva admitted that her primary motivation for using the teacher’s feedback was because it was required. This excerpt suggests that Eva adopted a performance prove learning orientation. Interestingly, Eva recognized that she could work harder, but she was not motivated to do so which is, again, supported both empirically and theoretically. When students possess low self-efficacy beliefs and also adopt performance goals, they are more likely to demonstrate maladaptive patterns of learning (Butler, 1998; Elliott & Dweck, 1998). The negative correlations between the performance learning orientation variables and several of the feedback variables (presented in Table 20) also illustrate how use of feedback may be impeded when students adopt performance goal orientations.
6.2.3.3 Zian’s Case

**Background.** Zian is a Chinese-born learner who moved to Canada in 2009. Zian was a mature, 17 year old learner who had a great interest in music, computers, and gaming. He regularly attended Angie’s after-school literacy classes and aimed to attend university upon completion of secondary school. He was an only child who primarily spoke Mandarin at home with his parents. He stated that he spent in excess of five hours a week on reading and writing activities not associated with school, most of which were spent engaging with non-fiction texts and newspapers. Although he spent much time searching and researching topics on the Internet and watching YouTube, he did not spend any time chatting on-line or engaging with popular social media platforms. Zian told me that he believed that he was a fair writer in English, but a poor one in Mandarin. This self-evaluation of his writing in his home language was based on his consistent receipt of low writing marks while he lived in China.

**Feedback Perceptions and Use.** When Zian was asked to rank the value of different types of written feedback, he told me that his ranking depended on the class and the teacher who taught it. He explained that while some teachers only direct him to mistakes without specifically identifying the error (i.e., indirect corrective feedback), other teachers always accompany the error identification with a comment. He stated that his preference was for the former type of feedback, but that in this class he received the latter. He explained the reason for his preference for indirect feedback:

*We have to see it [the errors] ourselves that can improve us and then if we have any other we don't understand we go to him [the teacher].*

After this explanation, Zian ranked the indirect corrective feedback and comments as equally and most valuable, followed by grades, and then peer assessment. He made sure to qualify that peer assessment is only valuable depending on the source. He did not value any feedback from peers whom he believed to be “not good at writing”.

Zian’s DRAW feedback profile was similar to Takumi’s; his profile also demonstrated a high categorization across three of the DRAW feedback variables; however, his survey results indicated that he had a low perceived value of the DRAW feedback. Zian’s learning orientation profile differed from both of the other students discussed. Zian’s learning orientation survey responses indicated that he had low anxiety, but interestingly, he demonstrated a high orientation
towards mastery as well as both performance goal orientations. His responses also exhibited high self-efficacy beliefs. In order to understand the relationship between Zian’s learning orientations and his perceptions of DRAW feedback (and its use), I delved into our conversation about feedback.

Table 32

Zian’s DRAW Feedback and Learning Orientation Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feedback Variable</th>
<th>Perceived Understanding</th>
<th>Reflection</th>
<th>Perceived Usefulness</th>
<th>Intent for Future Use</th>
<th>Feedback profile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High/Low Categorization</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1101</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Learning Orientation Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Orientation Variable</th>
<th>Anxiety</th>
<th>Mastery</th>
<th>Performance Prove</th>
<th>Performance Avoid</th>
<th>Self-Efficacy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High/Low Categorization</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Zian’s conversation with me about his DRAW feedback profile demonstrated several key points: 1) Zian greatly valued the feedback and reflected positively on it; 2) He possessed high self-efficacy beliefs; 3) His use of the feedback for revising was based partly on his beliefs of the aspects of writing that he valued and that would contribute to increasing his writing score. All elements of his learning orientation profile were evident. In order to illustrate these three points, I present some portions of the transcript of my interview with Zian.

One of the quotations that best illustrated Zian’s perception of DRAW feedback was:

*I think it's really honest for me, it shows me where I can improve and where I, I'm good at. And they just like myself evaluating.*

Not only did Zian articulate how much he valued the feedback, but it he also expressed that he believed it to be accurate, and also consistent with his personal beliefs about his writing ability. Zian also expressed that the features of the DRAW feedback contributed to increasing his confidence about his writing. Below in an excerpt of our conversation:

*Maryam: Did you find the strengths more helpful or the weaknesses?*
Zian: Weaknesses.

Maryam: Why?

Zian: Well the most part is the mechanic and grammar, it shows that really how to improve my grammar on writings. ‘Cause, you know, how grammar tests I can do it all right, but when I write my own then it becomes a problem. So you see I need to double check it.

Maryam: Did you find it helpful to read the strengths?

Zian: Yeah.

Maryam: Why?

Zian: ‘Cause, this strengths like give me confidence. Like before I was just thinking that way and now I believe that.

This portion of the interview addresses several key elements about Zian’s learning orientations and his use of feedback. In his explanation of why he values the weaknesses identified in his DRAW feedback, he expresses that the feedback directs him to his goals (mastery orientation) allowing him to identify the conceptual gap between where he is now and his desired future goal. Zian also explains that the strengths contribute to his self-efficacy belief about writing by confirming his self-evaluation.

Another excerpt of our interview that I present here serves to illustrate how Zian’s use of feedback was mediated by his beliefs about the writing sub-skills that he most values. His comments show that these values are partly rooted in his writing self-efficacy. It also provides an explanation as to why Zian’s feedback survey results indicated that his perceived usefulness of DRAW feedback was low while all the other categories were identified as high.

Maryam: is it important for you to get feedback or information on all of these writing categories?

Zian: Ideas, a little bit. Organization is highly important.

Maryam: What about vocabulary?

Zian: Same, highly important.

Maryam: Sentences?

Zian: Well, I don’t really...yeah a little bit important but not that important to me.

Maryam: Ok, mechanics?

Zian: Highly important, same as grammar.
Maryam: Tell me why ideas and sentences are only a little bit important?
Zian: First idea is the most confidence thing that I see.
Maryam: I see,
Zian: ‘Cause the most mark of my writing has come from the content part.
Maryam: Ok.
Zian: I think, my ideas good enough, so any, not just like, you're not working harder but I think my ideas good enough. And the sentences is like, while I'm writing I don't even think. Mostly I do make these thesis and the-yeah, these things in the book I always just come up and what did I want I just put it in. So, the sentences and structures is not so important to me. But it's different from organization 'cause every time after I write it I have to go back and see how the organize works and I need to redo it and put the idea together.

One of the most revealing aspects of this excerpt is that Zian believes that it is not important for him to receive feedback on the ideas in his writing. Although he values content in writing, he believes that he has already mastered the skill referring to his ideas as “good enough”; therefore, he does not need further guidance. This revelation highlights the relationship between the skills he values as a writer and learner, and his self-perceived mastery of the skill. He also explicitly stated that sentence structures are simply not important to him. Zian’s writing, on which the DRAW feedback was based, illustrated that there were two skills he had not mastered on that assignment: organization and grammar. This skill pattern is congruent with Zian’s self-perceptions of his writing skills. His revised writing skill profile indicated that he had used the feedback to improve his writing and achieved an increase in his overall DRAW score, and mastery in grammar.

The brief exchange presented above also demonstrated Zian’s adoption of qualities of both performance prove and mastery orientations. Other aspects of Zian’s conversation with me demonstrated a performance prove orientation. For example, I asked him what first draws his attention when he receives a scored essay from his teacher: the mark or the comments. He told me that the mark is what he first looks at because it's what contributes to his report card. He recognized the value of feedback for contributing to and improving his writing, but he stated that his parents only see his report card, not the comments. Zian explained:

‘Cause first [I look at] the mark. It just goes for the report card. It's just like, well, different from other things I just look for enough mark instead of the best. And these things just correct me from the mistakes, so I think this is the same important as the marks. The only way is, my parents can only see this, they won't see all these things. You know all the Chinese come here are trying their best to get the best marks, but even in
China I'm sort of lazy.

Zian also introduced another important dimension of feedback that I briefly addressed in the previous section: culture. The relationship between culture and feedback has not been extensively researched in education. In fact, Hyland and Hyland (2006) caution against an overreliance on using cultural variables as mediators of feedback so that the emergence of stereotypes is avoided. At the same time, Zian articulates his belief that his parents have certain expectations, because of their Chinese culture, pointing to a potential area of future research.

These three students’ cases illustrated their perceptions of DRAW feedback, and how each of their learning orientations mediated their use of feedback and contributed to warranting the related validity claims and assumptions. Both Takumi and Zian demonstrated that they had used DRAW feedback to improve their writing, but Eva had not; her revisions were focused on responding to the task criterion of ‘making all corrections’. She admitted that she was simply not motivated to work harder to improve her writing.

6.3 Summary and Claim

In this chapter, I presented analyses of data used as evidence to respond to the question: To what extent do students’ perceptions of DRAW feedback affect their writing skill development? I analyzed students’ writing performance data at both the whole group level, as well as at the classroom level, and examined the relationship between students’ perceptions of feedback, as well as the various motivational constructs which contributed to their individualized responses and students’ change in writing over time. These data were analyzed using multiple methods in order to provide different perspectives and generate multiple sources of empirical evidence.

The relationships between students’ perceived usefulness of DRAW feedback and intent for future use of feedback with the changes in their writing scores, demonstrated that DRAW feedback had a positive impact on students’ writing development. Data from within classrooms allowed for in-depth examination of students’ patterns of writing improvement, focusing on individual cases to elaborate and expand on the findings, and further substantiate the evidence about the effects of DRAW feedback. Students’ use of DRAW feedback was found to be contingent particularly on students’ intent to use the feedback, as well as their performance orientations. Specifically, students with a performance orientation were less likely to value
DRAW feedback. The findings warrant the claim that DRAW feedback had a positive impact on students’ writing development. The next chapter focuses on teachers and their role as assessors and providers of feedback.
Chapter 7
Teachers’ Feedback Beliefs and Impact on Students’ Writing

This chapter focuses on examining teachers’ responses to and practices with DRAW in response to the research questions: What are the characteristics of secondary school ESL teachers’ writing assessment beliefs and feedback practices?; and To what extent are adolescent students’ perceptions of feedback writing skill performance shaped by their teacher’s assessment beliefs and feedback practices? Evidence was gathered from classroom observations, semi-structured interviews with teachers, and writing scripts evaluated by teachers. The results of the analyses are discussed in relation to the classroom teachers’ writing feedback practices (both pre- and post-DRAW), and their contributions to influencing and shaping secondary school students’ perceptions and use of feedback, in general. I begin this discussion with an exploration of the characteristics of teachers’ writing feedback beliefs and practices before delving into teachers’ responses to DRAW.

7.1 Teachers’ Feedback Beliefs and Practices

I used multiple sources of evidence to understand the characteristics of writing that Celina, Nicole and Angie valued, and the type of feedback that they provided to students on their writing. These data sources include: 1) Teachers’ semi-structured interviews in which I explicitly asked teachers to address these issues; 2) Analysis of scored classroom writing assignments from each classroom to document the purposes and foci of teachers’ feedback practices; and 3) Think-aloud interviews with teachers in which they responded to three written texts each characterized by different types of feedback.

Prior to presenting the results of the data analyses emerging from each of these sources, I wish to acknowledge that all three of these teachers were extremely devoted educators who were working with me primarily because they cared about their students’ learning outcomes. Furthermore, all three were strong advocates for language learners, and actively worked in their respective schools to ensure that their students received the highest quality of education possible.
7.1.1 Teachers’ Feedback Beliefs Drawn from Semi-Structured Interviews

There were three specific questions that I asked teachers to answer in order to learn about their feedback practices and their perceptions of feedback: 1) What is good writing? In other words, when you read a student’s essay or other written work, what helps you decide if it’s high quality or not?; 2) What features of writing do you focus on when you correct writing?; and, 3) What type of feedback helps students the most in their writing development?

7.1.1.1 Qualities of Writing

As I stated above, I asked teachers to explain the characteristics of writing that they value and which they assess in order to evaluate its quality. Celina told me that “oddly enough” she does not use grammar as a primary criterion to evaluate quality writing. She stated that when she first reads an essay, she focuses on the content of the essay and the ideas that students have incorporated into their writing. She attributes her opinion to the numerous “years of hearing and seeing broken English [that] have allowed [her] to get beyond the surface obstructions”. She stated when she reads an essay she is foremost concerned with this content. During subsequent readings of students’ writing she focuses on other writing aspects such as “topic sentences and sentence structure.”

When I first posed this question to Nicole her immediate answer was that she never refers to any piece of writing as “good or not good”; she stated that her primary indication of whether students’ writing is deemed ‘good’ is if their writing has met the criteria that have been articulated for the task. In order to evaluate such success criteria she always uses rubrics. She continued to add that the elements most often included in her rubrics are: “coherence, style, conventions, vocabulary development, unity, organization, explanations, quotes, content, strong topic or focus, and thesis.” Finally, she added that when she teaches English language learners she makes sure that all of her expectations are identified in each performance task.

Angie was extremely specific in her response to the question. She stated that one of the key indicators of students’ success in writing development is the ability to use the present tense. She stated that students learn to write in the past tense, and subsequently proceed to writing in the present tense; therefore, high-quality writing will have correctly applied present tenses. She also told me that one of the biggest and “almost infallible” indicators of English language writing proficiency is the mastery of parallelism. Furthermore, she stated that she uses additional
markers of quality writing including: indication that the student has proofread the work; evidence of organization and planning; correct sentence structures, and use of a variety of words.

7.1.1.2 Feedback on Writing

I asked the three teachers to comment on the features of writing on which they provide feedback to students. Celina told me that she often feels “compelled to comment on everything”, but that giving such feedback is simply not practical. Therefore, she chooses to be selective in her provision of feedback and focus on several specific features that have been the focus of her recent instruction. The example that she gave me was that she may choose to work on “coherence of argument or two or three grammatical structures.”

Celina also explained that her feedback practices vary depending on the purpose of the writing task. She explained that when students are completing tasks that are meant to be practice assignments before a culminating activity, she will focus her feedback solely on one or two specific issues which students need to practice. Additionally, Celina discussed changes in her feedback practices. Although this issue will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter, one of Celina’s comments warrants discussion here:

*I think I used to deliver a lot more descriptive feedback at the end where it doesn't really make sense to, because what's the point of all that feedback if there's no opportunity to incorporate it into the learning?*

In the above quotation Celina was explaining that before participating in this research study, she would often provide students with a great amount of descriptive feedback on a final draft of a writing assignment, as opposed to providing the feedback on earlier drafts to give the students the opportunity to implement her lengthy feedback. Celina’s comments indicate that her feedback practices changed throughout the semester as a result of her participation in the study and working with DRAW.

Nicole stated that the type of feedback she provides to her students depends on the purposes of the writing assignment which she referred to as “assessment of learning” and “assessment as learning”. Nicole also used the terms ‘diagnostic, formative and summative’ to refer to the purposes of writing tasks. Nicole’s role as head of the ESL department may have contributed to her use of such terminology that is found in policy documents such as Growing Success: Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting in Ontario Schools (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010). Nicole stated that she provides students with a great deal of descriptive
feedback on tasks that fall into the category of assessment as learning. She identified writing tasks such as outlines as fitting into this category, because students would receive feedback, and have the information to apply to their final draft. Nicole continued to say that feedback on assignments for diagnostic purposes is simply anecdotal, and comment based. She does not record any scores associated with this type of task. She added that because writing is “so complex” she makes a decision about the type of feedback that she’ll provide on such assignment, and it often focuses on grammar and content.

Nicole stated that her “favourite” feedback source is rubrics. She stated that she uses rubrics and checklists to provide students with feedback on assignments with formative purposes. The rubrics assist her with focusing her feedback on specific aspects of students’ writing. Additionally, she revises and tailors the rubrics to match the purposes of the assignment. Finally, Nicole reported that summative evaluations are always accompanied by a score which is part of the student’s final grade.

Angie reported that the type of feedback she provides students matches the skills on which they are focusing in class. For example, she stated that early in the course, she doesn’t use a level one to four style of rubric; her feedback will focus on students’ use of formal language and present tense. Later on in the course, she seeks evidence of students using quotations in their writing and not using expressions such as “I think” so that they move away from personal, narrative styles of writing and towards academic genres. Furthermore, as students’ writing develops over the semester, Angie evaluates students’ work based on their ability to incorporate skills that have been taught into writing, and as well as evidence of progression (or regression) in students’ development. Angie stated that her feedback always includes a mark which is indicative of the level (i.e., one to four) and comments which reflect students’ progression. She made sure to qualify this comment by saying: “I never, ever have a high mark for lower work.”

Angie had strong feelings about the importance of providing grades to every assignment that she evaluates. In fact, during the time that I spent in the classroom, I observed Angie evaluating and providing feedback (both descriptive and evaluative) to students during almost every single class. Her marking workload was overwhelming. She often joked with me that in another lifetime she would choose to be a mathematics teacher. She explained to me that there were several reasons why she always provided students with marks on all the assignments regardless of the purpose of the task (e.g., formative, summative). Angie believes that one of the
primary reasons for using grades is to motivate students to complete their work and apply their best effort. As discussed above, her grades are not always based on the rubric. She explained:

*I like rubrics that outline the criteria, but I like to check it off. I almost prefer it if I don't mark according to the rubric, in a way. Like, I don't give the numeric mark according to the rubric; it's more of a guide for the students. What I'm expecting and da, da, da, da, 'cause I'm very uncomfortable putting a 'one' on a rubric. There are some students who would always get a 'one' when it came to mechanics.*

Angie was also critical of some of the provincial assessment policies and their advocacy of not providing marks to drafts of written works.

*I know that they don't want marks until the final product and so on. I'm suspicious of that-the whole reason behind that. The school board really promotes where you want students writing six, seven times, and not attach marks to the first test, just final product. I'm wondering if they want to see everyone at 80, 90 percent, you know what I mean?*

Therefore, scores serve as a tool for Angie to provide students with feedback that reflects their writing development, and also provides a greater range than a rubric which is scored on a four point scales. Additionally, Angie strongly believes that scores motivate students.

Angie also does not consider providing students with a checked rubric as quality feedback. She was quite critical of this practice:

*A lot of teachers mark blindly. I'm so sick of teachers who don't give feedback, but only check off a rubric.*

As stated above, she believes that the ‘checked off’ rubric should be accompanied with a mark, but should also include written feedback on the students’ work including both descriptive comments as well as direct and indirect corrective feedback. According to Angie, the focus of the written feedback is never only on content, but also on the ‘writing’ (e.g., sentence structures, grammar, mechanics). She also added that she never provides students with negative written feedback.

### 7.1.1.3 Feedback to Advance Writing

In order to further understand teachers’ perceptions of feedback I also asked teachers about the types of feedback that they believe helps to advance students’ writing. Celina provided a concise, yet multi-dimensional answer to this question stating:

*From my observation, direct and timely feedback...student teacher conferences where we can read-a-loud and look at the work critically together is often most helpful and also the time when student ask about aspects that they are not sure about. I find even if I work...*
with students to set success criteria it's often a difficult process for them to internalize in their own writing...and peer editing is not useful because, much like me, it's daunting to know where to begin to make positive feedback when sometimes there are so many things wrong with a piece of writing.

There are several key issues raised that warrant further discussion. From Celina’s comments reveal that she values providing feedback through one-on-one conferences. This type of feedback is quite different from simply providing students with written feedback as the conversation with students allows the students to receive the feedback as intended and makes it immediately clear exactly how they are interpreting feedback. Furthermore, students have the opportunity to immediately ask questions and seek clarification if they need it.

Another important idea that emerges from Celina’s comments is that her assessment practices reflect her beliefs about what constitutes effective feedback. She confesses that the process of giving feedback can be overwhelming as there are multiple facets on which to comment; therefore, she believes that this process would be equally overwhelming for her students. Consequently, she chooses to avoid engaging students in peer assessment. Celina’s response also provides a window into her conceptualization of writing assessment and feedback as a global process as opposed to a fine-grained, sub-skilled perspective. Therefore, Celina’s perception of what constitutes effective feedback is the process with which students’ engage in order to improve their writing which ideally involves one-on-one conferencing.

Nicole was also specific in her response to the question of the types of feedback that contribute to effective writing development. She stated that feedback should be: 1) descriptive; 2) it should ask questions to promote student reflection; and 3) be delivered through conferencing. Nicole also expressed her belief that writing should be assessed using rubrics which delineate feedback into distinctive categories. In fact, she was extremely passionate about the use of rubrics to assess writing and provide feedback as illustrated by the following comments:

*If there's a rubric that could substitute for the minimal feedback, if there is no rubric I don't think the student would have any idea as to why, what they need to do, what are their next steps, what are their goals?*

*I don't think that this student would know where to start with this [feedback] without a rubric.*

*Some of my students are trained so well...that the person will say when they get an assignment is, ‘Where's the rubric? What are you going to be looking for?’*
Some of Nicole’s comments also address the concept of diagnostic competence discussed in Chapter 2. I elaborate upon this discussion in subsequent sections of this chapter.

Nicole’s responses reflect her familiarity with influence of policy and curricular documents (e.g., Ministry of Ontario’s Growing Success) which espouse similar feedback practices for promoting student success. In fact, Nicole’s answers reflect assessment practices that are consistent with both assessment as learning and assessment for learning.

When I asked Angie about the types of feedback that she believed to be most beneficial to helping advance students’ writing she eluded to the idea that the type of feedback is not as important as the act of simply providing feedback to students. She told me that all of her students use the feedback that she provides to revise their writing. She also stated that she fosters the relationship with her students so that they gain her trust and, consequently, use the feedback she provides:

*If you’re not going to give feedback, why bother? You have to almost be friends be with them for them to spend time with your feedback.*

Another interesting aspect of Angie’s feedback practices, and her beliefs about effective feedback, is that she will modify her feedback in response to students’ use of it. Angie told me that at times she will “almost revise the feedback” and “simplify it”, because she’s so happy that they’ve mastered a writing skill such as writing in the present tense. This individualized feedback response illustrates Angie’s intimate knowledge of each of the students’ writing development at an extremely fine-grained level.

Angie also suggested that students can benefit from seeking and receiving feedback from each other. Therefore, she creates opportunities for students to engage in peer-assessment activities or other group work where students receive such feedback. However, she stated that when the feedback needs to focus on specific sub-skills (e.g., mechanics and content/ideas), then the composition of the groups is extremely important for the feedback to be effective:

*It’s a lot of work to group students so that groupwork is successful. If it’s a writing assignment that demands mastery of mechanics and content, I can’t put weak and strong students together. The strong ones get frustrated, and the weak ones don’t learn from the strong ones.*

Collectively, the responses of these three teachers highlight the idea that providing effective feedback is a multi-dimensional process that constitutes individualized responses.
7.1.2 Teachers’ Feedback Practices Based on Analysis of Scored Texts

In order to examine the three teachers’ feedback practices from a difference perspective and to capture teachers’ pre-DRAW feedback practices, I conducted an analysis of the feedback that they had provided to their students on a specific writing task (see Chapter 3 for details). It should be noted that the purpose of the writing assignments from the three classrooms were not identical. Since I only had scored writing scripts from one assignment for each teacher, I was limited in my ability to match the purposes of the tasks.

The assignment that I scored from Celina’s class was an OSSLT-based news report that the students had written in preparation for the exam. This task was the students’ third draft of the assignment. The second draft of the assignment was also peer-edited (two peers), and included feedback from the teacher which included a combination of error correction (mainly direct), as well as summative comments that identified areas for improvement and strengths.

It is typically expected that teachers would provide less feedback on a third draft of an assignment. It also bears repeating that Celina noted that her feedback practices changed so that she did not see the value of providing students with extensive descriptive feedback on later drafts/final copies of essays. In fact, she later expressed this change in her practice:

> So again I think in terms of looking at how my, my concepts of assessment and feedback is that whole idea of assessment for, of, and as learning. Which, when I first heard it I was like “really? I got to change the vocabulary again?” But somehow the concepts seem a little bit more clear now, because if you’re at the end of your evaluation cycle does it make a lot of sense to try to provide that level of feedback if the student is no longer going to have the opportunity to rework it? And so I think that’s been a really interesting piece to look at where do you, Wow! This is kind of really funny! It’s like this moment when the lights gone on about not just sitting in some crowded room where your being told sort of more teacher talk.

However, one of the purposes of this assignment was to prepare students for the OSSLT exams; therefore, providing feedback to guide improvement was particularly warranted even though it was a third draft of the task.

The assignment that I analyzed from Nicole’s class was titled “paragraph evaluation”. The students had written a short essay based on a novel they had read. They first organized their writing using a graphic organizer. The feedback they received (and which I analyzed) is based on the first draft of their work; they were to follow this task by writing a second draft. Nicole provided written feedback on their essays, and also offered students feedback using a pre-constructed evaluation sheet. The evaluation sheet comprised 4 parts: 1) Score (/20); 2) Five
writing criteria. There were no descriptors provided, but were delineated according to four categories: needs improvement; satisfactory; meets expectation; and commendable; 3) Space to respond to the category: “One thing that you did well”; and 4) Space to respond to the category: “One thing that you could improve”. Students also completed self-assessments.

Upon close examination of the writing scripts I speculated that the scores that Nicole gave the students were derived by subtracting one point per level of each writing category that was not achieved. For example, if students were to achieve ‘meets expectation’ on all five of the category (the best being ‘commendable), then they would lose 5 points which would result in a score of 15/20.

Angie’s class assignment that I used in this analysis was the same future essay which has been discussed earlier. As previously mentioned, students were required to write an opinion-based multi-paragraph essay which described their future self. Angie evaluated the essay according to two categories: content and writing. The rubric she used is the same one that was discussed in Chapter 4 and illustrated in Appendix I. The students in the classroom were also required to participate in peer-assessments. The peer-assessment rubric was adapted from DRAW.

Table 33 (and Figure 22) presents the results of the analyses of the feedback from the three sets of writing scripts. The first column in the table is an average frequency count of the total number of feedback instances per student. Since there were not the same number of students in each classroom, using an average of the feedback frequencies allowed for a comparison across the three classrooms. The results indicate that Celina provided the least amount of written feedback, and Angie provided the most. However, it should again be highlighted that Celina was commenting on a third draft of an assignment, and Angie was providing feedback on a first draft. Although Celina was providing feedback to guide students’ learning and prepare them for OSSLT exams, it is reasonable to assume that one of the reasons that she had provided less feedback was because it was, indeed, a third draft.

The next set of columns in Table 33 provides the distribution of the feedback across the six writing sub-skills of interest. In every case, teachers provided more feedback on grammar than any other skill. Celina provided no feedback on organization, and minimal feedback on ideas (1.98%) and sentence fluency (0.99%). A moderate percentage of the feedback was also devoted to mechanics (21.78%) and vocabulary usage (11.88%).
After grammar, Nicole provided the greatest amount of feedback on vocabulary usage (23.08 %) followed by students’ ideas/content in writing (17.95%), and then mechanics (8.97%). The least amount of feedback was provided on sentence fluency and organization sub-skills.

Like Celina, Angie’s feedback also greatly focused on students’ mechanics (20.0%). She also provided a moderate amount of feedback on students’ vocabulary usage (10.5%), and ideas in the writing (12.5%). She was the only teacher who provided a moderate amount of feedback to students on sentence fluency (13.00%). Out of all of the categories, Angie provided the least amount of feedback on students’ organization skills (2.5%). These data will be further discussed in the next section.

The next set of columns in Table 33 refers to the purpose of the feedback provided by the three teachers on the set of analyzed writing scripts. They were delineated according to the cognitively diagnostic feedback framework discussed in Chapter 2. Specifically, I categorized the purpose of each feedback unit as being to: reward, punish, identify errors, correct errors, or provide guidance for improvement, and calculated the relative percentages of the feedback matching each purpose. It is evident from the results presented in Table 33 that the primary purpose of the feedback was to provide direct error correction across all three classrooms.
### Table 33

*Analysis of Teachers’ Written Feedback on an Assignment*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Feedback (Frequency, average/student)</th>
<th>Writing Sub-skill (% of feedback devoted to each sub-skill)</th>
<th>Purpose (%)</th>
<th>Summative comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Celina                                      | GRM: 7.8, IDEAS: 63.4, SENT: 1.9, MECH: 0.99, VOC: 21.8, ORG: 11.9, To reward: 0.00, To punish: 1.0 | Identify error (indirect): 15.8, Correct error (direct): 75.3 | 4.95 | Yes and No
| Nicole                                     | GRM: 11.1, IDEAS: 46.2, SENT: 17.9, MECH: 2.6, VOC: 9.0, ORG: 23.1, To reward: 1.3, To punish: 2.6 | Identify error (indirect): 14.1, Correct error (direct): 56.4 | 26.9 | Yes
| Angie                                      | GRM: 28.6, IDEAS: 41.5, SENT: 12.5, MECH: 13.0, VOC: 20.0, ORG: 10.5, To reward: 2.5, To punish: 0.5 | Identify error (indirect): 9, Correct error (direct): 67.5 | 23.5 | Yes

*aComments provided 5 out of 13 students.
*bComments provided to all but one student.

*Note. n=13 in Classroom A; n=7 in Classroom B; n=7 in Classroom C.*
Figure 22. Distribution of Teachers’ Feedback among Writing Sub-skills.

These data contribute to an understanding of these three teachers’ feedback practices and instructional foci. In Chapter 6, I presented the results of students’ writing sub-skills development based on DRAW at three different time points (Table 25). At all three time points students’ lowest performing sub-skill was organization, indicating that there may be a relationship between students’ skill development and teachers’ feedback practices. As illustrated in Table 33, teachers’ feedback did not greatly focus on organization in comparison with the other sub-skills. Again, I add the caveat that these results represent a comparison of the feedback that teachers provided to students. A low percentage does not indicate that the teacher did not help/guide students in developing a sub-skill, but rather, there was less of a focus on that skill in comparison to the provision of the other feedback.

All of the teachers provided summative comments on their students’ writing; Celina responded with summary comments to 5 of 13 students; Nicole provided comments to all but 1 student; and, Angie provided this type of feedback to all of her students. I also analyzed the characteristics of the summative comments and categorized them as addressing students’ strengths in their writing, and/or areas for improvement, and/or providing evaluative comments. Celina’s comments primarily addressed students’ strengths and areas for improvement in their writing. The comments provided feedback on students’ writing organization, grammar and ideas. Some examples of Celina’s comments included:

Excellent! Very well done! Better than #2.
Most of these comments provided substantive guidance, but in an encouraging tone. It is likely that quotation marks were used to emphasize the positive tenor of the comments. I classified these comments as being fine-grained, while the in-text feedback were categorized as extremely detailed.

Nicole’s comments also provided feedback on strengths in writing as well as guidance on areas for improvement. Additionally, Nicole’s comments provided students with strategies to implement. For example, she suggested that one student proofread her work. Her written feedback primarily focused on students’ ideas, and she occasionally provided feedback on students’ use of citations. In addition to these two areas of writing, she provided students with feedback on grammar, mechanics, and vocabulary. There were not many instances of evaluative comments being used.

Angie’s feedback primarily focused on students’ ideas and grammar in writing reflecting her in-text feedback practices. One difference between Angie’s commenting practices and the other two teachers was her use of evaluative comments, which I observed frequently in her comments. For example, she commonly stated that the student was “very creative”. Some of her other evaluative comments included: “You’re a good writer”; and, “Well done”. This practice reflects her overall beliefs about evaluation and feedback. During one of her conversations with me she stated: “I make encouraging comments, but I don’t believe in fake marks”. During the time that I spent observing her instruction and interaction with her students, I also noted the great effort that she made not only to provide such positive feedback, but also to purposefully create opportunities to provide encouragement. Angie was also the only teacher who used linguistic codes to provide feedback to her students. It is plausible that her choice to use the codes simply reflects that she provides the students with a great amount of feedback; using linguistic codes saves time. In the next section, I explore another facet of the teachers’ opinions about writing feedback.
7.1.3 Thinking Aloud about Feedback on Writing

To further understand teachers’ feedback beliefs and perceptions about writing, I engaged the teachers in think-aloud interviews where they read and responded to three essays each of which possessed different feedback characteristics. The subsequent sections present the results of the analyses of these interviews in which I explored the data to specifically uncover the types of feedback that teachers values (i.e., excessively detailed, coarse, or cognitively diagnostic), the features of writing on which they placed their focus, and the types of feedback that they believe would most help students. These three questions mirror the three feedback topics previously discussed in this chapter, and are the first focus of discussion in this section.

7.1.3.1 Type of Feedback Valued

Each teacher’s think-aloud interview presented a lens into their feedback beliefs. Additionally, Celina’s interview also illustrated an evolution in her feedback practices and beliefs as a result of participation in this research study.

Celina began by reading and responding to Sam’s writing which possessed excessively detailed feedback. Celina agreed with the majority of the feedback, and reflected on her observation that the rater had not only highlighted errors, but had also commented on strengths in the writing, a practice in which she does not engage. Celina also stated that this type of detailed feedback reflects her personal preferences on how to receive feedback. In other words, if she were a student she would ideally prefer to receive such detailed feedback. While she agreed with the feedback that was provided, Celina did not believe that it was practical to include such an excessive amount of feedback, because of the time that it would take to produce it.

Upon reading the score provided on Sam’s paper, Celina explained that that the simple way of presenting students with a mark based on a grammar and content dichotomy reflects past feedback practices at her school. Recall that Celina’s rubrics were generally sub-divided among multiple categories reflecting the provincial assessment guidelines (see Chapter 4). One of the most interesting comments that Celina made during her think-aloud protocol of Sam’s work followed her analysis of this mark distribution:

*For the kid to go “yeah fourteen out of twenty, twenty-six out of thirty, alright bring on the next one.” So that, I think is something that really stays for me in the sense that can you document that the student has in some way now taken in all that feedback that you have provided and done something with it. I don’t know that I would have had these*
thoughts without having met you, without having worked with you this semester. Because this is how I would have marked beforehand, this is my sort of traditional approach of margin notes and whatnot.

Celina’s comments signify that she was making a connection between the type of feedback that is provided and its use. As she had explained, this feedback practice not only reflected her personal feedback preferences, but it included feedback with which she agreed. This evolution of Celina’s feedback beliefs was further evidenced while she was reading and thinking aloud Manny’s paper which represented a coarse feedback style. Celina explained:

> So then I think as a student right now not having that kind of feedback really doesn’t address some of the corrections that need to be made in this writing, so in that sense again, what does this student do with this afterwards? I would say that there is almost not enough feedback, but again I’m cognizant of the fact that that kind of feedback isn’t always helpful to all students. So then I wonder now about what would motivate this student to improve in the future and saying something like “ideas are not clear.” There’s not really a lot of advice on how you do make them more clear, what would be the next steps?

Again, this quotation illustrates that Celina connected the delivery of the feedback to how students will use it to improve their writing. Furthermore, Celina highlighted the affective dimension of students’ writing development. She articulated the idea that feedback needs to be individualized, not only in terms of content, but also with respect to its delivery such that students will use the feedback to set goals and take subsequent actions.

As Celina read Manny’s writing and feedback, she made repeated references to the lack of feedback, and the lack of specificity in the feedback. She suggested that the rater had spent little time providing feedback, and had not consistently addressed errors.

The final writing script to which Celina responded characterized cognitively diagnostic feedback. Celina responded extremely favourably to the feedback, and immediately noted the positive characteristics of feedback, particularly the “specific ideas on how to improve next time”. Celina, also made connections between the purpose of writing assignment and the type of feedback that was delivered, once again articulating the necessity of matching the type of feedback delivered with it use.

> So again I’m looking at it from the perspective of: Is this a draft copy that will be written again? In which case, yes, absolutely useful. Is it an end piece and this is the final thing? Then, no, then that kind of feedback is no longer appropriate unless it is an essay that is going to be visited again.
When I asked Celina which of the three types of feedback she most valued, she definitively identified the cognitively diagnostic feedback stating two primary reasons: 1) The amount of detail provided in the feedback would greatly help advance students writing; and 2) The feedback did not include a score/mark.

Nicole’s think-aloud interview was dominated by the theme of rubrics. Her first question when presented with each of the three writing scripts was: “Where is the rubric?” In fact, a statistical analysis of her think-aloud protocol revealed that the theme of valuing rubrics was coded 9 times representing 4.5 per cent coverage (coverage refers to the fraction of the source content that is coded at a particular theme). In comparison, this theme was only coded once in Angie’s interview (representing 0.6 per cent coverage), and not at all observed during Celina’s interview. Interestingly, she also used the word ‘rubric’ 18 times during her interview, more than either of the other two teachers. In short, Nicole believed that the type of feedback that students receive should be determined by rubrics. The following quotation illustrates Nicole’s reaction to the first writing script and feedback written by Sam and comprising excessively detailed feedback.

*My question would be, was there a rubric used? Because to go through this they dissected this persons writing in a very, very detailed way, and I'll probably do something this detailed once a term... I mean the student gets the feedback and they understand the mark maybe in greater detail, but I think having a rubric that would identify the criteria. So for me, I would think for a student a more detailed rubric rather than, like this is the old school method, a combination of this with a rubric I think really helps because is this grammar? Is this content? Is this structure? Is this knowledge and comprehension, are we looking at applications? Are we looking at communication? They're communicating their ideas quite well, you know. And their knowledge on their subject material is quite strong, are they are able to apply it?*

Another key feedback belief that emerged was Nicole’s opinion that the feedback should be tailored to students based on her expectations of their performance level. In other words, Nicole evaluated the veracity of the feedback provided after asking about the students’ proficiency level. She suggested that her expectations differ depending on if students’ are in low, intermediate or high level English classes.

*But some of the errors that they're, again it depends on the level, like if they're, if this is an ESL D student subject verb is something covered in ESL C, so I would expect them to already know it. I might underline or circle or highlight it, but I don't know that I would change it because to me when you're in a certain level there's a base line foundation where you want to be building up. So to do this so detailed, I don't know.*
The quotation illustrates that Nicole questioned the level of detail provided by the rater partly because of expectations of the writing skills students should already possess; therefore, the feedback may not be warranted if the students should already have the knowledge or skills.

When reading Manny’s writing assignment and the corresponding coarse feedback, Nicole immediately commented on the sparseness of the feedback, and the lack of rubric. Like Celina, she connected the quality of the feedback with its subsequent use by students stating that the feedback was simply too minimal to allow students to know what to do, identify next steps, and set goals. Nicole questioned the criteria on which the feedback was based and stated that a rubric would contribute to the provision of feedback, and also help guide students with the revision. For Nicole, rubrics serve the dual purpose of guiding teachers’ feedback processes, and students’ writing and revision process.

The cognitively diagnostic feedback on Mia’s essay prompted Nicole to compare the type of feedback that she would provide with what was included. She agreed with most of the feedback, but would repeatedly return to the script and add comments that she would have made on the writing. Nicole’s feedback primarily addressed the content of the essay, and specifically, the quality of the arguments being made. As with the other two scripts, Nicole sought a rubric and questioned why this last essay did not include a score.

When I asked her if there was a particular style of feedback she most preferred among the three, her immediate response was: “Rubrics all the way”. She explained her response:

*They have look-fors. Some [students] in my class are trained so well, particularly in the media class, that the person will say first thing when they get an assignment is, ‘Where’s the rubric? What are you going to be looking for?’ We’ll say that with this detail [Referring to the script with the excessively detailed feedback] is fabulous frame.*

In her response, Nicole stated that a rubric alongside the excessively detailed feedback provides students with the ideal feedback, because there was a “baseline” on which the feedback was generated. She was referring her observation that the feedback on this script included a score that delineated the mark into grammar and content. Therefore, Nicole’s rationale for selecting this type of feedback as the most beneficial was primarily because of its alignment with a rubric-style of feedback.

Upon further reflection, Nicole made an additional and interesting comparison. She suggested that the style of feedback prompted her to connect the assessments to the provincial policy document, Growing Success (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010). She suggested that
the cognitively diagnostic feedback script represented assessment for learning, the coarse feedback exemplified as learning, and finally, the excessively detailed script represented assessment of learning.

Angie’s think-aloud interview provided equally informative information about the types of feedback that she values. When discussing the first script which included the excessively detailed feedback, she questioned why not all of the errors were addressed. Even though the script addressed numerous errors, not every single grammatical error was identified for the student. Angie suggested that this practice would be confusing for students. She wondered if the feedback would be followed up with a conference session with the students to provide explanations. She did not suggest that the feedback was overly detailed or excessive.

Angie also disagreed with the practice of indirect error correction where corrections are not included alongside error identifications. Angie also stated that in her feedback, she trains students to interpret linguistic codes such that the feedback is not “so busy”. Finally, Angie also critiqued the scoring category dichotomy of content and grammar. She suggested that the scoring should be categorized according to: “subject-verb, spelling, sentence structure, content, and organizing sentences”.

### 7.1.3.1 Feedback Focus

Another aim of analysis of the think-aloud interviews was to examine the focus each teacher placed on the different types of feedback. I analyzed the protocols applying this theme, and I also noted specific references that the teachers made to specific writing sub-skills.

Celina’s protocol revealed three primary findings: 1) There was a change in her assessment practices and the types of feedback that would help to advance students’ writing as a result of participating in the study and using DRAW; 2) Celina placed great emphasis on students’ individual responses to feedback; and 3) Celina did not focus on any one specific writing sub-skill in her review of the evaluated essays, but rather, her attention was more directed to the grain size of the feedback.

One of the primary signs of the changes in Celina’s beliefs about feedback was the attention she directed to feedback that highlighted students’ strengths and weaknesses. This theme emerged across her discussion of all of the three students’ writing scripts. For example,
the recognition of the importance of identifying students’ strengths alongside areas for improvement was illustrated as she was reading Sam’s writing script:

*I like the teachers’ feedback, it identifies not just what is wrong but also the strengths which sometimes I don’t think I do in my own feedback to students. I don’t focus on what they have done well as much as what they need to improve, so that’s a very interesting point for me.*

This quotation exemplifies a common theme across Celina’s entire protocol. Further, it not only highlights Celina’s responsiveness to providing feedback with a different focus, but also draws attention to her self-reflections about her feedback practices.

Celina’s protocol was filled with references to her consideration of how students would receive the feedback that was provided on the evaluated writing scripts. More specifically, Celina referred to students’ motivations, their goals, and if the focus of the feedback would be helpful to them such that they would be able to understand it and apply it to advance their writing. During her multiple references to these issues Celina also discussed how some of her consideration of the students’ individualized response to feedback was also a (positive) consequence of her participation in this research investigation. The following quotation from Celina’s verbal protocol exemplifies these themes:

*I'm trying to think from a students’ perspective when they get this back, what do they do with this? Where do you even begin to make the corrections, and I think again thinking, of course I can't help but think that within the contents of what we've done all semester is, where does that opportunity come back now to make those corrections? Now you've got me thinking about the individual students in the sense of will all students now be motivated.*

Finally, another emergent finding from the analysis of Celina’s verbal protocol that she did not focus on any one specific writing sub-skill during the think-aloud activity. While Celina referred to multiple sub-skills (e.g., grammar, vocabulary, content), her primary focus was on the grain-size of the feedback. She would highlight feedback which she believed was too fine-grained, and also feedback which she found to be too coarse. Her opinions about the grain-size were consistent with the way that the feedback on the transcripts was designed. That is, Celina found Sam’s feedback to be somewhat excessively detailed, while the feedback provided on Manny’s protocol was too coarse.

Nicole’s feedback focus was consistent with her beliefs about the benefits and importance of using rubrics for assessing and proving feedback. Nicole focused on the three students’
writing and the feedback at the local (i.e., word, sentence) level, but organized her comments according to her commonly used rubrics in which she provides feedback using pre-defined criteria. In fact, Nicole repeatedly asked for a rubric which outlined the criteria of the task so that she could evaluate the provided feedback.

Nicole’s focus during the think-aloud task was to evaluate the essays, and would comment on the feedback provided in relation to her opinion. When there was a discrepancy, she never doubted herself, but rather questioned the feedback that was provided. In most cases, her primary concern was not the feedback itself, but that she was unable to assess the quality and focus of the feedback without seeing a rubric that identified the criteria on which the feedback was provided.

In summary, Nicole’s verbal protocol revealed that the focus of her feedback and the standard by which she evaluates it is wholly determined by rubrics and in several key ways: 1) Helping students to identify next steps with using feedback when there is not much feedback provides (as the case with Manny’s essay); 2) Provide a means for a teacher to summarize and limit written feedback by referring students to criteria defined in a rubric; and 3) Define the criteria for scoring writing and serve as the standard by which the focus of feedback is determined.

Angie’s verbal protocol revealed that Angie primarily focused on the veracity and quality of the feedback that was provided on the three scripts. Her attention was focused principally on grammatical issues in the essays. There were, of course, multiple instances where Angie commented on other writing sub-skills such as content, organization, and mechanics; however, her attention was placed overwhelmingly on the essays’ grammatical qualities. For example:

*This seems lack of agreement; this seems like a lot of language. I would just put SV, subject verb.*

Throughout the think-aloud activity Angie demonstrated her belief that the focus of feedback should be on all the errors that are made in a written script, because not addressing errors could prompt students to mistakenly assume that their writing does not require further work. Furthermore, as evidenced by the quotation above, Angie believes that the feedback should be delivered succinctly through the use of codes so that the feedback is streamlined and uncluttered.
Angie was consistent in her response to the feedback across all of three students’ writing, indicating that the feedback should: 1) Be consistent by focusing on all errors and either be all direct or indirect; and, 2) Address errors, but also highlight key strengths in the writing, namely, the indicators that are consistent with successful writing in a particular genre. Humorously, when Angie was reading Manny’s feedback, which was coarse, Angie joked that either the rater marked this essay last or had been drunk! She later speculated that the lack of feedback could have been due to a writing conference session that the teacher may have been planning with the student.

The three teachers’ think-aloud interviews served not only to demonstrate their reactions to and opinions of the different types of feedback, but they also served to illustrate any changes in these teachers’ opinions about feedback. Specifically, Celina’s interview illustrated an evolution in her feedback practices and beliefs as a result of participation in this research study.

The next section explores teachers’ uses of DRAW and the ways in which it impacted their feedback practices.

7.2 The Relationship between Students’ Writing Performance, Feedback Perceptions and Teachers’ Feedback Beliefs

In the previous sections, I have drawn from analyses of teachers’ semi-structured and think-aloud interviews, and feedback on an assignment to provide a window into their beliefs and perceptions about writing feedback. Table 34 provides a broad, overall summary of the teachers’ responses about their feedback beliefs and practices, as well as the foci of their written feedback.
Table 34

Summary of Teachers’ Feedback Beliefs and Practices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Qualities of Writing Valued</th>
<th>Focus of Feedback</th>
<th>Feedback Practices</th>
<th>Overall perceptions of Effective Feedback</th>
<th>Writing Analyses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Celina</td>
<td>Content (primarily); Sentences</td>
<td>Related to purpose</td>
<td>Rubrics</td>
<td>Timely; Positive; Direct; Conferencing</td>
<td>GRM, MEC, VOC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicole</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Related to purpose</td>
<td>Rubrics</td>
<td>Descriptive; Promotes reflection; Conferencing</td>
<td>GRM, VOC, IDEA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angie</td>
<td>Grammar (primary), org, sentences, vocab</td>
<td>Related to purpose</td>
<td>Rubrics, Grades</td>
<td>All feedback is important; Individualized</td>
<td>GRM, SENT, IDEA, VOC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The information presented in the first four columns of Table 34 represents a general summary of teachers’ responses about teachers’ feedback beliefs and practices based on their interviews. The columns titled ‘writing analyses’ summarizes the information presented in Table 33 based on the analyses of students’ scored writing scripts. In order to understand if and how these beliefs are reflected in students’ writing performance, and respond to one of this chapter’s inquiry questions, I compared students’ sub-skill writing performance on the pre-writing tasks across the three classrooms. I chose to examine the relationship using students’ writing at this time point simply because the students had not yet received DRAW feedback; therefore, their performance would be attributable to contextual influences including teachers’ beliefs and assessment practices. Note that I used the DRAW rubric to score the writing performances in order to provide a consistent measure of comparison between students’ writing across the different classrooms, and also to generate sub-skill specific information about students’ writing performance.
7.2.1 Comparing Students’ Writing Performance in Relation to Teachers’ Feedback Values, Beliefs and Practices

The relationship between teachers’ pre-DRAW feedback values, beliefs and writing feedback practices and students’ writing performance necessitated re-visiting students’ writing performance in each classroom. DRAW was used to assess students’ pre-writing scripts generated from the opinion essay and news report prompts. Therefore, two different compositions from all of the students in the three classrooms were assessed \( n_A = 12, n_B = 20, n_C = 19 \). Figures 23, 24, and 25 illustrate students’ sub-skills writing performance on the tasks in classrooms A, B, and C respectively.

![Graph showing writing sub-skills performance](image)

*Figure 23. DRAW assessment of Classroom A students’ opinion essays and news reports.*
A one-way independent ANOVA was used to investigate the statistical differences between students’ pre-writing performances in the three different classrooms. It was found that there was a significant effect of classroom membership on students’ mean grammar scores on the opinion essays, $F(2, 45) = 32.32, p = .00$, $\omega = .75$ representing a large effect size. *Post-hoc*
comparisons using the Bonferroni test illustrated that the grammar mean score for students in Classroom A ($M = 0.82, SD = 0.18$) was significantly different than the grammar mean score for students in Classroom B ($M = 0.20, SD = 0.15$), $p = .00$, and the grammar mean for students in Classroom C ($M = 0.48, SD = 0.27$), $p = .00$. The post-hoc comparison between Classrooms B and C also demonstrated significantly different mean grammar scores, $p = .001$. No significant differences of the mean scores for opinion essays were observed for any of the other sub-skill or for the overall mean.

Similarly, a one-way independent ANOVA revealed a significant effect of classroom membership on students’ mean grammar scores on the news report, $F(2, 45) = 4.93, p = .01$, $\omega = .36$ representing a medium effect size. The post-hoc analyses, using the Bonferroni test, revealed significant differences between the mean scores of Classroom A ($M = 0.69, SD = 0.21$) and Classroom B ($M = 0.47, SD = 0.21$), $p = .01$ and also between Classroom A and Classroom C ($M = 0.50, SD = 0.18$), $p = .04$. There were no significant differences between the mean grammar scores of Classrooms B and C for the news report.

These statistically significant differences in students’ grammar sub-skill performance across the three classroom points to the idea that teachers’ feedback beliefs and practices may be ideally compared across this domain. In fact, based on my classroom observations and conversations with Angie, and also during all of the interviews, the value that this teacher placed on grammar development was far greater than either of the other two teachers. Based on this finding, one would expect Classroom C’s students to outperform the other students’ grammar performance; however, there are also other contextual factors that cannot be ignored, such as the students in this school were from lower socioeconomic backgrounds than the students’ in the other schools.

The descriptive information about students’ writing performance shows that in all three classrooms, and across both writing tasks students’ lowest sub-skill performance was organization. There was only one exception: Classroom B students’ performance on the opinion essay showed them the lowest performed sub-skill to be grammar. This finding coincides with the finding that teachers’ assessment beliefs and practices did not focus as much on organization as on the other five sub-skills. Another commonality across the classrooms was found in students’ performance on the mechanics sub-skill. Again, in every classroom and across both tasks, students demonstrated the highest performance on this sub-skill. This finding could be a reflection of a skill hierarchy (i.e., it is easier to master this skill relative to others) or the
likelihood that students receive continual feedback on this skill from word processing programs that alert them to their mechanical errors.

Another source of evidence in these data that supports the relationship between teachers’ feedback beliefs and practices is Classroom C’s students’ high performance on the sentence fluency sub-skill in comparison to their performance on the other sub-skills. The feedback analysis of Angie’s students’ scored writing was the only one to show a feedback focus on sentence fluency. Furthermore, during the interviews Angie highlighted this skill as one she greatly valued.

The pattern of students’ sub-skill mastery in Classroom B is also aligned with Nicole’s beliefs and practices about writing feedback as she was definitive about not valuing any skill over another. There is no distinctive pattern of the students’ performances across the two writing tasks possibly indicative of Nicole’s beliefs.

Celina, Classroom A’s teacher, was definitive about the importance she placed on students’ content in writing; yet this belief was not reflected in the feedback analysis of her students’ writing, nor was it reflected in Figure 2 in the pattern of students’ sub-skill performance. There are two possible explanations for this finding. One reason may be that Celina’s beliefs are not effectively reflected in her feedback practices. Recall that one of the reasons that Celina chose to participate in this research investigation was because she had a negative relationship with assessment and felt that she needed to develop her diagnostic assessment competence. Another likely reason is that the students in Classroom A had simply not had the opportunity to learn with and from their teacher for a long enough time period at the start of the semester when they wrote the pre-measure writing tasks. Classroom A was the only semestered class. While students in Classrooms B and C had been learning with their teachers for over four months at the start of the study, the students in Classroom A had just started their relationship.

The results show that there were differences in the patterns of skill development among students’ performance on the writing tasks across the three classrooms with statistically significant findings for the grammar sub-skill. Since teachers are the primary agents in the classroom, it is likely that the primary explanation for these differences may be attributable to differences in teachers’ feedback beliefs and practices; however, further research in this area is warranted.
7.2.2 Comparing Students’ Feedback Perceptions

The previous section presented analyses comparing the relationship between teachers’ assessment beliefs and writing performance. In this section, I investigate the relationship between teachers’ beliefs and students’ perceptions about feedback. On the feedback survey (Appendix C) I included an open-ended question asking students to indicate which sub-skill provided them with the most and least helpful information for improving their writing. Table 35 presents these data. Each cell represents the fraction of the total responses attributed to that category. For example, in Classroom A, of the total responses to “What feedback category is most helpful to you?”, 20% of students’ responses were attributed to IDEA, 13% to VOC, 20% to ORG, 13%, and so on.

Table 35

Distribution of Students’ Opinions about Most and Least Helpful Feedback Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classroom</th>
<th>IDEA (%)</th>
<th>VOC (%)</th>
<th>ORG (%)</th>
<th>MEC (%)</th>
<th>GRM (%)</th>
<th>SEN (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A (Celina)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B (Nicole)</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C (Angie)</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Numbers may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Note. n=44.

In Classroom A, there were no outstanding trends with respect to the categories that students’ found most helpful, although, in general, students’ seemed to find mechanics the least helpful. This result could be because: 1) they believed that they did not need help with this sub-skill (recall that all the students’ had achieved mastery of this sub-skill); 2) they were unclear about the definition of the category; and/or 3) it was congruent with Celina’s beliefs about the value of ideas and content in writing.

Similarly, in Classroom B, there were no outstanding trends with respect to the most helpful category which could be reflective of Nicole’s beliefs that there is no singular most important skill, and that rubrics encompassing all sub-skills should be used for provision of feedback. Interestingly, students’ in this classroom found sentence fluency to be the least helpful category, which could possibly be because of a confusion about what constitutes sentence fluency, or their self-perceived strengths in this category.
Highly notable are the responses in Classroom C where the majority of students believed that feedback on grammar will be most helpful to them, and few found the category unhelpful. This finding is consistent with Angie’s feedback beliefs and practices possibly indicating that students’ perceptions and value of feedback are shaped by their teachers’ feedback beliefs and practices.

In summary, the relationship between students’ perceptions about feedback, and teachers’ feedback beliefs and practices are most evident in Classroom C where there is a clear priority placed on the grammar sub-skill. In Classroom A, the impact of Celina’s value on the content of writing is evidenced through students’ writing development in this category. In Classroom B, the relationship between Nicole’s beliefs and practices and students’ writing development and opinions was the least evident. The next section discusses the impact of DRAW on teachers’ classroom assessment practices.

7.3 Teachers’ Uses of DRAW

The primary agents in classrooms are students and teachers. In order for DRAW feedback to have had maximum effects on students’ writing development, it was necessary that teachers believed in its value and potential effectiveness and participated in its implementation. Accordingly, I examined teachers’ responses to and uses of DRAW through analysis of my classroom observations throughout the semester, and teachers’ interview data.

All three teachers responded positively to DRAW. They expressed this opinion with me repeatedly discussing the favourable impact that it had on their students and telling me that it contributed positively to students’ understanding of their writing proficiency and their teaching practice. There were three specific ways in which the use of DRAW was evidenced and impacted one or more of the assessment practices in classrooms: 1) Pedagogical tool; 2) Self- and peer-assessment; and 3) Evolution of assessment beliefs and practices.

7.3.1 Pedagogical Tool

All three teachers believed that DRAW was valuable to their teaching practices and provided pedagogically useful information about their students’ writing performance. This value was evidenced by all of the teachers use of DRAW as a tool for advancing professional development with their colleagues. As a curriculum leader and head of her school’s ESL
department, Nicole introduced her colleagues to DRAW at a regular scheduled meeting and used it as model of feedback. As she explains:

*I think that these students were blown away by it [DRAW feedback] and what I’m interested to see is I want to look at their work after. I showed your profiles to a couple of teachers and they were wowed by them, and they said these are brilliant. These are outstanding. I would say that when I showed your detailed versions they were blown away because in an idealistic world that’s what you need to be doing. It would allow me to be more detailed.*

Nicole expressed her recognition of the diagnostic potential of DRAW feedback for advancing students’ writing; however, her use of the word ‘idealistic’ suggested that she did not believe that was providing such feedback would be a realistic endeavor.

Angie also shared DRAW with her peers in a similar context, as she was also head of the ESL department. In Angie’s words:

*I promoted them [DRAW self-assessment rubrics] at our meeting.*

One of the significant aspects of this brief this quotation is the use of the word ‘promoted’, as it signifies the pedagogical value that Angie placed on DRAW.

Similarly, Celina also shared DRAW with her colleagues, although not in a formal capacity like the other two teachers. One of the teachers with whom Celina shared DRAW taught in the same classroom immediately after Celina; therefore, I had many opportunities to interact with him as the students changed classes, and also during the numerous ESL-specific extra-curricular events I attended at the school. This teacher, Colin, recognized the pedagogical value of DRAW and began to use it in his classrooms (particularly through self-assessment); consequently, he would engage me in conversations about its use as well as about assessment, in general.

7.3.2 Self- and Peer-Assessment

The most predominant use of DRAW was through its application as peer- and self-assessment rubrics, and in fact, it was through this use that DRAW had the biggest impact on Angie’s practice. Angie used the self- and peer-assessment rubrics multiple times for different writing tasks, and told me that she would continue to use the DRAW-based rubrics for these purposes in future years, and in other courses. She contrasted them to the curricular-based rubrics suggested in the curricular documents.
A lot of people, teachers, are just cutting and pasting the Ministry documents, and I find some of these rubrics are so convoluted and heavy in jargon, they’re ridiculous. So I think these rubrics [DRAW] are student and peer friendly. I’m definitely going to incorporate more of the student-friendly peer evaluations and self-evaluations in all my subjects.

Similarly, Nicole and Celina both used DRAW self- and peer-assessment rubrics in their classes. Celina noted that the self-assessment practices based on DRAW were instrumental in her classroom as they provided a common language between her and the students, and allowed for clarity in communication about the their writing sub-skills.

7.3.3 Evolution of Assessment Beliefs and Practices

While all three teachers responded positively to DRAW and promoted it to their colleagues, and used it in the form of self- and peer-assessment rubrics, only Celina demonstrated a marked change in her assessment beliefs and practices. Throughout our research collaboration, Celina would engage me in conversation (face-to-face and through e-mail) about DRAW, as well as assessment and feedback in general. She was continuously reflecting on our work and its influence on her assessment beliefs and practices. Celina explained:

*I look at what have I done in the past and have I ever focused on... “Yeah whatever; yeah yeah; good effort etc?” You know the kids worked hard, but have I ever broken it down to “Wow, your word choice was ever incredible”; and “You know, yes, maybe your grammar needs a lot of develop but you’ve got some amazing insights here”? And I don't think I have to the extent that you had in your profiles [DRAW feedback profiles] that again made me rethink how I look at every writing. So not just looking at deficits of like “Holy cow kid, there's no way you're getting through this,” but just looking at “Ok, so you and I are crossing paths at this point, and my job is to move you a little bit further along, and it might not be to that magical level four but there's still room for growth where in our interaction you can improve where you're doing things.”*

This quotation illustrates Celina’s recognition of one of the strengths of DRAW feedback, highlighting students’ strengths and areas for improvement, as essential to advancing students’ writing development. She further exemplifies her belief in the diagnostic potential of DRAW in comparison to other feedback models:

*We did two newspaper articles while you were away and those had older style rubrics, and one of them in particular was just so bare bones that I didn't know what I was looking for in the article and reverted to side margin notes because I thought “What is this? What is this telling the kids, and what am I looking for in this that the kids can clearly understand from this?” So it was a real shift in my mind.*
Another way in which the change in Celina’s beliefs manifested was in her discussion of how her feedback would be used by students and if it would have a lasting impact beyond the moment in which it was delivered. Celina explained that her previous feedback practices focused on identifying students’ errors, and then moving on to the next assignment with the understanding that she had fulfilled her obligation to students helping them improve their writing. However, she reflects that now (i.e., post-study) her feedback practices include providing students with the opportunity to use the feedback to specifically target the areas on which they need to improve, rather than simply moving on to new assignments and leaving the onus on the students to independently address their areas for improvement.

This section of the chapter has summarized the three main uses of DRAW by teachers: as a pedagogical tool; as self- and peer-assessment rubrics, and as an agent of change impacting one teacher’s writing assessment beliefs. However, Nicole and Angie, also identified challenges with the future use of DRAW which were primarily centred on the issue of time. As Nicole stated:

*I think all your checklists are amazing and what I would probably do, because there are so many of them [descriptors], is I’d like to look at in the future is reworking them into a rubric that makes sense to me, because I found some of them a little bit too detailed. Although they’re ideal for trying to what you’re trying to do, but again if it was semester and I was dealing with three classes not six classes.*

Nicole suggested that using DRAW rubrics would place too much demand on her time and would simply not be possible to do in a non-semestered teaching context as she was teaching. She suggested adapting DRAW such that the amount of detail included in DRAW was reduced. Angie also discussed challenges with using DRAW herself simply because of the time demands.

*I love the rubrics [DRAW]; it was nice to share those. I just wish, I find it's so hectic in our school with the activities.*

### 7.4 Summary and Claims

The primary purpose of this chapter was to delve into the feedback beliefs and practices of the three teachers who participated in this research investigation, and examine their uses of DRAW. Teachers’ opinions and practices were triangulated through semi-structured and think-aloud interviews, as well as an analysis of one set of scored writing scripts. Together, the results provided evidence that teachers’ varied in their beliefs about what constitutes good, effective feedback (pre-DRAW). Each teacher’s assessment practices and beliefs was influenced (to a varying degree) by the use of DRAW in their classrooms which contributing to a change.
The use of DRAW was evidenced primarily in three ways: 1) It was used as a pedagogical tool; 2) Students used adapted versions of DRAW to self- and peer-assess writing; and 3) It contributed to the change in teacher assessment beliefs and practices. One of the reasons why these findings about teachers’ opinions and uses of DRAW is significant is because the impact of participating in the study and the value that teachers place on the cognitively diagnostic feedback that was generated in DRAW profiles had the potential to impact teachers’ assessment and feedback practices both during the study and after. Teachers’ positive responses to and uses of DRAW support the claim that teachers value DRAW.

Teachers’ participation and belief in the value of DRAW and its diagnostic potential are integral to maximizing its effect in the classroom. Based on analyses of students’ pre-DRAW writing performance and teachers’ pre-DRAW writing feedback practices there was evidence that teachers’ practices had an impact on students’ writing performance, particularly in Classrooms B and C; however, more research is necessary to further investigate this relationship and warrant the claim that teachers’ assessment beliefs and feedback practices influence and shape students’ perceptions and use of feedback and contribute to their writing performance. In the following chapter I synthesize the findings across all three chapters to provide a conclusion to this mixed methods story.
Chapter 8
Synthesis

I began this mixed methods story by discussing the centrality of feedback for guiding students with their writing development. Feedback may be defined simply as information provided to learners following observations, tasks, and assessments. The overall purpose of feedback is to reduce the gap between learners’ current and a future, desired level of performance (Hattie & Timperely, 2007). However, the characteristics of feedback are not as simply defined; feedback is multifaceted and can vary according to type, focus, tone, mode, and source (Biber et al., 2011). It is not surprising that the field of language assessment, and particularly second language writing assessment, is rife with research that addresses some or multiple aspect/s of feedback. Despite the interest, and the burgeoning research in feedback, there are many gaps in the literature (Hyland & Hyland, 2006). Further, much of the L2 writing feedback research focuses on post-secondary learners (Biber et al., 2011; Leki et al., 2008; Silva, 2013), and does not take place in authentic classroom settings in which feedback is generated and (hopefully) used (Cumming & Riazi, 2000; Lee, 2013).

The goal of this research investigation was to respond to some of the gaps in the literature by focusing on secondary students’ use of cognitively diagnostic feedback generated through a diagnostic rubric for assessing writing. Examination of the use of any type of assessment information necessitates adopting a validity lens as validity is central to all work in assessment (Fulcher, 2010; Shepard, 1997). A validity stance affords the opportunity to critically examine the effect of assessment (use) on relevant stakeholders such that its impact can be evaluated. Further, adopting an argumentation validity framework (Bachman, 2003; Kane, 1992), provides the opportunity to examine research claims and their underlying assumptions, as well as any challenges to them. Jang (2005) expands on these ideas:

Given the complexity of any contextual setting, a kind of reasoning for validation does not simply involve propositions to propositions because the act of validation of a particular testing practice invokes a future action that directs an agent to do something. It differs from reasoning directed towards arriving at changes in beliefs because it is directed towards effects that engender subsequent acts. (p. xix)
Jang (2005) succinctly clarifies the difference between seeking validity evidence as a confirmatory act serving to convince and support, and validity evidence used to inform the future and the desired effects (Davidson & Fulcher, 2007) of research endeavours. In this research investigation I sought evidence to respond to research questions generated from a series of validity assumptions underlying the research. I gathered and evaluated multiple sources of evidence to warrant claims about DRAW and the feedback generated from it. Namely:

1. A diagnostic rubric for assessing writing (DRAW) provides cognitively, diagnostically rich information about adolescent students’ writing compared to competing feedback sources of writing feedback in Ontario’s secondary ESL classrooms.
2. Students’ perceptions of DRAW feedback vary according to self-efficacy, anxiety, and goal orientation.
3. DRAW feedback has a positive effect on students’ writing skill development.
4. Teachers’ assessment beliefs and feedback practices influence and shape students’ perceptions and use of feedback and contribute to their writing performance.
5. Teachers value DRAW.

In this chapter, I evaluate all of the gathered evidence and elaborate on the claims making suggestions to inform both future use and theory in assessment feedback and second language writing. Additionally, I examine possible counterarguments to these claim, and present rebuttals. The subsequent discussion addresses these purposes through three feedback-related themes: providing feedback; delivering and using feedback; and feedback competencies.

8.1 Provision of L2 Writing Feedback

The power of feedback for advancing writing development lies in its formative potential. In other words, feedback is most beneficial when it can guide learners to recognizing their strengths and improving upon their weaknesses. I have hypothesized that it is through the provision and use of cognitively diagnostic feedback that these features may be identified, and serve to effectively guide students’ writing development. This investigation has primarily focused on the generation of, responses to, and uses of such feedback. I now revisit the first aspect of this process and discuss the answers to two related and salient questions: 1) How
should cognitively diagnostic feedback be generated?; and 2) What aspects of writing should be the focus of the feedback?

8.1.1 Generating Cognitively Diagnostic Feedback

One of the claims I proposed was that a diagnostic rubric for assessing writing (DRAW) provides cognitively, diagnostically rich information about adolescent students’ writing compared to competing feedback sources used in Ontario’s secondary classrooms. DRAW was developed on the assumption that it would comprise descriptors that were both based on theories of L2 writing and relevant to the curricular context in which the research was taking place, and that it possessed diagnostic potential for identifying students’ areas for improvement and strengths in their writing. In response, DRAW was developed through an iterative process involving teachers and students, and also drawing from both theory and curriculum. DRAW generated skill-specific feedback on six writing sub-skills: content/ideas, vocabulary, grammar, organization, mechanics, and sentence fluency. The descriptors used to describe performance adopted a can-do philosophy similar to the CEFR for languages (Council of Europe Wil, 2001). Use of performance-based descriptors for assessing language development are a policy-supported practice (Jang, Wagner, & Stille, 2011). When these descriptors are theoretically founded, contextually relevant, and provide fine-grained information about a sub-skill, they have the potential to diagnose students’ strengths and areas for improvement. In other words, they have formative potential.

An integral aspect of CDF is its focus on students’ cognitive processes and strategies to identify students’ strengths and areas for improvement in their writing. Identifying students’ strengths is particularly important for students with lower proficiency as this research has highlighted an increased sense of self-worth and positive response to the feedback when students recognize their strengths.

Using 52 students’ news report and opinion essays performance I compared the type of information generated when evaluating the scripts using DRAW, and OSSLT rubrics from EQAO. On average, the DRAW rubrics showed the following pattern of achievement across the six writing sub-skills assessed: mechanics > ideas > vocabulary > grammar > sentence fluency > organization. In other words, students demonstrated the highest level of performance on the mechanics sub-skill and the lowest on organization. This pattern was somewhat different at the
individual classroom level possibly indicative of varying instructional focus in each classroom based on one or a combination of: teachers’ response to students’ needs and/or teachers’ beliefs about the qualities of effective writing and/or teachers’ pedagogical beliefs about how writing should be taught. Interviews with teachers revealed that they had different beliefs about the qualities of writing they most valued. Celina most valued ideas, while Angie placed a focus on grammar. In fact, Angie discussed that she used students’ grammar development as an indicator of their overall writing development. Nicole did not place a priority on any one writing sub-skill.

One interesting point that should be raised is that despite the differences in the achievement patterns of writing sub-skill development between the three classes (e.g., students in Classroom A had, on average, higher mastery in the mechanics sub-skill than the students in the other two classrooms), the patterns of skill mastery were identical within each classroom between the two writing tasks. Rephrased, students’ skill mastery patterns between the opinion essay and news report were identical. This finding may suggest that the OSSLT does not necessarily need to include both writing tasks in its assessment as they provide identical information about students’ achievement. Furthermore, it demonstrates the applicability of DRAW across multiple genres.

In contrast to the DRAW-generated information about students’ writing performance, the OSSLT rubrics for the opinion essay provided information only about students’ topic development and conventions. Across all three classrooms, students achieved a higher score on the latter. On the news reports, only one score was provided. This information is coarser and provides less information about different writing sub-skills than DRAW. Certainly, the OSSLT rubrics were not developed to be used daily in classrooms by teachers. Their purpose is not necessarily to fill a formative function. However, the OSSLT is a high stakes test, and some schools (e.g., School C) spend many instructional hours, both in class and after school, devoted to preparing students for it. The EQAO also produces instructional guides for teachers to use to prepare their students for the test. Therefore, the OSSLT rubrics have the potential to serve a pedagogical function for teachers who are preparing students for the writing tasks on the high stakes test. My purpose in this discussion is definitely not to criticize the OSSLT rubrics. Scoring high stakes tests is complex with a need to balance rater reliability, efficiency, and generating relevant information about students’ performance. Rather, my purpose is to evaluate the diagnostic potential of DRAW through this comparison, highlight its strengths for use in
classrooms, and warrant the validity claim that cognitive feedback informing students’ L2 writing strengths and areas for improvement may be generated from it.

The source of feedback is yet another salient issue related to the generation of feedback in secondary classrooms. Generating feedback should not be solely the responsibility of the teacher in a classroom. Students need to be taught how and provided the opportunity to self-assess (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Black & Wiliam, 2009; Poehner & Lantolf, 2005; Stiggins, 2007) and acts as agents of assessment (Rea-Dickins, 2004). Self-assessment is one of the ways that students can gain an understanding of is a knowledge or skill gap between their current state and desired goal(s); and, the actions needed to be taken to close the gap. As Black and Wiliam (2009) articulate:

the prime responsibility for generating the [formative] information may lie with the student in self-assessment, or with another person, notably the teacher, who discerns and interprets the gap and communicates a message about it to the student. Whatever the procedures by which the assessment message is generated, in relation to action taken by the learner it would be a mistake to regard the student as the passive recipient of a call to action. (pp. 20-21)

Furthermore, as discussed in Chapter 2, self-generated feedback guides students’ self-regulation and helps learners to monitor their behaviour, and seek action when there is a discrepancy between their perceptions and external feedback (Butler & Winne, 1995). Therefore, any instrument, tool, or rubric that is used to generate feedback in classrooms should be adaptable or modifiable for use by students.

DRAW was used in all three classrooms as a self-assessment and peer-assessment tool. As previously discussed, I was unable to gather all of these data from the different classes; however, teachers discussed the ease with which the DRAW-based instruments were used by the students, and the quality of the information it generated. This positive response may be attributable, in part, to DRAW’s specific, fine-grained descriptions of writing performance organized according to multiple sub-skills, which may be more easily and accurately interpretable by students. The organization of DRAW on the basis of sub-skills directs students to a singular aspect of their writing, and does not (easily) provide students the opportunity to focus on their self-perceived areas of strength or weaknesses without recognition of the other. Furthermore, such a rubric can serve a pedagogical function by alerting students to the different
components that comprise a writing skill. All teachers reported that the use of the rubrics by the students was beneficial, and all three teachers shared them with their colleagues.

Therefore, generating rubric-based cognitively diagnostic writing feedback in classrooms necessitates the following list of criteria: 1) Identification of sub-skills should be relevant to the curriculum and aligned with theories of L2 writing; 2) Descriptors should be used which articulate various aspects of performance necessary to master a particular sub-skill. The descriptors should be discrete and distinguishable (Alderson, 2005), and finely grained. Descriptors that are too coarse may lead to less reliability in their interpretation (e.g., between students and teachers), and not provide enough information to guide writing development. Descriptors that are excessively detailed may focus on features of writing at local levels, and guide syntactic errors rather than guiding students to conceptual gaps (Jang & Wagner, 2014). In order to contribute to their distinguishability, descriptors should avoid the use of quantifiers and/or modifiers which direct rubric users to identifying relative levels of performance. 3) The rubric should be adaptable/modifiable in order to customize it for different writing tasks (with different foci and/or different genres). They should also be adaptable/modifiable for the generation of self- and peer-assessment rubrics for students to use. Of this list, arguably, one of the most important aspects of generating feedback using such a rubric is its organization around specific writing sub-skills. How can one be assured that the sub-skills represented in the rubric are relevant and appropriate for advancing students’ writing?

8.1.2 Focus of L2 Writing Feedback

Second language writing is a complex cognitive and social phenomenon (Silva, 2013) whose multidimensionality has not been captured by any single framework (Cumming, 1998, 2001a, 2002; Cumming et al, 2000). Perhaps this gap is owing to the multitude of purposes for which people write, as well as the many genres, the varying contexts in which writing is learned and generated, and its ever changing interpretability depending on the reader. The lack of a framework poses obvious challenges to assessment of L2 writing, and consequently generation of feedback for writers.

As discussed, DRAW was developed through an iterative process engaging with teachers and drawing from the L2 writing literature. A review of 40 writing assessment scales (see Chapter 2) revealed that the five most assessed skills were: content/ideas, grammar, organization,
vocabulary, and mechanics. These sub-skills were all relevant to the Ontario curricular context, and were included in DRAW. In addition, the process of DRAW development resulted in the inclusion of a sixth writing sub-skill: sentence fluency.

The decision to include (or exclude) specific writing sub-skills is highly dependent on context, because writing cannot be removed from its purpose and the audience to whom it is directed (Weir, 2005). In other words, the social dimension of writing cannot be disassociated from its cognitive processes and linguistic skills. My decision to include the six aforementioned sub-skills on DRAW took into account the need for students to: develop academic writing skills, meet curricular outcomes, and respond to teachers’ expectations.

The sub-skills contributed to understanding differences in students’ writing development over time, as well as the influence of teachers’ practices on students’ performance. I hypothesized that the differences among the changes in skill mastery patterns was attributable to various factors including: students’ interpretation of the sub-skills; students’ use of DRAW feedback; students’ learning orientations, and teachers’ assessment beliefs and instructional foci. These latter three points are discussed in depth in subsequent sections of this chapter; however, students’ interpretation of the sub-skills warrants discussion here.

I provided students with DRAW generated feedback organized according to the six writing sub-skills that have been discussed using the same terminology (e.g., mechanics, vocabulary). During interviews with students I discovered that they were not always interpreting the sub-skills as I had intended. There were instances when the students had a completely different interpretation of the category representing a mismatch between what I had intended and what was understood. Other misinterpretations were attributable to students combining attributes of several skills. Students also sometimes expressed that they did not understand the meaning of the term (e.g., mechanics), or they had a partial understanding of the characteristics underlying a sub-skill. These issues emerged to some extent with all but the content/ideas sub-skill. Surprising to me was the finding that students’ understanding of grammar was frequently incomplete, or confounded with another sub-skill (primarily mechanics) particularly because grammar is so often the focus of teaching instruction, and of prime concern for students. I was mistakenly under the assumption that advanced level secondary school English language learners would have common understandings of terms such as grammar and vocabulary. Certainly, I am drawing from a small sample size, and I am not making any definitive claims; however, these findings suggest that when feedback is generated, and categorized/summarized according to sub-skills,
time should be taken to ensure that students have a common understanding of the facets composing it. Even when feedback is provided without a categorization, teachers (and researchers) should ensure that there is a common understanding of the feedback that is being generated.

Returning to the findings regarding students’ mastery skill development, there is an indication that feedback on mechanics is not as beneficial to students. In both these classrooms there was a high percentage of students who had mastered the skill with no change between the two time periods (before and after receiving DRAW feedback). It may be that when students reach a particular level of proficiency that some skills, i.e., mechanics, have been mastered and do not need be included in a rubric. If this finding is confirmed, then it could also be indicative of a hierarchy in the development of L2 writing skills. Additionally, with the increasing use of word processing programs, which can be requested to identify spelling and grammar errors, the need for feedback on mechanics may not be necessary in this specific context.

8.1.3 Counterarguments and Rebuttals: Can DRAW be used in other Contexts?

One of the concerns with DRAW may be that its use is limited to the local context in which it was developed (Ontario secondary school ESL classrooms), and that its application in other L2 writing learning settings would be restricted. It bears stating that context is not limited to the physical setting, but also the participants within it, and the social and learning context in which there are specific linguistic demands (Douglas, 2000). However, DRAW was developed based on a CDA framework, and it is the qualities associated with this design framework that allow for its adaptability to other L2 teaching and learning contexts.

Two central qualities of a CDA design framework are that the related assessments are situated in both the learning context and possess a sound, theoretical basis. There is no single unifying framework that captures the multidimensionality of L2 writing (Cumming, 1998, 2001a, 2002; Cumming et al, 2000); however DRAW was developed based on a thorough review of the literature to identify the sub-skills that best capture the L2 writing construct. Regardless of the physical and social setting in which instruction and learning is taking place, this foundation on which DRAW is based would be relevant, and particularly, the sub-skills which comprise it. In other words, the aspects of context associated with the linguistic demands of L2 writing would be globally addressed.
The descriptors comprising DRAW are aligned with local instructional and learning goals, and are specific to tasks. It is through modification of its descriptors that DRAW may be changed to meet learning and assessment goals in other contexts and for other tasks. Recall that the descriptors comprising DRAW developed for generating CDF for opinion-based essays were modified for assessing news reports. Furthermore, within each classroom, students’ writing performance demonstrated similar patterns of sub-skill writing mastery providing evidence of the effectiveness of the modifications to DRAW descriptors. Therefore, DRAW descriptors would need to be adapted to be used in other teaching and learning contexts to meet the localized demands of a context. For example, the specific grammatical or organizational components assessed by a modified DRAW could address features of the sub-skill that are aligned with the genres, communicative purposes, and learning targets in the localized context of use. However, the purposes (to provide feedback on cognitive skill process and address conceptual gaps), specificity (fine-grained), and potential to promote self-regulated learning behaviours remain the same.

8.2 Provision and Use of Feedback

As I have discussed, this research project has been driven by an effect-driven approach (Fulcher & Davidson, 2007) in which I looked to the future to the effect of this research endeavour, i.e., the effect of DRAW feedback, and imagined its desired effects and outcomes. Therefore, generating feedback (discussed above) is only one part of the feedback loop (Hattie & Timperley, 2007); it is through its provision and use that its effects on writing development can be explored and its imagined effects realized (or quashed).

I proposed two validity claims related to the use of DRAW feedback: Students’ perceptions of DRAW feedback vary according to self-efficacy, anxiety, and goal orientation; and DRAW feedback has a positive effect on students’ writing skill development. As discussed there were various assumptions underlying these claims including the idea that students receive and interpret feedback differently, and that for feedback to have a positive effect students need to value it and use it.

Students’ responses to DRAW feedback were measured through four variables: perceived understanding of the feedback, reflection on the feedback, perceived usefulness of the
information; and intent to use/apply the feedback on future assignments. All of the variables were significantly, positively and strongly correlated ($r = .41 - .67$).

Overall, the responses to the DRAW feedback were highly positive. While this outcome was favourable, there was limited variability in the responses which sometimes posed a challenge to pursuing additional relationships statistically. I hypothesized that students’ perception of feedback follows a trajectory in which they first interpret the feedback (i.e., understand it), and then reflect on its accuracy based on their beliefs about their writing skills. Based on these reflections students perceive the feedback to be useful or not. If they choose to reject the feedback, then students will not intend to use the feedback in the future. Conversely, if the feedback is accepted, students will express their intent to use it in the future. This proposed order in which these feedback processes occurs requires empirical testing and is an area for future research. I investigated how students’ responses to DRAW feedback were mediated by students’ goal orientations, writing self-efficacy, and writing anxiety.

I examined the predictive power of students’ goal orientation, self-efficacy, anxiety, and sub-skill mastery in explaining the variance in students’ responses to feedback. Regression analyses revealed that, in general, performance goal orientation variables were negative predictors of feedback perceptions, along with students’ grammar skill mastery. However, ideas skill mastery was a positive predictor of students’ perceived understanding.

Performance prove goal orientation was a significant and negative predictor of both perceived usefulness. Performance avoid goal orientation was a negative predictor of perceived understanding of DRAW feedback and intent for future use. These findings are extremely pertinent as goal orientations have the potential to drive students’ motivation (Ames, 1992). Furthermore, the results are consistent with research that distinguishes mastery-oriented learners from their performance-oriented counterparts in their feedback responses. The former seek and prefer cognitive feedback, while performance-oriented learners choose outcome based feedback (VandeWalle, 2003). Additionally, performance-oriented learners can view ability as fixed, thereby rejecting feedback (Bandura & Dweck, 1985). However, the relationship among these variables was not as seemingly straightforward.

I also investigated the correlation among the three goal orientations based on students’ survey results and found that there was a moderate relationship among mastery goal orientation and each of the performance orientations. Certainly, one of the reasons for this finding is because students are likely situated along a goal orientation continuum, and it may be that the positive
relationships are indicative of students holding multiple goal orientations simultaneously. Furthermore, some research has shown mixed findings about the effects of performance prove goals and particularly with its relationship with mastery goals (Barron & Harackiewicz, 2001; Elliot & Church, 1997; Harackiewicz, Barron, & Elliot, 1998). This research suggests that both types of goals may be pursued simultaneously possibly interacting and contributing additively to students’ outcomes. Based on the important findings that I uncovered in this research investigation, I hypothesize that students are apt to pursue multiple goals at the same time, and while this pursuit likely contributes positively to their overall motivation, it has a negative effect on their responses to feedback.

Self-efficacy and writing anxiety did not emerge as significant predictors in any of the regression models, but they were used as explanatory variables in students’ case studies used to examine the complexities of the use of feedback, writing development and the mediating role of the learning orientation variables. More research in authentic classroom settings with larger samples of students are needed to further explore these relationships.

Together these findings draw attention to students’ individualized responses to feedback, and particularly the relationship between the four feedback variables and students’ performance goal orientations. It would be worthwhile to provide teachers with professional development on these issues discussed. The goal of such professional learning would be to guide teachers in using the knowledge to individualize the feedback, and its delivery to meet the needs of each student. For example, teachers could have more frequent conferencing sessions with performance-oriented learners in order to learn about discrepancies between their perceptions and the generated feedback. These discrepancies could be addressed so that learners would be more likely to use the feedback.

I have discussed the generation of feedback and its provision. I now turn to a discussion of the use of DRAW feedback and its effect on writing development. The findings indicate that DRAW has a positive impact on students’ writing development. Two pieces of evidence support this finding: 1) A very strong, significant association between students’ perception of the usefulness of DRAW feedback and the change in their writing score between the mid-point writing measure, and the post-writing measure; and 2) A strong and positive relationship between students’ intent for future use of feedback and a positive change in their writing scores between the mid- and post-writing measures. Students who had perceptions of the usefulness of
feedback were more likely to achieve higher than average improvements in their writing. As students’ intent for using DRAW feedback increased, so did the amount of change observed in their writing scores. These findings also provide evidence to support the feedback trajectory that hypothesized the process through which student engage with feedback, and the importance of understanding students’ perception of the usefulness of feedback and their intent for its future use.

Correlational analyses revealed a negative and moderate correlation between students’ performance goal orientations and two feedback variables: perceived feedback usefulness and intent for future use, again pointing to the importance of these two feedback variables in understanding students’ use of feedback.

I used classroom level data to complement findings across all students, and also to delve into the role of learning orientations and their relationship with writing development. The variability in the types of data I had made it challenging to examine some relationships across classrooms, but at the same time provided a rich opportunity to creatively analyze the data through multiple approaches at the classroom level. Importantly, all of the data at the classroom level were used to augment, complement, or substantiate findings at the group level. I examined students’ skill development across time points, alongside their feedback profiles, and learning orientation profiles. Because of the complex nature of the data and results I have opted to synthesize the findings across classroom and data sources (e.g., student interviews, writing performance, response to feedback and learning orientation survey) by offering three feedback profiles that capture the interactions between students’ individualized receipt of feedback and its use. The profiles are illustrated in Figure 26.
Feedback Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Maximizer</th>
<th>Seeker</th>
<th>Minimalist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Type of Feedback</strong></td>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td></td>
<td>Evaluative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Source of Feedback</strong></td>
<td>Internal/</td>
<td></td>
<td>External</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>External</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Focus of Feedback</strong></td>
<td>Global features</td>
<td></td>
<td>Local features</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal Orientation</strong></td>
<td>Mastery</td>
<td></td>
<td>Performance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The three feedback profiles are characterized according to their position on four different continua. The first situates learners along a continuum of cognitive to evaluative feedback. The second continuum designates the feedback that is generated both internally and externally at one end and only externally at the other. The focus of feedback features a third continuum ranging from global features to local features. Finally, goal orientations are the focus of the fourth continuum which designates learners from mastery to performance. The first profile I identified are ‘Maximizers’. These students value cognitive feedback generated both internally and externally, focus on strengths as well as self-identified weaknesses, use feedback to achieve goals, and are mastery-oriented. Second are ‘Minimizers’ who are situated at the opposite end of each of the four continua. These students prefer evaluative feedback from external agents (authority figures), focus primarily on grammar and syntactic features of writing, and use feedback only for directed purposes. They tend to be performance avoid learners. Finally, ‘Seekers’ are students who exhibit a varying combination of feedback qualities, but are not at either extreme as are the Maximizers and Minimizers.

These profiles propose a model to explain how the various factors (e.g., learning orientations, responses to feedback) interact with each other and help to identify how different learners will use feedback. Therefore, they mainly serve an illustrative purpose to help guide provision of individualized feedback to learners. It should be recognized that students (particularly adolescents) are not stagnant in their beliefs, responses and orientations, but that
they are evolving. It is the role of all educators to facilitate this process. It was through the analysis of the use of DRAW feedback that these profiles emerged. Generating cognitive feedback for writing and individualizing its provision for students’ use is contingent on teachers’ assessment competencies.

8.2.1 Counterarguments and Rebuttals: Can DRAW feedback be integrated or expanded with more traditional feedback?

The three student feedback profiles reveal that different students seek different types and specificity of writing feedback and that for some, the information generated from DRAW is simply not satisfactory. Therefore, a question that emerges is: Can DRAW be integrated or expanded with more traditional feedback? The simple answer is yes. Certainly, any teacher or other user of DRAW can choose to add or provide more traditional feedback addressing grammatical form, and targeting knowledge and outcomes. This information may be provided to students through one-on-one conferencing, or simply through targeted feedback on learners’ written compositions. However, a more relevant, and possibly contentious question is: Should DRAW feedback be integrated with other forms of traditional feedback? This question does not have a simple answer. I strongly believe that one of the most important aspects of instruction and assessment is to promote autonomy in students’ learning. In other words, I believe that students should be equipped with skills to self-regulate their learning. DRAW feedback is aligned with these principles. Integrating DRAW feedback with traditional outcome-based feedback will no doubt help learners; however, the guidance might only be in the short term or it may limit the potential of DRAW to maximize students’ self-regulatory skill development. Perhaps it is necessary to engage all stakeholders (e.g., learners, parents, teachers) in conversations and training about the benefits of cognitively diagnostic feedback, and the potential it has to advance learning. Therefore, it may be that we need to engage in discussion about assessment and feedback practices to promote a shift in practice towards a CDF approach to assessment in L2 writing. These issues raise additional questions about the assessment competencies teachers need to provide and individualize CDF; therefore, I now turn the focus from students to teachers to engage in this discussion.
8.3 Teachers as Feedback Providers

Thus far, I have discussed issues emerging from the proposition of three validity claims emerging from multiple sources of evidence. Specifically, I have discussed two facets of cognitively diagnostic feedback: how it may be generated, and how it may be delivered and used. A third component that I have yet to discuss is its effect on teachers which is, in part, influenced by teachers’ assessment beliefs and feedback practices. The two validity claims related to these issues asserted that: teacher influence and shape students’ perceptions and use of feedback and contribute to their writing performance; and teachers value DRAW.

Multiple sources of evidence were used to delve into teachers’ beliefs about assessment and feedback practices. Through interviews I examined teachers’ beliefs about the characteristics of writing that they value and which they assess in order to evaluate its quality, the features of writing on which they provide feedback, the types of feedback they believe will advance students’ writing. I evaluated these findings alongside a feedback analysis of written scripts scored by teachers, and finally, in comparison to students’ writing performance. While all teachers used rubrics to generate and provide feedback, only Angie also equally valued scores. Teachers’ beliefs were reflected in students’ writing development particularly in Classrooms A and C, and to a much lesser extent in Classroom B. The results demonstrated a range of practices and evolving beliefs about the content and provision of feedback. The complexities and richness of the findings have provided me with the opportunity to synthesize the results, and similarly propose a model that summarized the characteristics of teachers’ assessment beliefs and feedback practices. This model is illustrated in Figure 27.

The profiles of feedback providers situate teachers on a continuum moving from an Empathizer, to Rationalizer, to an Enforcer. These profiles are characterized by the basis for providing feedback as well as the characteristics and focus of the feedback. Empathizers provide feedback that is individualized, and respond to students needs according to both the characteristics of the writing and the emotional needs of the student. They project into the future and moderate their feedback according to students’ anticipated responses. At the other end of the continuum, enforcers individualize the feedback only based on ‘rules’ as dictated by policy documents or school-dictated practices. The rationalist moderates feedback by balancing these two extremes.
Similarly, the characteristics and foci of teachers’ feedback can be situated along the same continuum. The Enforcer strictly adheres to feedback models to provide feedback. These models may be classroom-generated or derived from curricular documents, but the feedback is entirely characterized by the rubric, checklist or other feedback model. The Empathizer uses a feedback model as a basis, but focuses also on their beliefs about the feedback that students need in order to advance. The Rationalist, again, balances these two extremes, and may revise feedback models in order to provide feedback that is both responsive to students’ needs and still based on a model provided to students.

Regardless of the model of feedback that teachers adopt, they are arguably, the most influential agents in a classroom. Therefore, for any type of feedback to have a positive impact in a classroom requires teachers to value it. Therefore, I also investigated teachers’ responses to and uses of DRAW feedback to evaluate teachers’ perceptions of and interactions with DRAW and the CDF generated from it. All of the teachers valued DRAW as evidenced by their use of it as a pedagogical tool for professional development with their colleagues, and as self- and peer-assessment models in their classrooms. Additionally, one of the highly interesting facets of the use of DRAW was the impact it had on the evolution of one teacher’s assessment beliefs. Working with DRAW, and the self-assessments definitely had a large impact on Celina’s practices, beliefs and her relationship with assessment. At the outset of this research investigation, I had not expected to witness such a profound change in any teacher’s assessment belief system.

*Figure 27. Feedback Providers’ Profiles.*
8.4 Revisiting Teachers’ Diagnostic Competence

Another area that may be explored theoretically is the relationship between teachers’ assessment beliefs and practices and their diagnostic assessment competence for writing. Generating and providing feedback to students, and interpreting students’ use of it requires multiple competencies; it is possible that teachers’ beliefs and practices may be shaped by their beliefs and perceived competencies. While this dissertation did not specifically investigate this relationship, the evidence generated may be used to propose a framework for a diagnostic assessment competence for writing (DACW).

The general (rather than language) assessment body of literature discusses the principles of assessment needed by teachers in order to effectively evaluate students and use the information to advance learning in classrooms (e.g., Brookhart, 2001; Popham, 2009; Taylor, 2009). This research is fittingly subsumed under the general umbrella of assessment literacy. In the field of language assessment, the body of literature referring to the set of knowledge and skills necessary for creating, understanding and analyzing the outcomes of tests and assessments is aptly subsumed under the term language assessment literacy (e.g., Fulcher, 2012; Inbar-Lourie, 2013; Malone, 2013; Taylor, 2009; 2013). Consolidating the information in the fields of general and language assessment literacy has allowed me to identify a framework of diagnostic assessment competence for writing (DACW). This framework is illustrated in Figure 28.

Figure 28 illustrates four interrelated components essential to diagnostic assessment competence for writing: 1) Domain Knowledge: Teachers need to know and understand current research and beliefs about the construct of writing and the process of its development (Inbar-Lourie, 2008; Purpura, 2004); 2) Diagnosis: Teachers need to be able to gather assessment information that informs them about students current level of writing performance (Brookhart, 2011; Edelenbos & Kubanek-German, 2004); 3) Feedback: Teachers need to use the assessment information to give feedback to students on their writing in order to add to, tune, or restructure their learning to help them address conceptual gaps (Butler & Winne, 1995); and 4) Assessment Use: Teachers need to use assessment information formatively to guide students’ learning (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Lee, 2011) and also teach students to use assessment information to guide their learning of it and promote self-regulated learning (Butler & Winne, 1995). According to Brookhart (2001), teaching students how to use assessment information is multifaceted, and is not completely delineated from provision of effective feedback. Brookhart
identifies five integral competencies associated with this trait; the ability to: coach students to analyze their assessment results; help them to meaningfully track their learning, and communicate about it; help students plan subsequent steps; and, understand the relationship between assessment and student motivation. Based on the evidence generated in this research investigation I suggest the inclusion of two additional categories to this model: self-reflection; and timing.

Self-reflection in a DACW framework refers to the ability to critically examine one’s practice in order to: 1) Identify any discrepancies between belief’s about feedback, and provision of it. Consider that some teachers’ beliefs about the sub-skills they valued were not consistently reflected in their feedback practices. 2) Recognize the need for professional development. Without self-reflective practice, it is not possible for teachers to recognize gaps in their own assessment and feedback knowledge and practices.

Timing refers to the ability to deliver feedback during the writing process when students will most need it and be able to maximize its use. This issue is particularly relevant to achieving L2 writing competence as writing develops through a process and over time. Feedback needs to be delivered at a time during the process when students will have the opportunity to engage with it (whether it be to use it or reject it).

I also suggest that the feedback component of the framework needs to take account the individualized and variability of responses to feedback, a component of feedback use not explicitly addressed in this body of literature.
8.4.1 Counterarguments and Rebuttals: What is the feasibility of using DRAW in secondary school ESL classrooms?

A central issue that needs to be addressed is the practicality and feasibility of using DRAW in secondary school ESL classrooms to generate CDF. During the investigation, the teacher participants raised concerns about the time it would take to generate cognitively diagnostic feedback profiles as I did for the students. However, the use of these detailed feedback profiles was for research purposes and to investigate the diagnostic potential of DRAW, and students’ responses to the different types of feedback and their presentation. It would be unrealistic to expect teachers to generate such detailed feedback for students, especially on a regular basis. Instead, it is more realistic and feasible that the principles on which CDF is based be applied to the generation of writing feedback, which can be accomplished through DRAW. Specifically, these principles include the purposes and content of the feedback to inform students’ cognitive skills and strategies; and the specificity of the feedback which should be fine-grained as opposed to excessively detailed or coarse.

Teachers may use DRAW to make decisions about students’ mastery of each of the descriptors represented across each of the writing sub-skills in a check-list fashion. Students can
be taught how to use the feedback. In other words, students may be trained to generate their own DRAW feedback profiles by going through the process of highlighting their strengths and areas for improvement, and setting goals and making plans for how to address them. Teachers can facilitate instruction of how to address different gaps in writing, and how to augment or draw upon strengths in writing. For example, one instructional activity could be to for teachers to facilitate a lesson in which specific strategies were generated to address gaps in students’ content in writing. Individual students would decide which strategies would best help them to address their conceptual gaps. Again, these practices are consistent with an instructional and assessment approach that aims to advance the development of students’ self-regulatory behaviours and skills (Andrade & Evans, 2013).

For these suggestions to effectively address the feasibility and practicality of the use of DRAW, specific conditions need to exist. First, teachers must possess knowledge of cognitively diagnostic feedback practices, developed competencies described by the DACW framework, and they also need to ‘buy in’ to the different CDF approach to typical assessment and feedback practices in secondary ESL classrooms. These issues may be addressed through professional development, recognition of the need for which is actually a component of the DACW framework. Using DRAW, generating CDF, and teaching students to use it are not skills that teachers can be expected to know or develop independent of training and guidance. Assessment of students’ writing requires knowledge and expertise (Lumley, 2005). Providing opportunities for this development and establishing professional learning communities in which these skills may be fostered would be essential for advancing teachers’ abilities to engage with CDF practices. Second, students’ uses of CDF needs to be continuously monitored and guided to ensure that they are maximizing its formative potential. Part of addressing students’ feedback use, may also include information sessions with parents and guardians to suggest ways in which they can help foster their children’s writing development through the use of CDF.

Another way of addressing the feasibility issues is through the development of a computerized version of DRAW. The development and use of electronic raters is rapidly growing (Crusan, 2010), yet these systems do not generate cognitively diagnostic feedback. Furthermore, this area is worth pursuing and an area for future development.
8.5 A Working Framework of L2 Writing Feedback in Secondary Classrooms

Based on these findings I now present a working framework of L2 writing feedback in secondary school classroom that captures all of the facets that have been discussed. This framework is illustrated in Figure 29.

Figure 29. Working Framework for L2 writing feedback in secondary classrooms.

This working framework represents a synthesis of the evidence gathered, and the validity claims resulting from them. This framework not only summarizes the results from investigating inquiry questions related to the use and generation of cognitively diagnostic feedback from DRAW, but it also opens up opportunities for future research. As discussed earlier, one area of investigation would be into the development of a computerized version of DRAW. Another area
of research would be to further examine the processes of students’ perceptions and uses of feedback to empirically test the trajectory proposed in this investigation.

This field of research would greatly benefit from further investigations in the generation and used of CDF for advancing L2 writing. This study may be replicated in similar and different learning contexts and at different grade levels. Therefore, I conclude my mixed methods story with excitement for future endeavours.

To be continued.
References


Bae, J., Agajeanian, R., Han, N., Howard, K., & Lee, N. (1999). The criteria for scoring some salient writing components for elementary school students (K to Grade 4). *Language Testing Update, 26*, 72-82.


Harvard University Press.


QSR. (2014). *NVivo 10*. QSR International


# APPENDIX A
## WRITING SKILLS USED IN HOLISTIC AND ANALYTIC RATING WRITING SCALES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Writing Skill(^a)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Content/Idea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6+1 Traits of Writing (^b) (Education Northwest, 2013)</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bae, Agajeenian, Han, Howard &amp; Lee (1999)(^c)</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canadian Academic English Language Assessment (n.d.)</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBLA (Deane et al, 2008)</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\) The table lists the writing skills used in various rating writing scales. A ✓ indicates that the skill is included in the scale.

\(^b\) Education Northwest, 2013

\(^c\) Bae, Agajeenian, Han, Howard & Lee, 1999

\(^d\) Canadian Academic English Language Assessment, n.d.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Writing Skilla</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Content/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grammar</td>
</tr>
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<td>Organization</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mechanics</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sentence</td>
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<td>Structure/</td>
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<td>Fluencty</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Style</td>
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<td>Voice</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Overall</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Impression</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Language</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use/Control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rhetorical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Features</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Cohesion/</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cohesion</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Accuracy</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Length</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Fluency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Presentation</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interstingness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Source</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interpretation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sociolinguistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambridge English: Proficiency (Cambridge Language Assessment, 2014)</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criterion (ETS, 2014)</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumming (1990)</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DELNA-1 (University of Auckland, 2014)</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DELNA-2 (University of Auckland, 2014)</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East (2009)</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erling &amp; Richardson (2010)</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foley (1971)</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French (1996)</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source</td>
<td>Content/Idea</td>
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<tr>
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<td>--------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grabe &amp; Kaplan (1996)</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant &amp; Ginther (2000)</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamp-Lyons &amp; Henning (1991)</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IELTS (British Council 2014)</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacobs et al. (1981)</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kim (2010)</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knoch (2009)</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lumley (2002)</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marsh &amp; Ireland (1987)</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source</td>
<td>Writing Skilla</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michigan Writing Assessment (Hamp-Lyons, 1990)</td>
<td>✓✓✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OSSLT (EQAO, 2012a)</td>
<td>✓✓✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paulus (1999)</td>
<td>✓✓✓✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearson PTE (Pearson, 2014)</td>
<td>✓✓✓✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rezaei &amp; Lovorn (2010)</td>
<td>✓✓✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sakyi (2000)</td>
<td>✓✓✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shohamy (1992)</td>
<td>✓✓✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shohamy (1992)</td>
<td>✓✓✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEEP (Weir, 1990)</td>
<td>✓✓✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*a: Writing Skill categories include: Content/Ideas, Grammar, Organization, Mechanics, Sentence Structure/Fluency, Style, Voice, Overall Impression, Vocabulary, Language Use/Control, Rhetorical Features, Cohesion/Cohesion, Accuracy, Length, Fluency, Presentation, Interestiness, Reference, Source, Interpretation, Sociolinguistic Knowledge.
| Source                      | Content/Idea | Grammar | Organization | Mechanics | Sentence Structure/Fluency | Style | Voice | Overall Impression | Vocabulary | Rhetorical Features | Cohesion/Cohesion | Accuracy | Length | Fluency | Presentation | Integrityness | Reference | Source Use | Interpretation | Sociolinguistic Knowledge |
|-----------------------------|--------------|---------|--------------|-----------|-----------------------------|-------|-------|---------------------|------------|---------------------|------------------|----------|--------|--------|----------|--------------|-------------|----------|-----------|-------------|--------------------------|
| Timella et al. (2013)       | ✓            |         |              |           |                             |       |       | ✓                   | ✓          | ✓                   |                  |          |        |        |          |              |             |          |           |             |                          |
| TOEFL iBT (ETS, 2010)       | ✓            | ✓       | ✓            |           |                             |       |       |                      | ✓          | ✓                   | ✓ a              |          |        |        |          |              |             |          |           |             |                          |
| Turner & Upshur (2002)       | ✓            | ✓       | ✓            | ✓         |                             | ✓     |       |                      | ✓          |                      |                  |          |        |        |          |              |             |          |           |             |                          |
| Tyndall & Kenyon (1996)      | ✓            | ✓       | ✓            | ✓         |                             | ✓     |       |                      | ✓          |                      |                  |          |        |        |          |              |             |          |           |             |                          |
| Wolf-Quintero, Inagaki, & Kim | ✓            |         | ✓            |           |                             | ✓     |       |                      | ✓          |                      |                  |          |        |        |          |              |             |          |           |             |                          |
| **Total**                   | **31**       | **26**  | **26**       | **20**    |                             | **11**| **9** | **1**               | **1**      | **4**               | **26**           | **4**    | **3**  | **11** | **4**    | **3**        | **2**       | **1**    | **3**     | **3**       | **1**        | **1**       |                          |
APPENDIX B
OSSLT-BASED NEW REPORT AND
OPINION ESSAY PROMPTS

Writing a News Report

Write a **news report** on the next page based on the headline and picture below.

- ✓ You will have to make up the facts and information to answer some or all of the following questions: Who? What? Where? When? Why? How?

- ✓ You must relate your newspaper report to both the headline and the picture.

**Purpose and Audience:**

- ✓ to report on an event for the readers of a newspaper

**Length:**

- ✓ The lined space provided for your written work indicates the approximate length of the writing expected.

**Rough Notes**  Use the back of this page for rough notes. Nothing you write on the back will be marked. Write your report on the lines provided on the following page.

---

**ROUGH NOTES**

Use this space for your rough notes

You can also use the back of the page for rough notes

---

SCHOOL RECEIVES COMPUTERS
AS A REWARD
Writing a Series of Paragraphs

**TASK:**
Write a **minimum** of three paragraphs expressing an opinion on the topic below. Develop your main idea with supporting details (proof, facts, examples, etc.).

**PURPOSE AND AUDIENCE:**
An adult who is interested in your opinion

**LENGTH:**
The lined space provided for your written work indicates the approximate length of the writing expected.

**TOPIC:**

---

**Rough Notes**
*Use the space below for rough notes. You may also use the back of the page for rough notes.*
APPENDIX C
DRAW FEEDBACK SURVEY

Getting Your Feedback on Feedback

Name: ______________________________

Now that you’ve had a chance to read and think about your writing profile, I’d like to know what you think. Please tell me what you really think; I will use this information to help me understand your writing needs.

A. Look at the Summary Comments.
   a. Are these comments helpful to you?  Very helpful  A little helpful  Somewhat helpful  Not helpful
   b. Will you use this information when you revise your essay?  Definitely yes  Probably yes  Probably no  Definitely no

B. Look at the Feedback Analysis section. Feedback is organized into six different categories (Ideas, Organization, Vocabulary, Sentences, Mechanics, Grammar). Read the questions below and circle your answer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Do you understand what each of these categories mean?</th>
<th>Do you think that getting feedback in this category will help your writing?</th>
<th>Do you think that it is helpful to have a rating of your overall performance in this category?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes  Maybe  No</td>
<td>A great deal  A lot  A little  Not at all</td>
<td>Very helpful  A little helpful  Somewhat helpful  Not helpful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentences</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
C. Are there any other categories that would be helpful to you?  
   □ No  
   □ Yes; Which one(s)?

D. Which category is the most helpful to you? ____________________________________

E. Which category is the least helpful to you? ____________________________________

F. Look at the *Detailed Feedback about Each Category* section of your writing profile. I want to find out what you think about this information.

**Category 1: Ideas**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Is it helpful to have detailed feedback about ‘Ideas’?</th>
<th>Very helpful</th>
<th>A little helpful</th>
<th>Somewhat helpful</th>
<th>Not helpful</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Do you agree with the strengths?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>a)</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) If you agree or strongly agree…will you use this information when you revise your essay?</td>
<td>Definitely yes</td>
<td>Probably yes</td>
<td>Probably no</td>
<td>Definitely no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c) If you disagree or strongly disagree…what information is wrong?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>a) Do you agree with the weaknesses?</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) If you agree or strongly agree…will you use this information when you revise your essay?</td>
<td>Definitely yes</td>
<td>Probably yes</td>
<td>Probably no</td>
<td>Definitely no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c) If you disagree or strongly disagree…what information is wrong?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Category 2: Organization**

4. Is it helpful to have detailed feedback about ‘Organization’?  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very helpful</th>
<th>A little helpful</th>
<th>Somewhat helpful</th>
<th>Not helpful</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

5. a) Do you agree with the strengths?  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

b) If you agree or strongly agree…will you use this information when you revise your essay?  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definitely yes</th>
<th>Probably yes</th>
<th>Probably no</th>
<th>Definitely no</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

c) If you disagree or strongly disagree…what information is wrong?  

6. a) Do you agree with the weaknesses?  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

b) If you agree or strongly agree…will you use this information when you revise your essay?  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definitely yes</th>
<th>Probably yes</th>
<th>Probably no</th>
<th>Definitely no</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

c) If you disagree or strongly disagree…what information is wrong?  

**Category 3: Vocabulary**

7. Is it helpful to have detailed feedback about ‘Vocabulary’?  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very helpful</th>
<th>A little helpful</th>
<th>Somewhat helpful</th>
<th>Not helpful</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

8. a) Do you agree with the strengths?  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

b) If you agree or strongly agree…will you use this information when you revise your essay?  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definitely yes</th>
<th>Probably yes</th>
<th>Probably no</th>
<th>Definitely no</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

c) If you disagree or strongly disagree…what information is wrong?  

9. a) Do you agree with the weaknesses?  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

b) If you agree or strongly agree…will you use this information when you revise your essay?  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definitely yes</th>
<th>Probably yes</th>
<th>Probably no</th>
<th>Definitely no</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

c) If you disagree or strongly disagree…what information is wrong?  

### Category 4: Sentences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>10. Is it helpful to have detailed feedback about Sentences?</th>
<th>Very helpful</th>
<th>A little helpful</th>
<th>Somewhat helpful</th>
<th>Not helpful</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11. a) Do you agree with the strengths?</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) If you agree or strongly agree…will you use this information when you revise your essay?</td>
<td>Definitely yes</td>
<td>Probably yes</td>
<td>Probably no</td>
<td>Definitely no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) If you disagree or strongly disagree…what information is wrong?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. a) Do you agree with the weaknesses?</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) If you agree or strongly agree…will you use this information when you revise your essay?</td>
<td>Definitely yes</td>
<td>Probably yes</td>
<td>Probably no</td>
<td>Definitely no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) If you disagree or strongly disagree…what information is wrong?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Category 5: Mechanics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>13. Is it helpful to have detailed feedback about ‘Mechanics’?</th>
<th>Very helpful</th>
<th>A little helpful</th>
<th>Somewhat helpful</th>
<th>Not helpful</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14. a) Do you agree with the strengths?</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) If you agree or strongly agree…will you use this information when you revise your essay?</td>
<td>Definitely yes</td>
<td>Probably yes</td>
<td>Probably no</td>
<td>Definitely no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) If you disagree or strongly disagree…what information is wrong?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. a) Do you agree with the weaknesses?</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) If you agree or strongly agree…will you use this information when you revise your essay?</td>
<td>Definitely yes</td>
<td>Probably yes</td>
<td>Probably no</td>
<td>Definitely no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) If you disagree or strongly disagree…what information is wrong?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Category 6: Grammar

<p>| | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16. Is it helpful to have detailed feedback about ‘Grammar’?</td>
<td>Very helpful</td>
<td>A little helpful</td>
<td>Somewhat helpful</td>
<td>Not helpful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. a) Do you agree with the strengths?</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) If you agree or strongly agree…will you use this information when you revise your essay?</td>
<td>Definitely yes</td>
<td>Probably yes</td>
<td>Probably no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c) If you disagree or strongly disagree…what information is wrong?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. a) Do you agree with the weaknesses?</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) If you agree or strongly agree…will you use this information when you revise your essay?</td>
<td>Definitely yes</td>
<td>Probably yes</td>
<td>Probably no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c) If you disagree or strongly disagree…what information is wrong?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX D
LEARNING ORIENTATIONS QUESTIONNAIRE

LEARNING ABOUT YOU!

Here are some questions about what you like to learn, and what you think about learning English. Please be honest when you answer these questions; say what you really feel. No one at home or school will ever see your answers.

Please circle the number that best describes what you think.

Let’s practice. Here is an example question:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not At All True</th>
<th>Not True</th>
<th>A Little True</th>
<th>True</th>
<th>Very True</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I like chocolate.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not At All True</th>
<th>Not True</th>
<th>A Little True</th>
<th>True</th>
<th>Very True</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I can do almost all of the work in this ESLEO class if I try.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like to show other students that I’m good at English.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like to show other students that learning English is easy for me.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can correctly spell all the words in a one page essay.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s important to me that Ms. X doesn’t think that I know less English that the other students in my ESLEO class.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s important to me that I improve my English writing skills this year.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s important to me that I understand everything in my ESLEO class.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can organize sentences into a paragraph to talk about an idea.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In our ESLEO class, it’s important to get high scores on tests.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My parents would like me to show others that I am good at school work.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. X really wants us to enjoy learning new things.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not At All True</td>
<td>Not True</td>
<td>A Little True</td>
<td>True</td>
<td>Very True</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m afraid of writing essays in English when I know that they will be marked.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing in English is a lot of fun.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s easy for me to write good essays in English.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can write a paper in English with good organization (for example: all of the ideas are in the right order).</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I worry a lot about tests in English.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think that what I learn in this ESLEO class is important.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning English is one of my favourite activities in school.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t want to look like I am having trouble learning English in my ESLEO class.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can correctly use parts of speech (for example: nouns, verbs, adjectives, etc.).</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like to speak in English to new people.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think learning English is boring.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In our ESLEO class, getting right answers is very important.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My parents want my school work to be challenging for me.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I worry about my English writing in this ESLEO class.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t like to speak English in front of the other students in ESLEO.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like having my friends tell me that I am good at English.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I use English only if I have to.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s important to me that I don’t look stupid in my ESLEO class.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s important to me that I learn a lot of English this year.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. W thinks making mistakes in school are okay as long as we are learning.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I avoid writing in English.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can organize my ideas for writing in English by brainstorming.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I want to avoid looking like I have trouble with English writing projects in this ESLEO class.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I only write in English if I have to.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One of my goals is to be a master at English writing this year.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement</td>
<td>Not At All True</td>
<td>Not True</td>
<td>A Little True</td>
<td>True</td>
<td>Very True</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know that I will get a good mark on my report card in this ESLEO class.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In our class ESLEO, getting good marks is very important.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My parents think getting the right answers in class is very important.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like what I am learning in ESLEO class.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being a good writer in English is important to me.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. W knows that I am trying my best to learn English.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think that what I am learning in ESLEO is helpful to me.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I'm no good at writing in English.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like being in school.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like to read in English.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like to learn about new things by learning English.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am afraid of making mistakes in English.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like to learn English because I can learn new things.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like to look smart in English compared to other students in my ELSEO class.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t like writing in English.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can write a simple sentence with correct grammar.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know that I can do an excellent job on the English writing projects in this ESLEO class.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think that I will do very well in this ESLEO class.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have an upset feeling when I take a test in English.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t like reading in English.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is important to me that I look smart compared to others in my ESLEO class.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like to learn new vocabulary in English.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think writing in English is interesting.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In our ESLEO class, trying hard is very important.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am happy when Ms. X likes my work.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think that that English writing is a useful subject.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think that practicing English writing in this ESLEO class is important.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My parents don’t like it when I make mistakes in my work at school.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In our class ESLEO, it’s very important not to look dumb.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like to show Ms. X that I’m better in English than other students.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Even if the work is hard in this class, I can learn it.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can master even the hardest material in English writing if I try.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can correctly use punctuation (for example: periods, commas, question marks, colons, etc.) on a one page essay.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One of my goals in ESLEO is to learn as much as I can.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s important to me that other students think I am good at English.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I take a test in English I think about how badly I am doing.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can write a report for a newspaper in English</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX E
BACKGROUND QUESTIONNAIRE

Learning EVEN more about you!

1. What is your name?___________________________________________

2. What is your birthday?  Month__________ Day_______ Year_______

3. Are you a:  □ Boy   □ Girl:

4. What country were you born in?  _____________________________
   a. Your mother?  _____________________________
   b. Your father?  _____________________________

5. If you were not born in Canada, when did you come to Canada?
   ______________________________________________________________________

6. What languages does your family speak at home most of the time?
   You:  □ only English  □ only other language--which?_________
          □ both English and other language--which?_________
   Parents: □ only English  □ only other language--which?_________
            □ both English and other language--which?_________

7. Do you have brothers and/or sisters?
   □ No
   □ Yes-----What language do you speak with your bothers/sisters most of the time?
            __________

8. What language do you speak with your friends most of the time? _________________

9. What language(s) other than English do you read and write?
   ______________________________________________________________________

10. Do you take any other English classes?
    □ No
    □ Yes-----Which one(s)? ________________________________________________

11. Have you taken the literacy test (OSSLT) before?  □ No   □ Yes----Did you pass? ____

12. Do you go to the after-school literacy class?  □ No   □ Yes
13. After high school would you like to go to:

☐ University
☐ College
☐ Neither---what would you like to do? _________________________________

14. Do you work after school and/or on weekends?

☐ No
☐ Yes-------- Where do you work? _________________________________

-------- How many hours a week do you work? _______________________

15. How many hours do you read or write after school or on weekends, not including your homework?

☐ less than 1 hour per week
☐ more than 1 hour but less than 3 hours per week
☐ more than 3 hours but less than 5 hours per week
☐ more than five hours per week

16. How often do you read these materials in your free time?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Almost Never</th>
<th>Once a month</th>
<th>A few times a month</th>
<th>A few times a week</th>
<th>Everyday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Magazines</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comic books</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiction books (novels, stories)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-fiction books</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspapers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
17. How often do you do the following activities?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Almost Never</th>
<th>Once a month</th>
<th>A few times a month</th>
<th>A few times a week</th>
<th>Everyday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watch YouTube</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chat online</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play Video Games (on the computer, Wii, Playstation, Xbox, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use Facebook/ Twitter/ Google Plus (or other social networking)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search on Internet</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX F
STUDENT INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Hi_____. Thanks for meeting with me!
I am interested in your thoughts and opinions about the feedback report you recently received. I also what to learn about:

1- What information is important to you read and think about your writing;
2- How you understand feedback that you get on your writing assignments; and
3- How you decide which feedback to use and what parts are most important to you.

I am only interested in your thoughts and opinions. I am not using this information to evaluate you. What you say is very important so I’m going to record what you say, okay?

DRAW Feedback Reports [show students their report]

- What was your impression of this report? Tell me what you were thinking when you first saw and read the feedback report.
- How do you understand…. (discuss each writing sub-skill in the report)?
- Is it important to get feedback on…(ask about each writing sub-skill)?
- What type of feedback do you like to get on your writing assignments? Is this feedback helpful to you?
- How do/did you decide what parts of the feedback you will use?
- Tell me about the ‘Next Steps’ section that you have completed. How did you decide which weaknesses you wanted to work on? How did you pick the strategies?
- Was this feedback the same as Ms. X’s feedback? Explain.

Classroom Rubrics [show students a writing rubric from their class]

- What information here is useful to you?
- What will you use in your writing? Why?
- What strategies will you use to incorporate it in your writing?
- When do you use the rubric? Prompt: Before/during/after writing?
- If your opinion and Ms. X’s is different. Who do you think is right?
Strategies for Using Feedback.
I want to understand what strategies you use when you get feedback.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do you….</th>
<th>Almost all of the time</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Not very often</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Try to remember the feedback</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write down the feedback</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify points that you don’t understand</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk to your teacher about the feedback</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Look back to previous feedback you’ve gotten</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consult a textbook or the internet for help (e.g., grammar book, dictionary)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rewrite another draft the composition:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using only teacher’s comments (some, all)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using self-evaluation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using peer-evaluation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t do anything with the feedback</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How do you evaluate yourself as a writer
in English? Excellent Good Fair Poor
in your first language? Excellent Good Fair Poor

What type of feedback is more useful/important to you?
- Grades?
- Teachers’ comments
- Peers’ comments
- When your teacher circles or underlines mistakes?
- Self-assessment
APPENDIX G
TEACHER INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

I’m interested in understanding your experiences during the time we’ve worked together. What are your reflections on the process?

1. How do you understand assessment feedback? What was your previous understanding?
2. As a result of this experience what is your current understanding? Any changes?
3. Any challenges?
4. What type of feedback do you value the most? What is your focus/purpose when you provide feedback?
5. Is there anything that you want to try out in terms of feedback?
6. How do you think that the self-assessment process helped/hindered the students? Should self-assessment be used for marks? Did the students need more training?
7. In your opinion, what influences how students received and use feedback?
8. How did the language profiles contribute to your instruction?
9. Has your approach to rating your students’ English writing proficiency changed? If yes, how?
10. How did the language profiles contribute to your understanding of students’ writing development?
11. How did you incorporate the students’ self-assessment of writing in your classroom? What contribution did they make?
12. How do you think that the students’ self-assessment of writing contributed to their writing development?
13. In your opinion…What is good writing? In other words, when you read a student’s essay or other written work, what helps you decide if it’s high quality or not?
14. What type of feedback helps students the most in their writing development?
15. What are your reflections on the use of self-assessment?
16. What are your reflections on giving/receiving feedback?
APPENDIX H
SAMPLE DRAW FEEDBACK PROFILE REPORT

STEPS to Becoming a Better Writer
Zhou’s Writing Profile

Summary Comments
Zhou, you have creative and interesting ideas. You have included specific details that support your ideas and make it interesting for the reader. You use some interesting vocabulary, but there are times when you use incorrect words so it is hard to understand the meaning of your sentences. Your punctuation and grammar are not always correct. Try to read your essay aloud so that you can try to hear the mistakes to correct them.

Feedback Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Writing Category</th>
<th>Overall Performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IDEAS</td>
<td>You are on your way to mastering this skill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ORGANIZATION</td>
<td>You are showing improvement here—keep on working to continue improving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VOCABULARY</td>
<td>You are showing improvement here—keep on working to continue improving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SENTENCES</td>
<td>You are showing improvement here—keep on working to continue improving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MECHANICS</td>
<td>Needs Improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRAMMAR</td>
<td>Needs improvement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Zhou's Writing
### Detailed Feedback about Each Category

#### IDEAS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Your main ideas are clear</td>
<td>ordova introduction does not include enough information to introduce the topic and make the reader want to read more.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I learned new information about your topic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You make connections to your own knowledge/experiences</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You have provided many details about your life</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quotations are included</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### ORGANIZATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Essay includes an introduction</td>
<td>Introduction does not include date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your essay has a conclusion</td>
<td>Not all paragraphs have a concluding sentence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ideas are presented in a good order so that the reader can easily move from start to finish</td>
<td>There are no transitions between your paragraphs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paragraphs have an introductory sentence</td>
<td>Your essay does not have a title that tells the reader about the content</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### VOCABULARY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A good variety of words and phrases used</td>
<td>There are many times where an incorrect word is used which makes the meaning hard to understand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not many adjectives/modifiers used to add details, and make writing more interesting to help the reader to ‘see’ what you are writing about</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### SENTENCES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A variety of sentence types are used</td>
<td>Transition words are not used (for example: additionally, moreover, furthermore)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simple transition words are used between sentences</td>
<td>Not many complex sentences used</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### MECHANICS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not many spelling mistakes</td>
<td>Punctuation at the end of sentences is not always correct; some periods missing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capitalization used correctly</td>
<td>Punctuation for quotations not used correctly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengths</td>
<td>Weaknesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Correct use of pronouns</td>
<td>- Mistakes with grammar interfere with meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Some mistakes with the use of prepositions (e.g., to, on)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Some mistakes with verbs and verb tenses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Some errors of word order/function</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Some mistakes with the use of articles (e.g., the, a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Commas, semi-colons not always used correctly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Next Steps…**

Think about your writing profile that you’ve just finished reading.

In your own words write down the *areas of your writing that you want to work on, how you want to improve on it*, and *what your plans are for improving it* (for example, what strategies will you use, like re-reading your work, using a dictionary, etc.).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Writing Category</th>
<th>In your own words: What are your weaknesses that you want to work on?</th>
<th>How do you want to improve on your weaknesses? What strategies will you use?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IDEAS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ORGANIZATION</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VOCABULARY</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SENTENCES</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MECHANICS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRAMMAR</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX I
SOURCES OF FEEDBACK IN CLASSROOMS: TEACHERS’ RUBRICS

Classroom A: A Typical Rubric used to Assess a News Report Assignment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Skills¹</th>
<th>Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Knowledge and Understanding</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(writing)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article includes necessary facts= 5Ws and 1H</td>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article demonstrates a detailed account of the event being reported</td>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Thinking and Inquiry (socio-cultural)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article uses facts, quotes, and statistics in a meaningful way to create interest for the reader</td>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Application (writing)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article is written in an appropriate and relevant style for news reporting</td>
<td>Style/ Register</td>
<td>Never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communication (writing)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article uses language conventions appropriately (spelling, grammar, sentence, structure)</td>
<td>Mechanics; Grammar; Sentence Fluency</td>
<td>Never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article is well organized and followed the inverted pyramid structure</td>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Never</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹This column was not part of the original rubric; it is based on my analysis of the sub-skill being assessed
### Classroom B: A Typical Rubric used to Assess a Paragraph

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Writing Criteria</th>
<th>Skills&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The topic sentences state the main idea/opinion of the paragraph</td>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Needs Improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The body sentences give examples/explanations to support the topic or main idea of the paragraph</td>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Needs Improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concluding sentences restate the main idea/opinion</td>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Needs Improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All ideas are written clearly using correct verb tenses, spelling, sentence structure and punctuation</td>
<td>Mechanics, Grammar, Sentence fluency</td>
<td>Needs Improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The writer has clearly defended their [sic] position in relation to the topic</td>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Needs Improvement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup>This column was not part of the original rubric; it is based on my analysis of the sub-skill being assessed.
Classroom B: A Typical Rubric used for Summative Purposes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Thinking/Inquiry</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Critical thinking skills:</strong></td>
<td>The student</td>
<td>uses a controlling idea to focus the essay with limited effectiveness</td>
<td>uses a controlling idea to focus the essay with some effectiveness</td>
<td>uses a controlling idea to focus the essay with considerable effectiveness</td>
<td>uses a controlling idea to focus the essay with a high degree of effectiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thesis statement/controlling idea as focus for the body of the essay, the issue, and the writer’s position on the issue</td>
<td>Content</td>
<td>uses details and evidence from the text to support the controlling idea with limited effectiveness</td>
<td>uses details and evidence from the text to support the controlling idea with some effectiveness</td>
<td>uses details and evidence from the text to support the controlling idea with considerable effectiveness</td>
<td>uses details and evidence from the text to support the controlling idea with a high degree of effectiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communication</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communication of ideas:</strong></td>
<td>The student</td>
<td>organizes the essay by explaining the main points with limited effectiveness</td>
<td>organizes the essay by explaining the main points with some effectiveness</td>
<td>organizes the essay by explaining the main points with considerable effectiveness</td>
<td>organizes the essay by explaining the main points with a high degree of effectiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization (focussed on the pattern of organization suggested in the thesis statement)</td>
<td>Organizational</td>
<td>uses a formal tone and appropriate diction and style with limited effectiveness</td>
<td>uses a formal tone and appropriate diction and style with some effectiveness</td>
<td>uses a formal tone and appropriate diction and style with considerable effectiveness</td>
<td>uses a formal tone and appropriate diction and style with a high degree of effectiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communication for different audiences and purposes:</strong></td>
<td>Vocabulary, Sentence fluency, Content</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style (diction, sentence structure, figurative language, confident discussion of the issue)</td>
<td></td>
<td>uses language conventions with limited accuracy and effectiveness</td>
<td>uses language conventions with some accuracy and effectiveness</td>
<td>uses language conventions with considerable accuracy and effectiveness</td>
<td>uses language conventions with a high degree of accuracy and effectiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Application</strong></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application of writing process: Correct documentation</td>
<td>The student</td>
<td>documents sources with limited accuracy</td>
<td>documents sources with some accuracy</td>
<td>documents sources with considerable accuracy</td>
<td>documents sources with a high degree of accuracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application of language conventions: Spelling, grammar, punctuation</td>
<td>Mechanics, Grammar</td>
<td>uses language conventions with limited accuracy and effectiveness</td>
<td>uses language conventions with some accuracy and effectiveness</td>
<td>uses language conventions with considerable accuracy and effectiveness</td>
<td>uses language conventions with a high degree of accuracy and effectiveness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*This column was not part of the original rubric; it is based on my analysis of the sub-skill being assessed.*

Classroom C: A Typical Rubric used for Assessing Descriptive Essays
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>Level 1</th>
<th>Level 2</th>
<th>Level 3</th>
<th>Level 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction and Conclusion</td>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Introduction does not reveal your job. It does not set the scene or get much interest. There is incorrect “I.” There is no conclusion.</td>
<td>Introduction is somewhat clear but could be more interesting.</td>
<td>Introduction establishes a job and setting. However, it could be more creative.</td>
<td>Introduction is very creative and establishes a place, time, and job. It grabs the reader’s attention.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examples</td>
<td>Content</td>
<td>There are no examples given.</td>
<td>Examples are given, but they do not clearly support the topic/ideas. The examples are not always relevant to the topic.</td>
<td>A few good examples are given that support some of the topics/ideas but more examples are needed.</td>
<td>All topics/ideas have examples that support them by providing information related to job, life, and background.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific names, ages, places</td>
<td>Content</td>
<td>There no specific names, ages, or places given.</td>
<td>Writer only uses ONE of the following: specific names, ages, places to add details to writing.</td>
<td>Writer uses TWO of the following: specific names, ages, places to add details to the writing.</td>
<td>Specific names are given for each person mentioned, as well as their age. The names of places where events happened or the cities in which they happened are given to make the story more interesting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic and concluding sentences</td>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>There are no topic/concluding sentences.</td>
<td>There are some but they could be more creative.</td>
<td>Each paragraph has a topic and a concluding sentence. However, they could be more smoothly written.</td>
<td>Each paragraph has a topic and a concluding sentence: all are smoothly incorporated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quotations</td>
<td>Content</td>
<td>No quotations are used in the story</td>
<td>A few quotations are used in the story, but they are not included in appropriate parts of the story.</td>
<td>Several quotations are used in the story to make it more interesting, but more quotes are needed to add more details.</td>
<td>Multiple quotations are included to show what various people said. The quotations make the writing more interesting, and add extra information to the story.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transitions</td>
<td>Sentence Fluency</td>
<td>There are no transitions between paragraphs or between sentences.</td>
<td>Some transition words are used, such as and, but, or, to make connections</td>
<td>There are transition words, such as moreover, furthermore, additionally, to</td>
<td>At the end of every paragraph there is a transition sentence to introduce the reader to ideas in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Level</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>make connections between ideas in different sentences.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the following paragraph. A wide variety of transition words are used in the article.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are many spelling mistakes. There are several times when the wrong vocabulary word is used making it hard to understand the meaning of the sentence.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are some spelling mistakes. Adjectives are used in the article to make it more interesting.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are few spelling mistakes. A variety of different vocabulary words are used to make the article more interesting.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are almost no spelling mistakes in the story. A variety of different vocabulary words are used, AND adjectives are used to make the story interesting and provide more details about the people, places, and things in the story.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are many errors with verb tense (over 8).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most of the verb forms are correct (3 or fewer).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are no verb form/tense errors.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Either no punctuation is used for quotations OR the punctuation used is wrong.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punctuation of quotations is correctly used most of the time.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punctuations of quotations is used correctly all of the time. A variety of punctuation is used in the quotations to make the quotations more interesting. For example, the quotations might have a question mark or exclamation mark.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are many fragments and incorrect sentences (6 or more).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are correct simple and compound sentences but very few complex (Dep, Ind) sentences.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are many different kinds of sentences. Some, however, incomplete or incorrect.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most of the sentences are correct. There are many different sentence structures.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Skills</td>
<td>Level 1</td>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td>Level 3</td>
<td>Level 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject-Verb</td>
<td>Grammar</td>
<td>There are over 4 errors.</td>
<td>There are 3 errors.</td>
<td>There are 1-2 errors.</td>
<td>There are no errors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>agreement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capitalization</td>
<td>Mechanics</td>
<td>Words at the beginning of sentences are not capitalized. Names of people and places are not capitalized.</td>
<td>Words at the beginning of sentences are capitalized, but not all of them. Some of the names of people and places are not capitalized.</td>
<td>Words at the beginning of sentences are capitalized, but the names of people and places are not always capitalized.</td>
<td>Words at the beginning of sentences and names of people and places are always correctly capitalized.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\*This column was not part of the original rubric; it is based on my analysis of the sub-skill being assessed.*
## APPENDIX J
### SOURCES OF FEEDBACK IN CLASSROOMS: OSSLT RUBRICS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Descriptor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blank</td>
<td>The pages are blank with nothing written or drawn in the space provided.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illegible</td>
<td>The response is illegible, or irrelevant to the prompt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off topic</td>
<td>The response is off topic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code 10</td>
<td>The response is related to the prompt but does not express an opinion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OR</td>
<td>The response expresses an opinion with no supporting details or provides details unrelated to the opinion. There is no evidence of organization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code 20</td>
<td>The response is related to the prompt, but only part of the response expresses and supports an opinion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OR</td>
<td>The response is related to the prompt, and expresses and supports an opinion, but the opinion is unclear or inconsistent. There are insufficient supporting details: too few or repetitious. There is limited evidence of organization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code 30</td>
<td>The response is related to the prompt and expresses a clear opinion. There are insufficient and/or vague supporting details or the connection of the details to the opinion is not always clear. There is evidence of organization, but lapses distract from the overall communication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code 40</td>
<td>The response is related to the prompt. A clear and consistent opinion is developed with sufficient supporting details, however only some are specific. The organization is mechanical and any lapses do not distract from the overall communication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code 50</td>
<td>The response is related to the prompt. A clear and consistent opinion is developed with sufficient specific supporting details. The organization is logical.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code 60</td>
<td>The response is related to the assigned prompt. A clear and consistent opinion is developed with sufficient specific supporting details that are thoughtfully chosen. The organization is coherent demonstrating a thoughtful progression of ideas.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Descriptor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Code 10</td>
<td>There is insufficient evidence to assess the use of conventions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OR</td>
<td>Errors in conventions interfere with communication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code 20</td>
<td>Errors in conventions distract from communication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code 30</td>
<td>Errors in conventions do not distract from communication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code 40</td>
<td>Control of conventions is evident in written work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code</td>
<td>Descriptor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>The response is related to headline and/or photo but is not a news report. OR The response is a news report related to the headline and/or photo. It identifies an event, about provides no supporting details, or provides details that are unrelated to the event. There is no evidence of organization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>The response is related to headline and/or photo but only partly in the form of a news report. OR The response is a news report related to the headline and/or photo, but the focus on an event is unclear or inconsistent. There are insufficient supporting details: too few or repetitive. There is limited evidence of organization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>The response is a news report related to the headline and photo with a clear focus on an event. There are insufficient and/or vague supporting details or the connection of the details to the event is not always clear. There is evidence of organization, but lapses distract from the overall communication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>The response is a news report related to the headline and photo with a clear and consistent focus on an event. There are sufficient supporting details, however, only some are specific. The organization is mechanical and any lapses do not distract from the overall communication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>The response is a news report related to the headline and photo with a clear and consistent focus on an event. There are sufficient specific supporting details to develop the news report. The organization is logical.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>The response is a news report related to the headline and photo with a clear and consistent focus on an event. There are sufficient specific supporting details, which are thoughtfully chosen to develop the news report. The organization is coherent demonstrating a thoughtful progression of ideas.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## APPENDIX K
### SAMPLE OF CODED RESPONSES OF STUDENTS’ INTERPRETATION OF SUB-SKILLS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Ideas</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Vocab</th>
<th>Sentences</th>
<th>Mechanics</th>
<th>Grammar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ideas. I’m more so think like a thesis and then the ideas that relate to the thesis.</td>
<td>The way that I put it and the order for the readers to like understand what’s my point actually.</td>
<td>The vocabulary, the words, grammar, the structure, sentences. I think it’s just sentences.</td>
<td>I think it’s like a runaway sentences, like so long or so short, the way that you put in it.</td>
<td>To be honest, I don’t know it</td>
<td>Yeah, the structure of the sentence. The way you put it like to say it’s past tense.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Match</td>
<td>Match</td>
<td>Confounded</td>
<td>Match</td>
<td>No understanding</td>
<td>Mismatch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The Ideas--the examples and the way of explanations that it come with.</td>
<td>The way I organize my paragraph, the examples, the explanations, the order of like, importance</td>
<td>The words that I use if I repeat words, if I use the same words, simple words, or if I find more complex different vocabulary</td>
<td>The order and the structure of the sentence, for example I am using commas, dots, and if there off topic or if they are focusing on one thing</td>
<td>I didn’t do mechanics that good, but I said it was good. Mechanics maybe, um, I read it before, but now I forget about it.</td>
<td>Grammar is the same right, spelling mistakes, and that stuff?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Match</td>
<td>Match</td>
<td>Match</td>
<td>Confounded</td>
<td>Mismatch</td>
<td>Mismatch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Like, for example, when I look at “Ideas” right now, I think, for my essay, I think what things am I using, the examples and stuff like that to put in the essay. That’s what I think “Ideas” mean.</td>
<td>I think the order of the ideas, paragraphs like you told us before, like put the last one at the end and stuff like that. Margins, handwriting.</td>
<td>This one is like the usage of different vocabulary words like higher advanced and the ones that are modern. Modern vocab: “Like for example, “good” and then you use “better.” Overcome – surpass, those are kind of ones.</td>
<td>I don’t put so much in one sentence, like not a run-on sentence, for example. How the sentence has placed commas.</td>
<td>That’s like quotations, commas, certain things you put in the paragraphs.</td>
<td>I don’t know how to place that! I’m not really sure. The tenses, like that?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Match</td>
<td>Confounded</td>
<td>Match</td>
<td>Confounded</td>
<td>Match</td>
<td>Partial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>About what you know? About the story or what you are writing</td>
<td>How you organize when you put the examples. When they are explaining, and the conclusion and introduction.</td>
<td>The words that I use? If it fits in the sentence</td>
<td>If I wrote the sentence correctly or if I used the right grammar about it</td>
<td>Is it the – when I use commas?</td>
<td>The – when I use the right verbs, past tense...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Match</td>
<td>Match</td>
<td>Match</td>
<td>Confounded</td>
<td>Partial</td>
<td>Partial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>It means what do you know about the topic</td>
<td>How do you organize the whole essay and how you show it clearly for the reader to understand what you are trying to say</td>
<td>The words that you know - is it complex or just like ... words</td>
<td>How you state everything; sentences is how clearly you do the sentence, like, does it have a lot of verbs, nouns, pronouns and other stuff.</td>
<td>It's spelling and the semi-colons and how you have the periods. The capitalize letter...</td>
<td>Grammar is like the same as organizing but the way you write the sentence, is it right or do you use the right function of the words.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>What you have in your assignment, like topic or sentences, or like your ideas</td>
<td>How do you represent it- perform your...your ideas in a paragraphs, how do you write it, how do you express it.</td>
<td>Words that you use, like simple words, hard words, how many times do you copy it, how many times do you use the same word</td>
<td>I think it's structure of sentences. How do you, like, how do you put for example. The words before verb or noun before verb, I think that's structure and how do you use it with each other.</td>
<td>I think it's something close to sentences, I think</td>
<td>How do you spell words, how do you use this words and punctuation and commas, dots and other things.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Ideas about the topic</td>
<td>How you put things and how – what people will understand about your writing</td>
<td>Spellings</td>
<td>If your sentence has a ... has a thought</td>
<td>I don’t know</td>
<td>If your sentence have sense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>The main topic and the examples</td>
<td>The order of the introduction and the concluding, and how it's put into sentences</td>
<td>The spellings and the words (like, vocabulary words, like deeper). Deeper means that it has like more meaning then what we usually use in everything</td>
<td>I'm not sure, but it's like all the similes and that kind of sentences</td>
<td>Not sure about that, but punctuation marks or and commas</td>
<td>Grammar's kind of similar to vocabulary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Things that...inside of your mind and then your opinions</td>
<td>The order, the right order and how you write to make it clear, to make your ideas clear</td>
<td>The words, like, the unusual words and the like</td>
<td>It's how you create your sentences using the correct verbs and nouns</td>
<td>Maybe it's spellings?</td>
<td>The correct order of words in a sentence. It's the syntax of it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>The contents. What material you’re using</td>
<td>The essay proceeding a certain way, like, the correct way that the reader won’t get</td>
<td>The word you use is accurate or not. And like, it’s make the essay more interesting.</td>
<td>Like the connections of ideas</td>
<td>We type in a computer so .. we have spelling mistakes</td>
<td>Laughs- it's obvious; grammar is grammar!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Ideas</td>
<td>Organization</td>
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<td>---------</td>
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<td>-----------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>The information you have.</td>
<td>How you said and how you - what do you call that word? – how you presented your information.</td>
<td>Vocabulary is, for me, like the spelling, grammar.</td>
<td>The “Sentences” for me is like the run-ons, the fragments, the complete thoughts.</td>
<td>Basically, I think it’s like the structure, the how you are supposed to structure your information, same as like the Organization</td>
<td>The proper words that you should use, the tenses, the consistency of your tenses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Ideas. It’s like what do I think about the topics, what are my ideas to support my theme.</td>
<td>I think it’s the organization of ideas, like it’s not all over the place and I’m following the right structure of an essay</td>
<td>The kind of words I use. Like if I use all the words all over again.</td>
<td>It’s like how complicated my sentences are, like how simple...</td>
<td>Is that like spelling and past tense?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>What’s your essay about? Like, how detailed it is</td>
<td>Like how the informations are put together. If it’s like... Sometimes I don’t put it together and it’s hard to understand or read. So... I think that’s it.</td>
<td>Deep words or something... and proper sentences, like no wrong grammars</td>
<td>I don’t know Grammar” – isn’t it the same thing as vocabulary, somehow</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Match | Match | Partial | Mismatch | Match | Mismatch | Partial |
Match | Match | Mismatch | Match | No response | Confounded |
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