

# The Value of Feedback and Conferencing in the Process Approach to Writing for Filipino and Thai Students in Higher Education: A Comparative Analysis

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## Abstract

Using two groups of university students who enrolled in English 102, one from the Philippines and one from Thailand, this study looked into the role feedback and conferencing played in the process writing approach of the respondents. This study used a descriptive-qualitative causal design, adopting Dana Ferris' 1995 research in multiple-draft composition classrooms done at the California State University in Sacramento. To suit the specific needs of this study, Ferris' questionnaire was modified. Survey results were tabulated and questions placed under ordinal categories were averaged using SPSS. Results were analyzed using Categorical Data Analysis (CDA). Other questions were dealt with using a qualitative survey data analysis, a process of systematically searching for and arranging the answers to open-ended questions. This study underscores four major findings. First, students preferred both the quantitative and qualitative forms of assessment of their essays. Second, students preferred the process approach to writing, relying on the benefits the model promised them. Third, earlier drafts were found to have had positive influence on the succeeding drafts and the final copy. Lastly, this study demonstrates that revision is central in the improvement of every essay.

**Key words:** feedback, conferencing, process approach to writing

## Introduction

The context for academic writing serves as a very crucial factor that determines largely the learner's success notwithstanding the axiom that one learns to write by writing and that many second language (L2) writers eventually turn out as good writers by generating an ample amount of outputs over time. Said context includes as well the manner through which a teacher helps the learners achieve learning objectives "through a variety of intervention strategies available to the classroom setting" (Kroll, 2003, p. 115). As Silva and Matsuda (2002) pointed out, writing is something that is always "embedded in a complex web of relationships between writers, readers, the text and reality" (p. 253). In recognition of the constantly changing nature of academic writing, it can be truly said that, in reality, academic writing operates inside a system of an academic community whose members find meaning in building partnerships with those whom they share values or pursue similar academic quests.

In Southeast Asian classrooms, however, this is not the norm. Where the writing pedagogy is dominated by the product-centered paradigm, better known as the traditional approach to writing, most students have yet to make themselves familiar with both the practices and the beliefs inherent in academic writing in universities where English is the medium of instruction (Ballard & Clanchy, 1991). Whereas students in the academic discourse communities are made to fulfill different writing objectives in different content areas, they are expected to carry out different roles as well. Given this, students nowadays are confounded with a problem in trying to meet the purposes and roles expected of them.

Batin (2003) maintained that what is difficult, however, is that with the dominance of the product-

centered paradigm, students are not given the chance “to discover, explore, and experiment on their linguistic repertoire and deprives them of a chance to plan, review, and reflect on their ideas” (p. 25). She further argued, “If writing were to develop and sharpen learners’ mental acuity as well as communicative skills, it should allow for research, planning, drafting, revising, monitoring, feedback, and assessment” (2003, p. 32). Simply put, the process-oriented approach promises to be the better alternative to the product-centered paradigm.

As propelled by the benefits process writing offers, a number of researchers have raised relevant questions. Polio (2003) volunteered three kinds, the first of which is “Simply asking what the process is like” (p. 47). The second set of questions deals with interventions, an example for which is the giving of feedback and conducting conferencing. The third “limited number of studies has looked at change in writers over time” (p. 48). Of the three sets of questions Polio recommended, the one on the value of interventions via feedback and conferencing to students’ composition is the most relevant to modern-day academic needs.

This research subscribes to Reid’s (1983) findings based on her “own teaching that illustrates how teacher commentary taken out of context can be seen to misrepresent the dynamics of the classroom” (p. 121). Hence this study greatly considers the call for future researchers to remember that “[b]ecause teacher commentary, student reactions to commentary, and student revisions interact with each other, research needs to look at all three simultaneously” (Goldstein, 2001, p. 86).

This study has sought to look into the following: (1) what kind/s of assessment students prefer in their essay writing; (2) how students respond to the use of the process approach to writing; (3) how significant earlier drafts are in relation to the succeeding and final drafts, and; (4) what role revision plays in the revision of each draft/ paper.

In its aim to respond to the students’ needs in the writing pedagogy from across the disciplines, the Department of English of a private Philippine university, in support of the principles of the process approach to academic writing, spearheaded a campaign in the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) promoting the value of revision, teacher feedback, and conferencing. The Department of English initiated said drive upon learning through a preliminary survey that teachers from other disciplines/faculties were complaining over the kind of written outputs [using the English language] students handed in. Likewise, the Department of English found out a discrepancy in the academic writing performance of students in the English language and content area subjects, respectively. Initially, content area teachers were not as satisfied as the language teachers were in terms of the quality of writing students demonstrated. Apparently, students handed in better [final] papers in their language classes, as opposed to the quality of papers they gave in their content area subjects. This could be attributed to the fact that the language teachers, as opposed to the content area teachers, subscribed to the merit inherent in giving feedback to students’ compositions and in conferencing with the students, all of which were significant in requiring them to write and revise academic papers through process writing in a multiple-draft setting.

Believing that much academic writing takes place in content courses, the Department of English highly encouraged the other departments to engage in a similar approach to writing, persuading them to become advocates of the axiom, ‘Every teacher a language teacher.’ This simply meant that because academic writing in said University was considered central in most content area subjects, the Department of English believed that the use of the process writing approach would not only be significant and beneficial to the language teachers and their composition students, but also to content area faculty and their students. Given the results that came out of the preliminary study this author conducted in 2006, this current study subscribes to the same basic tenet. For this current study, however, the author replicates said similar study in the higher education Thai context. Results of the Philippine study were used as a point of reference to checking whether Thai students in the university level have the same, similar, or different preferences concerning feedback-giving and conduct of conferencing. (For a discussion on the selection of the respondents, please see the Research Design Section.)

### **Process Writing**

Given the exceptional spread of the English language written modality as an essential tool in both the academic and corporate milieu nowadays, it is imperative that relevant information about the people who use it and how it is used be consulted.

#### ***Process Writing in Academic Context***

Every writing teacher who is sincere in helping a student succeed in the composition class knows that the social context, i.e., the classroom, plays a very significant role. So much so that “some variable of learning behavior which has correlational potential with instructional treatment” (Candlin, 2001, p. 122) should be identified to promote better teaching and learning. For one, identification of the criteria used in evaluating an academic paper is seen central in the process. As discussed earlier, the assessment and evaluation of the academic papers in this study used the following scheme: the revision of the first draft covered general content, the second was concerned with organization, and the third draft centered on style, grammar, and language.

While the process-oriented approach has so much to offer in terms of aiding learners attain writing proficiency, a significant component of academic achievement, most writing classes in the Philippine classroom setting have not yet taken advantage of its use and benefits. For one, in a quasi-experimental study of Batin (2003), she disclosed how the writing pedagogy in said country is still dominated by the product-centered or traditional method. Quoting Zamel (1999), she described it not a remote case as most countries experience this as well. Despite the seeming inability of the traditional writing approach to address the specific concerns of the students, it continues to be the leading method employed. To better understand and appreciate what the process-oriented process has to offer, it is best to assess it in opposition to the traditional approach.

According to Lynch (1997), the traditional approaches to writing are meant to make students compose correct texts that emphasize grammatical, vocabulary, spelling, and punctuation accuracy. Connor (1987) pointed out that such kind of writing, which considers style as the most important element putting greater focus on the linear process, follows a conventional paradigm that is mainly product-centered. The problem with this model, however, is that many teachers and researchers disapprove of it because it does not give a full picture of what successful writers actually do (Raimes, 1988). Such traditional model does not allow writers room for repair of writing errors.

On the contrary, the process-based approach draws attention to a writing method that allows development of both organization and meaning (Pincas, 2001). Process writing, inclusive of invention strategies, multiple drafts, and formative feedback, considers revision central to the practice.

Some pioneering studies looked into the value of process writing, giving light to the development of its principles and features. In Batin's (2003) review of key studies which paved the way for the development of process approach to writing, she identified five major findings, namely: (1) Writing is non-linear and recursive with overlapping and independent stages, such as pre-writing or planning, composing or writing and revising (Hayes & Flower, 1980); (2) The process approach gives students two crucial supports in writing, namely, time for the students to try out ideas and feedback on the content of what they write (Perl, 1980); (3) Process writing is an enabling approach for it nurtures the skills with which writers work out their solutions to the problems they set themselves; they shape their raw material into a coherent message towards an acceptable and appropriate form for expressing it (White & Arndt as cited in Batin, 2003); (4) Process approach writing enables students to explore and analyze than to imitate it; it allows them to go through a cycle of writing activities which require them to use efficient writing strategies to come up with a product that is not pre-conceived (Batin, 2003); (5) The process approach enables students to find the writing process as one for discovering new ideas and new language forms to express these ideas (Raimes as cited in Batin, 2003).

Another important concern that needs greater attention is the role of writing instructors as well as content area teachers to help students achieve academic competence. Although this present study attempts to highlight the use and benefits of the process approach in the English language class, it also aims to accentuate the

fact that the role of content area teachers can never be denied in making this endeavor successful. For one, Batin (2003) argued that the use of process approach helps teachers identify the kinds of students they have in their own classrooms thereby giving them clues how to deal with them academically. She cited five cognitive learning styles that students normally exhibit (Ausubel & Hill as cited in Batin, 2003). She maintained that knowledge of the said learning styles helps avoid, if not totally reduce, a mismatch between the students' learning styles and the teacher's teaching styles. When accommodating the value of the five cognitive learning styles in using the process approach to writing, both the teacher and the students reap the benefits especially during the giving of feedback and when doing revisions. Once the teacher recognizes the learning styles of the students, the teacher is placed in a better position, knowing what kind of feedback can be best given to every learner and how the feedback can be best communicated. When the teacher is able to match his/her manner of handling feedback to the students, it is likely that revision is better facilitated as feedback is assumed to be geared towards addressing specific points.

### **Feedback**

Feedback is one of the two vital components of revision. The importance it plays in the writing process is further contextualized by way of discussing the need for it and the form it takes. This idea is best captured in Leki's "Coaching from the margins: Issues in written response" when she remarked, "How best to respond to student writing is part of the broader question of how to create a context in which people learn to write better or more easily" (1991, p. 57).

Interestingly, the context in which academic writing can be best taken is a social and cultural phenomenon. While it is true that the act of writing is most commonly thought of as the result of a writer's effort to pool ideas cognitively, it has to be viewed as well as a social and cultural act because it "takes place within a context that accomplishes a particular purpose...that is appropriately shaped for its intended audience" (Hamp-Lyons & Kroll, 1997, p. 8). This view emphasizes the social aspects of writing, specifically underscoring how one learns to write in the academic setting. This issue is crucial because it touches on the manner written outputs should be produced.

More specifically, Chaudron (1998) stated that the communication process in the writing classroom is partly made possible by the key role feedback plays. Feedback, juxtaposed with the mere notion of error correction, is an unavoidable component of classroom transactions. That is, learners will always derive information about their performance based on the teacher's response, or lack of it.

On the part of the teachers, they, too, see the value of their feedback as reflected in their students' writing, in how students behave towards it, and in the students' language acquisitions, generally speaking (Cohen, 1987). Lynch (1997) argued that a teacher's giving of feedback creates a "sound psychological sense," erasing whatever doubts and problems students have during the writing activity (p. 156). MacFarlane (as cited in Chaudron, 1975) touched on this as well, underscoring how feedback acts as a motivating force freeing the students from the apprehension of mistaking corrections as failures. Srole (1997) added that "...immediate feedback supplies clues to language problems" (p. 106).

However, it must be remembered that the kind of feedback given to students plays a crucial part. Hillocks (as cited in Fathman & Whalley, 1991) concluded that "...focused feedback can have an effect on certain aspects of writing" (p. 166). Whereas general or fragmented feedback leads to the non-improvement of the paper that is due for revision, focused feedback helps in showing students how to revise their texts successfully. White and Arndt (1996) advised teachers to "[r]espond as a genuine and interested reader, rather than as a judge and an evaluator" (p. 125). Fathman and Whalley (1990) revealed that "nearly all researchers agree that attention must be paid to both content and form" (p. 180) as "77% improved the content of their writing" (p. 185) when they were given feedback on said component.

On the contrary, Ferris (2003) reported that initial L1 research on giving feedback revealed a disheartening picture. She found out that students appeared to be disregarding teacher feedback. Hillocks (1986) and Knoblauch and Brannon (1981) reported that regardless of how the written feedback was provided, it did

not come out successful, supporting the teachers' aim to help students improve their writing. However, while some of these initial findings seemed discouraging, this study aims at negating earlier claims against feedback, believing that other factors might not have been considered leading to such a disparaging result.

This study, instead, subscribes to Raimes' (1985) conclusion: "With context, preparation, feedback, and opportunities for revision, students at any level of proficiency can be engaged in discovery of meaning" (p. 229). This present study maintains that it can be made possible through another equally significant and relevant step: conferencing.

### ***Conferencing***

When discouraging results came out regarding the students' reactions to feedback, the next major movement in the chronicle of response to student writing has geared towards strategies that are considered hugely apt (Raimes, 1985). This eventually paved the way to what is commonly known now as teacher-student conferences or conferencing.

Also known as communicative interaction or teacher-student talk, conferencing refers to the teacher's act of intervention during the writing process. Normally, a one-to-one conversation between teacher and student, it is a short conference that lasts from 10-15 minutes, enabling the teacher to discuss with the student problems in the latter's work (Peñaflorida, 1988).

According to Kroll (2003), one advantage of conferencing is that it lets the teacher discover probable misinterpretations a student might have about a prior written comment on writing issues. It also erases traditional concepts of classroom instructions as the transfer of information from a teacher who is knowledgeable to a student who is passively learning. A technique that need not be limited to the discussion of a specific draft, it yields results [from individual discussions] that are very satisfying (Chaudron, 1988).

Additionally, conferences are believed to be essential because they permit students to be in command of the communication, make clear their teachers' reactions, and negotiate meaning. "Furthermore, conferences enable teachers to assess how students react to their feedback" (Shin, 2003, pp. 3-4).

In conferencing, Peñaflorida (1988) further suggested, students are met individually by the teacher, rounding "out the process of discovering the unique backing records and needs of students, especially the first conference" all in the context of evaluation and response to student writing" (p. 85). Consistent with said views about conferencing, Graves (as cited in Peñaflorida, 1988) proposed a basic pattern of the writing conference, namely: (1) The student comments on the draft, (2) The teacher reads or reviews the draft, (3) The teacher responds to the student's comments, and (4) The student responds to the teacher's response.

Hinged on a popular classroom practice called scaffolding, conferencing, above all is a course design that puts learners as the reference point for decision-making, both in terms of content of lesson and form and style of teaching. Achieved through consultation and negotiation between teacher and learners, its main point is to make the students appreciate that their work is their property. That through it, students experience how it is to make "real-life decisions as well as decisions about schoolwork," realizing that the "real-world communicative needs of learners...take center stage in goal-setting" (Peñaflorida, 1988, p. 78).

### ***A Conceptual Framework of Process-Oriented Writing in Southeast Asia***

In keeping with the process-oriented approach to [academic] writing, the conceptual framework in the Figure 1 adopts the same framework that the preliminary study, which was conducted in the first participating university in the Philippines, subscribed to.

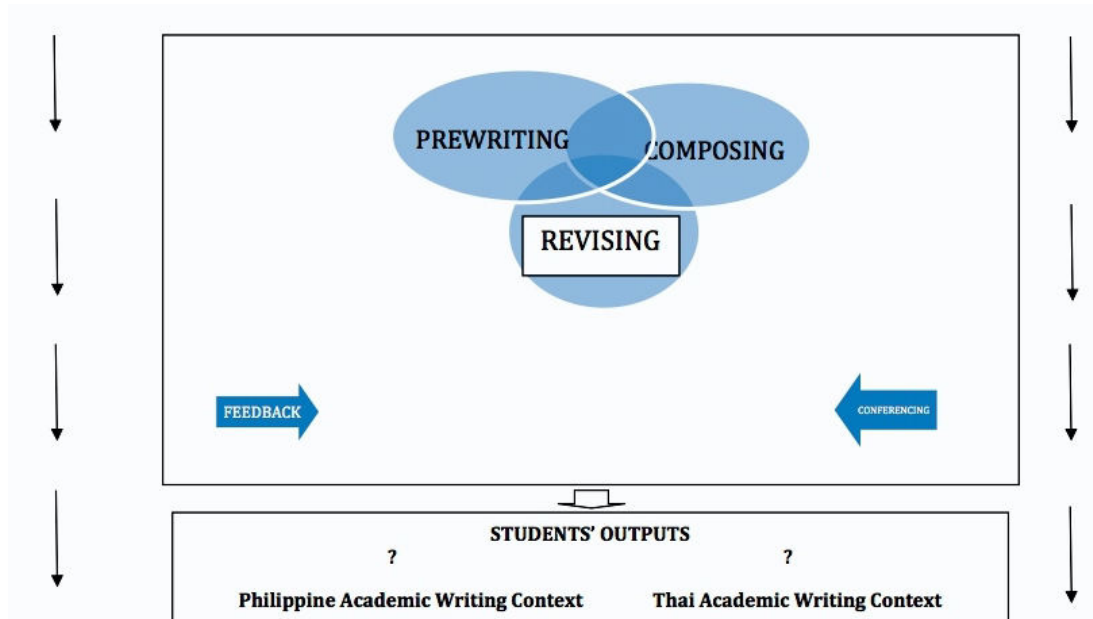


Figure 1. A Schematic Diagram of the Process-Oriented Approach with a Focus On Revision via Feedback and Conferencing

Consistent with the process every writer goes through, Figure 1 underscores the three most basic writing stages as represented by the three circles, namely the Pre-writing Stage, Composing/Drafting Stage, and Revising Stage, with emphasis on revision. While this study primarily focuses on the significant role revision plays in the composing process, both the discussion that follows and the schematic diagram above underscore the interdependence of the three stages of writing, as each phase does not work or operate in isolation. Revision being the focus of this study should be seen within the macro-framework of the process approach to writing.

As illustrated in Figure 1, this investigation aims to seek answers to questions primarily concerning the usefulness of revisions in the subjects' academic writing via the process approach. This study is anchored on the conceptual framework that argues that successful academic writing involves three major procedures, namely, prewriting, composing, and revising. Situated within the process approach context, prewriting, composing, and revising are believed to be both overlapping and independent stages (See Hayes & Flower, 1980); hence, the three separate yet overlapping circles representing the three steps. In the process of revising a paper, giving of feedback and holding conferencing sessions, which are all considered forms of teacher intervention, are key steps to producing satisfactory outputs. What this study ultimately seeks to find out is whether the key findings in the preliminary investigation that involved Filipino students from a Philippine private university would yield the same, similar, or different results when done with Thai students from a leading Thai university.

### Research Questions

This study aimed to answer the following research questions:

1. Which kind/s of assessment do students prefer?
2. How do students respond to the use of the process approach to writing in their respective classes?
3. What is the significance of earlier drafts in relation to the students' production of the succeeding and final drafts?
4. What role does revision play in the revision of each paper/ draft?

The results of this study were conceived to benefit the following stakeholders in the future:

- Composition students, as findings of this study are to be used as baseline information to address classroom-specific needs in an effort to improve the current teaching strategies employed;
- Classroom teachers, both in the English language and content subjects, as (1) baseline information on the learners will help them understand the reason/s for, and remedy any discrepancy there is in the learners' academic writing performance, and (2) knowledge of the process writing approach and its use in the classroom will help improve the students' performance in the academic writing pedagogy;
- Body of language-area research, as relevant findings can be used to form part of the existing and latest explorations on said topic, aiming to enlighten researchers who are working and will work on the same research locale;
- Language curriculum planners, as results of this study can be made instrumental in devising language curricula, and;
- Instructional materials writers, as discussions and findings of this investigation can be helpful in designing teaching-learning aids in the academic writing pedagogy.

### **Methodology**

This study made use of a descriptive-qualitative causal kind of research that focused on the importance of revision in process writing via feedback and conferencing in the [English] language class. As recommended by Ferris (1995) in her study, the coverage of this current investigation included administration of survey questionnaires, conduct of random interviews, analysis of composition outputs using Liz Hamp-Lyons' (1991) analytic and holistic marking systems, and keeping of journal entries.

### ***Data Collection***

This study made use of two sets of data. The first set of data came from a previous study done with participants who came from a private Philippine University. The second set of data came from participants from a leading Thai University. As this is a comparative analysis, the author purposely chose not to reveal the actual names of the students-participants and the Universities to protect their privacy. Actual results of said study, however, were used in all circumstances stipulated in and as required by the research design. Data collection was completed in 2012.

The first data site was a private Philippine University that emphasized the training of tertiary students via liberal arts education during the subject-students' first three years in school. Liberal Arts Education was offered by the University's College of Arts and Sciences, a service unit that offered general education courses. One of its courses, the English [language] course was founded on the unity of the trivium, namely, rhetoric, logic, and grammar. This course was offered by the Department of English, a department that handled [English] language courses. A separate department, the Department of Literature, offered literature courses [in English]. The second participating institution was a Thai state University that offered liberal education through its International College as its institutional strength. Just like the set-up in the first participating institution, this second participating institution offered English as a general education course taken up by its Freshman students. Said course was offered by the English Studies Program under the Humanities and Language Division. The EC2 course, from which the student-respondents in this study came, was the second credit course offered by the Program. Pre-requisites of this course included EC1, where students were made to write four essays using four different rhetorical patterns, and ERS, a non-credit course taken only by Freshman students whose language scores in the University Admission Exams did not satisfy the college's criteria. Should a student's entrance exam score satisfy the course placement requirement, they joined directly EC1 instead. This present study can be best appreciated within the context of the language courses, namely, English 102 for the Philippine university and Intermediate English Communication 2 (EC2) for the Thai university.

In the first participating institution's aim to promote and strengthen consciousness among its students the

spirit of unitas, the University credo, it [first participating institution] imbued its curriculum a singular focus on love for service and truth geared towards social development and attainment of national goals. This was made possible through the research topics the University's Department of English approved of. The topics for the English 102 papers were those that promoted social awareness among the students such as current issues and other socially relevant concerns that required the students' societal input.

The English Studies Program of the second participating institution, on the other hand, required topics that were theme-based. Set within the academic writing context, the writing of the students' papers was anchored on two broad themes, the first of which would have been pre-selected by the EC 2 teachers. The second theme was selected by the students. Similarly, EC2 primarily aimed at promoting awareness of social, political, cultural, economic, and religious issues among the students. In this investigation, as it was in the Philippine case, the focus was on the Thai students' writing of their academic argument essays.

However, teachers of both Philippine and Thai Universities recognized the need for the students to be abreast of issues that cultivated their social consciousness; hence the specific topics of the respondents from both Universities were student-nominated. The topics could be either "field-independent (more personal subjects)" or "field-dependent (academic and scholarly discourses)" (Batin, 2003, p. 28). Using the process approach within the academic writing context, the subjects were given the opportunity to explore topics of their choice to encourage them to be more motivated to conduct individual researches of their interest.

Additionally, consonant with the conditions that are typically required within an academic discourse community, both the Filipino and the Thai students were highly encouraged to produce research-driven papers. To advance this objective, the argumentative form of discourse was made a major course requirement. The argumentative form of discourse was a research-intensive rhetorical pattern. That is, apart from requiring students to follow strictly a convincing discourse structure, it called for a substantial discussion of the topic at hand, which normally could only happen when a student performed sound research. As indicated in the global scale used by Hamp-Lyons (1991) in her study of the academic writing proficiency of non-native students' written texts, the highest among the nine band descriptors that demonstrated good argumentative written discourse was the one that satisfied the readers fully. It demonstrated a very coherent organization, allowing the reader to follow the idea with ease. Appropriate points of view with complete and valuable supporting details were remarkably put forward, stating clearly the main ideas. There was also a clear and efficient correlation between the arguments and "the writer's experience or views" (1991, p. 147).

### ***Participants***

The first group was composed of 20 full-time Freshman students enrolled in the English 102 course of the university in the Philippines. Students in this group were homogeneously categorized based on the University's sectioning system, the basis for which was the subjects' entrance exam results particularly the exam's English component. One of the main considerations in said selection was the homogeneity of the group. This was mainly because of the need to make a collective emphasis on the students' academic writing needs and other concerns that might not be possible if done with heterogeneously grouped learners.

The second group was composed of 19 full-time freshman students who were enrolled in the English Communication Skills 2 class of the Thai University. The homogenous grouping of the participants in this study was used as one of the criteria in the selection of the participants. The homogenous grouping was necessary to be able to direct a singular focus on the academic writing needs of the respondents not only in their language classes, but also in other content subjects. The homogenous grouping stemmed from the original sectioning system used by the participating university, based on the English-component results of the entrance examination of the subject respondents.

Both the Filipino and the Thai students were chosen as subjects in this comparative study based on the following reasons:

- Both groups were composed of Freshman college students and were enrolled in corresponding courses in



their respective universities.

- Both groups were taking their respective universities' second credit English language course that had the writing of the argument essay as the course's major requirement.
- Both groups were homogenously categorized in their respective universities based on each of their university's admission exam results, and both student groups came from the upper-middle socio-economic strata in the Philippines and in Thailand. It was assumed that based on the groups' socio-economic background, the students most likely had similar exposure in terms of, but not limited to, education, access to the English language within and outside the school setting, and others.
- Both the Filipino and the Thai students were expected to write about similar issues in their argument essays.

All participants of this study were full-time Freshman students of the two Universities. In the parallel study that was earlier initiated in the first participating university, a private university in Metro Manila, Philippines, the respondents were enrolled in an English 102. Their ages ranged from 16-18 years old, mostly coming from the upper-middle socio-economic strata. The class was of mixed genders.

In a replicate study done in Thailand, the respondents were of similar grouping. They were full-time Freshman students enrolled in English Communication Skills 2 class or EC2, the equivalent of English 102 in the first participating university. The students' ages ranged from 17-18 years old, and they were of mixed genders as well. Just like the Philippine-based respondents, the Thai students also came from the upper-middle socio-economic strata.

Purposive sampling was used in the Thai-university study, as it was the same sampling method used in the parallel study in the first participating university. Said sampling method had been chosen based on the existing students' admission protocol observed by both Universities. Both sets of respondents were homogenously grouped based on the sectioning system determined by their scores in the language component they obtained in the university entrance examination. The university entrance exam, primarily a placement type of test, had been instrumental in the selection of the participants in both the Philippine and Thai investigations, ensuring that the selected respondents performed homogenously based on their entry skills in the English language component. The types of learners subjected to this study belonged to the group whose scores in the University entrance exam did not qualify for English 101, in the case of the Philippine-based participating university, and English Communication Skills 1 or EC1, in the case of the Thailand-based participating university. In both cases, English 101 in the Philippines and English Communication Skills 1 or EC1 in Thailand were the first regular credit courses in the respective schools' English curriculum. Not having obtained the required score to qualify for the regular English course offerings of the Universities, the respondents needed to take the compulsory zero-credit English language courses, English Lab and ERS for the Philippine-and Thailand-based schools, respectively.

### ***Instruments and Analysis***

#### *Learner Questionnaire*

The questionnaire used in the original Ferris' (1995) study was modified to suit the specific needs and context of the current investigation. The modification to the questionnaire involved questions that called attention to the role revision via feedback and conferencing plays as an integral part of the typical academic writing process. The composition survey, a combination of qualitative and quantitative questions, covered approximately 23 writing issues. Eight questions called for answers under the ordinal category, e.g., "a lot", "a little", "some", etc. Said responses were statistically analyzed using the Categorical Data Analysis (CDA). The rest of the items drawing out subjective responses were treated using a qualitative analysis. Responses to the questions were clustered to establish and further examine the patterns based on the collected data.

#### *Analysis of Composition Outputs*

This study used a descriptive-qualitative causal design, underscoring the importance of revision in process

writing within an academic context. Considered one of the key skills every writer should develop, revision should be aided by feedback and conferencing. This study employed Dana Ferris' study done in 1995 at the California State University in Sacramento and included administration of Ferris' survey questionnaire that was slightly modified. It also included a modification Tajonera (2001) incorporated when she did her own descriptive study of students' attitudes about feedback. Similarly, the author of this study also made modifications to said instrument to suit the current study's objectives.

Consistent with one of the objectives of this investigation, the author looked into the progress the subjects of the current study demonstrated. However, unlike what was done in the preliminary investigation involving the first participating university, analysis of the composition outputs of the second participating university's respondents was based primarily on the quality of their outputs hinged on content, organization, and style, without using Hamp-Lyons' (1991) analytic (Appendix A) and holistic (Appendix B) marking systems. Said analytic and holistic marking systems were not used as the second participating university used a different system. Given such a modification, however, the author assumed that the most basic assumption this investigation was hinged on would be fulfilled.

### Findings

In keeping with the research objectives cited in this study and to be able to arrive at a comprehensive comparative analysis between the two identified subject-groups, namely, the Filipino and the Thai college students, Questions 9, 13, 14, 18, 19, 20, and 22, which came with the original survey questionnaire, were excluded from the findings, discussion, and conclusion. This, in effect, resulted in the use of only 16 most relevant survey questions discussed in the succeeding pages.

The participants' responses to Question 1A ("Are you aware of the process writing approach?") indicates that all of the 20 Filipino respondents already had an idea about the process approach to writing before taking up English 102. The process approach was introduced at different stages in the students' tertiary-level academic life for the most part. An exception to this was one response from a Filipino student who claimed to have learned about this approach from as early as high school. Similarly, all of the 19 Thai survey respondents confirmed that they already knew about the process writing approach even before they reached EC 2.

The participants' response to Question 1B ("Did you find it helpful when you first used it in writing?") demonstrates that all of the Filipino and the Thai students found the process writing approach useful when they first used it in their respective writing classes.

The participants' responses to Question 1C, ("Do you find it helpful now in your English 102/ EC2?") show that a little more than half of the Filipino respondents (60%) stated three major reasons why they all found the process helpful. On the other hand, this question reveals that majority of the Thai respondents (74%) found it useful when developing the paper and organizing their ideas. Some said it allowed them to see their mistakes. Others claimed that the process approach made them more aware of the required structure of the paper they had to produce. The respondents' general commentary centered on the valuable assistance the approach gave them, allowing them to do a better revision.

Table 1

*Responses to Question 2: "How many of each composition do you read over again when your instructor returns it to you?"*

	All of it	Most of it	Some of it	None of it
Filipino students				
1 <sup>st</sup> /3 <sup>rd</sup> drafts	60%	30%	10%	-
Final drafts	70%	20%	10%	-
Thai students				
1 <sup>st</sup> /3 <sup>rd</sup> drafts	52.63%	42.10%	5.26%	-
Final drafts	63.15%	31.57%	5.26%	-

As shown in Table 1, the participants' responses to Question 2 (“How many of each composition do you read over again when your instructor returns it to you?”) indicate that a majority of both Filipino and Thai students claimed to have read returned preliminary drafts (1st to 3rd), although a small percentage (30%) of Filipino respondents read only some of the final drafts, whereas 10% did not read the returned final draft at all.

Table 2

*Responses to Question 3: “How many of your instructor’s comments and corrections do you think about carefully?”*

	All of it	Most of it	Some of it	None of it
Filipino students				
1 <sup>st</sup> /3 <sup>rd</sup> drafts	60%	40%	-	-
Final drafts	60%	-	30%	10%
Thai students				
1 <sup>st</sup> /3 <sup>rd</sup> drafts	57.89%	42.10%	-	-
Final drafts	63%	37%	-	-

For Question 3 (“How many of your instructor’s comments and corrections do you think about carefully?”), as shown in Table 2, all of the Filipino respondents thought about the instructor’s comments and corrections carefully. Similarly, all of the Thai respondents said the same concerning all the drafts. These results show that majority of the students from each group reflected upon their teachers’ comments, proving that despite the slightly varying percentages, the process approach engaged most of the respondents in both groups even after the final draft had been written and marked.

Question 4 was about the content of the teachers' correction (Table 3). Of the five language writing criteria, namely, organization, content/ ideas, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics, a consistent high number of comments and corrections for all the five language writing criteria were noted among the Filipino respondents. The Filipino students’ responses spread out relatively thinly, concentrating highly on “all” and “some.” On the other hand, the Thai respondents’ comments and corrections were highest for content/ ideas and the lowest was on vocabulary and mechanics. Comments and corrections on organization and grammar were moderate. Answers to this whole range of questions resulted in a very wide spread among the Thai respondents.

For the final draft, the Filipino respondents claimed to have received similar amount of comments and corrections for all the writing criteria. The Thai respondents, on the other hand, claimed to have received comments and corrections on all the language writing criteria for their final drafts, much lower compared to those they got for their preliminary drafts. The only exception was for the comments and corrections on mechanics, which only dropped to .53%. For the Thai respondents, the degree of comments and corrections involving the final draft changed significantly in some writing needs, with more respondents claiming fewer comments and corrections. For the Filipino respondents, results similar to their responses involving the first to the third drafts came out. This may mean that the Thai respondents must have significantly reduced the errors from the preliminary drafts to the final one. On the other hand, it may be worth a further investigation why results concerning the preliminary drafts and the final draft did not differ that much or not at all among the Filipino respondents despite their claim that they read the returned drafts to them more than the Thai students did.

Table 3  
*Responses to Question 4: Students' Perception of Correction Content*

	A lot	Some	A little	None	No Answer
Filipino students					
<i>1<sup>st</sup> /3<sup>rd</sup> drafts</i>					
Organization	70%	30%	10%	-	-
Content/ Ideas	70%	30%	10%	-	-
Grammar	70%	10%	10%	-	10%
Vocabulary	70%	10%	10%	-	10%
Mechanics	70%	10%	10%	-	10%
<i>Final drafts</i>					
Organization	70%	30%	-	-	-
Content/ Ideas	70%	20%	-	-	10%
Grammar	60%	10%	10%	-	20%
Vocabulary	60%	10%	10%	-	20%
Mechanics	60%	10%	10%	-	20%
Thai students					
<i>1<sup>st</sup> /3<sup>rd</sup> drafts</i>					
Organization	26.32%	31.58%	5.26%	21.05%	15.78%
Content/ Ideas	26.31%	42.10%	21.05%	5.26	5.26%
Grammar	21.05%	36.84%	21.05%	10.52%	10.52%
Vocabulary	5.26%	26.31%	36.84%	21.05	10.52%
Mechanics	5.26%	26.31%	31.57%	21.05	15.78%
<i>Final drafts</i>					
Organization	10.52%	21.05%	47.36%	10.52%	10.52%
Content/ Ideas	10.52%	26.31%	31.57%	21.05%	10.52%
Grammar	10.52%	26.31%	36.84%	21.05%	5.26%
Vocabulary	5.26%	10.52%	42.10%	36.84%	5.26%
Mechanics	5.26%	15.78%	21.05%	47.36%	10.52%

When asked how much attention was given to the first to third-draft comments and corrections (Table 4), the Filipino respondents said that the attention they gave to their preliminary drafts was consistently high for all the five criteria, except for one respondent who chose not to answer the question on grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics. In contrast, the Thai respondents claimed to have paid more attention to organization and content/ ideas the highest, followed by the one on grammar, leaving the least significant amount of attention to vocabulary and mechanics. The Thai respondents' degree of attention turned out to be high when correlated to the comments and corrections given by their instructor, especially on organization and content/ ideas, surpassing the responses of the Filipino students. They seemed, however, to believe that they did not think about said language writing areas as much as they did for grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics. The Filipino respondents, in contrast, generally had a consistent impression of the degree of attention they thought they gave to the different comments and corrections given them across the language writing needs.

Table 4

*Responses to Question 5: Students' Reported Amount of Attention to Instructor's Comments and Corrections*

	A lot	Some	A little	None	No Answer
Filipino students					
<i>1<sup>st</sup> /3<sup>rd</sup> drafts</i>					
Organization	70%	30%	-	-	-
Content/ Ideas	70%	30%	-	-	-
Grammar	70%	10%	10%	10%	-
Vocabulary	70%	10%	10%	10%	-
Mechanics	70%	10%	10%	10%	-
<i>Final drafts</i>					
Organization	70%	30%	-	-	-
Content/ Ideas	70%	20%	-	-	10%
Grammar	60%	10%	10%	-	20%
Vocabulary	60%	10%	10%	-	20%
Mechanics	60%	10%	10%	-	20%
Thai students					
<i>1<sup>st</sup> /3<sup>rd</sup> drafts</i>					
Organization	78.94%	21.05%	-	-	-
Content/ Ideas	78.94%	15.78%	-	5.26%	-
Grammar	52.63%	36.84%	10.52%	-	-
Vocabulary	36.84%	36.84%	15.78%	10.52%	-
Mechanics	36.84%	31.57%	15.78%	15.78%	-
<i>Final drafts</i>					
Organization	63.15%	21.05%	15.78%	-	-
Content/ Ideas	63.15%	26.31%	5.26%	5.26%	-
Grammar	31.57%	42.10%	10.52%	10.52%	5.26%
Vocabulary	42.10%	21.05%	15.78%	15.78%	5.26%
Mechanics	47.36%	21.05%	21.05%	10.52%	-

For the final draft, both the Filipino and the Thai groups claimed to have paid significant attention to organization and content/ ideas and a moderately significant attention to vocabulary and mechanics. Among the Filipino students, the attention they gave to organization and content/ ideas in the final draft was consistent with the one they gave when working on the first to the third drafts. The percentage, however, dropped slightly for grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics. The Thai respondents, on the other hand, gave the least amount of attention to grammar. For the Thai respondents, the attention they gave to the preliminary drafts dropped slightly for organization, content/ ideas, and grammar when compared to the final draft, but increased slightly for vocabulary and mechanics. These results reveal that writing students using the process approach would tend to lessen the amount of work exerted when dealing with the final draft.

Question 6 required the respondents to describe what they did after they read the instructor's comments and corrections ("Describe what you do after you read your instructor's comments and corrections (e.g., Do you look up the corrections in a grammar book? See a tutor? Rewrite your paper?"). A majority (60%) of the Filipino student-respondents said they re-wrote their papers. Others claimed to have done the following: re-evaluated their paper, looked up the corrections to make better revisions, and consulted peers and family members. Similarly, a majority (84.21%) of the Thai respondents said they did similar tasks such as the following: read again the essay, tried to understand the comments and corrections, and revised their own paper after. A little less

than half (42.1%) said that they looked for reasons/ information why they were wrong and then similarly revised their paper. A small percentage (21.05%) said that they sought the help of a friend or a higher-level student, revised their paper into the right format, and checked the APA style and other online materials. Other students' feedback also included the following: looked up words in the dictionary, used Google for correct vocabulary and more information, among others.

Question 7 ("Are there ever any comments or corrections that you do not understand? If so, can you give any examples?") inquired whether the respondents had a difficulty comprehending the instructor's comments and corrections. Among the Filipino respondents, a majority (70%) said "no." For the lone respondent who said "yes," the difficulty was linked to not being able to know exactly how "to expound on the paragraph" and being "a little bit confused with the marking process." Among the Thai respondents, a small number (26.31%) said "yes," whereas a majority (73.68%) said "no." The difficulty, they claimed, was due to the "simple" warnings stating that something was wrong, but no specific correction was given.

Question 8 looked into what the respondents did with corrections that they did not understand ("What do you do about those comments or corrections that you do not understand?"). Answers from both the Filipino and the Thai students revealed that both groups resorted to further enhancing their respective essays, at times, doing similar or same actions; that is, they sought help whenever and wherever help was available.

Question 10 asked if the instructor's comments and corrections helped the respondents improve their composition writing skills ("Do you think that your instructor's comments and corrections helped you to improve your composition writing skills? Why or why not?"). For the Filipino respondents, a majority (90%) said "yes," while one said "somehow." Those who said "yes" gave the following reasons: "It gave me the challenge to do better," "She [teacher] made me realize the errors that I have committed such as the limitations that should be observed in the content," "Because it made my writings better," "In a way, it helped me improve in writing compositions," and "Tried to avoid writing the same thing in my composition." The one who said "no" explained: "Because I only needed minor corrections in organization." All 19 of the Thai respondents said "yes." The most commonly cited reason from the Thai respondents was that the comments and corrections were "able to help them improve their writing, telling them where they went wrong." Others said that their instructor's ideas to help further improve the paper were "a lot better than mine." Other reasons were as follows: "It makes me think more carefully," "Comments show whether my paper is on the right track or not," "It helps me make my work more organized," and "These comments guide me how to move on with the paper." As a whole, both groups admitted to having improved their papers through the help of the process approach. Reasons were varied, but everything pointed to the immense paper improvement made via the process approach channeled through the instructor's giving of feedback and the conduct of conferencing.

In the last two major points in this discussion, findings for Questions 12, 15, and 16 have been grouped together, while findings for Questions 11, 17, 21, and 23 were combined as well to provide a more comprehensive analysis for items that are on similar research strands, hence the grouping of questions that thereafter follows.

The students' responses to Question 12 ("Which form of assessment do you prefer?") reveal that a majority of the Filipino and the Thai respondents (100% and 84.21%, respectively) preferred a form of assessment "with detailed comments and a numerical mark," a choice that was generally consistent with how they responded to the feedback and comments given by their instructor on their individual papers. Only some of the Thai students (10.52%) indicated a preference for only an overall numerical mark for the composition.

When asked to rate themselves as learners (Question 15: "How would you rate yourself as a learner?"), a majority of the Filipino respondents (90%) claimed themselves to be "good" as opposed to many of the Thai respondents (52.63%) who rated themselves as "fair." None of the students in the two groups rated themselves as "excellent" or "poor."

The respondents' self-rating concerning their performance as learners and as composition writers (Question 16: "How would you rate your skills in writing compositions?") was similar: A majority of the Filipino students (70%) and the Thai students (73.68%) considered themselves "good" writers, while none considered

themselves “excellent” or “poor.” Interestingly, their self-rating correlated to the kind of revisions and attention they paid to the comments given by their instructor. The more attention the respondents gave to the feedback and comments given by the instructor, the higher was their assessment of themselves as learners and vice-versa.

Question 11 (“Do you think that your instructor’s comments and corrections helped you discover and/or improve your skills in revising your paper?”) checked on whether the instructor’s comments helped them discover and/or improve their skills in revising their paper. Among the Filipino respondents, a majority (90%) said “yes,” whereas one respondent did not answer the question. Those who said “yes” gave the following reasons: “It helped me change my writing style so it could be understood easier,” “Because I knew what to replace or I knew where my errors were,” “I was able to discover new styles in writing and improve my writing skills to make my composition easier to be understood by almost any type of reader,” “It helped my paper to be more organized,” “I got to know how to do revising already, on what was needed to be revised,” “It did because I was able to increase my awareness of the writing process,” and “Every detail was clarified.” The Thai respondents, on the other hand, all said “yes.” They said that improvements in their papers were made possible given the following reasons: “Without the instructor’s comments, I would not know what is right or wrong with my paper,” “I learned how to locate properly the thesis/ topic sentence in the essay,” “It helped me know if the thesis statement and the topic sentence are related to one another,” “I revised my paper accordingly so I would not repeat the same mistakes next time,” “Makes it easy [for me] to find my own mistakes,” “We need others to know whether they understand [us] or not,” and “Reduced errors.”

To Question 17 (“Generally speaking, I find the teacher’s comments at the end of my paper helpful/ not helpful”), all the Filipino respondents (100%) and a majority of the Thai respondents (95.25%) indicated that they found their instructor’s comments “very helpful.”

Question 21 asked the respondents whether conferencing helped them clarify their thoughts/ ideas with their teacher (“Do you think conferencing helps you clarify your thoughts/ ideas with your teacher?”). For the Filipino respondents, a majority (90%) said “yes.” They, however, did not give further reasons for their answer. On the other hand, all 19 of the Thai respondents confirmed that conferencing helped. Majority of the explanations centered on the value of conferencing in helping them improve their thesis statements, refine their ideas, and find a better focus.

Lastly, Question 23 asked the respondents if conferencing helped them discover and/ or improve their skills in revising their paper (“Do you think conferencing helps you discover and/ or improve your skills in revising your paper?”). Whereas all (100%) of the Filipino respondents said “yes,” 94.73% of the Thai respondents said it did.

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

What is worth noting is that the Filipino and the Thai respondents’ replies to the last four questions correlated to their responses to earlier questions. The findings yielded in the last four remaining questions demonstrate one overarching result: That both groups found the use of the process approach to writing useful, ultimately helping them to make good revisions. This over-all response of both groups of respondents confirms the basic tenet which Zamel (1999), Ferris (2003), Reid (1993), among others, espouse. Both groups of students found the approach relevant and useful regardless of the differences in academic contexts within which the 2006 Philippine-based study and the 2012 Thailand-based investigation were conducted. Having said this, it only means that majority, if not all, of the respondents from both groups found and valued revision as a process that was central to good academic writing, irrespective of some specific pedagogical contexts within which the two groups of respondents were situated in. Indeed, in keeping with what Matsuda (2003) pointed out, both groups were in agreement that the use of feedback and conferencing in the process approach offered them a venue through which a better paper could be produced.

Results concerning corrections that involved the various language writing needs of the respondents indicated that while they were initially homogenously grouped based on their university admission results, the

Thai students' language writing needs covered almost all of the language writing criteria in varying smaller percentages, thus implying their highly heterogeneous writing skills. The comments on and corrections to the Filipino respondents' papers, on the contrary, indicated a somehow homogenous set of writing skills. In this regard, it is interesting to find out in future researches whether this performance was influenced by their prior exposure to the process approach or not and/ or whether other factors interplayed that resulted in this specific finding.

It might be worthwhile to check further as well if the Filipino respondents' revisions went beyond what the comments and corrections required, making them come up with more new inputs that, in return, required again a new set of comments and corrections in the final draft. If this conjecture would hold true, the Thai students then can be comparatively said to be more conservative in their revisions, whereas the Filipino students could have been more aggressive. And if this was the case, this particular finding then corroborates with what Batin (2003) mentioned in reference to Ausubel and Hill's (as cited in Batin, 2003) cognitive learning styles. That is, learners can be classified differently as demonstrated through the different ways they perform in class. Nevertheless, this finding interestingly presents another topic for future researches.

Looking at the whole spectrum of answers from the two groups, one general commentary that can be made is that despite the varying ways the students responded to their instructor's comments and corrections, they all responded with a common end in mind. All of the respondents wanted to make a better revision of the preliminary drafts resulting in a final copy that was a product of various scaffolding activities gathered from the different people they had connections with who were either willing or available to help.

While majority of the respondents from both groups claimed that they understood the comments and corrections, those who had a hard time remarked that the instructor's comments and corrections were general ones, hinting that the students wanted specific, if not very specific, feedback. In this case, this study provides academic writing teachers a general idea about what can be possibly expected from their students, perhaps even giving them an advanced notice as to how they can address such an issue aligned with their own school's academic writing policies.

Although the surveys with the Philippine and the Thai students were carried out separately under some varying conditions, this study constantly upholds the significance of the assistance (or lack of assistance) of writing teachers to their students. In addition, findings of this study espouse the idea that there is always the attendant pedagogical merit in revising papers channeled through feedback and conferencing, if only to advance every student's interest.

In short, this study's findings suggest the following: First, students prefer both the quantitative and qualitative way of assessing their papers, that is, through detailed comments and a numerical grade. Second, students show preference for the process approach to writing anchored on the benefits the use of the model promises them, that is, improved writing skills and better grades. Third, in keeping with previous findings, earlier drafts always have positive influence on the succeeding drafts and the final copy. And fourth, revision has been proven to be central in the improvement of every paper.

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**APPENDIX A****Profile Scale (Analytic Marking)**

(Adapted from Liz Hamp-Lyons (1991))

COMMUNICATIVE ABILITY  
 ORGANIZATION  
 ARGUMENTATION  
 LINGUISTIC ACCURACY  
 LINGUISTIC APPROPRIACY

9. The writing displays an ability to communicate in a way which gives the reader full satisfaction.  
 The writing displays a completely logical organizational structure which enables the message to be followed effortlessly.  
 Relevant arguments are presented in an interesting way, with main ideas prominently and clearly stated, with completely effective supporting material; arguments are effectively related to the writer's experience or views.  
 The reader sees no error of vocabulary, spelling, punctuation or grammar.  
 There is an ability to manipulate the linguistic systems with complete appropriacy.
8. The writing displays an ability to communicate without causing the reader any difficulty.  
 The writing displays a logical organization structure which enables the message to be followed easily.  
 Relevant arguments are presented in interesting way with main ideas highlighted, effective supporting material and they are well related to the writer's own experience or views.  
 The reader sees no significant errors or vocabulary, spelling, punctuation or grammar.  
 There is an ability to manipulate the linguistic systems appropriately.
7. The writing displays an ability to communicate with few difficulties for the reader.  
 The writing displays good organizational structure which enables the message to be followed throughout.  
 Arguments are well presented with relevant supporting material and an attempt to relate them to the writer's experience or views.  
 The reader is aware of but not troubled by occasional minor errors of vocabulary, spelling, punctuation or grammar.  
 There are minor limitations to the ability to manipulate the linguistic systems appropriately which do not intrude on the reader.
6. The writing displays an ability to communicate although there is occasional strain for the reader.  
 The writing is organized well enough for the message to be followed throughout.  
 Arguments are presented but it may be difficult for the reader to distinguish main ideas from supporting material; main ideas may not be supported; their relevance may be dubious; arguments may not be related to the writer's experience or views.  
 The reader is aware of errors of vocabulary, spelling, punctuation or grammar, but these intrude only occasionally.  
 There is limited ability to manipulate the linguistic systems appropriately, but this intrudes only occasionally.
5. The writing displays a limited ability to communicate although there is often strain for the reader.  
 The writing lacks a clear organizational structure and the message is difficult to follow.  
 Arguments are inadequately presented and supported; they may be irrelevant; if the writer's experience or views

are presented their relevance may be difficult to see.

The reader finds the control of vocabulary, spelling, punctuation and grammar update.

There is inability to manipulate the linguistic systems appropriately, which causes severe strain for the reader.

4. The writing displays a limited ability to communicate which puts strain on the reader throughout.

The writing lacks a clear organizational structure and the message is difficult to follow.

Arguments are inadequately presented and supported; they may be irrelevant; if the writer's experience or views are presented their relevance may be difficult to see.

The reader finds control of vocabulary, spelling, or punctuation and grammar update.

There is inability to manipulate the linguistic systems appropriately, which causes severe strain for the reader.

3. The writing does not display an ability to communicate although meaning comes through spasmodically.

The writing has no discernible organizational structure and a message cannot be followed.

Some elements of information are present but the reader is not provided with an argument, or the argument is mainly irrelevant.

The reader is primarily aware of gross inadequacies of vocabulary, spelling, punctuation and grammar.

There is little or no cause of linguistic appropriacy, although there is evidence of sentence structure.

2. The writing displays no ability to communicate.

No organizational structure or message recognizable.

A meaning comes through occasionally but it is not relevant.

The reader sees no evidence of control of vocabulary, spelling, punctuation or grammar.

There is no sense of linguistics appropriacy.

1. A true non-writer who has not produced any assessable strings of English writing. An answer which is wholly or almost wholly copied from the input text or task is in this category.

0. Should only be used where a candidate did not attend or attempt this part of the test in any way.

**APPENDIX B**  
**Global Scale (Holistic Marking)**  
 (Adapted from Liz Hamp-Lyons (1991))

**BAND DESCRIPTORS**

9 The writing displays an ability to communicate in a way which gives the reader full satisfaction. It displays a completely logical organizational structure which enables the message to be followed effortlessly. Relevant arguments are presented in an interesting way, with main idea prominently and clearly stated, with completely effective supporting material; arguments are effectively related to the writer's experience or views. There are no errors of vocabulary, spelling, punctuation or grammar and the writing shows an ability to manipulate the linguistic system with complete accuracy.

8 The writing displays an ability to communicate without causing the reader any difficulties. It displays a completely logical organizational structure which enables the message to be followed easily. Relevant arguments are presented in an interesting way, with main ideas highlighted, effective supporting material and they are well related to the writer's experience or views. There are no significant errors of vocabulary, spelling, punctuation or grammar and the writing reveals an ability to manipulate the linguistic systems appropriately.

7 The writing displays an ability to communicate with few difficulties for the reader. It displays a completely logical organizational structure which enables the message to be followed without much effort. Arguments are well presented with relevant supporting material and an attempt to relate them to the writer's experience or views. The reader is well aware of but not troubled by occasional minor errors of vocabulary, spelling, punctuation or grammar, and/ or some limitations to the writer's ability to manipulate the linguistic systems appropriately.

6 The writing displays an ability to communicate although there is an occasional strain for the reader. It is organized well enough for the message to be followed throughout. Arguments are presented but it may be difficult for the reader to distinguish main ideas from supporting material; main ideas may not be supported; their relevance may be dubious; arguments may not be related to the writer's experience or views. The reader is aware of errors of vocabulary, spelling, punctuation or grammar, and/ or limited ability to manipulate the linguistic systems appropriately, but these intrude only occasionally.

5 The writing displays an ability to communicate although there is an occasional strain for the reader. It is organized well enough for the message to be followed most of the time. Arguments are presented but may lack relevance, clarity, consistency or support; they may not be related to the writer's experience or views. The reader is aware of errors of vocabulary, spelling, punctuation or grammar, and/ or limited ability to manipulate the linguistic systems appropriately.

4 The writing displays a limited ability to communicate which puts a strain on the reader throughout. It lacks a clear organizational structure and the message is difficult to follow. Arguments are inadequately presented and supported; they may be irrelevant; if the writer's experience or views are presented their relevance may be difficult to see. The control of vocabulary, spelling, punctuation or grammar is inadequate, and the writer displays an ability to manipulate the linguistic systems inappropriately, causing severe strain for the reader.

3 The writing does not display an ability to communicate although meaning comes through spasmodically. The reader cannot find any organizational structure and cannot follow a message. Some elements of information

are present but the reader is not provided with an argument, or the argument is mainly irrelevant. The reader is primarily aware of gross inadequacies of vocabulary, spelling, punctuation and grammar; the writer seems to have no sense of linguistic appropriacy, although there is evidence of sentence structure.

2 The writing displays no ability to communicate. No organizational structure or message is recognizable. A meaning comes through occasionally but is not relevant. There is no evidence of vocabulary, spelling, punctuation or grammar, and no sense of linguistic appropriacy.

1 A true non-writer who has not produced any assessable strings of English writing. An answer which is wholly or almost copied from the input text or task in this category.

0 Should only be used where a candidate did not attend or attempt this part of the test in any way (i.e., did not submit an answer paper with his/ her name and candidate number written on).

**APPENDIX C**  
**Original Learner Questionnaire**  
(Ferris, 1995)

COMPOSITION SURVEY

1. How much of each composition do you read over again when your instructor returns it to you?

1st/ 2nd drafts

All of it \_\_\_ Most of it \_\_\_ Some of it\_\_\_ None of it\_\_\_

Final drafts

All of it \_\_\_ Most of it \_\_\_ Some of it\_\_\_ None of it\_\_\_

2. How many of your instructor's comments and corrections do you think about carefully?

1st/ 2nd drafts

All of it \_\_\_ Most of it \_\_\_ Some of it\_\_\_ None of it\_\_\_

Final drafts

All of it \_\_\_ Most of it \_\_\_ Some of it\_\_\_ None of it\_\_\_

3. How many of the comments and corrections involve:

1st/ 2nd drafts	A lot	Some	A little	None
Organization	_____	_____	_____	_____
Content/ Ideas	_____	_____	_____	_____
Grammar	_____	_____	_____	_____
Vocabulary	_____	_____	_____	_____
Mechanics (e.g., punctuation, spelling)	_____	_____	_____	_____
Final drafts	A lot	Some	A little	None
Organization	_____	_____	_____	_____
Content/ Ideas	_____	_____	_____	_____
Grammar	_____	_____	_____	_____
Vocabulary	_____	_____	_____	_____
Mechanics (e.g., punctuation, spelling)	_____	_____	_____	_____

4. If you pay attention to what your instructor write, how much attention do you pay to the comments and corrections involving:

1st/ 2nd drafts	A lot	Some	A little	None
Organization	_____	_____	_____	_____
Content/ Ideas	_____	_____	_____	_____
Grammar	_____	_____	_____	_____
Vocabulary	_____	_____	_____	_____
Mechanics (e.g., punctuation, spelling)	_____	_____	_____	_____
Final drafts	A lot	Some	A little	None
Organization	_____	_____	_____	_____

Content/ Ideas	_____	_____	_____	_____
Grammar	_____	_____	_____	_____
Vocabulary	_____	_____	_____	_____
Mechanics (e.g., punctuation, spelling)	_____	_____	_____	_____

5. Describe what you do after you read your instructor’s comments and corrections (e.g., Do you look up the corrections in a grammar book? See a tutor? Rewrite your paper?

1st/ 2nd drafts \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Final draft \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. Are there ever any comments or corrections that you do not understand? If so, can you give any examples?

\_\_\_\_\_

7. What do you do about those comments or corrections that you do not understand?

\_\_\_\_\_

8. Are there any of your instructor’s comments positive? If so, can you give an example?

\_\_\_\_\_

9. Do you feel that your instructor’s comments and corrections help you to improve your composition writing skills? Why or why not?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

10. How would you rate yourself as a learner?

Excellent\_\_\_\_ Good\_\_\_\_ Fair\_\_\_\_ Poor\_\_\_\_

11. How would you rate your skills in writing compositions?

Excellent\_\_\_\_ Good\_\_\_\_ Fair\_\_\_\_ Poor\_\_\_\_



**APPENDIX D**  
**Learner Questionnaire**  
 (Adapted from Ferris, 1995)

TO: English 102/ EC2 Students

At this stage in your English 102/ EC2 class, you have already been exposed to a number of writing activities. These activities should have already given you insights about the writing practices commonly observed in a language composition class. To further study how you perceive and respond to them, please answer this questionnaire as honestly as you can. Please take note that the questions stated here mostly refer to the writing practices observed in your present language class except for some that require you to recall your previous writing experience. Thank you.

1. Are you aware of the process writing approach?

Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_

If yes,

a. how did you learn about it? \_\_\_\_\_

b. did you find it helpful when you first used it in writing?

Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_ Why or why not?\_\_\_\_\_

c. do you find it helpful now in your English 102/ EC2?

Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_ Why or why not?\_\_\_\_\_

2. How much of each composition do you read over again when your instructor returns it to you?

1st/ 2nd drafts

All of it \_\_\_ Most of it \_\_\_ Some of it\_\_\_ None of it\_\_\_

Final drafts

All of it \_\_\_ Most of it \_\_\_ Some of it\_\_\_ None of it\_\_\_

3. How many of your instructor's comments and corrections do you think about carefully?

1st/ 2nd drafts

All of it \_\_\_ Most of it \_\_\_ Some of it\_\_\_ None of it\_\_\_

Final drafts

All of it \_\_\_ Most of it \_\_\_ Some of it\_\_\_ None of it\_\_\_

4. How many of the corrections involve:

1st/ 2nd drafts	A lot	Some	A little	None
Organization	_____	_____	_____	_____
Content/ Ideas	_____	_____	_____	_____
Grammar	_____	_____	_____	_____
Vocabulary	_____	_____	_____	_____
Mechanics	_____	_____	_____	_____
(e.g, punctuation, spelling)				
Final drafts	A lot	Some	A little	None
Organization	_____	_____	_____	_____
Content/ Ideas	_____	_____	_____	_____
Grammar	_____	_____	_____	_____

Vocabulary	_____	_____	_____	_____
Mechanics	_____	_____	_____	_____
(e.g., punctuation, spelling)				

5. If you pay attention to what your instructor writes, how much attention do you pay to the comments and corrections involving:

1st/ 2nd drafts	A lot	Some	A little	None
Organization	_____	_____	_____	_____
Content/ Ideas	_____	_____	_____	_____
Grammar	_____	_____	_____	_____
Vocabulary	_____	_____	_____	_____
Mechanics	_____	_____	_____	_____
(e.g., punctuation, spelling)				

Final drafts	A lot	Some	A little	None
Organization	_____	_____	_____	_____
Content/ Ideas	_____	_____	_____	_____
Grammar	_____	_____	_____	_____
Vocabulary	_____	_____	_____	_____
Mechanics	_____	_____	_____	_____
(e.g., punctuation, spelling)				

6. Describe what you do after you read your instructor’s comments and corrections (e.g., Do you look up the corrections in a grammar book? See a tutor? Rewrite your paper?)

1st/ 2nd drafts \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Final draft \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

7. Are there ever any comments or corrections that you do not understand? If so, can you give any examples?

\_\_\_\_\_

8. What do you do about those comments or corrections that you do not understand?

\_\_\_\_\_

9. Are there any of your instructor’s comments positive? If so, can you give an example?

\_\_\_\_\_

10. Do you think that your instructor’s comments and corrections help you to improve your composition writing skills? Why or why not?

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

11. Do you feel that your instructor's comments and corrections help you discover and/ or improve your skills in revising your paper? Why or why not?

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12. Which form of assessment do you prefer?

One with overall numerical mark for the composition \_\_\_\_

One with detailed comments and a numerical mark \_\_\_\_

13. Generally, how do you find your teacher's feedback on your composition?

Positive\_\_\_\_ Neutral\_\_\_\_ Offensive\_\_\_\_

14. How often do you receive such kind of feedback on one writing assignment?

Never\_\_\_\_ Rarely\_\_\_\_ Seldom\_\_\_\_ Occasionally\_\_\_\_ Always\_\_\_\_

15. How would you rate yourself as a learner?

Excellent\_\_\_\_ Good\_\_\_\_ Fair\_\_\_\_ Poor\_\_\_\_

16. How would rate your skills in writing compositions?

Excellent\_\_\_\_ Good\_\_\_\_ Fair\_\_\_\_ Poor\_\_\_\_

17. Generally speaking, I find teacher's comments at the end of my paper

Helpful\_\_\_\_ Useless\_\_\_\_

18. Which of the following drafts do you get feedback on by way of conferencing?

1st/ 2nd drafts\_\_\_\_ Final draft\_\_\_\_

19. Are there any comments or corrections that you do not understand during conferencing? If so, can you give any example? \_\_\_\_\_

20. Do you finish conferencing with your teacher without understanding some of the comments or corrections?

Yes\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_ If yes, can you given an example? \_\_\_\_\_

21. Do you think conferencing helps you clarify your thoughts/ ideas with your teacher?

Yes\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_ If no, why not? \_\_\_\_\_

22. Do you think conferencing helps your teacher clarify his/her thoughts/ ideas with you?

Yes\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_ If no, why not? \_\_\_\_\_

23. Do you think conferencing helps you discover and/ or improve your skills in revising your paper?

Why or why not? \_\_\_\_\_

24. Generally speaking, I find conferencing

Helpful\_\_\_\_

Useless\_\_\_\_