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# Student-teachers Across the Curriculum Learn to Write Feedback Does it reflect on their writing?

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**Abstract**

The study examined the connection between writing competency and writing feedback experiences through academic writing course for student-teachers across the curriculum. The aims of the course were to prepare student-teachers to their role as writing facilitators and to improve their writing. Experimental and control group differed in course plan focused on writing feedback as the depended variable. A significant improvement was found in writing formative feedback. Interaction effect between formative feedback, writing composition and time was significant, but the expected advantage of writing feedback course was not found.

This study examined feedback from the giver point of view and points at the importance of writing formative feedback among SL writers as prospective teachers but also puts some questions on the relations between writing feedback and writing competency.

**Keywords:** Writing feedback, writing facilitator, formative feedback, corrective feedback.

Writing feedback is an assessment tool as well as instructional approach to teaching writing named "learner-centered instruction", which focuses on individual feedback, used by language teachers and subject matter teachers as well. This approach is differed from "content-based" approach to writing which involves explicit instruction of writing, focuses on grammar, syntax, text structure and style of writing used by language teachers (Kasanga, 2004, p.65). Individual feedback is based on learning to write through practice in a process based on between-draft comments, focused on the process and leads to improve the writing product and writing competency as well. Writing feedback is the most common strategy used among teachers across the curriculum, but only few programs of teacher education suggest deep learning and practice in writing feedback. But most of the studies on writing feedback refer to language teachers in English, only few of them refer to across the curriculum teachers.

This study examined how across the curriculum student-teachers can improve their feedback writing and how this improvement in corrective and formative feedback affects their writing competency. The focus of this study is on feedback givers - student-teachers learning to write feedback and on the relation of writing feedback to writing competency.

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## Literature review

Writing feedback is one of the ways to create a communicative writing event, in which teacher and student create a dialogue on the writing product in order to understand how writing intentions can be better realized.

Feedback writing to others can help writers clarify their own thoughts and raise questions such as to whom are we writing, why, and what are our intended message. Feedback can enhance motivation, engagement and interest towards writing (Srichanyachon, 2012).

Comments on writing can pose questions, request clarifications, correct or suggest corrections and can be a starting point for a dialogue with the addressee (Bitchener, 2008; Bitchener, & Knoch, 2009; Lillis, 2003). Although teachers face pupils' lack of motivation towards writing, most writing assignments at school are not authentic and lack communicative intentions. Students write to their teachers usually in order to abide by their demands and rarely experience a real expressive motive for writing (Lam & Law, 2006; Burning & Horn, 2000).

The complexity of feedback writing depends on the context of the writing circumstances, teachers' perceptions and goals and on the writing assignment (Straub, 2000). Researchers distinguish between direct-corrective feedback, and indirect-formative feedback (Biggs, 1988; Hounsell, 1997). Direct-Corrective feedback focuses on editing the text as the main act of the feedback, resulting in a corrected version of the text (Sugita, 2006). Indirect-Formative feedback aims to develop writers' self-assessment. Wingate (2010) describes the aim of formative feedback: "The main purpose of formative assessment is to guide and accelerate students' learning by providing them with information about the gap between their current and the desired performance." (pg.520). Formative feedback focuses on different strategies from the corrective feedback: marking the mistakes, writing suggestions, adding explanations for the corrections needed, reminding writers' of their task or objectives of writing, and directing writers to their audience instead of corrections, mainly on spelling, punctuation or grammar and syntax (Beach & Friedrich, 2005, Bitchener, 2008; Ellis, 2009; Shute, 2008; Sweeler, van Merrienboer, & Paas, 1998).

**The impact of Feedback on writers:** Researchers point at teachers' feedback to students as having high impact on their perceptions and writing behaviors (Connors & Lonsford, 1993; Furneaux, Paran, & Fairfax, 2007). Ferris and Roberts (2001) found that direct corrective feedback is more productive with writers of low level proficiencies than indirect feedback. It was also argued that second language (L2) writers have a limited processing capacity and therefore feedback focused on limited aspects of writing will be more effective than unfocused feedback which might cause a cognitive overload (Bitchener, 2008). Van Beuningen (2010) in her review on corrective feedback concludes that for L2 writers direct-corrective feedback is more efficient than indirect feedback, explaining that L2 writers are unable to infer the rules from underlying grammatical errors to other writing assignments: "Empirical evidence so far seems to suggest that learners benefit more from direct correction than from indirect CF, especially when CF targets errors within the

grammatical domain." (pg.19). Truscott & Hsu, (2008) examined formative feedback through the impact of marking locations of errors and found that students did not transfer the corrections to a different text. Srichanyachon (2012) concluded that direct feedback fits for students with weak English skills because of writers' lack of language knowledge, the researcher added that, explanations are needed to be attached to the corrections in order to expand writers' knowledge. But, researchers claim that the impact of writing feedback on writing improvement is difficult to prove because of methodology differences: different population, different points of view, different situations and manipulations, (Bitchener, 2008; Ferris 2007; Gue´nette, 2007; Lee, 2004; Moore, 2000).

**The problematic of writing feedback:** Implementation of writing feedback as an assessment and teaching method conceal within it several difficulties. Research on the practice of writing feedback among teachers points to three main problems: (a) teachers usually write feedback in order to correct a specific text failing to address their feedback to the development of strategies and understanding of writing processes (Lee, 2003; 2004).
(b) Although teachers are aware of the importance of motivation and of the impact of their feedback on motivation, they usually write corrective feedback, give few praising comments and display critical attitudes towards the writers (Kasanga 2004; Sugita, 2006).
(c) Student-teachers develop a technical approach towards the writing process; ignoring content and ideas; focusing on spelling and grammar rules (Arikan, 2006; Cohen-Sayag, Asaf & Nathan, 2013).

This study describes changes in student-teachers writing corrective and formative feedback during a course whose aims were to develop insights and practices of writing feedback and to improve their writing competency. In the course, student-teachers across the curriculum learned to write feedback to pupils and peers on compositions and summaries. The full results of the study were published in Hebrew (Cohen-Sayag, Nathan & Triebish 2012). This article will focus on L2 Hebrew speakers, since they were the weak group but improved significantly.

Research questions were: 1. To what extent will writing feedback (CF and FF) change the feedback of the experimental group? 2. To what extent will learning to write feedback create an advantage for improving writing in the experimental group in comparison to the control group, both are L2 Hebrew speakers? 3. How will writing competency and writing formative and corrective feedback interact before and after the course?

## The Course

The guidelines of the course plan were based on practical suggestions in the research for preparing teachers to their role in feedback writing:

(1) Reflection- Ferris (2007) suggests teaching writing feedback starting with reflective processes on their own writing, which will enable participants to talk about their writing experiences and receive feedback, on the other hand the researcher emphasizes that teaching feedback writing should be formal and can't rely on experiences alone.

(2) Authentic feedback- teaching student-teachers to learn about children's writing should be based on experiences with texts written by children (Colby & Stapleton, 2006; Moore, 2001).

(3) Variety of experiences- Researchers suggest exposing student -teachers to a variety of evaluation experiences to be applied in writing, which help them choose the rhetorical style content and quantity of the comments in their feedback (Connors & Lunsford, 1993; Fife & O'Neill, 2001; Straub, 2000).

(4) Reading aloud writing products- Rijlaarsdam, Braaksma, Couzijn, & Janssen (2008) suggest that writing feedback should be based on reading aloud learners' written texts with peers which enables a better dialogue on the writing product.

Every session started with reading articles and writing summaries. This was the starting point to reflect on their writing. During the course students read six articles about reading, writing and language and were asked to write summaries. The students prepared indicators for every specific assignment and were instructed to use the indicators in their feedback to peers. The instructor of the course supervised these indicators with the whole class discussing genre, main ideas and different option of language use.

Writing feedback – experience of writing feedback on compositions with peers and school-students was the main activity of this course. Compositions taken from fifth and six graders were the authentic writing texts of school-students for which student-teachers wrote feedback. They wrote comments on six different compositions, consulted on comments with peers, and discussed the feedback based on ten guidelines for efficient feedback (Nicol, 2010; Nicola & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006) referring to: Written in terms which the writer can understand; pointing specifically to the places needed to be corrected; non-judgmental but descriptive; balancing between positive and negative comments; selective according to writers capability to accept; provided in time; include suggestions for further writing; guiding writers to the process of writing; include explanations to the writers on the corrections needed; conclude your feedback.

The course activities combined writing at students' level in the college with writing feedback at pupils' level.

**Example of writing feedback activity:** The example demonstrates a product of one activity which started with student-teachers reading an article, and writing a summary, followed by writing feedback to a peer (presented in Table 1, first column). Subsequently, reading others' feedback and writing an evaluation of this feedback took place in pairs (Table 1, second and third column).

Discussions guided by the instructor on feedback raised pedagogical questions about, clarity and necessity of comments, lack of praising, comments on wording preferences, inconsistency of comments and the comments' potential contribution to the writers. These discussions aimed to shape and deepen their knowledge, perceptions and practices of the writing process and writing feedback.

**Table 1: Example of two pairs criticizing feedback writing: (translated from Hebrew).**

| ***The feedback on a summary of one student-teacher*** | ***Pair of Student-teachers responding to this feedback*** | ***Pair of Student-teachers responding to this feedback*** |
|---|---|---|
| *You need a good opening sentence.* | *It is not helpful because we did not know what a good opening sentence might be.* | *This comment could be helpful if you would give a clue, for example: the opening sentence in this task should include the aim of this article.* |
| *You are too close to the language used in the article.* | *It is an important comment but needs an example.* | *You need to explain it.* |
| *Lack of coherence [The comments related to several ideas written in bullets].* | *Can cause the writer to think of text structure.* | *Important comment, but need to connect to writing summary in particular.* |
| *Maybe there is a missing connector.* | *This is very helpful.* | *This comment can result in thinking.* |
| *162 words in the summary* | *What does it mean, you can write that a summary needs to be 1/4 of words comparing to the original text.* | *Unnecessary, Explain your comment.* |

All the activities described above interacted during 13 consecutive weeks (90 minutes every meeting). Writing feedback to peers and discussing feedback in the class guided by the instructor in the course created collaboration in feedback writing. This collaboration aimed to avoid poor feedback or misjudgment of the texts for which they were writing feedback.

We assumed that participating in the course will widen their options of writing feedback and thus their feedback will improve in terms of more correct and efficient formative or corrective comments which will show their understanding of the writing process and of their role as teachers. It was also assumed that this process will improve student-teachers own writing.

## The Context of the Study

The participants of this study attended a four year B.Ed. program at a Teachers College in Israel. The students belonged to six different departments (kindergarten, special education, elementary school, junior high school, art education and physical education). Studies included three major domains: pedagogy, (psychology and education), different disciplinary areas (literature, mathematics, sciences, etc.) and field practice within a teaching methodology course. The program included 2-3 language courses (depending on the

grade they achieved in a language admission examination). The language courses focused on academic writing, grammar and oral proficiency. This academic writing course was mandatory for students of the third year and was focused on writing feedback for second language and first language Hebrew speakers. Arabic students constitute 50% of the students in the college. The majority of these Arabic-speaking student-teachers will teach Hebrew as a second language to Bedouin children, and therefore they are expected to achieve a satisfactory level in Hebrew writing and in teaching Hebrew writing. The participants were asked to give their consent to participate in the research, and had other options to take another course of academic writing.

## Method

The study is a longitudinal pedagogical intervention performed with experimental group and control group. The intervention focused on corrective and formative feedback to peers and to school-students. Both experimental and control groups learned with the same teacher, were involved in reading and writing activities based on the same articles, discussed and created indicators for writing tasks. Feedback writing activities were not part of the program of the control group and were used only in the intervention group. During the study, repeated measures were used on the quality of writing (between–subjects array) and on writing feedback (within-subjects array).

### Participants

86 native speakers of Arabic student-teachers participated in the study, 53 in the experimental group and 33 students in the control group. The students were from different disciplinary areas literature, mathematics, sciences, etc. No significant difference was found between the control and the experimental groups in a writing composition test before the course: The mean score in the experimental group was 50.72 (±19.06) $n = 46$ and the mean score in the control group was 44.04 (±13.58); $n = 28$; $t = 1.61$; $p = 0.08$ (n.s.).

### Research Tools

The tools had been developed in a preliminary study (Cohen-Sayag, Asaf & Nathan, 2013). In this article we will present results from two tools which will give the answer to the interaction between writing competency and writing feedback.

1. **Writing composition**: This test examined writing competencies of the student-teachers as an effect of the activities held during the course. The test lasted for 30 minutes, during which students were asked to write an argumentative text about advertisement in the media. To support their writing and speed it up, they got an opening paragraph which presents a disputed point of view in this issue. The participants were asked to take side and explain their claims.

2. **Writing Feedback**: Two compositions (a story and an argumentative text) written by fifth-grade students and two text summaries of expository text (The Nile) written by sixth grade students were used to examine feedback writing of the student-teachers to pupils.

The students were asked to write comments on the compositions and summaries that can help school-students to improve their writing. Every participant wrote comments on different composition and summary in pre- and post-test in order to avoid rehearsal of the same comments in pre and posttest.

## Data Analysis

Analysis of the Composition - Each composition of the student-teachers was evaluated according to four criteria: ideas, structure, vocabulary and language (spelling, punctuation, syntax and grammar), and each of the criteria was evaluated on a scale of three levels. The maximum score was 12 points calculated to percentages. Reliability between judges was $\rho = 0.86$ (Kappa test) .

Analysis of Feedback writing - Analysis of the feedback writing data was first analyzed by correct and incorrect comments, such as wrong suggestions of grammar or wrong corrections of punctuations. Incorrect comments were calculated in percentages before and after the course. The improvement of writing feedback was calculated on the correct comments solely. Second, the comments were coded to global and local comments by their location in the written text. Local comments were in the text while global were at the end of the text. Third the feedback data was classified into 20 comment types (see appendix A) and were classified into 10 formative and 8 corrective feedback types. None of the comments are typical of Hebrew language but rather general comments that teachers use in their feedback.

Corrective Feedback were: suggestions of new ideas; correct spelling; corrections regarding text structure; rephrasing wording problems; suggestions on style; criticizing writers' ideas or standpoints; correction of grammar and syntax errors; adding transitional sentences;

Formative feedback were: Request for clarifications of information; marking places in need of correction; asking questions on content; general global comments; asking questions regarding the connection between ideas; Asking questions regarding text structure; guidelines how to improve writing in the future; explanations regarding genres.

Two comments were not coded as formative or corrective, praising and grading (17; 11; see appendix A), because their classification to either corrective or formative is not clear cut.

Reliability testing: Coding the comments into the 20 comment types was tested on ten cases of feedback by three judges achieving a relatively high level of reliability (89% agreement).

The data was tested by frequencies, qualitative analysis and t test, examining changes in mean score of the CF and FF within time. T test on the grades of writing composition test between pre and posttest examined the differences between the experimental and the control group. The connections between number of feedback types, and writing composition

grades was tested through ANOVA using composition grades as the depended variable and feedback types and time as independent variables.

Two limitations of the study are important to take into consideration; first the writing feedback included two different acts, writing feedback to peers and to children, which were not controlled. Second, the improvement of writing compositions in both experimental and control group could be a result of a floor effect.

## Results

The findings will be presented in three parts according to three research questions: Changes in feedback writing, the improvement of writing and its relation to writing feedback.

I. To what extent will writing feedback (CF and FF) change the feedback of the experimental group?

Five findings pointed at student-teachers improvement of writing feedback:

1) Incorrect comments were 35% in the pre-test and reduced to 25% in the post test. Student-teachers showed less misjudgment of the writing texts they were evaluating.

2) Correct comments divided into formative and corrective comments showed that the participants doubled their formative comments from mean score of 8.48 (±4.67) to mean score of 15.35 (±4.60) $N = 37$, this change was statistically significant ($t = -5.349$***). On the other hand their corrective comments on pupil's compositions almost did not change, starting with a mean score of 7.10 (±5.36) changing to a mean score of 8.10 (±8.33) n.s.

3) Global comments increased significantly- pre-learning mean score was $\bar{X} = 4.66$ (±3.77) and post-learning mean score changed to $\bar{X} = 9.05$ (±4.60); ($N = 44$) $t = -5.23$ ($p < 0.01$).

4) Praising comments increased from a mean score of $\bar{X} = 3.7$ (±3.19) to a mean score of $\bar{X} = 5.5$ (±4.06) ($N = 22$) $t = -2.09$ ($p < 0.05$). This finding points at student-teachers' increase of their awareness and knowledge of how to encourage writing, as will be demonstrated below.

5) Changes in feedback according to genre: the number of comments on writing a summary increased significantly more than other genres: from a mean score of $\bar{X} = 4.98$ (±3.27) at the pre-test, to a mean score of $\bar{X} = 7.91$(±5.47) at the post-test; ($n = 44$) $t = -3.26$ ($p < .001$).

Qualitative analysis of three student-teachers' global comments to a summary will illustrate the changes in writing feedback:

a) Pre-learning feedback: *"The summary is good but you have to correct your grammar and rewrite some sentences."*

Post-learning feedback: *"Encouraging comments: You have no spelling mistakes, the structure is good: you have an opening, a body and an ending. Corrections: you did not use punctuations as needed. There is no division into paragraphs."*

Before the course his/her feedback was very vague although its general judgment was right. After the course the student-teacher learned to recognize the good elements of the students' writing and decided to be clearer in praising comments referring to structure and spelling as good parts of the summary and to point to *punctuation* and structure as the weaker elements of the summary. The titles *"Encouraging comments*" and "corrections" following the indicators seemed as if the student-teacher addressed the instructor of the course.

b) Pre-learning feedback: *"Good summary, I don't have any comments."*

Post-learning feedback: *"The summary is good regarding the language and structure. But he did not write all the main ideas from the text. The connections between the sentences are good. The sentence at the end is unnecessary (quotations should not be included in the summary).*"

At the beginning, the student concluded that his/her feedback as 'good' and it seemed that s/he did not know how to handle the task of writing feedback. After the course the student praises the writer trying to be concrete (language and structure) and to comment on important issues such as: main ideas, connections between sentences, etc. S/He explains claim for the unnecessary sentence in brackets, demonstrating knowledge on writing a summary. The student used third person (he) "*he did not write all the main ideas*" addressing the instructor of the course.

c) L. pre-learning feedback: *"A nice summary, but you have to emphasize some details so the readers of your summary will understand how important the Nile is for Egypt."*

Post-learning feedback: *"A very nice summary. You used your own words, very well. You clarified the main ideas from the text. Pay attention to punctuation."[she marked the missing places of punctuations marks]*

Before the course the student started with "a nice summary, but" she continues with a good point of view directing the writer to the aim of his writing, but the comment was vague and could leave the writer with a question. After the course she refers in her feedback to concrete measures such as: the use of your own words, the main ideas and the punctuation. Indeed, she yielded a very good communicative point "*to emphasize some details in order that the readers of your summary will understand how important the Nile is for Egypt."* This change demonstrates the weakness of indicators, which on the one hand help student-teachers to write clear feedback, but on the other hand cause her to stick to the indicator and leave her good point behind.

Concluding these results, the changes in feedback writing were revealed in four main ways: 1. Comments at the post learning stage were more specific giving the students detailed information and explanations which were incorporated into the feedback, such as: *the structure is good: you have an opening, a body and an ending;* 2. Some of the students changed their opinions about the same composition and recognized more positive/negative points of view. 3. Early in the course praising was general. After the course praising was detailed. 4. After the course comments were abiding by the indicators, sometime in titles like, "praising comments", "comments on structure" which point at thinking in clusters when writing feedback.

II. To what extent will learning to write feedback create an advantage for improving writing in the experimental group in comparison to the control group?

Results of writing composition test showed statistically significant improvement in composition writing, in both groups as provided in Table 2.

**Table 2: Improvement in composition writing- pre-post paired t-test results.**

| | | Mean score and S.D. | *N* | Df | *t* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Experimental Group | Pre-learning | 51.62 (±19.0) | 36 | 35 | **-2.039 |
| | Post-learning | 59.02 (±14.3) | | | |
| Control group | Pre-learning | 44.56 (±14.6) | 23 | 22 | ***-3.268 |
| | Post-learning | 54.34 (±16.2) | | | |

*** p< .000 **p< .001

III. How will writing competency and writing formative and corrective feedback interact before and after the course?

Interaction effect between formative comments, writing composition grades and time was statistically significant: $\bar{X}$ = 11.70 (±5.74) ($f$ (2;74) = 12.18 ;$p$ < .000) with moderate size effect $R^2$ = 0.25, meaning that, learning to write formative feedback affected the improvement in writing composition within time, but this result was not found in corrective feedback. Interaction effect between, corrective comments, writing composition grades and time was not significant: $\bar{X}$ =5.82 (±5.43) ($f$ (2;51)=0.23; n.s.) with small effect size: $R^2$=0.032.

## Discussion

Two premises underlies in this study in two perspectives:

a. Teacher education- student-teachers across the curriculum need to understand and practice feedback writing in order to prepare them for their role as writing facilitators.

b. Writing and the feedback process- writing feedback can be fertile environment for writers to improve their writing.

a. **Teacher education**: Assessment is one of the important components of teacher role, but is not the focus of teacher education programs, as might be expected (Hill, Bronwen, Gilmore, & Smith, 2010). This study dealt with student-teacher assessment abilities through a process of learning to write feedback and with the interaction between writing and feedback. The findings show that student-teachers changed their writing feedback to a more formative type of feedback. The participants in the experimental group wrote more formative comments at the end of the course, indicating their understanding of the writing task and the role of feedback. They wrote more global comments, more praises, gave more explanations, and were more concrete in their comments on pupils' compositions, all of which represent their knowledge of writing. By these acts they overcome difficulties of teachers using feedback comments: incomprehensible comments, too general or vague comments, focused on negative perspectives, and unrelated to the assessment criteria comments (Wingate, 2010). In this study student-teachers met these difficulties and improved their writing feedback while they wrote indicators for the writing assignment and feedback to their peers and to school-students. They learned to give more formative feedback which was realized by writing explanations, suggestions and clear requests about text structure and genre. This improvement prepares them for their role as writing facilitators in their teaching disciplines.

The contribution of this study to the field of teaching writing and teacher education can be concluded by four conclusions: First, this study support peer learning to promote writing: since most of the activities in the course were based on peer learning, we can say that peer learning regarding feedback writing for SL student-teachers with First Language speakers can improve writing and contribute to prospective teachers across the curriculum to widen their understanding of writing process. Second, using indicators while writing feedback might have led to an analytic approach for writing and make their knowledge more explicit. But it is important to recognize that indicators might create superficial type of feedback, abiding by the indicators and leaving behind student-teachers' intuitive understanding of writing. It can also cause students to write to the instructor in the course instead of the writer. Third, writing feedback does not automatically reflect on feedback givers' own writing competency, it seemed that formative feedback is more connected to reflect on writing competency, but this needs to be reexamined in further research. Fourth, the task of writing feedback to unknown writers can reduce empathy and thus change feedback type. Authentic situations are recommended (see also Moore, 2000) in further research on teacher education, where student-teachers will write feedback to their pupils in the practicum and thus avoid situation of "unknown" addressees while writing feedback.

b. **Writing and the feedback process**: Researchers described receiving feedback as an act which develops self-assessment, which is essential for the writing process (Nicola & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006; Hattie& Timperley 2007; Hill, Cowie, Gilmore, & Smith, 2010; Wingate, 2010). But in this study student-teachers were feedback givers and the question was, whether giving feedback will impact on their writing competency? The improve-

ment in formative feedback which also improved writing composition could be that formative feedback does not only reduce ambiguousness for the feedback receiver, as Straub, (2000) and Shute, (2008) explained, but it is also reduces ambiguousness of the feedback givers. Second language writers, became clearer in their writing as they were guided to write feedback.

It seemed that while researchers shift their focus to Corrective feedback mainly for second language writers (Van Beuningen, 2010), this study point on the benefit of formative feedback to SL writers in higher education. In this intervention we recognized that peer review was straightforward, honest and accurate (see the example in pg.6) and was not characterized by the negative side of peer feedback as reported in the review of Junining (2014) pointing at lack of trust in the accuracy, sincerity and specificity of peer comments.

The expectation to find an advantage in the experimental group over the control group in the composition test did not materialize. This result can be explained by the difference between writing requirements which are much beyond feedback writing: while writing process requires production of ideas and knowledge, organization of these ideas in text structure, it requires a high level of language awareness and self-criticism based on reflective thinking (Torrance& Galbraith, 2006; Nystrand 2006 Hayes, 2012). Writing feedback requires language awareness to identify mistakes, but not to produce language; discourse knowledge to identify text structure, but fewer efforts for creating text structure. Writing feedback demands identification of coherence, but fewer efforts in creating coherent text. Most of all, it does not include self-criticism. Therefore, writing feedback is important activities on the rout to improve writing, but writing process demands higher level of linguistic competency.

This study exposed a complex alignment of variables which is hard to control in pedagogical interventions: "content-based" instruction of writing versus individual instruction based on writing feedback, teacher feedback versus peer feedback, receiving feedback versus giving feedback and writing feedback to school-students versus writing feedback to peers. Further research is needed, which will control this complex alignment and examine the outcomes of learning to write feedback on writing competency of the feedback givers.

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# Appendix A:

*Twenty Types of comments*

1. Questions about the objectives of writing;
2. Suggestion of new ideas;
3. Correction spelling mistakes;
4. Suggestions regarding text structure;
5. Request for clarifications on information (e.g. relevance of ideas or accuracy of using terms);
6. Marking places in need of correction;
7. Rephrasing wording problems;
8. Underlining or writing question marks next to spelling, syntax, or wording errors;
9. Suggestions on style;
10. Criticizing the writers' ideas or standpoints;
11. Grading or giving an evaluative comment;*
12. Asking questions on content;
13. General global comments (on ideas, structure, language and style, etc.);
14. Correction of grammar and syntax errors;
15. Asking questions regarding the connection between ideas;
16. Adding transitional sentences;
17. Praising the writing;*
18. Asking questions regarding text structure;
19. Guidelines how to improve writing in the future;
20. Explanations regarding genre;