

## The effects of learning oriented assessment on academic writing

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**Abstract:** The purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of learning-oriented assessment (LOA) on the academic writing ability of EFL students (N:40) during a 12-week in the semester of 2019-2020 academic year in the context of a higher education. Within a pretest-posttest intact group design, the experimental group received instruction following the principles of LOA, and the comparison group received routine procedures for academic writing. This is a quantitative experimental design. The test of normality, Kolmogorov-Smirnov, Mann-Whitney Tests and Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test were administered in order to see the significance of the intervention the data for this study included scores of a pretest, several assessments, and a posttest at the beginning, during, and at the end of instruction, respectively. The prompt for both pre and post-tests required participants to write argumentative essays. To rate the writing tasks, we followed the rubrics developed by the testing office of the institution. The findings revealed that the experimental group outscored the comparison group indicating the effectiveness of LOA procedures in student learning. Further, the findings indicated that implementing LOA could have significant implications and applications for EFL writing education.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

According to Hyland (2014), academic writing provides opportunities for learners to create social negotiations and understand the process of constructing knowledge with the help of reasoning skills and critical thinking. In other words, academic writing serves as a communication booster that helps writers convey a message on a specific topic. The issues such as ‘opportunities for learners to create social negotiations and understand the process of constructing knowledge’ are also some of the principles of LOA.

As Carless (2014) states, LOA promotes higher-order thinking because the learners are active participants in generating, applying, and engaging with instructional criteria. These principles include students' and instructors' active engagement along with a focus on procedures that integrate assessment, learning, and teaching (William & Thompson, 2007; Stiggins, 2005). For instance, LOA fosters learners' self-directed learning skills in the context where active collaboration and cooperation take place along with using the feedback/feedforward process

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(Mok, 2013). Moreover, the LOA context requires that learning activities occur while learners are actively involved in the assessment process via thinking about their strategies for achieving learning objectives (Zeng, Huang, Yu & Chen, 2018).

The significance of this study lies in combining these two important aspects of ELT by investigating the effects of LOA on academic writing. To put the issue in an appropriate context, a brief description of LOA along with the framework used for this study seems necessary.

### **1.1. Statement of the Problem**

Recently, several studies have attempted to deal with the concept of LOA and recently LOA has been a subject of various research studies due to several reasons. LOA promotes higher-order thinking and various approaches to learning since learners are active participants in generating, applying, and engaging with criteria (Carless, 2014). In language testing, formative assessment and LOA has gained popularity thanks to late and ongoing advancements (Carless, 2007). Mentioned advancements include students' and instructors' cognitive involvement along with a focus on procedures to promote assessment for learning (William & Thompson, 2007).

To illustrate, Hamp-Lyons (2017) examined the factors affecting learning orientation in assessment. According to research, LOA is as closely related to beliefs and principles of teaching as it is with principles in testing and assessment. Hamp-Lyons (2017) aimed to explore the possible ways that might encourage instructors and test developers to provide greater chances of learning for large-scale tests such as Cambridge Speaking Tests of CEFR B2 level. According to Hamp-Lyons (2017), LOA opportunities might be extremely useful in speaking tests for teacher trainers. Hence, Hamp-Lyons (2017) explored the effects of LOA on speaking assessment by showing the LOA processes. Furthermore, a similar study has been carried out by Green (2017) exploring the impact of using learning-oriented language test preparation materials for the speaking part of a General English proficiency test (Cambridge English). Besides, few studies have also explored the effects of both assessment and LOA in different ways. In his study, Ibrahim (2013) explored the support the idea of using LOA in an EFL setting and how to implement it along with challenges. However, the lack of a comprehensive view of the implementation of LOA in different contexts with different skills still exists. Carless (2014) also explored the LOA processes by observing classes. The research did not have a goal to explore the students' success, but it explored the process that learners and instructors were engaged in. As it can be understood from above, there is not much literature on 'effects of learning-oriented assessment'. Also, earlier research on LOA has generally focused on the detailed description of the LOA process.

Writing skills and assessment have also been investigated in much of the previous studies. There are many studies about the Cognitive Process of Theory of Writing (Flower & Hayes, 1981), reading writing relations and its theoretical perspectives (Grabe, 2016), the genre in second language writing (SLW from now on) (Bawarshi & Reiff, 2010; Swales, 1990), fluency in writing (Hayes & Chenoweth, 2001), paraphrasing texts in SLW (Shi, 2012), contrastive rhetoric: cross-cultural aspects of SLW (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996), writing models and their effects on writing performances (Nicolas et al., 2014), writing assessment (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996), written corrective feedback in writing accuracy (Han & Hyland, 2015), error correction in SLW (Beuningen, Jong & Kuiken, 2012). Lastly, regarding academic writing skills in a university context and formative assessment, research by Horstmanshof and Brownie (2013) investigated the effect of using a scaffold approach for formative assessment in academic writing skills. The researchers addressed the academic challenges of writing in the formative assessment such as timely feedback, and different abilities to improve academic writing skills in higher education. The authors also focused on student satisfaction, assessment, the role of feedback, and teaching/learning online.

Horstmanshof and Brownie's (2013) study fail to address significant components of assessment which are embedded in LOA since LOA assessment is a dynamic process as well as including the combination of not only formative assessment but summative as well. In addition to these LOA captures the centrality of learning within assessment whether summative or formative, the main goal of LOA is to promote active student learning (Barker, 2013). It should be also noted that LOA assessment has its root from both the features of both summative assessment and formative assessment. In other words, summative assessment evaluates what has happened before; that is to say, judgment and backward- looking, on the other hand, formative assessment guides what will happen next that is to say development and forward looking. Therefore, above mentioned features of both summative and formative assessment are within LOA that support learning. As can be seen above there are plenty of studies on academic writing. However, there is not any study conducted regarding the administration of LOA in higher education specifically for academic writing.

In brief, what is known about LOA is that it is largely based on studies that investigate the process of learning-oriented assessment rather than its effect on a specific skill. Previously published studies mostly describe the principles and process of LOA or LOA and technology relevance. To illustrate, Keppell, Au, Ma, and Chan (2007) investigated themes of group work, group projects, collaborative learning, and peer learning in LOA for technology-enhanced environments. As mentioned previously, similarly, Hamp-Lyons (2014) explored the effects of LOA on speaking assessment by showing the LOA processes. Furthermore, a similar study has been carried out by Green (2017) exploring the impact of using learning-oriented language test preparation materials for the speaking part of a General English proficiency test (Cambridge English)

## **1.2. Significance of the Study**

Although there is a growing body of studies on academic writing, assessment in higher education, specifically LOA on academic writing, has received less attention. A number of authors have considered LOA in large-scale testing thus, the administration of LOA in an academic writing context in higher education is investigated to fill this gap in the literature.

To provide another example of why the current study is significant is that the implementation of LOA in different contexts has been investigated but they make no attempt to engage with higher education within academic writing specifically. To illustrate, the studies reported by Ashton and Salamoura (2012) illustrate the implementation of LOA in the primary and early secondary educational context. In addition to this Keppell (2006) asserts the significance of distance learners and distance learning with regard to flexible curriculum and learning at Hong Kong University for LOA implementation. Also, details of how teachers can use those strategies in their classrooms are shown as well. However, mentioned studies above did not consider the academic setting, especially for academic writing skills. Thus, it can be concluded that previous studies on LOA have dealt with large-scale testing and curriculum-based LOA. Therefore, the current research may contribute to the field with the implementation of LOA in higher education specifically for academic writing skills in the School of Foreign Languages.

Besides, regarding negative aspects of the traditional type of assessments Hamp-Lyons (2017) make a comparison between the former type of assessments and claims that learner-oriented assessment is against the traditional type of assessment which is about assessments that consist of judgment-focused tasks, learner excluded assessment and judgment-focused feedback. Thus, traditional assessment practices may have some weaknesses and limitations such as underestimating learners' capacities to evaluate their own work (Boud & Falchikov, 2006). It can then be argued that according to the studies mentioned above there are numerous challenges of assessment in higher education. Therefore, it would be useful, beneficial, and effective for

describing principles and stages, which are linked to patterns of LOA and connect these specifically to academic writing.

In this manner, it could be concluded that LOA is of paramount importance and should be definitely used to support and promote effective learning specifically in higher education. As previously mentioned, the existing literature on writing skills and LOA is detailed but failed to address both academic writing skills and implementation of LOA in higher education. A more comprehensible study would then include several unresolved issues. Thus, the present study would hopefully be valuable and significant for a more efficient assessment of academic writing in higher education. In brief, the present research would make several contributions to the field of applied linguistics to fill the gap in terms of ‘detailed description of LOA implementation process, it is being conducted in higher education, focusing specifically on academic writing skill’.

### **1.3. Definition and History of LOA**

The roots of LOA reside in the sociocultural theory that (Westbury et al., 2000, p. 47) emphasizes the associations between the theory and practice within the framework of the philosophy of didactics. Under this philosophy, teachers need to focus on ‘learners’ learning and learning activities’. Besides, the Didactic paradigm focuses on the reflective processes for the assessment as the core element of teaching and learning processes (Vallberg, & Roth, 2014). This paradigm offers a framework for the reflective processes where the teacher needs to consider what, why, and how to assess questions in the context of instruction (Westbury et al., 2000, p.33).

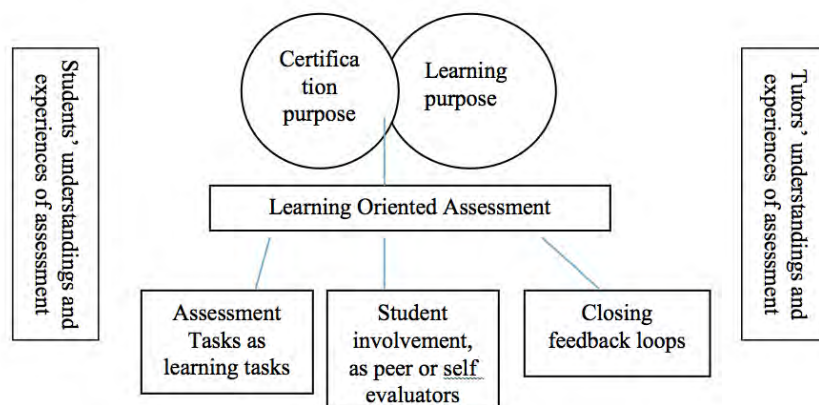
Many studies have investigated the interrelationship of teaching, learning, and assessment under different topics such as assessment of learning (AoL) (Hume & Coll 2009), assessment for learning (AfL) (Martinez & Lipson, 1989), and assessment during learning (Gibbons & Kankkonen, 2011) (AdL). Some scholars classify them all under the term formative assessment to contrast with summative assessment (Hume & Coll 2009; Stiggings, 2005). According to Mok (2013), the LOA framework seems to be comprehensive enough to function as an umbrella term and accommodate the multiple concepts developed in combination with the word “assessment”. LOA comprises a blending of various assessments such as performance, alternative, authentic, and dynamic assessments. Within this conceptualization, Huang, Yu, and Chen (2018) expanded Carless’ (2006, 2007) framework and offered a model of LOA that is more apt for a productive way of students’ learning and an effective way for teachers’ teaching.

Some principles emerged from the models that provided a roadmap for teachers in implementing LOA in a real context of the classroom. First, assessment tasks ought to promote learning among students. That is, the teacher serves as a curriculum designer to arrange a desirable assessment task that would promote learning. Second, students need to actively engage, with understanding, in the application of the criteria for self and peer assessment. It implies that the teacher as a test developer integrates AoL, AaL, and AfL and tries to help learners involve in the processes of teaching, learning, and assessment. Third, teachers need to provide timely feedback that is prompt and forward-looking for future learning (Zeng, et al., 2018). The teachers should receive training on providing feedback and feed-forward to support future learning.

In the context of the current study, the dependent variable (DV) is defined as the score of students’ writing tasks prepared from the testing department of Erzurum Technical University School of Foreign Languages. Regarding operational definitions for instruction following LOA, there are two widely known frameworks: Learning-Oriented Assessment Framework (LOAF) proposed by Carless, (2007); Carless, Joughin, Liu and Associates, (2006) and ‘Framework of

LOA' proposed by Turner and Purpura (2014). The LOAF has two main goals, which are evaluating learners' performance and the learning component. According to Carless (2009), the goal of LOA is to focus on the learning component of assessment in order to achieve it via both summative and formative assessment. Figure 1 is a graphic representation of LOA components.

**Figure 1.** Framework for learning-oriented assessment (Carless, 2009).



As Carless proposes, three strands of LOA are viewed as unified rather than composed of discrete elements that can be clearly seen from the above Figure 1; 1) Assessment tasks as learning tasks, 2) Student Involvement (Peer and Self-Assessment), 3) Feedback Loops or Feedback and Feed-forward.

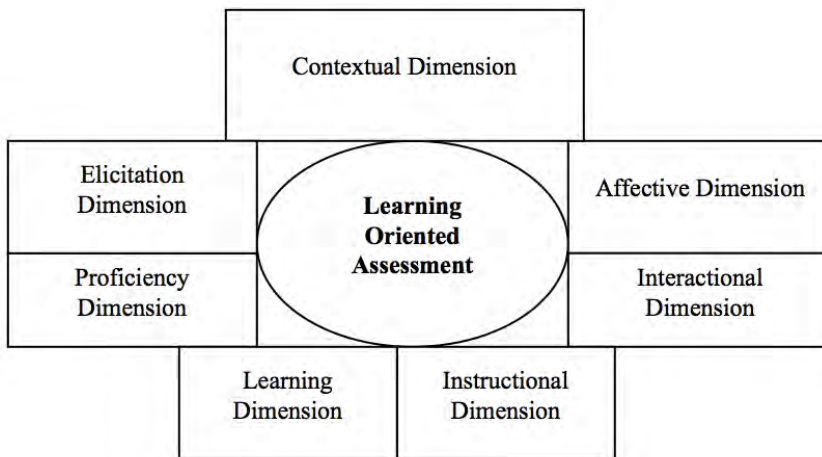
As for the second framework called 'Framework of LOA' proposed by Turner and Purpura (2014), LOA can be described as an embedded assessment, focusing on the learner through seven interrelated dimensions. This framework also contributes to instructors with the goal of helping to facilitate the determination of best practices for teaching (Turner & Purpura, 2014). 'Framework for LOA' is adapted to serve the purpose of the study. Turner and Purpura's (2014) 'Framework of LOA' is administered for the current research due to its detailed descriptions of various dimensions. The LOA framework consists of seven dimensions that are the contextual, the elicitation, the proficiency, the learning, the instructional, the interactional, and the affective.

The Contextual Dimension of LOA has two phases, which are macro level and micro level. In the former one, curriculum, instruction, and assessment are affected by several factors such as socio-cultural norms and socio-political forces as well as classroom expectations. In the latter one, curriculum, instruction, and assessment are driven by personal attributes of teachers, teacher's choices, the creation of classroom culture. Thus, it can be concluded that the Contextual Dimension indicates teachers' characteristics (assessment literacy) that has an effect on learning and assessment in a class context. The Elicitation Dimension of LOA involves the situations in which language is elicited in various methods. In the form of a feedback for potential intervention action, students' performance is noticed, argued, commented on, and responded to. The Proficiency Dimension of LOA is utilized to identify 'what to assess? How to follow the performance? and what to focus on regarding feedback? The Learning Dimension of LOA consists of a perception of how students deal with knowledge and finally learn. Furthermore, it is crucial to know how instruction and assessment are conceptualized and administered. The role of feedback and self-regulation (responsible for their own learning) are also considered as critical features of the learning dimension of LOA.

The Instructional Dimension of LOA is related to; Teacher's Content and Content Knowledge. Thus, it is important to consider the following question 'How much do instructors' pedagogical

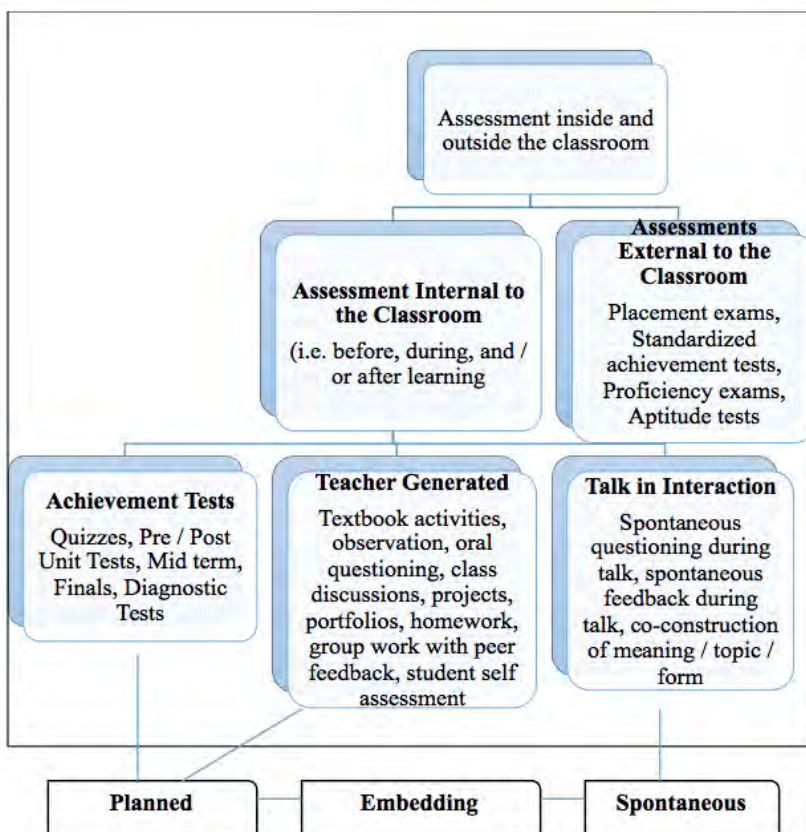
content knowledge influence the understanding of LOAs and choices regarding the following learning processes?’ The Interactional Dimension of LOA encapsulates the organization of LOA in an interactive manner. Lastly, The Affective Dimension of LOA defines learner’s feelings and motivation level regarding learner’s engagements in the assessment process. In other words, it is closely associated with the characteristics such as emotions, beliefs, personality, attitude, and motivation. To sum up, seven dimensions of LOA are illustrated in the below Figure 2.

Figure 2. Dimensions of LOA framework (Reprinted from Turner & Purpura, 2014).



The latter Figure 3, demonstrates the detailed implementation of ‘Framework for LOA’ proposed by Turner and Purpura (2014).

Figure 3. Framework for learning-oriented assessment (Turner & Purpura, 2014).



The independent variables included External Assessments, Internal Assessments; planned assessments (achievement tests, teacher-generated), and spontaneous assessments (talk in interaction) in the context of the current research. Here are the LOA components for independent variables: Achievement Tests: pre-test, post-test, timed writing quizzes, self-regulated tasks: reflective diary, same day feedback, weekly personal response, portfolio, participation in weekly tutorials, patchwork texts, peer and group tasks: team projects (group critique and group assessment), mini projects (peer critique and peer assessment), in-class feedback, and computer-mediated collaborative writing.

To shed some light on the effectiveness of LOA in practice, the current research addressed the research question mentioned below:

Is there a significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores of the experimental and control groups?

## **2. METHOD**

The method of the current study is a quasi-experimental design and it is a quantitative study. A quasi-experiment is a research design that aims to determine a cause-and-effect relationship, but unlike a true experiment, the groups involved are not randomly assigned. Quasi-experiments are usually carried out in real-world settings where it's hard or not feasible to randomly assign subjects. They're frequently used to assess the efficacy of a treatment such as a psychotherapeutic approach or educational intervention (Cook & Campell, 1979)

### **2.1. Participants**

The participants were 40 students from the School of Foreign Languages in Turkey. They were in two intact groups in classes from the B2 level of language ability on the CEFR scale. Their age ranged between 18 and 24. The participants formed two randomly assigned groups of experimental and comparison groups (N=20 for each). Students' levels were determined according to the English Proficiency Exam of Erzurum Technical University, which is the exit/exemption test of the English Preparatory Program of School of Foreign Languages at a state university.

### **2.2. Instruments**

The design of this study required several instruments for the study groups. Two 'argumentative essays' for both groups and several LOA-based assessments for the experimental group formed the basis for the data. Argumentative essay 1 served as the pretest and argumentative essay 2 as the post-test for both groups. The essays went through a double-check procedure according to rubrics and grading criteria developed by the institution. One of the raters was an EFL teacher from the institute and the other a teacher from Marmara University's School of Foreign Languages ([Appendix A](#), [B](#), [C](#)). Grading LOA tasks also followed the rubrics provided for each task and shared with the students.

### **2.3. Procedure**

The present study was adopted a mixed-method approach with a combination of pre-test and post-test and quantitative design. Erzurum Technical University School of Foreign Languages students in upper-intermediate and advanced levels were asked to write compare-contrast essays, cause and effect essays, an argumentative essay, and an argumentative research paper. As for the assessment tool (pre / post-test) argumentative writing has been selected as a main writing performance in this study. There are several reasons why argumentative writing is selected as a main writing performance in this study. According to the scholars (Manzi, Flotts & Preiss, 2012; Paek & Kang 2017), argumentative writing can be considered as one of the most difficult and demanding types of writing when compared to other types of academic

writing due to the following reasons: consequences of linking high cognitive skills along with the ability to use the language, sharing ideas on different contrasting views, writers' own point of view about the argument, and a well-designed critical angle (Krause & Brian, 1999). The above features make argumentative essay challenging for the author therefore, there are a couple of things that need to be considered; knowing how to interact and communicate with the audience, becoming aware of communicative nature of writing which is related to certain manner of considering and addressing views on a topic for or against and effort to change them. The last very fundamental reason why argumentative writing is at the cornerstone of academia is that in the writing elements of their exam the globally accepted English proficiency tests: IELTS (International English Language Testing System) and TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) both use and administer argumentative essays. This notion demonstrates that ability to present, argue, justify or refute opinions are measurement criteria of a student's English writing proficiency.

Taking the above information into consideration, 'comparison group' is assessed through 'instruction following 'routine procedures for academic writing' which are; achievement tests: pre-test, post-test, argumentative essays, timed writing quizzes, and as for the 'experimental group' instruction following 'LOA Procedures'; achievement tests: pre-test, post-test, argumentative essays, timed writing quizzes, self-regulated tasks: reflective diary and reflective journal, same day feedback, weekly personal response, portfolio, participation in weekly tutorials, patchwork texts, peer and group tasks: team projects (group critique and group assessment), mini projects (peer critique and peer assessment), in-class feedback, and computer-mediated collaborative writing was administered. Here are the detailed descriptions of LOA components and procedures which are used as an intervention for the experiment group. [Table 1](#) presents the two main categories of 'self-regulated and collaborative tasks' and 'assigned and assessed tasks'.

**Table 1.** *Self-regulated and collaborative tasks.*

	Self Regulated Tasks
Reflective Diary (RD)	Type of writing in several genres such as expectations from an academic writing class, impression, judgments, attitude regarding academic writing practices, procedures to help the efficiency of the course.
Same Day Feedback (SDF)	Questions formed by the teacher through an online platform on the same day they have in the class, also students are asked to offer input and critiques of each other's responses.
Weekly Personal Response (WPR)	Students prepare questions each week and upload them to the Blackboard System and answer every question posted by other students, combine them, and send them to the teacher.
Portfolio Assessment (PA)	Collecting students' work throughout the course to reflect on their effort, progress, and achievements. About essay drafts, paraphrasing, summarizing, editing, and citation.
Participation in Weekly Tutorials (PWT)	Tutorials are 15-minute, one-on-one workshops regarding academic writing compare / contrast essays, cause/effect essays, argumentative essays, and the argumentative research paper in which students receive assistance and feedback.
Patchwork Text Assessment	Learners were asked to fulfill regular short writing tasks; patches including various themes and genres throughout the module. The teacher constantly checked the writing and gives formative feedback to help students produce a reflective, 'stitching together of the patches. PT provides students with continuous productivity, and collective assessment along with learning via 'metacognitive self-reflection.



**Table 1.** *Continues.*

	Peer and Group Tasks
Team Project (Group Critique and Group Assessment) (TP)	Groups are required to write reaction papers to selected articles by using the academic writing skills they have learned throughout the semester including the joint writing abilities of learners. Assessing both individual efforts, contributions to group work, and our level of involvement in performing a group task was observed through ‘assessment criteria’.
Mini Projects (Peer Critique and Peer Assessment) (MP)	Students assess and evaluate their classmate’s work and have their work assessed by peers. Also, peer involvement personalized the learning experience, potentially motivating continued learning processes.
In-class Feedback (ICF)	Students were required to criticize, give feedback, edit and reflect upon each other’s writing tasks in in-class activities.
Computer-Mediated Collaborative Writing (CMCW)	This writing task is implemented in a web platform where learners discuss the writing tasks, co-build and revise paragraphs and collectively creates a solitary online text via joint endeavors with the help of technological tools like Google Docs and Blackboard (Online Education Platform).

Here is the detailed table for weekly ‘LOA procedures’ and ‘routine procedures’ for both the experimental group and comparison group. Thus, [Table 2](#) demonstrates the weekly instructions for the experimental and comparison groups.

**Table 2.** *Weekly LOA procedures and routine procedures.*

	LOA Procedures	Experimental Group	Routine Procedures
	<i>Daily Tasks:</i>	<i>Weekly Tasks:</i>	Comparison Group
WEEK 1: Researched Essay	Same Day Feedback 1	PRE-TEST / Argumentative Essay Weekly Personal Response 1 Participation in Weekly Tutorials 1 Mini Project 1	PRE-TEST / Argumentative Essay In-class instruction, feedback Activities / Tasks from Effective Academic Writing Book
WEEK 2: Comparison- Contrast Essay	Reflective Diary 1 Same Day Feedback 2 In-class Feedback 1	Patchwork Text 1 Computer- Mediated Collaborative Writing 1 Portfolio 1	In-class instruction, feedback Activities / Tasks from Effective Academic Writing Book
WEEK 3: Comparison- Contrast Essay	Same Day Feedback 4	Weekly Personal Response 2 Participation in Weekly Tutorials 2 Mini Projects 2	In-class instruction, feedback Activities / Tasks from Effective Academic Writing Book
WEEK 4: Cause / Effect Essay	Same Day Feedback 4 In-class Feedback 2	Patchwork Text 2 Computer- Mediated Collaborative Writing 2 Portfolio 2 <i>Comparison-Contrast Essay Mid-Term</i>	In-class instruction, feedback Activities / Tasks from Effective Academic Writing Book <i>Comparison-Contrast Essay Mid- Term</i>
WEEK 5: Cause / Effect Essay	Reflective Diary 2 Same Day Feedback 5	Weekly Personal Response 3 Participation in Weekly Tutorials 3 Mini Project 3 <i>Timed Writing Quiz</i>	In-class instruction, feedback Activities / Tasks from Effective Academic Writing Book <i>Timed Writing Quiz</i>
WEEK 6: Argumentative Essay	Same Day Feedback 6 In-class Feedback 3	Patchwork Text 3 Computer- Mediated Collaborative Writing 3 Portfolio 3	In-class instruction, feedback Activities / Tasks from Effective Academic Writing Book

**Table 2.** *Continues.*

WEEK 7: Argumentative Essay	Same Day Feedback 7	Weekly Personal Response 4 Participation in Weekly Tutorials 4      Mini Project 4	In-class instruction, feedback Activities / Tasks from      Effective Academic Writing Book
WEEK 8: Argumentative Essay	Reflective Diary 3 Same Day Feedback 8 In-class Feedback 4	Patchwork Text 4 Computer- Mediated Collaborative Writing 4 Portfolio 4 <i>Timed Writing Quiz</i>	In-class instruction, feedback Activities / Tasks from      Effective Academic Writing Book <i>Timed Writing Quiz</i>
WEEK 9: Classification Essay	Same Day Feedback 9	Weekly Personal Response 5 Participation in Weekly Tutorials 5 Mini Project 5	In-class instruction, feedback Activities / Tasks from      Effective Academic Writing Book
WEEK 10: Classification Essay	Same Day Feedback 10 In-class Feedback 5	Patchwork Text 5 Computer- Mediated Collaborative Writing 5 Portfolio 5	In-class instruction, feedback Activities / Tasks from      Effective Academic Writing Book
WEEK 11: Reaction Essay	Same Day Feedback 11	Weekly Personal Response 6 Participation in Weekly Tutorials 6 Mini Project 6	In-class instruction, feedback Activities / Tasks from Effective Academic Writing Book
WEEK 12: Reaction Essay	Same Day Feedback 12 In-class Feedback 6	Patchwork Text 6 Computer- Mediated Collaborative Writing 6 Portfolio 6 Team Project <i>POSTTEST / Argumentative Essay Writing Final Exam</i>	In-class instruction, feedback Activities / Tasks from Effective Academic Writing Book <i>POSTTEST / Argumentative Essay Writing Final Exam</i>

As can be seen from [Table 2](#) above, experimental and comparison groups had received different intervention. The experimental group proceeded with below mentioned ‘LOA procedures’; achievement tests: pre-test, post-test, comparison-contrast essay, cause-effect essays and argumentative essays, timed writing quizzes, self-regulated tasks: reflective diary and reflective journal, same day feedback, weekly personal response, portfolio, participation in weekly tutorials, patchwork texts, peer and group tasks: team projects (group critique and group assessment), mini projects (peer critique and peer assessment), in-class feedback, and computer-mediated collaborative writing. However, the comparison group proceeded with pre-test, post-test, comparison-contrast essay, cause-effect essays, and argumentative essays and timed writing quizzes. In addition to these, the comparison group had received in class instruction and feedback.

The data for this research came from four sources; first, the rating scores from the pretest that included scores from the argumentative essay 1 were performed by both groups; second, the scores of regular assessments were assigned during the course for both groups, third, the scores from LOA tasks for the experimental group, fourth the end of the process, the scores of posttests on argumentative essay 2 for both groups. Informed consent form is taken by the participants along with the ethical from institution.

Here is the explanation of the procedure for data collection, the intervention lasted for 12 weeks. Pre-test (argumentative essay) for both comparison and experimental groups was administered in the first week. The control group went through a routine process of writing instruction and regular feedback provided by teacher. The experimental group, however, received additional assessments following LOA procedures; Self-Regulated and Collaborative Tasks mentioned above. At the end of the semester (the 12th week) post-test (Argumentative Essay) for both Comparison and Experimental groups was administered.

## 2.4. Data Analysis

To answer research question quantitative data was analyzed through SPSS. Test of normality, Kolmogorov-Smirnov, Mann-Whitney Tests and Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test were used to estimate the significance of instruction following ‘Routine Procedures’ and ‘LOA procedures’ effect on academic writing.

## 3. RESULTS

To answer the first question of whether LOA has any effect on students' academic writing ability, test of normality, Kolmogorov-Smirnov, Mann-Whitney Tests and Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test were performed. The test of normality, Kolmogorov-Smirnov statistics are presented in Table 3. The test of normality, Kolmogorov-Smirnov test results between the study groups presented here.

**Table 3.** *The tests of normality.*

	Tests of Normality					
	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
PRE-TEST	.130	41	.078	.924	41	.009
POST-TEST	.121	41	.137	.937	41	.025

The table above shows that the two tests of normality revealed complicated results and did not agree with each other. Kolmogorov-Smirnov test supported normal distribution ( $p>0.05$ ), while Shapiro-Wilk test indicated not normal distribution of the data ( $p<0.05$ ). To avoid statistical weaknesses and risks, data will be counted as with non-normal distribution and non-parametric tests will be used for the data analysis. Non-parametric tests can be used for the analysis of both normal and not normal data distribution. Table 4 and Table 5 show results of the Mann-Whitney Test in order to see the significance difference between experimental and comparison groups on the pretest and posttest.

**Table 4.** *Mann-Whitney test results: Descriptive statistics.*

Ranks /Descriptive statistics				
	Intervention	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
PRE-TEST	EXP	20	22.75	455.00
	COMP	21	19.33	406.00
	Total	41		
POST-TEST	EXP	20	29.70	594.00
	COMP	21	12.71	267.00
	Total	41		

**Table 5.** *Mann-Whitney test results: Test statistics.*

	Test Statistics <sup>a</sup>	
	PRE-TEST	POST-TEST
Mann-Whitney U	175.000	36.000
Wilcoxon W	406.000	267.000
Z	-.914	-4.546
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.361	.000

a. Grouping Variable: Intervention.

The results from Mann-Whitney Test in the Table 4 and Table 5 above indicate that there is no significant difference ( $p>0.05$ ) between experimental and comparison group for the pretests, which supports the homogeneity of the sample. However, a significant difference ( $p<0.05$ ) is found between experimental and comparison group for the posttest scores. Descriptive statistics results in Table 4 clarifies that experimental group has outperformed the comparison group with a significant difference in the posttest scores. That is why, it can be assumed that the LOA intervention significantly improved the writing scores of the experimental group. In other words, students' writing scores were higher in the post-test therefore, achievement was higher in the experimental group. Table 6 and Table 7 show results of the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test and Descriptive Statistics as well in order to see the significance difference between experimental and comparison groups on the pretest and posttest.

**Table 6.** Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Signed Test: Ranks / Descriptive statistics.

		Ranks /Descriptive statistics		
		N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
POSTEXP - PREEXP	Negative Ranks	0 <sup>a</sup>	.00	.00
	Positive Ranks	20 <sup>b</sup>	10.50	210.00
	Ties	0 <sup>c</sup>		
	Total	20		
POSTCOMP - PRECOMP	Negative Ranks	0 <sup>d</sup>	.00	.00
	Positive Ranks	21 <sup>e</sup>	11.00	231.00
	Ties	0 <sup>f</sup>		
	Total	21		

a. POSTEXP < PREEXP, b. POSTEXP > PREEXP, c. POSTEXP = PREEXP, d. POSTCOMP < PRECOMP, e. POSTCOMP > PRECOMP, f. POSTCOMP = PRECOMP.

**Table 7.** Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Signed Test: Test statistics.

Test Statistics <sup>a</sup>		
	POSTEXP - PREEXP	POSTCOMP - PRECOMP
Z	-3.926 <sup>b</sup>	-4.044 <sup>b</sup>
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000
Exact Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000

a. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test, b. Based on negative ranks.

According to Table 6 and Table 7 the findings of the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test for both groups of pre and post tests revealed that there is a significant difference between pre and post test results for both of the groups ( $p<0.05$ ). Descriptive statistics indicated that post scores were significantly higher than pre-test scores for both of the groups. Therefore, the intervention had a positive effect on the experimental group, however, comparison group also reached significantly high progress without the intervention.

#### 4. DISCUSSION and CONCLUSION

The findings of the current research are in support of the previous studies about computer-mediated collaborative writing, patchwork text assessment, portfolio assessment, self, peer, and group assessment and feedback as well as the principles of Turner and Purpura's (2014) LOA framework. Previous findings support the positive effect of interaction and computer-mediated writing on argumentative writing. These findings also indicate that regulation activities in collaborative writing foster learners' involvement, self-confidence, and responsibility (Chao &

Lo, 2011; Cho, 2017; Wang, 2019,). On other LOA tasks, Further, Wu, Petit and Chen (2015) studied the effect of online interactivity and discussion between EFL writing learners on a computer-mediated platform. These findings showed that learners benefited from online peer feedback specifically in essay writing assignments.

On another LOA task, the findings of the study corresponded with the earlier studies by Dalrymple and Smith (2008) who mention the positive effects of patchwork text regarding student interaction and participation. The findings of the current study were also in line with earlier studies about the effectiveness of portfolio assessment in writing (Eridafithri, 2015; Farahian & Avarzamani, 2018; Kathpalia & Heah, 2008; Lam, 2019; Romova & Andrew, 2011) who all reported the effectiveness of portfolios on academic writing specifically concerning peer collaboration, reflectivity, and feedback loops. Hence, the significance of the results of the study comes from combining these two significant aspects of ELT for understanding the effects of LOA on academic writing since LOA comprises research on academic writing as well. In this manner, it could be concluded that particularly in higher education, LOA is of utmost importance and should unquestionably be used to support and promote good learning. The existing studies on writing skills and LOA is detailed but failed to address both academic writing skills and implementation of LOA in higher education.

In addition to these, having mentioned the facets of computer-mediated collaborative writing facets above in the literature review, it can be implied that these facets are closely associated with stages of the LOA learning interaction model since WPR and TP were related to computer-mediated collaborative writing. With regard to stages of LOA learning interaction via technology, Jones and Seville (2016) proposed that delivery and mediation of assessment and learning tasks, capturing and recording data, tracking progress, individualization of learner's experience, enabling new forms of learning interactions and improving our understanding of learning are among the most important stages of LOA learning interaction via computer. As can be observed these correspond well with the 'learning dimension' since learners collaboratively engage and interact with each other. To provide an example, as mentioned before Storch (2019) defined collaborative writing in its broadest sense, collaborative writing is defined as the process of writing a text with multiple authors or writers (p. 2). It can then be said that collaborative writing consists of several themes like interaction among learners and editing phases of the writing process. As cited in Alghasab and Handley (2017), these concepts are again closely related to the Turner and Purpura's (2014) LOA framework of 'Learning Dimension' since learners focus on self-regulation and 'how they learn'.

Regarding the 'Affective Dimension' of Turner and Purpura's (2014) LOA framework, it is again in consistent with Computer Mediated Writing since it promotes motivation as well. Thus, it is again related to SDF, RD, WPR and TP tasks of LOA. As the studies of Elola and Oskoz (2010); Storch, (2005) and Chen (2016) suggest computer-mediated collaborative writing is beneficial in promoting the acquisition of different language skills along with the motivation for learning.

Similarly, patchwork assessment fosters and promotes the concepts of learners' self-reflection, peer feedback, self-regulation skills. As Wilson and Trevelyan (2012) claimed alternative components of patchwork text assessment encapsulate the flow of patches, resubmission of prior patches, summative feedback, collaboration, self-reflection. Therefore, these components of patchwork text assessment; collaboration, feedback, self-reflection are closely associated with the principles of Turner and Purpura's LOA framework of 'Learning Dimension' since they are related to 'how learners process learning and become responsible for their own learning'. Similarly, since patchwork text promotes student's interaction and participation (Dalrymple & Smith, 2008) it aligns with the principles of Turner and Purpura's LOA framework of 'Learning Dimension' as well. SDF, RD, WPR and TP tasks of LOA comprise

patchwork assessment partly therefore, patchwork text also aligns with the principles of Turner and Purpura's LOA framework of 'elicitation dimension' which deals with the situations in which language is obtained and acquired. in this dimension learners' actions and progresses are observed and examined, hence 'elicitation dimension' is related to patchwork text principles of how students learn and observe their learning phase and pace since students have an opportunity to reflect, react and discuss in SDF, RD, WPR and TP tasks of LOA thanks to computer-mediated writing feedback (Winter, 2003).

Considering the principles and components of portfolio assessment along with SDF, RD, WPR, and TP tasks of LOA, portfolio assessment is associated and in consistency with the principles of Turner and Purpura's (2014) LOA framework of the 'learning dimension'. In portfolio assessment students become aware of their own learning and progress. In other words, according to Lam (2019) self-monitoring, self-reflection and self-assessment are the core element of portfolio assessment thus, the above-mentioned features of portfolio assessment highly coincide with the learner-centered teaching model of LOA as well as the 'learning dimension' of Turner and Purpura's (2014) LOA framework. Similarly, learners become independent and responsible learners with the help of portfolio (Arslan, 2014; Bader, Iversen & Varga, 2019; Eridafithri, 2015;) therefore, this is closely related to the principles of Turner and Purpura's LOA framework of 'Learning Dimension' since they are related to 'how learners process learning and becoming responsible for their own learning' in the process of SDF, RD, WPR and TP tasks of LOA respectively.

In this sense studies and literature reviewed on self / peer assessment and feedback are associated and in consistency with the principles of Turner and Purpura's (2014) LOA framework of the 'learning and Affective Dimension'.

The Affective Dimension of LOA defines learner's socio-mental inclinations with respect to how students experience and participate in the assessment process. In other words, it is closely associated with the characteristics like emotions, beliefs, personality, attitude, and motivation. therefore, self / peer assessment and feedback facilitate the affective dimension of learning by providing chances for learners to express their expectations from an academic writing class, impression, judgments, attitude regarding academic writing practices, procedures to help the efficiency especially for SDF, RD, WPR since learners are given chance to express themselves thanks to these LOA tasks. As Turner and Purpura (2013) claimed affective dimension is related to learner's socio-psychological aspects which is the learner's engagement in the process of assessment. Similarly, according to Katstra et al. (1987) study learners who receive peer feedback have more positive feelings and attitudes towards writing skills. In this respect, this is closely related to the 'affective dimension' of Turner and Purpura's (2014) LOA framework. Also, as the findings of Gielen et al. (2010) and Strijbos et al.'s (2010), study indicated that there were positive impacts of peer feedback on learners' learning outcomes. Lastly, regarding the principles of Turner and Purpura's (2014) LOA framework of the 'learning dimension', this is closely related to the Self / Peer Assessment and Feedback since these components are already embedded in the 'Learning Dimension'.

In sum, above mentioned studies regarding LOA, computer-mediated collaborative writing, patchwork text assessment, portfolio assessment, self, peer assessment and feedback have been carried out separately in the field. The current study on the effects of LOA on student's academic writing ability is carried out in order to fill the gap of cumulative different types of writing tasks as well as assessment. All in all, the findings of the current study touched upon several unresolved issues and for a more effective evaluation of academic writing in higher education, it would ideally be useful and significant.

#### **4.1. Implication and Application**

A significant implication of this study is the effectiveness of instruction within the LOA framework. Learners' high achievement on different LOA tasks implies that a move may start among EFL instructors, academic writing teachers, and course designers to consider adapting LOA activities for their contexts. Since the application of the LOA framework in the EFL context academic writing is gaining importance, popularity, and recognition, teacher education programs may want to include information that would prepare teachers to accommodate the changes (Mok, 2013).

#### **4.2. Suggestions for Further Study**

LOA is a newly emerging field. It can make significant changes in the education of the students. Therefore, it is applicable to multiple possibilities for research in multiple areas in which benefits of the LOA framework are investigated for other language skills in different contexts. Besides, its effect on other university courses, with other age range learners, at various levels of language ability are all fascinating areas of research. Another significant point worth mentioning would be related to the implementation of LOA in different online platforms. Since online and distance education have become popular, gained importance, and became part of our lives nowadays, a study of LOA administration and its effect on various skills via an online platform will serve as a base for future studies as well.

It should be also emphasized that a more comprehensible study of teacher's pedagogical practices on LOA referring both to pre-service and in-service teacher education practices would also be a thorough investigation of LOA in different aspects of English language teaching specifically in Turkish educational settings, meaning an EFL context. In addition to the above-mentioned aspects, a detailed and depth analysis of teacher education regarding implications of LOA; specifically, in terms of improving learners' assessment skills, differentiated instruction and fostering the feedback process can be explored as well as a further study. For example, Keppell (2006) and Carless's (2006) study that explored the principles of LOA in a teacher education context can be conducted in the school of foreign languages of Turkish universities with an emphasis on different feedback forms, peer learning, web-based platforms, project-based, and task-based learning and so on. To sum up, therefore it may be said that innovative learning platforms and e-assessment would be a comprehensible and pioneering area to be examined along with the LOA literacy of language teachers in the field of ELT.

#### **4.3. Limitation of the Study**

A number of limitations can emerge from the current study. To begin with, an argumentative essay was selected as the main writing performance due to the School of Foreign Languages Testing Policy; however, an expository essay would give more accurate information regarding student's academic writing skills' performance in this context since expository essay type comprises argumentative, cause-effect and compare-contrast essay types respectively.

Another limitation could be related to the number of participants. There were 40 students (participants) from the School of Foreign Languages. Future studies should include more participants to make further generalizations of the present findings reported in this dissertation.

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The authors declare no conflict of interest. This research study complies with research publishing ethics. The scientific and legal responsibility for manuscripts published in IJATE belongs to the authors. **Ethics Committee Number:** Yeditepe University Humanities and Social Sciences Ethics Committee, 31.08.2020 - 1212020.

## Authorship Contribution Statement

**Haticetul Kubra Er:** Investigation, Resources, Methodology Visualization, Software, Formal Analysis, and Writing-original draft. **Hossein Farhady:** Supervision, and Validation.

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**APPENDIX**

**APPENDIX A: PRE-TEST**



Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Overall Grade: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

**Please write an Argumentative Essay for the following topic:**

- *The education system should be improved in parallel with the technological developments in communication.*

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## APPENDIX B: POST-TEST



Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Overall Grade: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Please write an Argumentative Essay for the following topic:

- *Increased media use creates behavior problems*

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## APPENDIX C: ESSAY GRADING CRITERIA\*

	ORGANIZATION	CONTENT	GRAMMAR & PUNCTUATION	LEXIS
25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The introduction begins with a hook or general statement</li> <li>• Introduction successfully narrows down to the thesis, the introduction ends with an explicit thesis statement</li> <li>• Body paragraphs contain clear topic sentences, elaborate on the thesis, are an appropriate length, and are well-connected with transition words</li> <li>• The conclusion summarizes the main points in the body or restates the thesis, and finishes with a concluding remark</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fully addresses the question at hand</li> <li>• All main points are elaborated and explained thoroughly with sufficient supporting details that provide full reasoning and exemplification</li> <li>• Paragraphs are very clear, coherent, and unified</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skillful command of language with almost no grammatical errors</li> <li>• Level appropriate and varied sentence structure</li> <li>• Very good use of punctuation and capitalization</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wide range of level appropriate vocabulary</li> <li>• Almost no word formation errors and almost impeccable spelling</li> </ul>
20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The introduction has a hook or general statement but may not successfully connect to the thesis statement</li> <li>• Introduction somewhat successfully narrows down to the thesis and has a clear thesis statement</li> <li>• Body paragraphs have satisfactory topic sentences and elaborate on the thesis statement with sufficient use of transitional signals</li> <li>• The conclusion summarizes the main points but might have repeated the thesis word-for-word</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sufficiently addresses the question at hand</li> <li>• Presents a developed and sufficient argument</li> <li>• Main points are supported with information that provides adequate reasoning and exemplification</li> <li>• Paragraphs are clear, coherent, and unified</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good command of language with minor grammatical errors that do not impede understanding</li> <li>• Level appropriate sentence structure and adequate range</li> <li>• Good use of punctuation and capitalization</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sufficient range of level appropriate vocabulary</li> <li>• Few word formation errors with mostly accurate spelling.</li> </ul>
15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The hook or general statements do not lead to the thesis statement / narrowing down not successful / may start too general or too specific</li> <li>• Attempt to create a thesis statement, but may be unclear or may not pose a stance</li> <li>• Topic sentences are unclear/weak or not well connected to the thesis</li> <li>• Body paragraphs are too short or not divided proportionately or not well-connected with insufficient use of transition signals</li> <li>• The arguments are somewhat reviewed in the conclusion / a new idea might be introduced</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Somewhat responds to the question at hand</li> <li>• There may be more than one central argument / some supporting ideas may be irrelevant</li> <li>• Content may have inadequate or excessive information or examples</li> <li>• Repetition of ideas either in the same paragraph or other paragraphs</li> <li>• Some effort may have been made to write coherently and clearly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some structures are accurate but sentence structure errors predominate / many minor errors.</li> <li>• Only a limited range of level appropriate sentence structure/ attempts to use level-appropriate sentence structures with some mistakes</li> <li>• Limited command of punctuation and capitalization</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Somewhat sufficient range of level appropriate vocabulary</li> <li>• Some major word formation errors and spelling errors that do not impede understanding</li> </ul>
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is an introduction but there is no hook or general statement, or general statements leading to thesis are irrelevant or non-existent.</li> <li>• There is a thesis statement but it is vague, or weak.</li> <li>• Topic sentences are non-existent or they are contradictory to the thesis and/or they do not correspond to the thesis.</li> <li>• Disproportionate paragraphs and use of only simple transition signals</li> <li>• The conclusion lacks a summary of the body / the arguments are not reviewed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Barely responds to the question at hand.</li> <li>• The main argument may be too vague, weak, or underdeveloped/ Several arguments may have been made, but no central idea is in focus</li> <li>• Presents inadequate information with little or no supporting details</li> <li>• Limited clarity, coherence, or unity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weak command of language with many grammatical errors so much as to hinder comprehension</li> <li>• Sentence structures below level expectations / only simple sentences</li> <li>• Use of punctuation and capitalization below level expectations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited range of level appropriate vocabulary</li> <li>• Frequent errors of word forms that confuse meaning with many spelling errors</li> </ul>
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Produces a simple written text (not in essay form) that lacks cohesion. Inappropriate paragraphing, no thesis statement, no conclusion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fails to respond to the question.</li> <li>• Produces a simple written text that shows minimal coverage of the assignment/task. No consistency, no unity. Not enough ideas or information to support ideas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• So many grammatical errors that comprehension is impossible</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Range and accuracy of lexis fall significantly short with too many errors in word formation and spelling</li> </ul>
0	NOT ENOUGH OF A SAMPLE TO GRADE			

\*Adapted from Istanbul Şehir University, School of Foreign Languages, Testing Department / IELTS Writing Grading Rubric / British Council / University of Cambridge