

## L2 WRITING FEEDBACK: ALIGNMENT OF INSTRUCTIONAL PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

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### **Introduction**

Written feedback is a form of scaffolding in second language (L2) writing. The appropriate provision of feedback may assist L2 learners in developing their L2 writing (Lee, 2003; Myles, 2002). As such, teachers' feedback may play an important role in producing self-regulated L2 writers. However, it is difficult for learners to process feedback in order to improve their writing skills if it is delivered in a random manner and without clear relation to the teaching input. Hence, for effective use of feedback, teachers' feedback focus must align with their instructional goals and instructional approach so that students' attention could be directed to fulfill the intended goals. Alignment among instructional goals, feedback focus and instructional approach means that the goal of a writing lesson must also be the area of focus of teacher's selective feedback. In addition, the instructional approach which the teacher selects would assist the achievement of instructional goals via teacher's feedback.

The L2 curriculum within the Malaysian setting is labeled as communicative. Hence, L2 writing instruction should be aimed at training students to develop skills in written communicative expression. As such, the instructional goal of each L2 writing lesson is to train students in different aspects of effective writing through a process approach to writing. Accordingly, the teacher's feedback focus should be on a particular aspect for each revision such as on content and style for the first draft and on accuracy for the second draft via process approach. Ideally, the instructional goal, teacher's feedback focus and instructional approach are all in alignment with one another. Nonetheless, many L2 teachers might not have an awareness of the importance of such alignments in L2 writing instruction.

### **L2 writing instruction in the Malaysian setting**

In Malaysia, L2 writing skills are taught at primary, secondary and tertiary levels. The process approach to L2 writing is advocated by the Ministry of Education of Malaysia. Thus,

learning outcomes in the L2 curriculum are designated in terms of the writing process rather than the final product. In alignment with this approach and its associated learning outcomes, the purpose of feedback in the process approach is to direct students' attention to the skills and strategies involved in the recursive process of writing, so that the feedback may serve as a means of scaffolding to help students improve their writing, not only in regards to language but also content and other writing aspects. Oftentimes, L2 teachers tend to focus on accuracy throughout the essays as the method of teacher feedback in the effort to make students' writing better (Zamel, 1985; Kepner, 1991; Bitchener & Knoch 2008). Such a writing feedback method is not process-based in nature. Instead, it reflects the product-based writing instructional approach as the instructional goal, primarily in terms of accuracy. Content is not significantly commented on because teachers tend to focus more consistently on accuracy as an indicator of writing performance (Ferris & Roberts, 2001). Ironically, although L2 teachers in Malaysia are aware that they should use a process approach in L2 writing classroom and use learning outcomes tailored to the process approach as their instructional goals, in practice, what they are not aware of is that they are implementing the product approach and providing feedback, which is not in alignment with their instructional goals. Such a scenario suggests that within the Malaysian setting, there is a misalignment between teachers' instructional approach, instructional goals and feedback focus. In addition, L2 teachers gain hardly any response from students in terms of how they make use of the teacher's feedback on their writing, even though such student feedback is vital in informing the teacher's future feedback decisions. Therefore, the present study attempts to highlight the importance of alignment between teachers' instructional goals, writing approach and feedback focus: the key elements which may affect the effectiveness of L2 writing instruction. In addition, the study also provides insights into how students' responses to

teachers' feedback can be used as useful data sources to inform teachers' future feedback decisions.

### Literature review

In general, there are two basic approaches to the teaching of writing in the classroom, namely product and the process approaches. The former concerns prescriptive rules and the copying of models, whereas the latter is based on the "how", instead of the "what" of students' writing (Tuffs, 1993). In other words, the process approach stresses the process of learning, while product approach emphasises the outcomes of learning.

In the product approach, the teaching of writing is language-focused and barely has to do with the actual writing needs of learners (Tuffs, 1993), for instance the intention of the piece of writing and the target readers. This is also stated by Silva (1990: 13), who observe that "the text becomes a collection of sentence patterns and vocabulary items - a linguistic artifact, a vehicle for language practice. The writing concern is the ESL classroom; there is negligible concern for audience or purpose".

One criticism of the product approach is that it does not show how a writer reaches the end or the finished product, an area which advocates of process writing consider to be important. Writing entails not only the action of writing itself, but also the processes of writing- planning, drafting, editing and reviewing, all of which are not always linear in nature (Zamel, 1985; Hayes & Flower, 1980; Bogert & Worley, 1988). The process approach highlights the developmental role of writing, and accordingly, it calls for a constructive, supportive and collaborative learning atmosphere for students to produce their thoughts clearly into a written piece (Silva, 1990; Tuffs, 1993).

Many attempts have been made to exemplify teachers' responses to student writing, as these responses are theorized to reflect the nature and role of writing (Chandler, 2003; Sachs & Polio, 2007). Kroll and Schafer (1978) illustrate a metaphor of the writing teacher as "a revenge-thirsty monster wielding pen and red ink" to bloody a horrified beginner writer. This metaphor reflects the structural approach to L2 writing feedback, which seems to intimidate students rather than to enhance their writing experience. Kroll and Schafer's (1978) finding is supported by Zamel (1985) who found that when instructors advised students on how to revise their essays, the comments given were

abstract or prescriptive and rarely directed to the content of the essay.

Studies suggest that the correction of errors of form has been found to be inconsistent and unclear, and overemphasizes the negative (Fregeau, 1999; Cohen & Cavalcanti, 1990; Lee 2003). Equally, when this type of feedback is given, students for the most part simply reproduce the corrections in their final essays. Many students do not note or revise the mistakes indicated in the feedback. Having students just copy teacher corrections into rewrites is an unproductive act that does not teach students how to identify or correct errors. Many times, students do not understand why the errors were pointed out, and merely guess the corrections as they rewrite. A further ineffective aspect of the marking of student errors is that it causes students to focus more on grammatical errors than on the clarity of their ideas, and it often accentuates the negative. (Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 1996; Ferris, 1995; Zamel, 1985)

Nevertheless, there are several effective points to some of the customary methods of teacher feedback. Fathman and Walley (1990) discovered that when students receive grammar feedback that indicated the place but not type of errors, the students notably improved their grammar scores on subsequent rewrites of the papers. Indirect feedback as such requires students to analyze where they went wrong, and such a process makes the teacher's feedback useful in improving students' writing. Written feedback has also been found to be effective when it is accompanied by student-teacher conferencing (Fregeau, 1999). As mentioned earlier, many students find understanding written feedback problematic. According to Williams (2003), conferencing is one way that offers students and teachers an avenue to resolve the problems surfaced from student writing and teacher feedback. Through conferencing sessions, teachers can raise questions to students with the aim of obtaining a better insight into students' problematic areas in their writings. Teacher-student conferencing enables students to express their difficulties in understanding the teacher's feedback and obtaining clarification on the feedback that teachers have made.

However, Pica (1982) reveals that teachers repeat some of the similar errors that they are attempting to correct in the students' written work such as sentence fragments and underdeveloped paragraphs. This is reiterated by Zamel (1985: 86) who discloses that writing teachers 'misread student texts, are inconsistent

in their reactions, make arbitrary corrections, write contradictory comments, provide vague prescriptions, impose abstract rules and standards, respond to texts as fixed and final products, and rarely make content-specific comments or offer specific strategies for revising the text'. She also discovers that writing teachers place greater emphasis on form than on meaning, which reflects the practice of a product rather than a process approach to L2 writing. In short, the literature suggests that there is a randomness in terms of feedback on student writing, with little coherent integration and alignment of feedback and instructional planning, resulting in students not getting ample assistance.

### **Methodology**

The purpose of this study was to examine whether there was an alignment between teachers' instructional goal, instructional approach and their feedback focus. In addition, the study also explored how students' responses to teachers' feedback helped inform teachers' feedback decision. The present study sought to answer the following research questions:

- Are teachers' instructional goals for students' L2 writing in alignment with their written feedback focus?
- What is the approach that the teachers use for their writing instruction?
- Did the students learn from teachers' feedback?
- How can students' responses to teachers' feedback inform teachers' feedback decisions?

### **Research context**

The study was conducted at a residential school known as Maktab Rendah Sains Mara (MRSM). MRSMs are secondary boarding schools for selected students based on their results in the Lower Certificate of Education (PMR) or Ujian Penilaian Sekolah Rendah (UPSR) examinations. Most of the schools are situated in rural areas. They are coeducational schools with roughly 36 branches all over Malaysia. MRSM was selected for this study because one of the researchers has access to the school, thus alleviating some bureaucracy procedures.

### **Participants**

3 teachers of English and 90 Form Five students of Maktab Rendah Sains MARA Kuala Kubu Bharu, Selangor were the participants of the study. Seeing that this study examined the overall view of teachers' and students' responses and feedback, no particular attention was given to any gender variation. The students come from families of various social classes, where they are placed together with the aim to excel in their academic life. The majority of the students speak Malay as their first language, although due to affluent family backgrounds and enhanced learning opportunities, some may have a good command of English.

3 teachers were chosen because there were 3 personnel teaching the Form 5 level. Each teacher selected 30 students to answer the student questionnaire.

### **Research instruments**

There were two sets of questionnaires; a Teacher Questionnaire (TQ) and a Student Questionnaire (SQ). The TQ examined the ways in which the teachers corrected their students' work while the SQ reflected students' responses to teachers' feedback. TQ was a mirrored version of SQ. The former was devised and revised so as to make it suitable for extracting the needed information from the three teachers. It consisted of eleven questions, which were a mixture of closed and open-ended questions. The closed questions aimed to give some kind of guide or framework so that the respondents' answers were precisely focused, while the open-ended ones would provide the opportunity for the teachers to answer freely. These would consequently enable a more balanced result. The questions asked concerned the title, the purpose of the particular writing task, the categories of feedback offered (grammar, mechanics, vocabulary, organization, content, style and other), and follow-up plans.

The SQ was adapted from Cohen (1987: 68) for the reason that it contains suitable items relevant to the present study. The questionnaire elicited data on the type of feedback (i.e. mechanics, grammar, vocabulary, etc). the 90 students considered themselves to be receiving, and the type of feedback they would prefer. Students were also asked to indicate the tactics they employed in dealing with the feedback

**Table 1:** Comparison matrix: examples of teachers' goals and feedback focus.

Teachers	Goals of Writing Task	Focus of Feedback	Alignment
Teacher A	To use direct speech	Correct use of direct speech	Yes
Teacher A	To use direct speech	Other than direct speech	No
Teacher B	Sentence structure	Sentence structure	Yes
Teacher B	Sentence structure	Other than sentence structure	No
Teacher C	Writing style	Writing style	Yes
Teacher C	To check writing style and grammar	Everything	No

provided by the teachers. This would include items such as 'making a mental note, writing down points, identifying points in need of further explanation, requesting an explanation, consulting previous compositions, consulting a grammar book, or rewriting the essay incorporating the teacher's comments' (Cohen & Cavalcanti 1990: 159). Finally, the questionnaire also requested self-ratings of students' ability in different skills of English.

According to Robson (1998: 243), "for the results to have any hope of meaningfulness, the questionnaire must be painstakingly constructed, with very clear and unambiguous instructions, and careful wording of questions". Therefore, the selected and adapted questionnaires were concise and brief, but informative and useful. The page layout was practical and easy to answer. The researchers were also aware that "if the questionnaire has been well constructed, the time needed to code and analyze responses can also be short" (ibid.).

#### **Procedure and data collection**

The first phase of the study involved each selected teacher assigning their respective participating students to write an essay in English. During the second phase of the study, the teachers examined the students' essays and provided written feedback as they deemed necessary. Upon completion of examining students' essays, the teachers were given the teacher questionnaire (TQ). The questionnaires were collected immediately upon completion. Student questionnaires (SQ) were given to the teachers to be distributed to their respective students and were collected upon completion.

Data on teachers' goals and their feedback focus were acquired from the TQ while data on students' reaction to teachers' feedback were obtained from the SQ.

#### **Data analysis**

Most of the data were tabulated in the form of numbers and percentages. The study was inquisitive in nature, and was meant to render data that would assist in raising the quality of English, specifically the skill of writing. The data analysis for each research question is explained below.

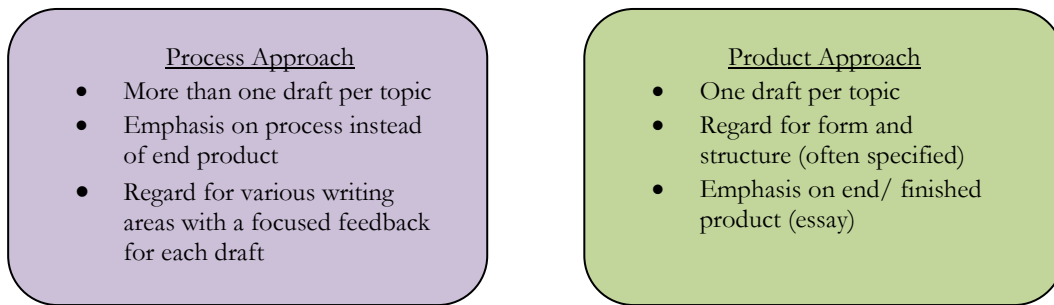
#### **Question 1: Are teachers' instructional goals for student L2 writing in alignment with their written feedback focus?**

The alignment between teachers' instructional goals and their feedback focus were analyzed by comparing the teachers' writing instructional goals and their feedback focus. For example, if the teachers' goal was for students to practice using direct speech in their writing, then the teachers' feedback focus should be on the correct use of direct speech. Table 1 presents the comparison matrix and examples of the comparison between teachers' goals and feedback focus in analyzing Question 1.

#### **Question 2: What is the approach that the teachers use for their writing instruction?**

In relation to this, the researchers have outlined the general attributes of Process and Product approaches to writing (Figure 1). Thus, from the teachers' responses to the TQ, their claimed approaches are inferred and examined through their implementation part.

**Figure 1:** Process vs. product writing approaches.



**Question 3: Did the students learn from teachers’ feedback?**

In order to find out whether the students learn from the teachers’ feedback, the data from SQ were analysed by grouping students’ behavioural reactions, for example “Did not look at the essay at all”, “put the paper away”, “made a mental note”, “ask the teacher”.

**Question 4: How can students’ responses to teachers’ feedback inform teachers’ feedback decisions?**

Data from SQ on students’ reaction to feedback were analyzed qualitatively in providing insights into how students’ reaction to teachers’ feedback can be used to inform teachers’ feedback decisions. Students’ responses were grouped into responses that indicate students did react to feedback, and responses that indicate no reaction to teachers’ feedback in terms of frequency counts which were converted into percentages.

**Findings and discussion**

The findings are presented according to the research questions in this study.

**Question 1: Are teachers’ instructional goals for students’ L2 writing in alignment with their written feedback focus?**

In line with the findings of past studies in other settings (e.g. Fregeau, 1999; Cohen & Cavalcanti, 1990; Lee 2003), the findings of this study provide evidence that L2 teachers within the Malaysian setting tend to primarily use a product rather than a process approach to L2 writing, based on their instructional approach reflected in their structural goal setting and feedback

focus, as shown in Table 2. Such practice is contrary to the process approach advocated by the Malaysian L2 writing curriculum. Table 2 also demonstrates that the instructional goals of writing task for two teachers were not in alignment with their feedback focus. Teacher B’s instructional aim was for students to practice using various sentence structures correctly while Teacher C aimed at the use of topic-relevant writing style as well as the use of context-appropriate grammar. Nonetheless, the focus of feedback of both teachers was not only confined to their instructional goals but on all aspects of their students’ essays. Teacher B’s and Teacher C’s undetermined focus of feedback might confuse students on which feedback they should actually attended to. In order for students to learn from feedback they need to be able to direct their attention to specific writing feedback (Sheen, Wright & Moldawa, 2009; Bitchener, Young & Cameron, 2005). Learners’ working memory capacity (Baddeley, 2003) and the information processing capacity are limited. Thus, teachers’ feedback on “everything” might result in cognitive overload on the students’ part, which may discourage them to process the feedback. Although Teacher A’s focus of feedback on direct speech was in alignment with her instructional goal (direct speech), she also focused on tenses. As such, the focus of her feedback can be considered only as partially in alignment with her structural L2 writing instructional goal. Table 2 also provides evidence that L2 writing instruction is used more for grammar teaching than developing students’ skills for communicative written expression.

**Table 2:** Comparison of writing instructional goals and feedback focus.

Teachers	Goals of Writing Task	Focus of Feedback	Alignment
Teacher A	To use direct speech	Tenses & direct speech	Partial
Teacher B	To use various sentence structure	Everything	No
Teacher C	To check writing style and grammar	Everything	No

**Table 3:** Comparison of writing approach and implementation of writing instructions.

Teachers	Writing Approach	Characteristics of Writing Instruction	Alignment between Selected Writing Approach & Instructional Implementation
Teacher A	Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students wrote only one essay per topic</li> <li>Teacher examined the essays once</li> <li>No specific focus on feedback</li> </ul>	No alignment
Teacher B	Product	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students wrote only one essay per topic</li> <li>Teacher examined the essays once</li> <li>No specific focus on feedback</li> </ul>	Partial alignment
Teacher C	Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students wrote only one essay per topic</li> <li>Teacher examined the essays once</li> <li>No specific focus on feedback</li> </ul>	No alignment

**Question 2: What is the approach that the teachers use for their writing instruction?**

Based on the findings in Table 3, teachers A and C reported that they used the Process Approach, whereas Teacher B identified her instruction as the Product approach. In the case of Teachers A and C, there is clearly no alignment between their instructional approaches and the instructional process they executed in the classroom. They only marked the final essays produced by the students. This does not conform to the criteria of having more than one draft in a process writing approach (Figure 1) and as such, the instructional implementation reflects the Product Approach. Nor was there any specific focus on the areas of feedback which indicate the misalignment between teachers’ instructional approach and feedback focus.

On the contrary, Teacher B reported using the Product Approach to writing. We consider it to be partially aligned with the implementation. Although Teacher B met the criterion of examining the essay once, not giving feedback at several stages like in the process approach, she however, did not have a specific focus in providing the feedback. Hence, based on these findings, it is reasonable to conclude that Teacher B’s instructional approach is only partially in alignment with her actual instructional implementation.

This may indicate that teachers do not fully comprehend the concept of the two approaches or they hold strongly differing ideas of what

process writing is, as throughout a certain time, a teaching approach may become diverse (Caudery, 1995). Another possible reason for the mismatch of the approach and the characteristics may be due to the ongoing influence manifested in the majority of popular contemporary L2 essay writing textbooks (Silva, 1990). In Malaysia, the same scenario takes place with the writing exercises found in many writing practice books adopting a product approach. This makes it hard for L2 teachers, who generally rely on those practice books as part of their L2 writing instructional materials, to adopt the process approach. As such the product approach still dominates L2 writing materials and classroom practices within the Malaysian setting.

**Question 3: Did the students learn from teachers’ feedback?**

Table 4 indicates that more than half of the students did not react to their teachers’ feedback once they received their marked essays. This finding suggests that a high proportion of students did not seem to benefit much from the feedback provided by their teachers.

**Table 4:** Students’ reactions to teachers’ feedback.

React to Feedback	Do Not React to Feedback
45.8%	54.2%

Listed in Table 5 are the examples of students’ reactions upon receiving the feedback from their teachers.

**Table 5:** Examples of students’ reactions to teachers’ feedback.

Examples of Students’ Reactions to Teachers’ Feedback
Did not look at the essay at all
Made a mental note
Wrote down points
Re-wrote the paper incorporating the comments
Asked the teacher
Reread the corrected essay

The findings in Table 5 corroborate the findings presented in Table 2, in which teachers' feedback focus lacks selectivity and tends to cover "everything" which results in the students ignoring teachers' feedback on their essays. Crucially, many who did not react to the feedback given by the teachers, with the figure of 54.2%, reported that they did not understand the comments. Some did not look at the paper at all, kept them in their files and ignored the comments altogether. This supports Cohen's (1987) findings that learners have a limited repertoire of strategies to handle teachers' feedback. Even though teachers' feedback is generally viewed as vital (Lee, 2003; Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 1996), in this study, it appears that learners did not take further action in correcting their written work.

On the other hand, there were also positive reactions by the students, which made up about 46%, toward the feedback given by the teachers. The positive reactions are such as writing down points, rewriting of essays, asking the teacher and also reading more sample essays. The figure of less than 50% again shows that learners might not know how to make use of teachers' feedback. Feedback is only valuable if the essays are consequently revised (Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 1994), but the findings of the study suggest that actual revision by the learners occurred only occasionally.

**Research Question 4: How can students' responses to teachers' feedback inform teachers' feedback decisions?**

From the SQ, the researchers were able to extract the data of students' attention to teachers' comments on the various aspects of their essays (Table 6). Students seemed to pay great attention to Grammar (50%), Mechanics (21%) and Vocabulary (21%). This may be due to the traditional outlook of how teachers mark written work and the view that good pieces of writing are those of error-free ones (Leki, 1991; Diab, 2005). Teachers might also lose their credibility with students if they do not correct all surface errors (Radecki & Swales, 1988). These three areas of surface-level errors are also the most expected and effective feedback perceived by students (Leki, 1991;

Enginarlar, 1993; Saito, 1994; Ferris, 1995), compared to organisation, content and style. The findings show that students' focus on structure more than on other aspects of writing such as content, organisation and style is a reflection of teachers' prevalent use of the Product Approach. It is a misconception that using the Process Approach translates to less training on accuracy to students. The recursive process in Process Approach allows more focused feedback on accuracy addressed explicitly at different points of the Process Approach cycle. Past studies have shown the effectiveness of the Process Approach in developing students' L2 writing competency (e.g. Fathman & Walley, 1990; Fregeau 1999; Williams, 2003). Hence, this study provides insights into the importance of educating L2 teachers on what the Process Approach really entails, as well as creating awareness among L2 teachers on how the Process Approach may assist the development of L2 competency. The findings of the study also suggest that students tend to focus on what teachers focus on. By being aware of students' attention to the comments made, teachers can plan, design and strategise their feedback on written work more carefully (Diab, 2005).

**Table 6:** Students' attention to teacher's comments on different aspects of essay writing.

Areas of Comment	Percentage (%)
Mechanics	21
Grammar	50
Vocabulary	21
Organization	2
Content	4
Style	2

**Pedagogical implications**

Like other studies (Cohen & Cavalcanti 1990; Leki 1991; Diab, 2005), this study reveals the inconsistencies between teachers' and students' views regarding feedback on writing, for instance the alignment between writing tasks and focus of feedback, the mapping between the writing approach and its implementation, and also the areas of feedback teachers should respond to. This study has also

called attention to the various ways that students react when processing the teachers' comments and feedback.

The results of this study support the notion that teachers should always be aware of and provide what their learners need. This begins with a principled understanding of the goals of writing instruction and the alignment with teachers' feedback focus. If the teacher's instructional goals and feedback focus are in alignment, students will be more focused and directed to the feedback given, thus making the feedback more meaningful and useful. Another important point is to ensure an appropriate correspondence between writing approach and its implementation. Once the teacher is clear about his or her writing approach and provides matching feedback, learners will be more likely to benefit most from the writing and correction processes. Correcting or giving feedback is not unidirectional, but rather a shared practice if it is to be optimally effective. Therefore, the findings of this study may be useful in providing teachers insights into how students react to their feedback and as a consequence, enabling teachers to make better feedback decision accordingly.

Although students' actual uptake of feedback is sometimes not indicative of the usefulness of the feedback provided, teachers are still considered accountable in helping students to understand how feedback is expected to improve their writing and why teachers provide specific feedback. Thus, the findings of the current study provide data that help to inform integrated writing instruction especially concerning teachers' feedback decisions in the effort to produce self-regulated L2 writers.

### **Conclusion and recommendations**

One of the most challenging areas in the realm of L2 writing is whether the feedback given by teachers to students is useful and practical. This study has indicated that there is often a misalignment between teachers' instructional goals and their instructional approach, which leads to the inaccurate execution of their instructional planning, particularly in the feedback phase.

Although the issue of what constitutes effective feedback is still inconclusive in the area of L2 writing, the findings in this study

may provide teachers with some insights into effective ways of assisting students in learning to analyse their weaknesses and in developing their writing skills. Being aware of what students need and how they perceive teachers' feedback and error corrections, teachers will create awareness among students in the areas that they need to improve in order for them to take on the challenges of writing in both academic and professional worlds.

In an effort to raise students' writing proficiency, it is important that teachers provide feedback that corresponds with their instructional goals. As such, teachers need to be aware of the alignment of their instructional goal, instructional approach and feedback focus. Besides this, teachers should review and consider how they can respond as genuine and interested readers, who are there to assist the learners, rather than solely as examiners

Teachers' feedback is part of instructional implementation as the outcome of instructional planning. Hence, prior to constructing the instructional plan, it is recommended that teachers analyse students' writing needs. At the beginning of the school year, teachers may analyse students' L2 writing needs by identifying students' weak areas in L2 writing. Teachers can conduct a simple survey which will provide information on students' problematic areas in L2 writing. In addition, teachers may also acquire data on students' level of L2 writing proficiency. Such data will inform teachers' instructional planning and implementation which include providing appropriate and effective need-based feedback. In addition, teachers may also keep formative anecdotal records of students' writing progress in order for teachers to tailor their instructional planning and implementation to students' individual needs, helping them to be aware of what is expected of them as writers and to be able to produce it with minimal errors and maximum clarity (Cohen, 1987; Lee, 2003). The principal goal of feedback is to assist students in developing their competency in communicative L2 written expressions to the point where they are aware of what is expected of them as writers and are able to produce it with minimal errors and maximum clarity (Cohen, 1987; Lee, 2003).



### Limitations of study

Subsequent to the discussion on pedagogical implications, it is also significant to clarify the limitations of the study. To begin with, this study was conducted only with 3 teachers of English and 90 students in one school, which is not a representative sample of all secondary English teachers and students in Malaysia. Hence, the generalisability of the results is limited. In addition, no teacher and student interviews were conducted. The findings of this study might have been different with the increase in size of the samples, and also with some data from interviews. Importantly, the results of the study were based on respondents' self-reported data with regard to feedback in writing, and in truth it is not certain how teachers, conduct their feedback on written work. There are indications and scope here for future research.

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