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Classroom Writing Assessment and Feedback in L2 School Contexts

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ISBN 978-981-10-3922-5 ISBN 978-981-10-3924-9 (eBook)
DOI 10.1007/978-981-10-3924-9

Library of Congress Control Number: 2017934080

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Printed on acid-free paper

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The registered company is Springer Nature Singapore Pte Ltd.
The registered company address is: 152 Beach Road, #21-01/04 Gateway East, Singapore 189721, Singapore

Preface

As a second language writing teacher educator-researcher, I first became keenly interested in issues about error correction in L2 writing in the late 1990s. Like many feedback researchers, I found myself deeply engrossed in the topic after reading Truscott's (1996) landmark article published in *Language Learning*, where he argued vehemently against grammar correction in L2 writing. My early research on error correction (e.g., Lee 1997, 2004, 2005) soon took me to new heights, urging me to take a closer look at feedback in L2 writing from multiple and critical perspectives – e.g., why teachers give feedback in the ways they do and why feedback advice is not translated into classroom practice (Lee 2008, 2011a, 2013).

My research activities on feedback in L2 writing coincided with a time when the paradigm shift from summative to formative assessment in education has turned the tide for second language assessment in favor of assessment that promotes student learning. Since then, assessment for learning has become the buzzword in education, including second language education. In different parts of the world, education reforms consist in assessment innovations that are geared toward learning-oriented assessment – i.e., using assessment to inform and improve student learning. In L2 writing, the assessment for learning tide is too powerful to be swept aside. Classroom writing assessment is futile if it does not help students learn better and become better writers. Feedback is ineffective if it does not improve student learning. Informed by perspectives on assessment for learning, I constantly ask myself how classroom writing assessment and feedback can be effectively utilized to enhance student learning of writing. My quest for the "holy grail" has witnessed a growth and broadening of my own research and professional interests where classroom assessment and feedback are increasingly seen as intertwined (Lee 2011b, c; Lee and Coniam 2013), culminating in this book that examines the role of classroom writing assessment and feedback in enhancing student learning.

As a second language writing teacher educator, I am particularly interested in the school context. This is partly because I started my teaching career as a secondary English teacher myself, but more importantly my mission as a university professor is to provide effective training of preservice and inservice teachers for primary and secondary English language teaching. With my research and professional interest in

second language writing, my heart is always in making a difference to the teaching and learning of writing in schools. Also, the bulk of the literature on second language writing serves the interests and needs of teachers and researchers working in the tertiary context. By focusing on classroom writing assessment and feedback in L2 school contexts, the book can fill a gap in the existing second language writing literature.

Although this book addresses classroom writing assessment and feedback for school-age L2 learners, I am aware that the "L2 school context" can refer to thousands of different contexts, ESL and EFL, and primary and secondary classrooms with a wide spectrum of characteristics, comprising students of divergent proficiency levels, different motivations, and diverse language and cultural backgrounds. Despite the differences across the whole range of school contexts, one thing common to all school contexts is that currently classroom writing assessment and feedback are not sufficiently utilized to maximize student learning of writing. Also, L2 writing teachers working with young learners lack assessment literacy to advance students' learning and improve their writing. This book is motivated by my wish to address these exigent needs.

More than a decade ago, US-based assessment scholar Rick Stiggins wrote, "If we wish to maximize student achievement …, we must pay far greater attention to the improvement of classroom assessment" (Stiggins 2002, p. 1). The same holds true for L2 writing classrooms, where classroom assessment and feedback have a crucial role to play in leveraging student achievement in writing. By bringing together these two key components of L2 writing, I hope that this book can provide useful classroom assessment and feedback training for L2 writing teachers, as well as new insights about promising avenues for future investigations for L2 writing researchers.

Hong Kong Icy Lee

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Acknowledgments

I started working on the book when I was spending my sabbatical at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE), the University of Toronto, in May and June 2015. I want to thank my home institution, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, for granting me sabbatical leave during the second semester of 2014–2015 so that I could work on the book project. I am grateful to Professor Alister Cumming for hosting me as a visiting professor at OISE and for allowing me to use his office. I also owe much to Anke and Ben Mok for their warm hospitality throughout my two-month stay in their Markham home, during which time I was able to work on my writing without any disruption. I still have fond memories of Cooper, the lovely puppy, keeping me company most of the time when I was working in front of the computer.

I wish to thank all the teachers with whom I have come into contact over the years, who have enabled me to gain tremendous insight into classroom writing assessment and feedback in primary and secondary classrooms. They include those who have attended my university teacher education classes, invited me to organize school-based professional development activities, and partnered with me on research projects.

I have benefited greatly from the valuable feedback provided by Professor Alister Cumming and the two anonymous reviewers, as well as my research team (all former doctoral students from the Chinese University of Hong Kong: Pauline Mak, Colin Yu, and Eric Yuan). Their insights have played a significant role in sharpening my ideas for the book.

On a personal level, I'd like to express great appreciation to my husband, Rickie Chan, and my sons, Tony and Gareth Chan, who have constantly made me believe that I can balance my multiple roles as a wife, a mother, and a university teacher-researcher.

I dedicate this book to my deceased father, who could not read English but instilled in me a great passion for English, and to my Heavenly Father, the source of inspiration for this book.

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About the Author

Icy Lee is a professor in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at the Faculty of Education of the Chinese University of Hong Kong. Her main research interests include classroom assessment, feedback, and teacher education in L2 writing.

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The original version of this book was revised. An erratum to this book can be found at https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-3924-9_11

Chapter 1
Introduction

Aims of the Book

Writing plays an important role in all stages of life from early education to college and beyond. It allows students to communicate ideas, develop creativity and critical thinking, and build confidence. Effective writing skills contribute to academic success and are considered a useful asset in the workplace. In second and/or foreign language (L2) contexts, as a result of globalization and the worldwide trend toward learning English as an L2 at an early age, writing has begun to play an increasingly significant role in the teaching and learning of English for younger learners. The growing importance of written communications, ranging from informal writing for social networking to more formal writing for academic studies, has made the acquisition of writing skills an important priority for young L2 learners. Since "developing language competence inevitably requires assessment" (Berchoud et al. 2011, p. 9), how teachers should conduct classroom assessment to help L2 students improve their writing is of critical importance.

Traditional classroom writing assessment in L2 school contexts is dominated by a summative orientation, which sees teachers administer writing tasks in the form of tests that focus primarily on writing performance and scores. This summative focus is referred to as assessment of learning (AoL), where scores suffice for feedback. A predominant emphasis on AoL, however, is not conducive to effective learning. For students, while they complete classroom writing tasks on a regular basis, a primarily summative emphasis and lack of formative feedback are unlikely to lead to effective learning, also making it hard for students to develop motivation, confidence, and autonomy in writing. For teachers, when classroom writing tasks are administered summatively, they tend to treat writing as a terminal product and pay little attention to the writing and learning process; they also spend a huge amount of time responding to errors in student writing and suffer from burnout as a result. This lose-lose situation is a cause for concern since time and efforts, on the part of both teachers

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I. Lee, *Classroom Writing Assessment and Feedback in L2 School Contexts*,
DOI 10.1007/978-981-10-3924-9_1

and students, are not sufficiently rewarded and that a vicious cycle damaging to teaching and learning ensues.

The main aim of the book is to explore how classroom writing assessment and feedback can be utilized effectively to enhance student learning in the second language writing classroom in the school context. In the book, the term "second language" refers to both second and foreign languages, where English is taught and learnt as a second/foreign language – i.e., ESL/EFL. The "school context" refers to the precollege/university context, i.e., from primary to secondary, though the book can also have relevance for contexts beyond the secondary. Currently, there is an overall lack of school representation in the L2 writing literature. With increasing importance to equip school learners for college, university, and workplace writing in the globalized world, and with earlier starting ages of writing – e.g., in European and Asian countries (Reichelt 2009), a focus on classroom writing assessment and feedback in the L2 school context can redress the current imbalance in the literature. It can also provide practical ideas for writing teachers to help young learners enhance their learning of writing early on and for teacher educators to facilitate the effective design of classroom writing assessment and feedback training for L2 school teachers. For L2 writing researchers, the book can provide suggestions on new directions for future research on classroom assessment and feedback, which are germane to the field of L2 writing.

Classroom Writing Assessment in L2 School Contexts

Classroom assessment in this book refers to "the kind of assessment that can be used as a part of instruction to support and enhance learning" (Shepard 2000, p. 4), rather than assessment "used to give grades or to satisfy the accountability demands of an external authority" (Shepard 2000, p. 4). Instead of treating assessment and instruction as "curiously separate" (Graue 1993, p. 291), classroom assessment emphasizes "the crucial link between assessment, as carried out in the classroom, and learning and teaching" (Assessment Reform Group 1999, p. 1). Such assessment is also referred to as "instructionally relevant assessment" (Shepard 2000, p. 13) or "learning-oriented assessment" (Carless 2007, p. 57). Simply put, classroom assessment serves to find out what students have learnt (and have not yet learnt), and such information is used by teachers to promote student learning. This is referred to as assessment for learning (AfL) – i.e., using assessment to inform and improve learning. Although AfL and AoL are not mutually exclusive, "when classroom assessments are conceived as assessments for learning, rather than assessments of learning, students will learn better what their teacher wants them to learn" (Popham 2009, p. 11). Additionally, assessment as learning (AaL), a subset of AfL (Earl 2013) that highlights the role of the learner as a critical connector between assessment and learning, has a crucial role to play in classroom assessment. The

focus of this book is on AfL/AaL[1] rather than AoL because, as asserted by Stiggins (2002), the latter is in place but not the former.

Applied to L2 school contexts, classroom assessment of writing has been heavily influenced by traditional views of testing with assessment being used to dole out grades and to serve as accountability measures (Lee 2007). It has a heavy summative orientation, focusing on the written product, student performance, and scores (Lee and Coniam 2013). Such a phenomenon is particularly common in certain L2 contexts such as EFL contexts dominated by an examination culture and influenced by the Confucian heritage culture, where teaching and learning tends to be polarized as imparting knowledge and passive reception of knowledge, respectively, with teachers playing a dominant role as authorities and students being passive recipients rather than active participants and co-learners in the classroom (Biggs 1998; Carless 2011). Take Hong Kong as an example. Despite the espoused aim to promote AfL, writing in schools is treated primarily as a product within an examination-dominant culture (Hamp-Lyons 2007), where the primacy of scores is never gainsaid. To maximize the potential of classroom writing for improving student learning, classroom writing assessment should be reconceptualized to include AfL as its central pillar.

Reframing the purpose of classroom assessment has clear ramifications for the teacher and student roles in the L2 writing classroom. In classroom writing assessment that emphasizes AfL/AaL, the teacher does not dominate the assessment process, nor does he/she merely play the role of the tester/evaluator. Instead the teacher is "working toward the ultimate success of the student" (Lantolf and Poehner 2004, p. 58) through interacting with and offering mediated assistance. Such assistance is given in the form of feedback – in the written, oral, and/or online mode – not only by the teacher but also by peers.

Throughout the book, a prominent role is accorded to the learners – e.g., they set goals, engage in peer assessment, and monitor their learning. Through participating in classroom writing assessment activities such as peer feedback and compiling portfolios, students enhance their motivation to learn and to write, develop self-regulation, and improve their writing performance. Students become assessment capable and develop assessment literacy to take charge of their learning. The ultimate goal of classroom writing assessment is to help students become autonomous and self-regulated learners and writers.

While student learning is pivotal to classroom writing assessment, the problem is that many teachers are ill prepared to provide productive assessment experiences for students. The large majority of L2 teachers in particular, have little training in alternative writing assessment practices that are geared toward AfL/AaL (see Crusan et al. 2016). Also, as classroom assessment based on AfL/AaL is likely to be at variance with conventional assessment practice, teachers will need to develop assessment literacy to bring classroom assessment more in line with teaching and learning,

[1] In the book references are made to AfL, AfL/AaL, and AaL. When a reference is made to AfL, AaL (though not mentioned) is implied as part of AfL. A reference to AfL/AaL is intended to emphasize both the AfL and AaL functions of classroom assessment. A reference to AaL alone focuses specifically on the AaL aspect of AfL.

use it to create a classroom culture that puts learning at the center, and develop "a vision of assessment in the service of learning" (Shepard 2000, p. 12).

Feedback in Classroom L2 Writing Assessment

Classroom assessment that is oriented toward AfL lays a strong emphasis on quality feedback and active student involvement (Brookhart 2011); specifically, classroom assessment includes teacher, peer, and self-feedback, i.e., "all those activities undertaken by teachers and by students in assessing themselves – that provide information to be used as feedback to modify teaching and learning activities" (Black and Wiliam 1998, p. 140). As a crucial component of classroom assessment, feedback provides information about students' learning, performance, knowledge, or understanding and is often referred to as one of the most powerful sources of influence on student learning (Hattie and Timperley 2007). However, we often "take it for granted that providing feedback to the learner about performance will lead to self-correction and improvement" (Shepard 2000, p. 11), which is not necessarily the case.

Research on educational assessment has provided positive evidence in support of the role of feedback in classroom assessment. As shown in the synthesis of 500 meta-analyses conducted by Hattie (1999) as reported in Hattie and Timperley (2007), feedback in the classroom is found to be in the top five to ten most influential factors affecting student achievement, though the results reveal huge variability in the feedback types and their impact on learning. For instance, feedback that relates to learning goals provides incentives and cues to help students improve learning, and instructional feedback that is technology enhanced (e.g., delivered in the audio, video, and/or online mode) is found to be particularly powerful. In Kluger and DeNisi's (1996) meta-analysis, also reported in Hattie and Timperley (2007), it is found that feedback is effective when the goals are specific and challenging and when feedback is perceived as nonthreatening.

In L2 writing, existing feedback research has cast doubt on the effectiveness of teacher feedback in helping students improve their writing, and hence a fundamental question that has driven research on feedback in writing, including written corrective feedback, is whether feedback does make a difference to students' writing (Hyland 2010; Hyland and Hyland 2006; Truscott 1996). In many L2 writing classrooms, feedback tends to be treated as an entity that exists independently of teaching and learning, when, in fact, feedback is best conceptualized with reference to three stages of learning: (1) where I am going, i.e., feed up; (2) how I am going, i.e., feed back; and (3) where to next, i.e., feed forward (Hattie and Timperley 2007). In the "feed up" (where the learner is going) stage, concrete learning goals are provided to students so that they know where they are going. Effective feedback is information about students' performance or understanding in relation to these goals. Such an alignment between goal-oriented instruction and goal-specific feedback is pivotal to effective learning. In a number of L2 writing contexts, however, feedback is not geared toward the learning goals, resulting in a misalignment between

assessment, teaching, and learning. Students receive generic feedback on content, language, and organization rather than specific feedback that relates to the writing topic, genre, or learning goals. In story writing, for example, when feedback is given in isolation of teaching and learning, students may receive generic commentary such as "interesting content" instead of specific commentary that relates to the learning goals of story writing, such as "an engaging story opening." In the "feed back" stage (how the learner is progressing), feedback should be given with a view to bridging the gap between the current level of understanding and the desired outcome (also in relation to the learning goals). Such feedback is descriptive and diagnostic, yielding specific information about progress (i.e., what students did well) and how to proceed (i.e., how to improve their learning). A specific and concrete comment like the following can provide useful information to help the learner move forward: "The story opening is fine, but you could revise it to grab the readers' attention – e.g., by putting a short dialogue at the beginning." In many L2 writing classrooms, however, the "feed back" stage often serves the purpose of AoL, consisting in detailed error feedback and relying on scores instead of descriptive, diagnostic feedback to show how learners are progressing. Teacher commentary tends to be general (e.g., "You've made a lot of grammatical mistakes"), providing judgment of student writing rather than informing them of strengths and weaknesses in relation to the learning goals. Finally, in the "feed forward" (where to next) stage, even though students have completed the classroom writing assessment task, learning should continue through the teacher's provision of information that further promotes learning. For example, the teacher may provide opportunities for further challenges (e.g., asking students to set new learning goals based on the feedback received), encourage critical reflection on the learning process (e.g., asking students to write reflections in their learning log), or teach additional strategies to help students cope with what they have not fully understood or mastered in the writing process (e.g., reinforcement of the use of dialogue to enrich story writing).

In a nutshell, classroom assessment refers to "activities that provide teachers and/or students with feedback information relating to one or more of the three feedback questions" (Hattie and Timperley 2007, p. 101) – i.e., feed up (where am I going), feed back (how am I going), and feed forward (where to next). Classroom writing assessment explored in this book is assessment that brings improvement to student learning, with teacher, peer, and self-feedback playing a pivotal role to make this happen. While traditional assessment has focused a great deal on AoL, a paradigm shift from AoL to AfL means that teachers have to learn how to use classroom assessment and feedback to inform and improve learning and to enhance their own teaching[2] (Black and Wiliam 1998; Sadler 1989). As teachers provide better classroom assessment (Popham 2009), more productive feedback, and more effective instruction, students are likely to improve their learning.

[2] Classroom assessment serves as a pedagogical tool to improve both learning and teaching. Although the book puts an explicit emphasis on classroom L2 writing assessment that informs and promotes student learning, its role in improving teaching is also vital.

Outline of the Book

Following this introductory chapter, Chap. 2 examines the purpose, theory, and practice of classroom L2 writing assessment. The chapter clarifies the different purposes that classroom writing assessment serves, highlighting AfL/AaL as the cornerstone of classroom writing assessment. It reviews the major theoretical tenets that underlie classroom assessment, highlighting the social-constructivist framework that sees learning as socially and culturally constructed and learners as active agents taking charge of their learning. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the principles that guide effective classroom writing assessment practice.

Chapter 3 examines AfL in the L2 writing classroom. It begins by unpacking the notion of AfL and then reports salient findings from AfL in writing research. The chapter also discusses the issues arising from the implementation of AfL in writing in L2 school contexts as well as the pedagogical implications for classroom L2 writing assessment.

Chapter 4 focuses on AaL in writing. The chapter begins with a review of the theoretical foundations of AaL and examines the pedagogical principles by outlining the AaL strategies that teachers can use in the writing classroom. It then highlights findings from the currently limited research on AaL in L2 writing and concludes with recommendations for further research.

Chapter 5 provides an introduction to the various chapters on feedback in writing. It begins by examining the theoretical perspectives that undergird feedback in L2 writing. Situating feedback within AfL/AaL, the chapter highlights the contribution of sociocultural theory in advancing our understanding of feedback as a form of mediation and its role in influencing teachers' implementation of effective feedback practices. It also provides a brief introduction to teacher feedback (Chap. 6), peer feedback (Chap. 7), and technology-enhanced feedback (Chap. 9).

Chapter 6 addresses teacher feedback. It begins by reviewing salient research findings about feedback in L2 writing and then discusses the discrepancies between research and practice by drawing upon studies conducted in some L2 secondary classrooms. The chapter underscores the significant role context plays in teacher feedback and concludes with some guiding principles for effective teacher feedback.

Chapter 7 examines the role of peer feedback in classroom L2 writing assessment. The chapter begins with a discussion of the theoretical perspectives that inform peer feedback in L2 writing. Then it addresses a number of frequently asked questions about the use of peer feedback in L2 school writing based on salient findings from peer feedback research. Finally, the chapter provides some tips to help teachers organize peer feedback activities in L2 writing contexts.

Chapter 8 examines the role of portfolio assessment in L2 writing classrooms. The chapter begins with a discussion of the features and types of portfolios and how they are used in the writing classrooms. It then relates portfolios to the different purposes of assessment, namely, AoL and AfL/AaL, and clarifies the dual-purpose portfolios can serve in the writing classroom. After that, the chapter focuses on the

portfolio process and illustrates the intertwined relationships between instruction, learning, and assessment in the portfolio-based writing classroom. As feedback plays a pivotal role in portfolio assessment, the chapter also examines how feedback can be utilized at different stages of the portfolio process. Finally, it concludes with an evaluation of writing portfolios as a pedagogical and assessment tool in L2 school contexts.

Chapter 9 turns to the use of technology in classroom assessment and feedback in L2 writing. The chapter begins with a brief introduction to the use of technology-enhanced tasks in L2 classroom writing assessment – namely, digital storytelling, blog-based writing, and collaborative writing on wikis. It then examines the use of technology in teacher evaluation of student writing by discussing the pros and cons of automated writing evaluation and screencast feedback. After that, the chapter examines the use of technology in self-/peer evaluation with reference to Microsoft Word language check functions, concordancing, and screencasting. To illustrate how technology can be exploited to leverage the potential of AfL/AaL, the chapter provides an overview of a new Writing ePlatform developed by the Hong Kong Education Bureau for upper primary and lower secondary students to promote AfL/AaL, with potential relevance for similar contexts. Through describing the features of the Writing ePlatform, the chapter illustrates how students can be helped to take an active role in classroom writing assessment.

Chapter 10, the final chapter, provides a closure to the book by examining the knowledge base of classroom assessment literacy for L2 writing teachers. It also highlights the importance of feedback literacy as a critical component of classroom assessment literacy. The chapter underlines the importance of professional development for L2 writing teachers and the need for them to undertake assessment innovations to improve the teaching, learning, and assessment of writing. It concludes with a call for teachers to undertake continuing professional development so as to enhance their classroom assessment literacy and bring improvement to student learning of writing.

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Chapter 2
Purpose, Theory, and Practice of Classroom L2 Writing Assessment

Introduction

Over the last decade or so, assessment in English language education has witnessed a major paradigm shift from traditional forms of testing to a stronger focus on outcome-based and standard-referenced assessment (Davison and Cummins 2006). Such a shift results in an increasing attention to a "substantive connection between assessment and meaningful instruction" (Shepard 2000a, p. 3), where teachers' evaluation of student learning, their feedback, feedback from peers, and students' self-assessment play an important role in mediating students' learning and knowledge construction. This paradigm shift is evidenced in the assessment reform that has taken place in different parts of the world, including the United Kingdom where the Assessment Reform Group originated and Europe where the Common European Framework of Reference (CERF) has laid a foundation for language assessment reform throughout the continent (Berchoud et al. 2011; North 2014). The crucial role of teachers and learners in classroom assessment; the interrelationships between teaching, learning, and assessment; and the use of classroom assessment for promoting student learning and for improving teaching are encapsulated in the notion of "assessment for learning," which came into use in the late 1980s and early 1990s, originating from the UK Assessment Reform Group, as well as "assessment as learning" to denote the active role of the learner in taking charge of their learning during classroom assessment. Instead of having classroom writing assessment dictated by the traditional testing paradigm, where teachers design assessment activities that conform to high-stakes standardized tests, it is imperative to reenvision excellence in classroom writing assessment so that assessment can be better utilized to empower students, enhance learning, and improve teaching.

The original version of this chapter was revised. An erratum to this chapter can be found at https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-3924-9_11

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I. Lee, *Classroom Writing Assessment and Feedback in L2 School Contexts*,
DOI 10.1007/978-981-10-3924-9_2

The primary goal of this book is to explore how classroom writing assessment can be used to inform and improve learning and teaching. This chapter lays the theoretical and pedagogical foundations for the book by examining the purpose, theory, and practice of classroom writing assessment.

Different Purposes of Classroom Writing Assessment

Classroom assessment can serve different purposes. Traditional testing serves the purpose of "assessment of learning" (AoL), where students' performance and progress are assessed against specified learning targets and objectives, often serving reporting and administrative purposes. In contrast, "assessment for learning" (AfL) focuses on the improvement of learning and teaching (Black and Wiliam 2009); it aims to identify students' strengths and weaknesses through quality feedback to enhance learning and to help teachers review their teaching objectives and strategies to improve instruction (Berry 2008). While teachers dominate the assessment process in AoL, in AfL students share responsibility with teachers through participating actively in the assessment process, e.g., engaging in peer and/or self-assessment (Gardner 2006). "Assessment as learning" (AaL) reinforces and extends the role of AfL and is "a process through which pupil involvement in assessment can feature as part of learning" (Dann 2002, p. 153), with the learner being considered a critical connector between the assessment and learning process.

Pivotal to AfL is the role of the students, alongside that of the teacher and peers, as explicated in the definition of AfL provided by Klenowski (2009):

> Assessment for learning is part of everyday practice by students, teachers, and peers that seeks, reflects upon and responds to information from dialogue, demonstration and observation in ways that enhance ongoing learning. (Klenowski 2009, p. 264)

As teachers implement AfL practices in the classroom (e.g., clarifying learning goals and success criteria and giving descriptive feedback), they hand down these strategies to students and empower them to engage with similar AfL practices to enable themselves and their peers to develop into self-regulated, self-monitoring, and autonomous learners. AfL therefore sees students play an active role in the classroom; it is a student-centered approach to assessment that "involves the active engagement of students in setting goals for their learning and growth, monitoring their progress toward these goals, and determining how to address any gaps" (Andrade et al. 2012, p. 8). Earl (2003, 2013) refers to such an assessment focus as AaL, which is "a subset of assessment for learning" (Earl 2013, p. 3) that puts an emphasis on using assessment to develop students' metacognitive and self-monitoring abilities, putting them at the center of learning. In this book, AaL is used to emphasize students' active involvement in AfL; hence AaL is part of AfL, specifically highlighting the student-centered dimension of AfL.

Although the above approaches to classroom assessment have their place in education and in the classroom, the extent to which they contribute to student learning differs markedly. AoL, focusing predominantly on measuring learning, streaming

students into different ability levels, and reporting judgments about the students' level of competence and achievement to other parties, places the teacher as the key assessor and isolates students from the assessment process. Occurring at the end of the learning process, AoL has relatively less effect on student learning than AfL/AaL. AfL shifts the focus from making judgments to diagnosing students' strengths and weaknesses, as well as enabling them to monitor their learning and progress on an ongoing basis. The assessment information gathered from AfL can improve the quality of both learning and teaching. Not only does the information provide students with an indication of where they are and how to proceed next, it also informs teaching and enables teachers to adapt their instruction to meet the learning needs of the students. AaL highlights the student-centered dimension of AfL and focuses specifically on the role of the students in connecting assessment and learning in an active manner. Emphasizing assessment as a process of metacognition (Earl and Katz 2006), AaL encourages students to monitor and exert self-regulation over their thinking processes and stresses the importance of fostering students' capacity over time to be their own assessors. Students take a proactive role in their learning, use assessment information to self-assess and self-monitor their learning progress, reflect on their learning, and make adjustments in their thinking so as to achieve deeper understanding and to advance their learning.

In the literature, AoL and AfL/AaL are often used interchangeably with summative assessment and formative assessment, respectively. While summative assessment (as with AoL) serves administrative and certification purposes (Genesee and Upshur 1996), formative assessment (as with AfL/AaL) contributes to students' learning through providing information about student performance (Black and Wiliam 2009; Yorke 2003). Unlike AoL and AfL/AaL which are mainly distinguished according to the different purposes they serve, summative assessment and formative assessment are also differentiated on the basis of the time of the assessment (Scriven 1967). Whereas summative assessment happens at the end of a unit of work or course, formative assessment takes place continuously during learning. Although the difference between AoL and AfL/AaL is often seen as parallel to the distinction between summative and formative assessment, the terms AoL and AfL/AaL are used in this book to denote the different purposes of assessment they serve (rather than the time of the assessment).

Despite the different purposes of classroom assessment as captured in AoL, AfL/AaL, the overlapping functions between the three assessment concepts must be noted. As delineated above, AaL is a subset of AfL, being singled out as an independent entity mainly to underline the important role of student-centered classroom assessment. AoL and AfL, though seemingly serving entirely different purposes, are not mutually exclusive since assessment can serve both AoL and AfL purposes (though it is possible for an assessment to stop at AoL). To give an example, a writing assessment that takes place at the end of the school term/year, which is traditionally associated with AoL (as it is used to measure what students have learnt in writing in that particular school year, with scores being used for administrative purposes – to report to parents about students' performance, to predict future performance, etc.), can also serve the purpose of AfL if the teacher makes use of the assessment information to inform students about their strengths and limitations in

writing and to further improve writing instruction. On the contrary, while regular, ongoing writing assessment is often said to serve the purpose of AfL, if the teacher fails to utilize the assessment to help students identify strengths and weaknesses and to bridge the gaps in their learning but instead focuses mainly on scores and providing judgments of student writing, such assessment is essentially AoL-oriented. These examples show that the timing in which assessment occurs does not define its function or purpose; instead it is the use to which assessment information is put that distinguishes AoL from AfL (Wiliam 2001).

Overall, AoL is fundamentally normative in purpose: to compare an individual's performance to that of others in the group. In contrast, AfL is oriented toward learning, teaching, and curricula. Instead of using assessment for ranking and certification purposes, classroom writing assessment should reflect a real, substantive focus on the improvement of learning and teaching. It is this purpose that guides the entire book.

Theoretical Tenets of Classroom Assessment

AoL and AfL/AaL are informed by different orientations to learning. AoL places an emphasis on objective, scientific measurement of learning, underpinned by a behaviorist theory of learning and influenced by the achievement-testing movement which is premised on the belief that student learning can be measured in terms of objective evidence (Shepard 2000a). Scores, therefore, play an important role in AoL; they provide objective evidence for student learning and suffice for feedback.

AfL/AaL, on the other hand, is informed by a social constructivist framework that combines the essence of cognitive, constructivist, and sociocultural theories (Shepard 2000b), which maintain that learning is socially and culturally constructed, with learners shouldering the responsibility of learning and the teacher playing the role of a facilitator. Through socially mediated learning experiences (Feuerstein 1990), students interact with teachers and more capable peers and develop their cognitive abilities. Sociocultural concepts such as zone of proximal development (ZPD) (Vygotsky 1978) and scaffolding (Wood et al. 1976) are both central to AfL/AaL. ZPD is "the distance between the actual developmental level determined by independent problem solving and the higher level of potential development determined through problem solving in collaboration with more capable peers or seniors" (Vygotsky 1978, p. 86). Simply put, it refers to what a learner can learn and improve with the assistance of an adult or capable peer – i.e., the learner's current and potential level of competence. To be able to leverage the assistance provided, the assistance has to be tailored for the learner, responding to the learner's specific needs, being evolving and dynamic rather than static and predetermined – i.e., graduated and contingent assistance (Lantolf and Aljaafreh 1995). Assistance has to be graduated – e.g., too little assistance is undesirable, whereas too much assistance may be harmful. Assistance has to be contingent too because when the learner displays independence in learning, assistance may no longer be needed. Such dynamic assistance is referred to as "scaffolding" – namely, the social support provided to learners to "help them achieve more than would have been possible without aid" (Wette 2015, p. 72). Together ZPD and scaffolding underline the importance of social inter-

action and its role in assisting learning. Influenced by sociocultural perspectives, classroom assessment is dynamic (see "dynamic assessment" – Lantolf and Poehner 2014; Poehner 2009; Poehner and Lantolf 2013), which "integrates assessment and instruction into a seamless, unified activity aimed at promoting learner development through appropriate forms of mediation that are sensitive to the individual's (or in some cases a group's) current abilities" (Lantolf and Poehner 2004, p. 50). Dynamic assessment is "finding out what a student is able to do independently as well as what can be done with adult guidance" (Shepard 2000b, p. 10); it emphasizes how a learner can be helped, through mediation, to become what she/he not yet is (Lantolf and Poehner 2004). Such mediation can be facilitated by culturally constructed tools such as the provision of feedback.

Moreover, AfL/AaL is informed by the "cognitive revolution" (Shepard 2000a, p. 21) that emphasizes the role of metacognition in learning, i.e., cognition about cognition or thinking about thinking. Metacognition involves, according to Sternberg (1992), several processes: (1) recognizing a problem, (2) figuring out the nature of the problem, (3) developing strategies to tackle the problem, (4) monitoring the problem, and (5) evaluating after the problem is solved. During classroom assessment, students' metacognitive abilities can be developed through socially mediated processes, which is a major goal of AaL (see Chap. 4 for a more detailed discussion of the theoretical foundations of AaL).

Recent development of classroom assessment is also framed by the theory of self-regulation (Clark 2012), which involves (1) goal setting, (2) self-monitoring with reference to the goal, (3) interpreting and utilizing feedback (e.g., from teacher and peers) that results from self-monitoring, and (4) modification of goal-directed action (e.g., adjusting or redefining the goal) (Andrade 2013). These self-regulatory processes align with the three wh- questions students ask during the assessment process: Where am I going? How am I going? Where to next? (Hattie and Timperley 2007), as illustrated in Chap. 1.

Finally, AfL/AaL is informed by a theory of motivation that emphasizes learning goals – that is, students are motivated by a desire to attain mastery of learning and to achieve competence, rather than performance goals that motivate them toward getting higher scores/better grades (as in AoL) (Shepard 2000a). AfL/AaL, therefore, results in enhanced intrinsic motivation. In the AfL/AaL-oriented classroom, teachers support student learning by treating mistakes as a natural part of learning. They take account of student motivation, playing the role of a resource, a guide, and a facilitator rather than an evaluator (Shepard 2000a). In short, classroom assessment and motivation are seen to "enjoy chicken-and-egg relationship" (Brookhart 2013, p. 35), i.e., while AfL/AaL enhances learner motivation, learner motivation contributes to effective AfL/AaL practice.

Effective Classroom Writing Assessment Practice

Having examined the purposes of classroom assessment as well as the underlying theoretical tenets, I discuss the implications and outline several important considerations that guide effective classroom writing assessment practice.

Assessment as Integral to Teaching and Learning: Aligning Instruction with Assessment

Classroom assessment should be integral to the teaching and learning process. Translated into the writing classroom, this means that the criteria used to assess student writing should be shared with students at the instructional stage, so that they are clear about what they are learning and how their writing is going to be assessed. Stiggins and Chappuis (2012) use the global positioning system (GPS) metaphor to signify the importance of giving students a clear sense of direction about where they are going. Before students start writing, e.g., a recount, they have to be taught what constitutes a "good" recount. Example 2.1 includes the features of a "good" recount, which inform the learning targets, instructional focuses, as well as assessment criteria – hence integrating learning, teaching, and assessment. By contrast, in traditional AoL practice, teachers simply assign the topic without providing specific learning targets; student writing is assessed against some general assessment criteria such as content, language, and organization, and teacher feedback is summative rather than formative, mainly comprising feedback on the language form.

Example 2.1 What Makes a Good Recount
A good recount:

- Begins with an orientation, establishing who was involved, where, and when the events happened
- Sequences the past events in a clear order
- Ends appropriately – e.g., with a feeling, a thought, or a comment
- Uses the past tense accurately
- Uses time words appropriately
- Uses a range of appropriate words to describe the events

Classroom Assessment as Formative: Importance of the Writing Process

Fundamental to good classroom writing assessment practice is a recognition of writing as a process, apart from it being a product to be judged for its quality. Given this, it is important that students are given time to write and to go through the different stages of the writing process, that is, brainstorming, planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. The timed impromptu model for external, standardized writing assessment is not suitable for classroom writing assessment when the main purpose is to help students improve their learning and enhance their writing. In a number of L2 school contexts (particularly examination-oriented contexts), however, a product-oriented approach to classroom writing assessment still predominates. Feedback, which lies at the heart of classroom writing assessment, is delivered

to single drafts, which obviates the need for students to take teacher feedback seriously as they do not have to use it to revise their writing.[1] In all likelihood, after receiving teacher feedback in single-draft writing classrooms, students will simply read the feedback (if they choose to) and then forget it. To realize the learning potential of classroom writing assessment, multiple drafting is essential.

Classroom Assessment Informed by Constructivist and Sociocultural Theories: Teacher Scaffolding and Role of Feedback

In classroom writing assessment, students engage in social interaction with the teacher and peers, obtain assistance from them, and develop their writing abilities accordingly. As such, teacher scaffolding and feedback (both from teacher and peers) have a key role to play in classroom writing assessment.

In the pre-writing stage, teachers can provide instructional scaffolding to prepare students for the writing. Using the criteria for the recount genre in Example 2.1 in the above, for instance, teachers can engage students in meaningful learning activities that help them better understand the features of a recount. With sample texts, teachers can design activities that require students to analyze various features of the texts, such as the text structure and typical language features (e.g., past tense verbs or time markers of the recount genre). The assistance provided to students will help them proceed in their ZPD and learn to write a better recount.

Feedback constitutes another form of socially mediated assistance. As mentioned in Chap. 1, feedback can be conceptualized in terms of three stages: (1) Where am I going – i.e., feed up; (2) How am I going – i.e., feedback; and (3) Where to next – i.e., feed forward (Hattie and Timperley 2007). In the "feed up" stage, teachers share learning goals and success criteria with students and provide instructional scaffolding, informing students of "where they are going." In the "feedback" stage, clear, descriptive, and diagnostic feedback is provided to students in accordance with the set of success criteria established in the "feed up" stage. This not only helps the teacher integrate assessment with instruction but can also enhance students' metacognitive awareness so that they know what criteria are used to evaluate their writing, what counts as "good" writing, and what they can do to improve their writing. Finally, in the "feedforward" stage, both teacher and students can make use of the available assessment information such as teacher feedback, peer feedback, and students' self-assessment/reflection to further promote learning. Based on such information, students can set new learning goals, and, through negotiation and

[1] In contexts where teacher feedback is primarily error focused (e.g., Hong Kong school contexts), after receiving teacher feedback, students are required to rewrite sentences that contain errors, oftentimes by copying the sentences with correct answers already provided by the teacher (Lee 2004).

consultation with the teacher, they can acquire new strategies to cope with what has not been fully understood or achieved (i.e., to bridge the gaps in their learning).

Classroom Assessment as Shared Responsibility Between Teacher and Learners: Teacher and Student Roles

In classroom writing assessment that emphasizes AfL/AaL, teachers involve students actively in learning and assessment. This does not mean that teachers relinquish their role in the classroom. They are still active in planning, designing assessment tasks, developing learning goals and success criteria, providing instructional scaffolding, delivering feedback, and facilitating student learning. However, students play an equally active role, using metacognition to self-regulate their learning. In addition to peer feedback, they engage in self-assessment and reflection; they play the role of active agents thinking about, understanding, and articulating learning goals/success criteria; they ask metacognitive questions about their writing, monitor their own learning and writing, and set further learning goals based on the assessment information available. In so doing, students engage with AfL/AaL strategies in the writing classroom and use them to improve learning and enhance their writing. Chapters. 3 and 4 examine AfL and AaL, respectively, with Chap. 4 focusing particularly on the active role students play in connecting assessment and learning.

Quality Feedback as Central to Classroom Assessment: Mechanisms for Delivering Feedback

In AfL/AaL, feedback has to be descriptive and diagnostic in order to help students understand their strengths and weaknesses and to inform and improve student learning. To facilitate the delivery of such feedback, and to align assessment with instruction, feedback forms can be used to evaluate student writing. Example 2.2 gives an example of a simple feedback form that uses the success criteria outlined in Example 2.1 (recount genre). The form can be used for both teacher feedback and peer feedback. It can be simplified or modified to suit learners' needs at different stages of writing. For example, teachers can focus on "content and structure" of Example 2.2 in evaluating the first draft, and they can select specific focuses from Example 2.2 for peer evaluation and design a form accordingly. As a variant of Example 2.2, Example 2.3 includes a four-point rating scale. Example 2.4 provides a scoring rubric for the recount genre, which includes a concrete description for each level of performance based on the stated criteria. Example 2.5, as a variant of Example 2.4, includes an additional "remarks" column for teachers to enter qualitative comments.

These examples can be modified slightly to include "can do" descriptors (see Example 2.6), emphasizing what students can do rather than what they fail to do (Lee 2007).

Aside from written feedback, feedback can be delivered orally by the teacher during writing conferences (see Chap. 5) or by peers during peer feedback conducted in pairs or small groups (see Chap. 7). Example 4.3 in Chap. 4 on AfL provides an example to guide students' oral peer feedback.

Example 2.2 A Feedback Form for Offering Descriptive Feedback for the Recount Genre

Recount – evaluation criteria	Comments
Content and structure	
Begins with an orientation, establishing who was involved, where, and when the events happened	
Sequences the past events in a clear order	
Ends the essay appropriately – e.g., with a feeling, a thought, or a comment	
Language features	
Uses the past tense accurately	
Uses time expressions appropriately	
Uses a range of appropriate words to describe the events	

Adapted from Appendix 1 in Lee (2014)

Example 2.3 A Feedback Form that Contains a Rating Scale for the Recount Genre

4: Excellent
3: Pretty good
2: Average
1: Needs improvement

Evaluation criteria – recount	4	3	2	1	Comments
Content and structure					
Begins with an orientation, establishing who was involved, where, and when the events happened					
Sequences the past events in a clear order					
Ends the essay appropriately – e.g., with a feeling, a thought, or a comment					
Language features					
Uses the past tense accurately					
Uses time expressions appropriately					
Uses a range of appropriate words to describe the events					

Adapted from Appendix 1 in Lee (2014)

Example 2.4 A Scoring Rubric for the Recount Genre

Evaluation criteria – recount	4	3	2	1
Content and structure	A very clear orientation, establishing who was involved, where, and when the events happened	A generally clear orientation which provides necessary background information	Some missing information in the orientation	Lots of missing information in the orientation
	Past events are sequenced in a very clear order	Past events are generally clearly sequenced	Some events not in the right order	Past events are all over the place; hard to figure out a clear sequence
	Very appropriate and impressive ending – ending with a feeling, a thought, or a reflection	Appropriate ending	An ending is provided, but it is not very appropriate	No ending is provided
Language features	Past tense verbs almost completely accurate	Tense generally accurate	Quite a number of tense errors	Full of tense errors
	Very appropriate and accurate use of time expressions to link up events	Generally good use of time expressions to link up events	Some time expressions to link up events	No time expressions to link up events
	A large range of appropriate words to describe events	A good range of words to describe events	Some good words to describe events	An extremely limited range of words to describe events

Example 2.5 A Scoring Rubric with a "Remarks" Column for the Recount Genre

Evaluation criteria – recount	4	3	2	1	Remarks
Content and structure	A very clear orientation, establishing who was involved, where, and when the events happened	A generally clear orientation which provides necessary background information	Some missing information in the orientation	Lots of missing information in the orientation	

(continued)

Evaluation criteria – recount	4	3	2	1	Remarks
	Past events are sequenced in a very clear order	Past events are generally clearly sequenced	Some events not in the right order	Past events are all over the place; hard to figure out a clear sequence	
	Very appropriate and impressive ending – ending with a feeling, a thought, or a reflection	Appropriate ending	An ending is provided, but it is not very appropriate	No ending is provided	
Language features	Past tense verbs almost completely accurate	Tense generally accurate	Quite a number of tense errors	Full of tense errors	
	Very appropriate and accurate use of time expressions to link up events	Generally good use of time expressions to link up events	Some time expressions to link up events	No time expressions to link up events	
	A large range of appropriate words to describe events	A good range of words to describe events	Some good words to describe events	An extremely limited range of words to describe events	

Example 2.6 A Feedback Form with "Can Do" Descriptors

Evaluation criteria – recount	4	3	2	1	Comments
Content and structure					
I can begin with an orientation, establishing who was involved, where, and when the events happened					
I can sequence the past events in a clear order					
I can end the essay appropriately – e.g., with a feeling, a thought, or a comment					
Language features					
I can use the past tense accurately					
I can use time expressions appropriately					
I can use a range of appropriate words to describe the events					

Classroom Assessment as Sensitive to Learner Motivation: The Place of Scores in Classroom Writing Assessment

It is pointed out in the AfL literature that comment-only feedback is more conducive to student learning than feedback given in tandem with scores (Black and Wiliam 1998; Brookhart 2001; Butler 1987; Crooks 1988). As observed in many L2 writing classrooms, when students receive teacher feedback alongside scores, they tend to focus much more on scores than comments, but then scores have a potentially damaging effect on student motivation. To maximize the potential of classroom writing assessment, a focus on comment-only feedback is helpful. The feedback forms shown in Examples 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, and 2.6 are intended to play down scores. Although a rating scale is used in most of these examples, student attention is directed to the success criteria and the extent to which the criteria have been met in their writing, rather than scores. In contexts where scores are required (e.g., where classroom writing assessment scores count toward the summative scores students receive at the end of the school year), teachers can easily work out the total score by adding up the points scored for each of the criteria stated in the feedback form. To reduce the possible negative impact of scores, teachers can withhold or delay the reporting of scores, so that when students receive the feedback forms their attention is focused on the extent to which they have attained the learning goals, as well as teachers' qualitative comments (especially in feedback forms that contain a "remarks" column for teachers to write commentary). Through de-emphasizing scores in classroom writing assessment, teachers are likely to build a supportive learning atmosphere where the focus is put on the quality of learning rather than scores.

Complementarity of AoL and AfL/AaL

Although AfL/AaL serves different purposes from AoL, they are not mutually exclusive. The complementary functions of AoL and AfL/AaL can be illustrated in classroom assessment of students' written accuracy. Traditionally, summative assessment of writing leads to evaluative feedback that focuses primarily on written errors (McGarrell and Verbeem 2007). But even with such an AoL-oriented practice that emphasizes teachers' judgment of students' performance in written accuracy, an additional focus on AfL is possible. To give an example, teachers can perform an analysis of students' written errors, using an error analysis sheet as in Example 2.7 to inform students of their error ratios for a selected range of error categories. Such assessment information can inform students of their strengths and weaknesses in their command of grammar in writing, serving the purpose of AfL. To further engage students in AaL, students can use the results of the error ratio analysis to set

goals for themselves (e.g., if "agreement" is found to be their severest error pattern, they may set a goal to make as few errors on "agreement" as possible) and to monitor their own writing accuracy development by keeping an error log (see Example 2.8). Depending on students' abilities and motivations, students can use the error log to monitor their written accuracy for every piece of writing or only for some pieces – e.g., at different points of the writing course (like beginning, middle, and end of the course). The practical value of error logs can be increased if teachers adopt a selective approach to written corrective feedback (see Chap. 6), so that students' attention is drawn to a small number of selected error types rather than all kinds of errors. Error logs can provide valuable assessment information for teachers to help them fine-tune their grammar instruction – e.g., planning post-writing grammar workshops based on students' pervasive error patterns. Thus, insofar as written accuracy is concerned, AoL and AfL/AaL can be used in conjunction with each other without any conflict.

Although assessment of written accuracy is used to illustrate the complementarity of AoL and AfL/AaL, in AfL-focused writing practice, teachers should avoid giving meticulous feedback on errors since such "premature evaluation of their evolving texts leads writers to early closure, discouraging students from further revising the ideas and organization in their texts" (McGarrell and Verbeem 2007, p. 231). Hence, the suggested error analysis and error log activities should not replace formative feedback on content and organization.

Example 2.7 An Error Ratio Analysis Sheet

	Error type	Code	Number of errors made	Error ratio[a]	Error gravity ranking[b]
1	Verb (tense and form)	V	3	0.1	4
2	Articles	Art	2	0.07	5
3	Pronoun	Pron	1	0.03	6
4	Word choice	Wc	5	0.17	3
5	Number	Num	7	0.23	1
6	Spelling	Sp	3	0.1	4
7	Prepositions	Prep	6	0.2	2
8	Word form	Wf	1	0.03	6
9	Subject-verb agreement	Agr	2	0.07	5
Total number of errors			30		

Adapted from Appendix C in Ferris (2002)

[a]Error ratio = divide the number of errors in each category by the total errors (i.e., the larger the ratio, the more serious the error)

[b]Mark "1" for the most serious error type, then "2," "3," and so on

Example 2.8 An Error Log

	Total number of errors								
Error type	Date	Date	Date	Date	Date	Date	Date	Date	Date
Verb (tense and form)									
Articles									
Pronoun									
Word choice									
Number									
Spelling									
Preposition									
Word form									
Subject-verb agreement									

Adapted from Fig. 5.5 in Ferris (2011)

Another example to illustrate the overlapping functions of classroom writing assessment is portfolio assessment. Portfolios can serve the purpose of AfL/AaL and "make the learning process transparent, enabling language learners to be more aware of their process, to develop a capacity for self-assessment and reflection, and to take control of their own learning" (Yilmaz and Akcan 2012, p. 167). Through delayed evaluation (until the end of the entire portfolio collection and compilation), students' attention is drawn to the writing and learning process. Hence, portfolio assessment is in line with the principles of AfL/AaL, where students play an active role in taking charge of their learning. At the same time, the portfolio product can provide judgments of student writing, serving the purpose of AoL (see Chap. 8 on portfolio assessment).

Conclusion

Traditional forms of classroom writing assessment put a premium on student performance evaluated on the basis of scores. Teachers play a dominant role, with students reduced as passive receptacles of learning. This chapter reconceptualizes a modern view of classroom writing assessment that takes the improvement of student learning as its starting point, considers the theoretical underpinnings of classroom writing assessment, and examines a number of basic considerations that inform the principles of sound classroom writing assessment practices. These will be revisited in the following two chapters on AfL (Chap. 3) and AaL (Chap. 4).

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Chapter 3
Assessment for Learning in the L2 Writing Classroom

Introduction

Assessment for learning (AfL), i.e., using assessment to promote learning and improve teaching, has gained wide currency in the educational policy in different parts of the world. In the United Kingdom, the Assessment Reform Group (2002), with which the notion of AfL is closely affiliated, has played a pivotal role in bringing about positive change to assessment practice, policy, and research in not only the United Kingdom (see Black and Wiliam 2003) but also other parts of the world. In Australia, for instance, AfL has now become a central plank of curriculum reform. The national curriculum framework has put the improvement of learning and teaching as the primary function of assessment (Australian Capital Territory 2005; Queensland Studies Authority 2005). Research conducted on AfL in Queensland schools has demonstrated the beneficial outcomes of AfL practices in Australian secondary education (Sebba 2006; Sebba and Maxwell 2005). In the United States, more than a decade ago, there has already been a clarion call for a more balanced approach to assessment that comprises not only standardized achievement tests but also learning-oriented assessment that informs instructional decision-making and turns learners into assessors (Stiggins 1999, 2007). Currently, AfL is an integral part of professional development initiatives that address classroom assessment in US schools. The Formative Assessment for Students and Teachers (FAST), for example, has promoted the implementation of AfL in classrooms to positively influence teaching and learning nationwide. In Hong Kong, AfL has been identified as one of the most important items on the English language education reform agenda (Curriculum Development Council 2004, 2007; Curriculum Development Institute 2004). The oral assessment innovation in school-based assessment at Secondary 4 and 5 (Grades 10 and 11) is a recent initiative to promote AfL in English (Davison 2007). In 2001, Taiwan introduced a nationwide curriculum reform in primary and secondary education, advocating a variety of assessment strategies to promote student learning. In China, "The Outlines for Basic Educational Reform (Pilot)" issued

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I. Lee, *Classroom Writing Assessment and Feedback in L2 School Contexts*,
DOI 10.1007/978-981-10-3924-9_3

by the Education Department of China in 2001 refers to assessment as a means to promote learning, and teachers are encouraged to integrate self- and peer assessment into the curriculum. In brief, AfL has become a priority in the educational reform policy worldwide.

Against this backdrop, this chapter begins with an attempt to unpack the notion of AfL, which is often contrasted with assessment of learning (AoL) – i.e., using assessment to provide judgment of student learning and utilizing the assessment information for administrative and reporting purposes (Wiliam 2001). It then highlights salient findings in AfL in writing research and discusses issues arising from the implementation of AfL in L2 school contexts. Finally, the chapter concludes with an examination of the pedagogical principles that underlie effective AfL practices in L2 writing classrooms.

What Does Assessment for Learning Entail?

There is a plenitude of definitions about AfL in the literature, though Black et al. (2004) provide a comprehensive one as follows:

> Assessment for learning is any assessment for which the first priority in its design and practice is to serve the purpose of promoting students' learning. It thus differs from assessment designed primarily to serve the purposes of accountability, or of ranking, or of certifying competence. An assessment activity can help learning if it provides information that teachers and their students can use as feedback in assessing themselves and one another and in modifying the teaching and learning activities in which they are engaged. Such assessment becomes "formative assessment" when the evidence is actually used to adapt the teaching work to meet learning needs. (Black et al. 2004, p. 10)

From this definition, it is evident that the top priority of AfL lies in using assessment to promote student learning (Black and Wiliam 1998); it is also used to help the teacher fine-tune and improve their teaching (Rea-Dickins 2006). AfL refers to "the process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by learners and their teachers to decide where learners are in their learning, where they need to go, and how best to get there" (Assessment Reform Group 2002, p. 2). Feedback, in particular, has a pivotal role to play in AfL. Through formative feedback, teachers show learners their strengths and weaknesses and what they can do to close the gap between their current performance and desired performance – i.e., the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky 1978). Teachers also make use of the assessment information to improve teaching. AfL is, therefore, akin to diagnostic language assessment (DLA), which has garnered immense interest in language testing in recent years. Like AfL, DLA is "both backward-looking and forward-looking" (Lee 2015, p. 306), in which "feedback" and "feedforward" have crucial roles to play.

To elaborate, the following AfL principles are useful in guiding classroom assessment practices (Assessment Reform Group 1999):

- Giving students effective feedback

- Involving students actively in the learning process
- Using assessment information to modify teaching
- Classroom practice that takes cognizance of the significant impact of assessment on students' motivation and self-esteem
- Fostering students' ability to self-assess and monitor their own learning

Worthy of note is that AfL draws attention to the process of learning, during which students develop their capacity to manage their own learning and learn how to learn. Thus, AfL involves student-centered learning, as underscored by Jones (2010):

- It is important to "meet learners at their level of knowledge and to revisit prior learning" (Jones 2010, p. 176).
- Learners take part actively in their learning.
- Learners are clear about the learning goals they are working toward, the criteria they are evaluated against, and how to improve on their work.
- Learners develop critical awareness of what is required of them and improve their work through self- and peer assessment.

Such a focus on the learners' active role in learning and assessment is encapsulated in the notion of assessment as learning (AaL), seen as a subset of AfL (Earl 2013), which will be examined closely in Chap. 4.

To sum up, AfL is a huge contrast to the traditional paradigm (i.e., AoL) where, as stated earlier, assessment serves as a means to test and grade students and to differentiate stronger from weaker learners. AfL serves students and teachers directly, benefitting both learning and teaching; it is something teachers do "with" students. Conversely, AoL is something teachers "do 'to' students rather than 'with' students" (Serafini 2000/2001, p. 390). It is this realization that has provided an impetus for curriculum and assessment reform in different parts of the world, where AfL is being systematically promoted in the classroom and in school.

Insights from Assessment for Learning Research in Writing Classrooms

Both AoL and AfL are crucial to assessment, but traditionally the focus of L2 assessment has been put on AoL, with AfL only beginning to draw the attention of researchers, practitioners, and policymakers in the 1990s. Thanks to the groundbreaking research by Black and Wiliam (1998), there is now clear evidence that AfL can lead to substantial gains in student learning, enhanced student motivation, and more effective classroom practices. Research that applies AfL to writing is scarce, however. In L1 writing contexts, Graham et al.' (2015) meta-analysis of formative assessment of Grades 1–8 students showed that AfL that emphasized classroom-based feedback from teachers, peers, self, and computers could enhance students' writing quality. In other L1 contexts, such as New Zealand, research by Parr and

Timperley (2010) in primary classrooms has shown a strong relationship between the quality of teacher feedback and student improvement in writing, demonstrating the role of formative feedback in AfL in writing. Exploring AfL in writing practices in primary classrooms in greater depth, Hawe and Parr (2014) have found that when teachers fail to maximize students' role in taking charge of their learning – e.g., through self- and peer evaluation, the full potential of AfL cannot be fully realized. Their study has underscored the unitary nature of AfL – i.e., AfL strategies being interdependent, with "each feeding into and from the others in an iterative manner" (Hawe and Parr 2014, p. 212). In other words, the mere presence of AfL strategies is insufficient to engender positive student learning outcomes, and when teachers simply follow the letter rather than the spirit of AfL (Marshall and Drummond 2006), AfL cannot be completely realized. It is, therefore, imperative that teachers understand, interpret, and apply AfL as a unitary or holistic concept, putting students at the center of learning and making them take charge of their own learning. To this end, a change in the classroom culture and development of expansive learning on the part of the teachers are necessary (Parr and Timperley 2010; Webb and Jones 2009).

There is a dearth of research on AfL in L2 writing contexts. As rightly pointed out by Evans (2013), Hattie and Timperley (2007), and Huang (2016), the theoretical development in AfL has not been paralleled by a concomitant growth in empirical research. The limited research on AfL in L2 writing has mainly been conducted in secondary and college EFL contexts in Hong Kong and Taiwan, in which a number of research focuses are evident. First, research has examined teachers' motivations for AfL innovation in writing and how they implemented AfL in the writing classroom. In Lee's (2011) study, the participating secondary teachers embraced the AfL initiative in their writing classrooms as they felt that conventional assessment and feedback practices, being teacher dominated and error focused, were ineffective and unproductive. The teachers hoped that through AfL students could play a more active role in learning and make progress in their writing. To implement AfL in writing, the secondary teachers in Lee and Coniam (2013) made an attempt to integrate planning, instruction, and assessment. They began with planning of genre-specific units of work for writing, followed by explicit instruction using a genre approach, and then genre-based assessment that used the same success criteria shared with students in the instructional stage. Similarly, in Lee and Falvey (2014), the secondary teachers used a range of strategies to promote AfL in writing: (1) collaborative planning and material development, (2) pre-writing instructional scaffolding to bring assessment in line with instruction, (3) process writing during which students produced multiple drafts and engaged with feedback to improve their writing, (4) selective error feedback, and (5) peer evaluation. Briefly, the AfL strategies adopted by the teachers included a strong focus on planning and teaching, an explicit link between instruction and assessment, active involvement of students through peer evaluation, and delivery of feedback through feedback forms that outlined the success criteria shared at the pre-writing stage.

Another strand of AfL in L2 writing research has focused on the effects of AfL on students' writing, as well as students' receptiveness to such an assessment

initiative. Huang's (2012) survey revealed that EFL college students were generally positive toward the AfL strategies adopted by their writing teacher. Huang's (2016) more recent study, drawing on Yang and Carless' (2013) feedback framework (cognitive, affective, and structural dimensions of feedback), showed that integrating AfL into EFL college writing classes could help students make progress in their writing. Through providing ongoing learning and assessment activities, encouraging learner response to teacher feedback, and gradually removing teacher scaffolding, students exhibited stronger abilities to reflect on and take charge of their learning. While Huang's (2012, 2016) research was conducted in college contexts, Lee's (2011) study has addressed L2 secondary writing contexts. Similar to Huang's findings, in Lee (2011), as a result of the teachers' implementation of AfL in writing, students became more motivated toward writing, demonstrating that classroom assessment can be "one of the key factors that affect motivation" (Harlen 2006, p. 61). Students also began to acquire some new attitudes toward AfL strategies, such as peer evaluation and multiple drafting. However, the survey results in Lee (2011) were mixed in terms of the congruence between students' beliefs and the AfL principles. For example, at the end of the study, students still attached a lot of importance to the written product (more than the process) and grammatical accuracy in particular.

The last strand of research on AfL in L2 writing has addressed the factors that facilitate and restrain the implementation of AfL in L2 writing. In Lee and Falvey's (2014) study, the secondary teachers' enthusiasm, commitment, and strong beliefs about the benefits of AfL, their concerted efforts and shared vision, and their developing assessment capacity (Seong 2011) were found to facilitate their AfL in writing practices. On the other hand, research has also uncovered some challenges that writing teachers face in their AfL practices. In EFL college contexts in Taiwan, Huang (2016) found three obstacles that hindered the implementation of AfL in higher education: (1) marginal and terminal role of assessments; (2) teacher-dominated talk in the classroom, resulting in a lack of productive teacher-learner dialogues; and (3) paucity of empirical research to shed light on the implementation and feasibility of AfL. These impediments to AfL practices were also found in L2 school writing contexts – e.g., Lee and Coniam (2013) and Mak and Lee (2014). More specifically, Lee and Falvey (2014) uncovered a number of challenges that posed obstacles to secondary teachers' implementation of AfL in Hong Kong writing classrooms. These include a mandatory policy to follow the conventional practice of detailed marking of students' written errors, causing exhaustion, frustration, and burnout among teachers, as well as deleterious effects on students psychologically. Additional challenges in Lee and Falvey (2014) stemmed from the examination culture, the need for teachers to prepare students for high-stakes public examinations, as well as the primacy of scores (i.e., AoL). Other problems were found to relate to practical constraints like the lack of time (but AfL required teachers to spend more time on planning and material development), large class sizes (making it difficult to carry out peer evaluation), and inadequate support from the school management in terms of additional resources and manpower to alleviate teachers' increased workloads incurred by the assessment innovation. In Mak and

Lee (2014), the primary teachers faced similar challenges in AfL in writing practices. A major threat that emerged relates to the contradictions within the school system that posed threats to the implementation and development of AfL in writing. It was found that the incongruous beliefs between the participating teachers and their colleagues regarding how best to go about responding to written errors made it hard for the teachers to implement a focused approach to error feedback, which is more in line with AfL than comprehensive error feedback. Another contradiction pertains to the school administrators' concern with the impact of innovation on students' immediate writing performance as shown in public examinations, when in reality AfL in writing innovation would need time to accomplish and take root and that it would probably take a long time to witness improvement in students' writing. Related to this contradiction is that the teachers had to cover the jam-packed syllabus at school, and due to the time constraint, they found it necessary to adjust their original AfL plan, and hence they adopted some of the AfL strategies less regularly as planned (e.g., student self-reflection and peer assessment). This impacted adversely on the effects of AfL because, as advocated by Hawe and Parr (2014), AfL is a unitary concept and successful implementation requires attention to all key AfL strategies.

AfL and Implementation Issues for L2 School Writing

Insights from AfL in writing research have demonstrated that successful implementation of AfL is dependent on a host of factors, ranging from teachers' personal beliefs and understandings of principles and practices of AfL to wider issues of school culture and reform climate (Carless 2005; Yung 2002). Even though teachers are positively inclined toward AfL, they may have difficulties putting it into practice in the classroom (Antonious and James 2014) as they are influenced by both internal and external factors (Box et al. 2015) that can detrimentally influence the practice of AfL. These include the lack of time, the pressure to cover all curriculum materials (because of high-stakes examinations), as well as teachers' lack of understanding of what makes "good" assessment practice and their inadequate mastery of techniques to carry out effective assessment (e.g., self−/peer assessment) (Antonious and James 2014; Box et al. 2015). In certain contexts, the potential of AfL can be easily eroded due to the influence of certain cultural values (e.g., a high premium on examination performance in Confucian heritage contexts), as well as institutional and historical conditions that attach enormous value to examination scores and summative performance (Chen et al. 2013; Cross and O'Loughlin 2013). To enable school teachers to implement AfL successfully, therefore, it is important that they are given a reduced assessment load (Cross and O'Loughlin 2013) so that they are freed up to provide formative, diagnostic feedback to support student learning. Besides, the implementation of AfL would require engagement and symbiosis among the various parties that interact within the context of teachers' work – i.e., not only teachers but also key stakeholders like the school administrators (Cross and O'Loughlin

2013; Moss et al. 2013). If AfL is to be successfully implemented, four important factors (teacher, student, school, and system), as suggested by Fullan (1982, 1991) and more recently Carless (2005, 2011), need to be taken on board (see Lee and Coniam 2013).

Teacher Factor

Teachers play a pivotal role in the implementation of AfL in the writing classroom, which requires not only professional knowledge and skills on the part of the teachers but also their commitment and collaborative efforts. Effective AfL practices are underpinned by a clear vision of what AfL in writing entails, a focus on the quality of student learning, and a common vision shared by teachers in the same professional community. Such a vision has to be in line with teacher beliefs and instructional and assessment practices, so that teachers are able to translate their beliefs into practice.

Effective AfL practices also hinge upon teachers' careful planning that fosters close connections between teaching, learning, and assessment in the writing classroom (e.g., laying out success criteria that inform assessment, instruction, and learning) and consistent application of AfL strategies (such as peer assessment). The teachers in Mak and Lee's (2014) study were unable to implement AfL strategies regularly, and this impacted negatively on their innovation. Thus, it is important that AfL strategies are integrated into the writing classroom and adopted consistently. More importantly, teachers' awareness of the potential debilitating factors and their concerted efforts to combat them are crucial. Without such awareness and collaborative efforts to battle the realities of the classroom, it is hard to sustain and develop AfL practices. One suggestion is for teachers to work in concert, share their experiences and concerns, and jointly come up with strategies which they can present to the school management for discussion and negotiation. For example, in school contexts where school administrators are keen on having students write a large number of essays using a product approach (i.e., single drafting) and adopt recalcitrant attitude toward process writing (as it will result in fewer writing assignments), teachers can present the benefits of multiple drafting to their school administrators and negotiate an acceptable number of writing assignments. In brief, teachers have to be proactive and take a bottom-up approach to change, taking into account the specificities of their work contexts.

Student Factor

The student factor pertains to students' understanding of AfL in writing and the role they play during the process. For AfL to work, students need a clear understanding of the learning goals and success criteria of the writing tasks. Teachers have to

prepare students adequately by teaching what they assess and make process writing and self-evaluation and peer evaluation an integral part of students' writing experience. Unfortunately, in a number of L2 school contexts, a product approach to writing is prevalent, where students produce single rather than multiple drafts; peer evaluation is, more often than not, a peripheral feature of the writing classroom. While the pre-writing phase of instructional scaffolding is useful to help students understand the learning goals and assessment criteria of the writing tasks, the follow-through phases of redrafting, self-evaluation, and peer evaluation are equally, if not more, essential to the writing curriculum. In order that students are actively involved in the pre-writing, during, and after writing stages, AfL strategies such as multiple drafting and peer/self-evaluation have to be established within the culture of schools and implemented across the board, and preferably as early as in primary schools, so that process writing and active student involvement become the norm rather than the exception.

School and System Factors

AfL in writing research has demonstrated that there are entrenched school practices that constitute the main stumbling block to the full uptake of AFL in writing – namely, the school's assessment policy and practice that place a heavy emphasis on detailed error feedback and scores, which are incongruent with AfL and not conducive to student motivation. To implement AfL effectively, teachers need to negotiate with school leaders and administrators, garner their support, and find ways to change the school culture that emphasizes error-focused feedback, summative scores, and a product approach to writing. Also, schools have to understand that to bring about students' long-term writing improvement, one-off or short-term attempts at AfL are insufficient. The implementation of AfL has to be consistent, persistent, and school based, involving teachers' concerted efforts in communities of practice.

Although AfL in L2 writing research has not dealt with issues arising from the parents, they play an important role in influencing AfL practices in the school community. To ensure the smooth implementation of AfL in writing, therefore, parents need to be involved. For example, parent meetings or forums can be held to explain the rationales and principles of AfL, and in particular, alternative practices like selective error feedback and delayed reporting of scores have to be explained to convince parents of the merits of AfL. Indeed, assessment innovation cannot be pursued in a vacuum, and the school factor, though complex, is essential to effective AfL practices.

The school factor is related to and influenced by the system factor, which poses a considerable challenge to the implementation of AfL in writing. In many L2 contexts, school writing practice is seen as an important preparation for high-stakes public examinations. And since public examinations are based on the impromptu writing model, classroom writing assessment in schools tends to adopt a similar model, which in fact need not be so. In classroom writing assessment, students

should be given time to write and learn to write within a process writing model. While the examination-driven system cannot be easily changed, it is important to foster awareness of the distinction between the public examination impromptu writing model on the one hand and the classroom multiple-drafting process writing model on the other. Admittedly, systemic issues are not easily amenable to change, but it is possible to change mind-sets of stakeholders so as to facilitate and sustain AfL practices.

Assessment for Learning for L2 School Writing: Pedagogical Principles

Drawing upon insights from AfL in writing research and the broader AfL literature, I provide a summary of the pedagogical principles that underlie effective AfL practices.

Pre-writing Instructional Scaffolding

Effective AfL practice starts with teachers' collaborative planning, realized in a strong focus on instructional scaffolding that is intertwined with assessment. This means that teachers should think about how to assess the writing they are going to assign and use those criteria to inform their teaching. Like the teachers in Lee and Coniam (2013), a genre approach can be adopted to integrate teaching and assessment. Teachers can first establish the genre-specific goals of writing (see Example 3.1 for the genre-specific goals for story writing) and help students understand the learning goals by engaging them in a range of learning activities. For instance, to help students come to grips with the story structure (i.e., orientation, complication, and resolution), a jumbled text can be given to students, and through engaging students in mini-text analysis, students will learn about the structure of a story. Apart from the text structure, teachers can design a variety of learning activities to familiarize students with the language features typical of the target genre. These activities can take the form of analyzing sample texts and performing text improvement tasks, where students apply the success criteria to evaluate or improve the quality of the texts provided. For example, students can be given an imperfect story with incorrect verb tenses, or a plain story with few descriptive details, and using their understanding of the success criteria, they work on improving the grammatical accuracy with regard to verb tenses or expanding the vocabulary to enrich the descriptive details in the text. Through engaging in these activities, students can gain a clear understanding of the assessment criteria that will be used by their teachers to assess their own writing, while also preparing themselves for self- and peer assessment at a later stage of writing.

Example 3.1 Genre-Specific Goals for Story Writing
Content/structure goals

- The story opening is able to grab the readers' attention.
- The story begins with a clear orientation, establishing who was involved, where, and when the events happened.
- There is a complication/problem that arouses interest.
- As the story develops, the complication/problem is resolved.
- The past events are sequenced in a very clear order.
- The story has an appropriate and impressive ending.

Language goals

- Past tense verbs are used accurately.
- Time expressions are appropriately and accurately used to link up the events.
- The story uses an appropriate range of words to describe the characters and events.
- Dialogues are used appropriately to make the story interesting.

Involving Students in Self–/Peer Assessment and Self-Reflection

AfL develops students' abilities to self-assess so that they can become reflective and independent in learning; it is therefore important to engage students in self- and peer evaluation, as well as self-reflection. In L2 school writing contexts that involve younger learners, and often learners with little experience with self–/peer evaluation, training provided by teachers is essential (see Chap. 7 about the role of peer feedback training). Self-evaluation of writing can take different forms, such as (1) self-assessment based on the assessment criteria shared at the pre-writing stage (e.g., see Example 3.1), (2) self-editing which focuses mainly on language, (3) and self-inquiry where students not only reflect on their strengths and weaknesses in writing but also formulate their own goals, set further goals based on teacher/peer feedback, and take initiatives to improve their own writing. It is worth noting that such student-centered assessment activities should be an integral part of the writing classroom, rather than implemented only once in a while (see Chap. 4 on AaL in writing for a more detailed discussion of the student role in classroom writing assessment).

Teachers Providing Descriptive, Diagnostic Feedback

In the AfL-focused writing classroom, it is crucial that teachers provide quality feedback so that students learn about their strengths and weaknesses in writing (see Chap. 6 on teacher feedback). According to Williams (2005), effective feedback is

focused, stimulates thinking, consists of comments only, refers explicitly to success criteria, and provides concrete guidance on how to improve (rather than giving complete solutions). As such, feedback forms that make explicit reference to the success criteria are highly recommended. With spaces for written commentary in the feedback forms (e.g., Examples 2.2, 2.3, 2.5, and 2.6 in Chap. 2), and with the success criteria clearly laid out, teachers can avoid giving vague comments that are not directly linked to the learning goals/success criteria – e.g., "the story is not interesting." Instead teacher feedback can be concrete and directly linked to the success criteria – e.g., "You could make the story more interesting by including some dialogues. See X marked in the story where dialogues could be used." Descriptive, diagnostic teacher feedback can be delivered through teacher-student conferences too, during which students can ask questions and seek clarifications from teachers, and teachers can offer advice and help students think of ways to close the gaps in their writing.

Creating a Supportive Classroom Culture

While traditional writing assessment practices tend to have detrimental effects on student motivation (Huot 2002), effective AfL practices result in enhanced learner motivation. To implement AfL in the writing classroom, it is important for teachers to provide a secure and supportive learning atmosphere and to make students feel that making mistakes is a natural part of learning. This is particularly crucial for L2 school learners who are learning to write and hence bound to make a lot of mistakes in writing. Instead of giving feedback to all written errors, teachers could consider giving selective error feedback. Responding to errors selectively does not mean that teachers turn a blind eye to students' written errors and do nothing about them. Using information gathered from classroom writing assessments, teachers can devise strategies and design materials that help students work on different aspects of grammar. For example, if assessment has revealed certain trouble spots in students' use of grammar in writing, teachers can adjust their teaching by designing additional learning activities or exercises on these specific grammar areas. Furthermore, to establish a positive learning atmosphere and to help L2 students overcome apprehensions about writing, assessment criteria can be phrased in positive terms – for example, in the form of "can-do" statements, emphasizing what students can achieve instead of what they fail to do (e.g., I can provide an attention-grabbing story opening) (see Example 2.6 in Chap. 2 for a feedback form with "can-do" statements).

Disengaging Scores from Feedback

Research on AfL has shown that students are very likely to ignore teacher feedback when they receive a grade/score alongside teachers' comments (Black and Wiliam 1998). In AfL, if feedback is to produce positive impact on students, scores have to be de-emphasized. As suggested in Chap. 2, in educational contexts where scores are required for classroom writing assessment, teachers can consider de-emphasizing scores by using feedback forms that draw students' attention to their qualitative comments, or they can record scores but report to students only after revisions have been submitted or even at the end of a school term or school year. In other words, if scores have to be involved, they can be released after students have engaged teacher feedback to improve their work (Laflen and Smith 2017). Of course, if such alternatives are adopted, it is important that teachers inform students and parents and explain the rationales for doing so.

Conclusion

AfL is not only about assessment but also about teaching and learning; through AfL, teaching, learning, and assessment form a symbiotic relationship. In writing classrooms, AfL is about how teachers design writing assessment tasks, how they establish learning goals and success criteria, and how they align teaching with assessment and how students learn from playing an active role in the assessment process (e.g., through multiple drafting and peer/self-evaluation). Therefore, "rather than a final step, assessment is an intermediate, or even initial, step in a continuous process of teaching and learning" (Berchoud et al. 2011, p. 9). AfL should also take account of learner motivation (Assessment Reform Group 2002), and teachers should avoid AfL practices "becoming mechanistic, ritualized and ultimately meaningless and boring to pupils" (James 2011, p. 29). Teachers can work on enhancing student motivation through using more interesting writing tasks, adopting a more engaging pedagogical approach, and playing down errors and scores. Most important of all, AfL is a unitary concept (Hawe and Parr 2014) with all key AfL strategies interrelated with and interdependent on each other. If teachers share learning goals with students without engaging them in self-monitoring, self-evaluation, and peer evaluation, for example, AfL cannot be fully realized. Thus, teachers have to develop a strong grasp of AfL and apply it as a unitary or holistic concept.

For a lot of teachers in L2 school contexts, implementing AfL in writing may present a steep learning curve, and hence teacher education is necessary to enhance teachers' assessment literacy (Stiggins 1999) and to equip them with the professional knowledge and skills to implement AfL in writing classrooms (see Chap. 10). Since AfL differs hugely from traditional AoL practices, both in spirit and practice, implementing AfL entails a significant shift in the way teachers conceptualize assessment, design instructional and assessment tasks, and evaluate learning.

Fundamentally, AfL involves a "culture change in the classroom and expansive learning on the part of the teacher" (Parr and Timperley 2010, p. 71). To implement the principles of AfL requires significant change in teacher and student behaviors, as well as the mind-sets of key stakeholders such as parents, administrators, and policymakers. More importantly, as assessment is a social practice, it is crucial to recognize the interactive nature of AfL and the multiplicity of contexts in which the assessment is situated, such as the social realities and power relations within the educational contexts that characterize teachers' work (Arkoudis and O'Loughin 2004). Future research on AfL should take account of the myriads of contextual variables (e.g., the teacher, student, school, and system factors) necessary for the successful implementation of AfL – i.e., teachers trained in AfL principles and practices, fully briefed and prepared students and parents, and dedicated support from school management. Classroom-based research of longitudinal nature can yield insights into how teachers can implement and sustain AfL practices – e.g., through engaging in communities of practice.

The next chapter turns to AaL and examines specifically how it, as a subset of AfL, can be promoted in L2 school writing contexts.

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Chapter 4
Assessment as Learning in the L2 Writing Classroom

Introduction

Effective assessment for learning (AfL) practices involve students actively in the assessment process. This is made possible by teachers sharing AfL strategies with students (e.g., clarifying learning goals and success criteria and giving descriptive feedback to their peers) so that students themselves can engage with similar AfL practices to help themselves and their peers with self-regulated, self-monitoring, and autonomous learning (Lee 2016). AfL therefore puts students at the center of learning; it involves "the active engagement of students in setting goals for their learning and growth, monitoring their progress toward these goals, and determining how to address any gaps" (Andrade et al. 2012, p. 8). Such student-centered classroom assessment is referred to as "assessment as learning" (AaL) (Earl 2003, 2013).

Rather than being distinct from AfL, AaL is "a subset of *assessment for learning* [emphasis in original] that emphasizes using assessment as a process of developing and supporting meta-cognition for students" (Earl 2013, p. 3), as well as "the role of the student as the critical connector between assessment and their own learning" (Earl 2013, p. 3). As a subset of AfL, AaL underlines students' active involvement in classroom assessment through "the process of students monitoring their own learning, achievement and progress" (Mutch 2012, p. 373). Although AaL is part of AfL, and Chap. 3 has examined AfL in L2 school writing, a specific focus on AaL is deemed necessary and pertinent to school writing in L2 contexts. This is especially because in the globalized world in the twenty-first century, increasing demands have been put on real-life skills such as independence, self-management, and critical thinking. The main focus of AaL is to develop learners who are capable of self-reflection, self-assessment, and self-regulated learning; these skills are highly prized in the twenty-first century and, therefore, have to be nurtured as early as possible.

The original version of this chapter was revised. An erratum to this chapter can be found at https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-3924-9_11

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I. Lee, *Classroom Writing Assessment and Feedback in L2 School Contexts*,
DOI 10.1007/978-981-10-3924-9_4

This chapter begins with an examination of the theoretical foundations of AaL, followed by a review of the AaL strategies that teachers can adopt in L2 writing classrooms. After that, I highlight a few findings from the currently limited research on AaL in writing and recommend a few areas for further research.

Theoretical Foundations of Assessment as Learning

To understand the notion of AaL, this section examines the major dimensions of this assessment approach and its underlying theories. First, AaL characterizes assessment as a process of metacognition (Earl and Katz 2006); it entails the development of students' metacognitive capacity, during which students set learning goals, monitor, reflect on, evaluate, regulate their own learning, and improve their own work. Metacognition, also referred to as metacognitive knowledge or metacognitive awareness (Flavell 1976, 1987, 1992), is "a person's cognition about cognition" (Wellman 1985, p. 1). These related terms refer to "thinking about thinking, or regulation or execution of cognition" (Zhang 2010, p. 270). When students are metacognitively aware, they know what there is to learn and what options are available to help them improve learning. Through engaging in AaL, students become metacognitively aware of their own thought processes and the strategies they use to improve learning (Davies et al. 2011).

Related to metacognition is self-regulated learning, which is pivotal to AaL (Perrenoud 1998). When students apply AaL strategies such as clarifying, sharing, and understanding learning goals and being owners of their own learning (Wiliam 2014), self-regulated learning is facilitated. AaL "reinforces and actualizes self-regulated strategies among students" (Clark 2012, p. 205), during which they apply their metacognitive knowledge of what needs to be done at different stages of the learning process. In language learning research, self-regulation is found to aid language acquisition (Graham and Harris 1994; Zimmerman and Risemberg 1997). The major components of self-regulation such as goal setting, self-evaluation, and self-reflection are especially valuable in the learning-to-write process (Zimmerman and Kitsantas 1999, 2002), in which AfL/AaL is grounded.

Self-regulation is both cognitive and affective (Nakata 2010). Cognitively self-regulation entails goal setting, self-reflection, and metacognition, whereas affectively self-regulation involves emotion and desire. As students engage in AaL, they set goals, self-reflect, and enhance their metacognitive awareness (cognitive self-regulation), but they also derive satisfaction from what they do (affective self-regulation). Thus, apart from developing self-regulation, AaL is able to enhance student motivation in learning (Earl 2013; James 2006; Marshall and Drummond 2006).

Finally, AaL is underpinned by the concept of autonomy. Putting students at the center of classroom assessment, teachers' ultimate goal is to develop learners' autonomy so that they become metacognitively aware of their own thought processes and the strategies they use to improve learning. AaL, therefore, sets learners up for "wide, lifelong learning" (Klenowski 2009, p. 264) and develops autonomous

learners who are actively involved in learning, capable of making choices, setting goals, and monitoring their own progress in learning.

In brief, AaL engages students in a process of metacognition, through which they take responsibility for learning, develop autonomy, and take active steps to monitor, manage, and regulate their learning. AaL produces self-regulated, autonomous, and motivated learners who are capable of learning how to learn (Earl 2013; James 2006; Marshall and Drummond 2006).

Assessment as Learning Strategies in the Writing Classroom

Translated into classroom practice, AaL accentuates the active role of the learner as the connector between assessment and learning (Earl and Katz 2006), where all elements of assessment are designed with the purpose of promoting learning (i.e., student-centered AfL). In traditional L2 writing classrooms where the teacher role is predominant, AaL presents a potent challenge. This section attempts to examine how AaL can be realized in L2 school writing contexts. While the pedagogical principles for AfL examined in Chap. 3 are applicable to AaL, this section focuses specifically on the principles conducive to helping students play an active role in classroom writing assessment. Four AaL strategies are particularly relevant to effective AaL practice (Lee 2016).

Establishing Learning Goals and Success Criteria

Whether the primary focus of the writing classroom is on AfL in general or AaL in particular, the starting point is the same – teachers have to help students develop a clear understanding of the learning goals and success criteria against which their writing will be evaluated. This is an essential step toward developing students' metacognitive capacity and enhancing their metacognitive awareness. Anchored by theories of learning in mainstream psychology and sociocultural theories of learning (Lantolf 2000), goals are "the focal element guiding people's motivation to do activities, to mediate the contexts they experience, and to learn" (Cumming 2006, p. 476), which can be used by students to regulate their learning. Through sharing learning goals and success criteria, teachers equip students with the metalanguage pertinent to the writing task so that students are able to use the same language to think and talk about and to evaluate their own learning and writing.

Example 4.1 gives an example of the learning goals and success criteria for the biography genre. To clarify, learning goals and success criteria are two sides of the same coin. While the pointers in Example 4.1 are learning goals for students, they are also the success criteria that will be used for assessing their writing.

Success criteria can be established through instructional scaffolding. In the AaL-oriented writing classroom, since the focus is on the active involvement of the

Example 4.1 Learning Goals and Success Criteria for Biography
Writing a biography: Learning goals and success criteria

1. Include well-sequenced information about the selected celebrity in the following order:
   - Personal information
   - Career
   - Achievements and contributions
2. Use appropriate connectives to link up the information
3. Use the simple past tense correctly to describe events in the past

Adapted from Box 1 in Lee (2016)

learners, it is best if such success criteria can be negotiated and co-constructed with students (Gregory et al. 2011). For example, success criteria can be elicited from strong and weak samples that teachers share and analyze with students. Students can also engage in categorizing or prioritizing a list of criteria provided by the teacher so that they develop an in-depth understanding of the relative significance of the success criteria and how they relate to one another.

Encouraging Students to Set Personal Learning Goals

While teachers help students develop an understanding of the learning goals and success criteria of the writing task (e.g., Example 4.1), it is equally, if not more important, to allow students to reflect on those goals, personalize their learning (i.e., select, develop, and/or prioritize those goals according to their personal needs), and come up with personal learning goals that are meaningful and manageable in their own learning context. Setting personal learning goals provides the point of departure for self-regulated learning, which is central to AaL.

Goal setting can be generic or specific. Generic goals can be linked to writing in general (e.g., to improve one's written accuracy in general), while specific goals can be linked to a particular unit of work, writing task, or genre (e.g., to improve the use of verb tenses in story writing). Goals can be set at different points of the academic year (e.g., beginning, middle, and end) to allow students to take stock of their own learning. Goal setting can also be performed when a writing task is assigned, and such goals can be genre/task specific. Generic and specific goals, however, are not mutually exclusive. Teachers can encourage students to set both generic and specific personal learning goals at different times and to document them systematically to facilitate self-evaluation/reflection. For instance, students can record their personal learning goals in a learning log or reflection log, revisit them regularly, and monitor

their goals. Example 4.2 shows a student's attempt to document some personal learning goals for story writing.

Example 4.2 Student's Personal Learning Goals for Story Writing

In the past when I wrote a story	In this story writing task, I aim to
I used to start in a boring manner, e.g., *One day, once upon a time, last Sunday*	Write an opening that is able to grab the readers' attention
I used to finish my story quite slackly, usually in a hurry	End my story in an impressive way
I didn't use any dialogue	Use dialogue to make my story more interesting

In brief, it is important that goal setting is followed by reflection on goals, where students monitor and evaluate their own learning and set further goals to enhance their writing.

Engaging Students Actively as Learning Resources for One Another

AaL requires learners to play an active role in helping one another in the writing classroom, using their peers as learning resources for mutual benefits. In traditional writing classrooms where peer assessment is practiced, students may just play the role of passive receptacles, receiving comments from peers rather passively, mechanically, or even unthinkingly. In an AaL-focused writing classroom, however, students take control by proactively seeking peer feedback, e.g., by soliciting comments on areas that they feel are most relevant to their needs (e.g., related to their personal learning goals), seeking clarifications from peers, disagreeing with peers or even challenging peer comments, and initiating discussion with peers about areas of writing that warrant further attention. In so doing, both the student writers as recipients of peer feedback and the peer assessors can benefit from the active engagement in the AaL process. A typical feedback cycle that involves students actively in peer assessment is comprised of a purposeful dialogue between the student writer and the peer assessor as shown in Example 4.3.

In the AaL-focused writing classroom, teachers can implement peer assessment at different stages of the writing process. Usually peer assessment is conducted during writing (e.g., after the first draft is completed), but it can also take place before and after writing. Before writing, students can review and critique their peers' pre-writing outlines or the personal learning goals they establish for their own writing. After writing (with the final draft submitted), students can be asked to evaluate or critique their peers' self-reflections and the new goals they set for their further development. Where possible, they can offer suggestions to help their peers improve their future writing.

Example 4.3 Purposeful Dialogue Between Student Writer and Peer Assessor

A template for effective peer dialogue during assessment

Student writer: *May I have your feedback on … [*e.g.*, introductory paragraph]*

Peer assessor: (gives feedback that consists of three parts)

(1) *You did well on … [major strength(s)]*
(2) *These parts have to be changed because … [major problems]*
(3) *You can improve by … [constructive suggestions about how to improve]*

Student writer: *Could you clarify/explain/elaborate on …?* (gets peer assessor to clarify, explain, and/or elaborate)

Peer assessor: (replies) …

Adapted from Box 4 in Lee (2016)

Empowering Students to Develop Ownership of Their Writing

In the AaL-oriented writing classroom, it is crucial to empower students to develop a sense of ownership of their own writing. To achieve this, teachers should work on promoting students' metacognitive awareness, encouraging them to ask metacognitive questions, and enhancing their awareness of what needs to be done and what options are available in their writing. For example, in story writing students can ask a range of metacognitive questions relating to "setting," "characters," "dialogue," "story opening," "climax," and "story ending," such as:

- How can I grab the readers' attention with the story opening?
- What should I include in the setting?
- How should I describe my characters?
- What kinds of dialogue should be used to make my characters come to life?
- How should I plan the climax of the story?
- How can I end the story in an impressive manner?

Such metacognitive questions can be asked at different stages of the writing process, i.e., pre-, during, and after writing, which coincide with the three stages of learning (Hattie and Timperley 2007) examined in the preceding chapters: (1) where I am going, (2) how I am going, and (3) where to next (also see Chappuis 2009).

To help students engage in the process of metacognition, teachers can encourage students to keep a learning log (see Example 4.4), where they record their learning goals; document their strengths and weaknesses in writing; write reflections based on self-assessment, teacher feedback, and peer feedback; and set new goals for future development. The learning log can cover different areas of writing, such as content, organization, and language. For written accuracy in particular, students can

be encouraged to monitor their written accuracy development by keeping an error log (see Example 2.8 in Chap. 2), where they track the number of errors made with regard to some common error categories (e.g., verb tense, article, preposition, and subject-verb agreement). To further capitalize on the self-assessment information based on the error log, error ratios can be worked out for the selected error types (by calculating the instances of incorrect use of error categories over the total) (see Example 2.7 in Chap. 2), yielding information about the most serious errors students have made so that they can monitor and track their own written accuracy development.

To develop ownership of their writing, students should be encouraged to practice self-assessment on a regular basis (Rea-Dickins 2001; Sadler 1989). Self-assessment can take place at different stages of the writing process. Before writing, students can assess their personal learning goals, mind maps, or outlines. During writing, they can assess the content, organization, language, and style of their writing based on the success criteria of the writing task. After writing, they can assess the extent to which they are able to meet the goals they set before writing. Where portfolio assessment (see Chap. 8) is used, students can conduct self-assessment by choosing the most effective piece of writing or the most improved draft. They can also reflect on the reasons of their choice and ask relevant metacognitive questions such as: *What makes this piece the best of all? Why is this the most improved draft? What evidence of improvement is there?* Indeed, self-assessment, self-reflection, self-monitoring, and the ability to ask metacognitive questions are intertwined, and they are all crucial to student empowerment in effective AaL practice in the writing classroom.

Example 4.4 Student Learning Log
Learning log

Writing topic:

My personal goals:

What I learnt from my peers' comments:

- My major strengths:
- My major weaknesses:

What I learnt from my teacher's feedback:

- My major strengths:
- My major weaknesses:

Upon my self-reflection:

- The goals that I achieved:
- The goals that I did not achieve:
- My goals for the next piece of writing

Research on Assessment as Learning in Writing

Research that demonstrates the benefits of AaL in writing tends to address specific aspects of or approaches to AaL, such as portfolio assessment (also see Chap. 9 on portfolios in classroom writing assessment), self-assessment, self-monitoring/regulation, and goal setting. In Lam's (2008) study, the teacher participant reaped benefits from an assessment innovation that involved portfolio assessment and felt empowered through the opportunity for professional development. The findings suggest that professional development activities that focus on AaL can enhance teacher assessment literacy and lead to teacher empowerment. Previous research has also focused on students' engagement in self-assessment. In Porto's (2001) study, through participating in self-evaluation and cooperative writing response groups, the students improved their writing skills and raised their awareness of the writing process. Similar positive findings were reported in Butler and Lee's (2010) study, where Grade 6 Korean students' regular practice in self-assessment was found to enhance their ability to self-assess their writing, improve their performance, and boost their confidence. The Swedish upper secondary students in Oscarson's (2009) study also developed their ability to assess their own writing through active involvement in self-assessment activities; the students believed that such skills are transferable and able to further their learning. Likewise, the university students in Hale's (2015) study felt that self-assessment allowed them to take greater responsibility for learning, examine their own writing more objectively, and feel trusted by their writing instructors. In Lam's (2010) study, the participating tertiary students benefited from self-assessment, mainly in terms of enhancing their language awareness and developing their self-monitoring capacity during writing. In Xiang's (2004) study, students were trained to use self-monitoring in writing and found it an effective strategy that improved their writing abilities, particularly the organization of their writing. Similarly, Feltham and Sharen (2015) found that explicit instruction that enhanced students' self-regulation could lead to effective revision in student writing. In Hawe and Dixon's (2014) study, the primary teachers adopted AfL as a unitary concept, encompassing AaL with an emphasis on student involvement in their learning, and made a difference in students' learning. Specifically, the students developed a better understanding of what was expected of them in the writing tasks, engaged meaningfully and productively in student-centered activities (e.g., peer evaluation and self-monitoring), and showed evidence of their ability to take charge of their learning.

A number of studies have focused specifically on goal setting in the writing classroom and shed light on the role of student goals in classroom writing assessment. Timperley and Parr (2009) investigated goal setting among Grade 4–8 students and found that students benefited from learning goals that were clearly articulated and exemplified the features of successful writing. Similar findings were reported in Cumming (2006) and Cumming et al. (2002), showing that ESL students benefited from goal setting when the goals were identified clearly and expressed as propositions – e.g., *I want to use a wider range of vocabulary. I am trying to spell*

more accurately. In particular, Hawe and Parr (2014) observed in their study that when teachers focused on performance goals, students tended to be more product oriented; on the other hand, when the goals related to both process and product outcomes, as well as the quality expected, learning was more effective. In general, it has been found that goal setting can lead to improved learning. For instance, Cumming (1986) and Hoffman (1998) documented the progress made by adult ESL students through setting and monitoring goals for their writing assignments throughout the duration of the writing course. Specifically, the EFL college students in Huang (2015) improved their writing performance through setting revision goals for their writing. Indeed, students' goal setting is key to AaL as they can use goals to plan, self-monitor, and self-regulate their learning (Pintrich 2000).

Research on AaL as a unitary or holistic concept (i.e., comprising all the key AaL strategies) in L2 writing contexts is rare. Lee's (2015) recent study on the implementation of AaL in primary and secondary writing classrooms in Hong Kong was an attempt to fill the void. In her study, it was found that after training, the primary and secondary teachers were able to incorporate AaL strategies in the writing classroom with pockets of success, such as helping students set goals and engaging them in self-assessment. However, while some students benefited from AaL, others found it difficult to take charge of and evaluate their own learning. This was particularly true in the case of weaker learners. Also, AaL appeared to come into direct conflict with an emphasis on scores in traditional classroom writing assessment, which could divert students' attention from the process of learning. Lee's (2015) study suggests that implementing AaL in the conventional AoL-oriented writing classroom is not a straightforward matter, yet with its potential for leveraging student learning AaL in writing definitely warrants further research.

While there are studies that address specific aspects of AaL in writing, such as goal setting and self-assessment as reported in the above, future investigations should focus on teachers' implementation of AaL as a unitary or holistic concept in the L2 writing classroom, addressing all key AaL strategies that are intertwined with one another, e.g., goal setting, self-monitoring, self-reflection, and self-assessment. In particular, research on students' metacognitive systems and self-regulatory processes during AaL in L2 writing will provide fruitful areas for future research. How teachers' coaching and instructional scaffolding can facilitate students' acquisition of AaL strategies is also worthy of research attention.

Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed the theoretical underpinnings of the notion of AaL, examined how it can be applied in L2 school writing contexts, and highlighted salient findings from pertinent writing research. Admittedly, a student-centered approach to classroom writing assessment characterized by AaL is easier said than done, but it can present a number of significant benefits which are probably too important to overlook. To recap, a focus on AaL can enhance students' metacognitive awareness

and make them become better informed of what they learn, why they learn, and how they learn. They develop self-regulation and self-reflection abilities, become assessment capable, and have their motivation and confidence boosted as a result. They also take responsibility for learning and become autonomous learners. Chapter 8 will revisit AaL and examine specifically how AaL can be realized in a portfolio approach to L2 writing assessment.

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Chapter 5
Perspectives on Feedback in L2 Writing

Introduction

Feedback is "information provided by an agent (e.g., teacher, peer, book, parent, self, experience) regarding aspects of one's performance or understanding" (Hattie and Timperley 2007, p. 81), with "direct, useable insights into current performance, based on tangible differences between current performance and hoped for performance" (Wiggins 1993, p. 182). In L2 writing, feedback has been a topic of perennial interest to language/writing teachers. In different parts of the world, L2 teachers spend a large amount of time responding to student writing; however, the effectiveness of teacher feedback has often been called into question (Cumming 1985; Lee 2016; Truscott 1996; Zamel 1985). Early works by Zamel (1985) and Cumming (1985) published in the 1980s have uncovered some major problems of teacher feedback. In Zamel's (1985) study, for example, ESL teachers were found to misconstrue student texts, give arbitrary and unhelpful feedback, and fail to help students develop strategies to improve their writing. In 1996, Truscott published a controversial article that questions the place of grammar correction in teacher feedback, and since then research on feedback in L2 writing has proliferated at an unprecedented rate, with research on written corrective feedback (WCF) emerging as one of the most vibrant research topics in the field of L2 writing.

This chapter begins by examining the theoretical perspectives on feedback in L2 writing, highlighting the potential of sociocultural theory in advancing our understanding of feedback in writing. It then explores feedback as a form of mediation, underlining the importance of mediated learning experience for students through feedback, as well as the central role of feedback in promoting assessment for learning (AfL). I then revisit sociocultural perspectives and examine the influence of activity theory on teachers' implementation of feedback practices in L2 writing. Before concluding the chapter, I provide a brief introduction to teacher feedback, peer feedback, and technology-enhanced feedback, which will be followed up in subsequent chapters.

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I. Lee, *Classroom Writing Assessment and Feedback in L2 School Contexts*,
DOI 10.1007/978-981-10-3924-9_5

Theoretical Perspectives on Feedback in L2 Writing

Research on L2 writing feedback is underpinned by second language acquisition (SLA) theory, L2 composition and writing theories, cognitive and sociocognitive perspectives, interactionist theories, and more recently sociocultural theory. SLA perspectives have mainly informed research on WCF, answering the question of whether WCF has a role to play in promoting students' written accuracy development. Despite some positive findings that point to the effectiveness of WCF in enhancing writing accuracy, conclusive evidence is lacking (Bitchener and Ferris 2012) due to issues with regard to research design, participants, contexts, purposes, and sample sizes in previous studies (Ferris 2010; Liu and Brown 2015). Also, such SLA-oriented research mostly takes place in tightly controlled experimental conditions with little pedagogical relevance for real classroom contexts. Informed by L2 composition and writing theories, research on feedback in L2 writing has explored the effects of feedback on student revisions in writing, answering the question of whether feedback can help students improve the quality of their writing (Chandler 2003; Ferris 1997, 2010; Hyland 1998, 2000; Truscott 2007). Contrary to SLA-focused feedback studies, such research mostly occurs in writing classrooms that bear greater relevance to real-world contexts. L2 writing feedback has also been explored from cognitive and sociocognitive perspectives. Cognitive researchers have examined how the human mind processes feedback and learns from it, focusing on the role feedback plays in converting declarative knowledge into automatized procedural knowledge (Anderson 1985; McLaughlin 1987, 1990; Pienemann 1984, 1998). Sociocognitive researchers, on the other hand, do not view learners as merely autonomous individuals (as in the cognitive approach), but instead they interact with the social environment as they learn. Specifically, influenced by interactionist theories, feedback takes into consideration "the significance of the individual reader and the dialogic nature of writing" (Hyland and Hyland 2006a, p. 2).

More recently, sociocultural theory has drawn attention to the socially mediated and socially constructed nature of learning (Aljaafreh and Lantolf 1994; Lantolf and Pavlenko 1995; Swain 1997; Villamil and de Guerrero 2006), where social interaction plays a fundamental role in the development of cognition. From sociocultural perspectives, learning is a social phenomenon embedded in specific cultural, historical, and institutional contexts (Lantolf 2000; Vygotsky 1978), with the social element "as constitutive of cognition and thus of learning" (Villamil and de Guerrero 2006, p. 23). Much of feedback research has looked at feedback as an entity that is devoid of context (Hyland and Hyland 2006b; Lee 2008), failing to take account of the multitude of contextual factors that may influence the feedback process – e.g., the instructional context, the teacher factor, and students' individual differences (such as educational backgrounds, language proficiency, motivations, and beliefs) (Evans et al. 2010; Ferris 2010, 2014; Goldstein 2005, 2006; Hyland and Hyland 2006a). Sociocultural perspectives have great potential to address the role of these important, yet underexplored, contextual variables in feedback in L2 writing. In particular, activity theory as a subbranch of sociocultural theory (see Engeström

1987, 2001, 2008) is able to help us better understand the tensions that exist within the teacher feedback activity and how feedback innovation can be realized from sociocultural perspectives. This will be examined later in the chapter.

Feedback as a Form of Mediation that Promotes Assessment for Learning

As a sociocultural construct, feedback in the writing classroom is best understood as a form of mediation. The concept of mediation is predicated on the belief that human relationships with the world are mediated by material and symbolic tools. According to the theory of mediated learning experience proposed by Feuerstein and his colleagues (Feuerstein 1990; Feuerstein et al. 1979, 1980, 1988), cognitive abilities are malleable, and it is through appropriate forms of interaction and instruction that learning can be improved (Presseisen 1992). In the classroom, a mediated learning interaction is accomplished when three criteria are met (Feuerstein et al. 1988): (1) intentionality/reciprocity, (2) transcendence, and (3) meaning (also Lee 2014). To elaborate, feedback has to be focused and purposeful, being aligned with instruction (intentionality), and there has to be active student engagement through dialogic interaction with the teacher/peers (reciprocity). Second, multiple drafting is crucial to facilitate learning transfer (transcendence), where students are given opportunities to apply their learning to another draft. Opportunities for goal setting, self-monitoring, and self-reflection can also facilitate transcendence as students look ahead to consider how learning can be transferred to another writing task. Finally, diagnostic feedback (meaning) that gives information about both strengths and weaknesses in writing will be able to provide mediated learning experience for students.

Conventional feedback practices typical of certain L2 school contexts are unlikely to be effective because of their failure to provide students with mediated learning experience as described in the above. For instance, in many L2 contexts (Furneaux et al. 2007; Yang et al. 2006; Zhao 2010), feedback that is error-focused lacks intentionality because teachers do not have a sense of purpose and direction – they simply respond to all written errors without targeting specific error patterns that are either linked to their instruction, the specific writing task or genre, or individual student needs. Even in their choice of WCF strategies, it is not necessarily informed by a principled or systematic approach as teachers may not be aware of when and why error codes should be used and when and why correct answers should be given. Throughout the feedback process, students remain essentially passive, and hence, reciprocity is lacking; rarely are students encouraged to follow up on the teacher feedback through email, conferencing, or other means (hence lack of transcendence); peer feedback is not a regular activity in writing classes. In product-oriented writing classrooms where students do not have to act upon teacher feedback,

transcendence is unlikely to occur because students have no chance to transfer what is learnt from teacher feedback on draft to another one. Such conventional feedback approaches are unable to mediate a sense of achievement for students, and hence lacking meaning, since students mostly get overwhelming information about their weaknesses as communicated by the flood of red ink in their writing.

Feedback that provides mediated learning experience is able to promote AfL in the writing classroom; it also corresponds with the three stages of learning (Hattie and Timperley 2007) expounded in Chap. 1 – i.e., "where I am going," "how I am going," and "where to next." To make feedback "intentional," there should be a close relationship between assessment and instruction, where teachers respond to writing with specific purposes or focuses that directly reflect the instructional goals ("where I am going"). When responding to a story, for instance, teachers can give feedback on areas emphasized in pre-writing instruction, such as whether students have included an attention-grabbing opening, portrayed the setting and characters, included a clear story structure that incorporates a complication and resolution, used the past tense to describe the past events, and used dialogue to make the characters come to life. For feedback that enhances "reciprocity," plenty of opportunities should be provided for students to interact with the teacher and their peers – e.g., through asking questions and seeking clarification or advice from the teacher/peers to find out "how they are going." To ensure that transfer (or transcendence) takes place, assessment as learning (AaL) activities introduced in Chap. 4 are relevant – e.g., asking students to set goals and reflect on and monitor their own writing in the multiple-draft writing classroom with a view to finding out "where to next." Last but not least, feedback that is infused with "meaning" is descriptive and diagnostic, not in the form of scores. It is important that students know what they have achieved in their writing with reference to the learning goals and success criteria. Through diagnostic and meaningful feedback, students also become aware of their weaknesses and what gaps there are in their writing (Lee 2014).

Therefore, effective feedback in the writing classroom is best seen as an important part of classroom assessment that integrates teaching, learning, and assessment; provides mediated learning experience; and promotes AfL (Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick 2006). In a nutshell, good feedback should:

- Clarify what good performance is, helping students understand where they are going
- Deliver descriptive, diagnostic information to students about their writing, helping them understand how they are going
- Involve and empower students (e.g., through self-assessment and peer assessment)
- Promote student motivation and self-esteem
- Enable students to close the gap between current and desired performance, helping them improve their future performance (and hence feedback is also feedforward) (Carless et al. 2006)

These characteristics of effective feedback provide a useful lens against which we can evaluate existing work on feedback in L2 writing. For example, teachers'

preoccupation with written errors is unlikely to promote students' confidence and motivation in writing. Arbitrary comments not linked to clearly established learning targets are also unlikely to help students understand how they are going and how to bridge the gap between current and desired performance since they fail to relate the feedback to what they are learning. In order to promote AfL, feedback has to be delivered in writing classrooms that value not only the written product but also the process of writing. Feedback has to be given to intermediate rather than final drafts, so that students can act on teacher feedback and improve their writing. It has to involve the learners actively (Wiliam 2001), reflect the learning targets, and take into account student motivation.

Implementing Effective Feedback Practices in L2 Writing

As a mediated activity in sociocultural terms, feedback does not take place in a social and cultural vacuum, but instead it is influenced by several factors. As such, activity theory, a subbranch of sociocultural theory, is able to shed light on feedback as an activity system (see Engeström 1987, 2001, 2008), which is comprised of "subject" (e.g., teachers), "object" (e.g., giving feedback to students), "mediating artifacts" (i.e., feedback strategies such as peer and electronic feedback), "rules" (e.g., one-shot writing in traditional L2 school contexts as a "rule"), "community" (i.e., teachers, students, principal, and parents), and "division of labor" (i.e., power relationship – e.g., between teacher and students) (Lee 2014). Conventionally writing teachers spend a massive amount of time responding to written errors, paying much less attention to content, organization, genre, and style. The "object" (i.e., goal) of feedback comprises mainly WCF and summative scores. In order for more effective feedback practices to take place, the conventional feedback activity system needs to be transformed through a number of innovations. Of foremost importance is a change in the object of feedback – i.e., teachers do not mainly correct errors and give scores to student writing but they should provide mediated learning experience in the form of formative feedback so as to help students improve learning, to motivate them, and to make them autonomous writers in the long run. Given this new object, alternative mediating artifacts are needed. Instead of comprehensive WCF as a key mediating strategy as in traditional L2 school contexts, teachers have to provide more holistic, informative, and diagnostic feedback on all important aspects of writing and to cut back on the amount on WCF (hence, a more focused approach to WCF); they also have to involve students actively in the feedback process – e.g., through peer feedback. These feedback strategies have to be applied to interim rather than single drafts in a process-oriented classroom so that students use feedback to revise and improve their own writing and learn to play an active role in their learning.

Moreover, to accommodate the new object and alternative mediating artifacts, conventional rules and division of labor have to be changed. Existing rules that require one-shot writing in a testing-oriented environment that emphasizes scores

should be changed, so that new rules like multiple drafting and a greater emphasis on pre-writing instruction and post-writing reinforcement can be established. Innovation would also involve redistribution of the teacher and student roles, so that students actively take charge of their learning (e.g., setting goals, engaging in self-evaluation/peer evaluation, reflecting on learning, and setting further goals). All the above innovations would have to involve the entire community comprising not only teachers and students but also school administrators and even parents, who all need to be informed of and get involved in the change in different ways. For instance, teachers have to form a community of practice with their colleagues and develop new visions about feedback; they need to develop students' assessment literacy to help them make good use of feedback to advance their learning; they have to share their feedback philosophy with parents and shore up support among school administrators (see Lee 2014).

In short, innovation designed to improve the effectiveness of feedback practices can be hampered by a number of factors that operate within teachers' sociocultural context, such as the intransigence of certain school rules, limited power of teachers, and lack of support from colleagues (Lee et al. 2016). These echo the various factors (student, teacher, school, and system) that influence the implementation of AfL (see Chap. 3), as proposed by Fullan (1982, 1991) and Carless (2005, 2011). The next chapter on "Teacher Feedback in L2 Writing" will further explore the role of context in influencing teacher feedback.

Types of Feedback

To arouse students' interest and to engage them actively, teachers can experiment with different types of feedback – namely, teacher feedback, peer feedback, and technology-enhanced feedback. Before concluding the chapter, I provide a brief introduction to each of these modes of feedback, which will be followed up in subsequent chapters.

Teacher Feedback

Teacher feedback provides a useful form of mediation to help students improve their learning. In L2 writing classrooms, the teacher is considered the most important source of feedback, not least in school contexts where students are learning to write at a relatively young age. While the bulk of feedback research is conducted in college/university contexts where process-oriented writing is commonly practiced, our knowledge of teacher feedback in L2 school contexts remains limited. Teacher feedback is found to focus primarily on the language form with much less attention paid to content, organization, and style (Furneaux et al. 2007; Lee 2004). Teachers are so preoccupied with language issues that they fill student papers with the red

ink, with possible damaging effects on students' confidence and motivation. Teachers relegate themselves to "marking machines," trying to spot every single error in student writing. Consequently they burn themselves out and find themselves faced with a no-win situation and a vicious cycle where both teacher and students do not find teacher feedback particularly effective. Despite research findings that suggest the benefits of a more selective or focused approach to WCF (Ferris et al. 2013; Sheen et al. 2009), school teachers in L2 contexts tend to consider it their duty to respond to all errors, also being afraid that if they do not do so, students' bad grammar will become fossilized. Many L2 school teachers also work in examination-driven cultures that put a premium on timed impromptu writing, making it difficult for them to practice process writing. High-stakes writing examinations appear to have negative washback in L2 school contexts, where writing is valued mainly as a final product, and scores seem to suffice for teacher feedback.

It is evident that conventional teacher feedback approaches have left much to be desired, especially when judged against effective feedback that provides mediated learning experience and promotes AfL, as discussed in the above. In the main, a number of areas about teacher feedback merit attention, such as:

- What should teacher written feedback focus on?
- How should teachers go about giving feedback on written errors? To what extent should errors be marked, and what strategies should be used?
- How should commentary be given to maximize student learning?
- How should teachers enhance teacher-student interaction to leverage feedback to its fullest benefits for learners – e.g., in teacher-student conferences?

These will be examined in Chap. 6.

Peer Feedback

Peer feedback is a well-researched area in L2 writing. From sociocultural perspectives, it is another significant form of mediation to bring about improvement in student writing, also indispensable to L2 classroom writing assessment that emphasizes AfL/AaL. The benefits of peer feedback are well documented in the research literature, e.g., increasing audience awareness (Nelson and Murphy 1992; Sengupta 1998; Tsui and Ng 2000), enhancing students' understanding of their own strengths and weaknesses in writing (Tuzi 2004), fostering critical thinking (Hu 2005; Rollinson 2005), and promoting learner autonomy (Yang et al. 2006). Equally, however, the literature has highlighted an array of problems associated with peer feedback, including students' resistance and reluctance to take it seriously (Nelson and Carson 1995), their limited language proficiency, and practical constraints particularly in school contexts such as time and class size. Notwithstanding all these problems, it is increasingly recognized that training has a pivotal role to play to facilitate effective peer feedback (Min 2005, 2006, 2008).

In classroom writing assessment that promotes AfL/AaL, peer feedback is of vital importance. In order to provide mediated learning experience, the three features that include intentionality/reciprocity, transcendence, and meaning are crucial. Peer feedback has to be aligned with learning goals/success criteria (intentionality), and students should be encouraged to engage in meaningful interaction with their peers (reciprocity). Peer feedback has to be delivered to interim drafts so that students are provided with opportunities to act upon the peer feedback (to facilitate transcendence). Peer feedback can be rendered "meaningful" when it is descriptive and diagnostic, pointing to strengths and weaknesses with reference to the learning goals and success criteria. Chapter 7 further explores peer feedback in classroom L2 writing assessment by addressing some frequently asked questions with a view to providing teachers with useful tips to go about peer feedback in L2 school writing contexts.

Technology-Enhanced Feedback

As responding to writing is time-consuming and can be fraught with problems, computer-mediated/electronic feedback has been put forward as a viable alternative to human feedback. To this end, automated writing evaluation programs have been developed (e.g., *Criterion*), and commercial software is available to provide feedback on language issues in writing in particular (e.g., *Grammarly*). In classroom writing assessment that promotes AfL/ AaL, electronic feedback can be exploited as another form of mediation to help students improve their writing; it can have strong potential as a learning and assessment tool especially in this technological age in the twenty-first century.

There are both arguments for and against electronic feedback. Positive benefits include saving teachers' time, providing prompt feedback particularly on language issues, and fostering learner autonomy (Li et al. 2015; Wang et al. 2012; Warschauer and Grimes 2008). However, writing is social and arguably student writing should be read by human readers (Deane 2013). Some students perceive teacher feedback as more useful than electronic feedback (Chen and Cheng 2008), and conclusive evidence that demonstrates the positive impact of electronic feedback on student writing improvement is still limited (Stevenson and Phakiti 2014). Nonetheless, electronic feedback can be a useful tool for promoting AfL/AaL and a useful means of mediation that may impact positively on student writing. Chapter 9 examines the role of technology in classroom writing assessment and feedback in L2 school contexts.

Conclusion

Feedback in conventional L2 school writing contexts is typically summative in nature, comprising primarily WCF that focuses on errors in writing, as well as scores that provide judgments of student performance. As an introductory chapter to feedback in L2 writing, this chapter provides different perspectives on feedback in L2 classroom writing assessment, highlighting the importance of formative feedback for enhancing student learning. Using a sociocultural lens, this chapter characterizes effective feedback as a form of mediation which, when appropriately utilized, can provide mediated learning experience for students and promote AfL/AaL. Effective feedback involves not only the teacher but also students; it should be conceived with reference to three stages of learning (Hattie and Timperley 2007) – in terms of what happens before feedback (where I am going), during feedback (how I am going), and after feedback (where to next). It is important that through feedback, students not only improve their writing but they also become independent and self-regulated learners. Although feedback that helps develop self-regulation may not be common in L2 school contexts, it is the centerpiece of classroom writing assessment geared toward AfL/AaL. How teacher feedback, peer feedback, and technology-enhanced feedback as three common forms of mediation can promote student learning will be further examined in Chaps. 6, 7, and 9, respectively.

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Chapter 6
Teacher Feedback in L2 Writing

Introduction

Although teachers spend a massive amount of time writing feedback on student texts, this aspect of teachers' work is "often fraught with frustration and uncertainty" (Ferris 2014, p. 6). As a result, teacher feedback has drawn considerable attention from both researchers and practitioners. In many L2 contexts, particularly in large classes typical of school contexts, the written mode of teacher feedback has remained the major kind of feedback in writing classrooms. In this chapter, therefore, "teacher feedback" refers mainly to teacher written feedback.

This chapter first begins by summarizing salient research findings about feedback in L2 writing, covering the focuses of teacher feedback, written corrective feedback (WCF), written commentary, and oral feedback. Drawing upon studies conducted in some L2 writing classrooms, the chapter then explores the research-practice divide regarding teachers' written feedback practices, highlighting the influence of context on teachers' feedback. Finally, the chapter examines some guiding principles for effective teacher feedback and discusses the implications for classroom practice. The thrust of the chapter is to help teachers develop feedback literacy so that they can use feedback effectively to promote student learning in classroom writing assessment (see Chap. 10 for discussion of feedback literacy).

Salient Findings from Research on Teacher Feedback in L2 Writing

Feedback research is wide-ranging, addressing the focuses of teacher feedback, WCF, commentary, and oral feedback in writing conferences. This section reviews such research and highlights the salient findings with relevance for L2 school

The original version of this chapter was revised. An erratum to this chapter can be found at https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-3924-9_11

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I. Lee, *Classroom Writing Assessment and Feedback in L2 School Contexts*,
DOI 10.1007/978-981-10-3924-9_6

contexts. Since L2 school teachers focus primarily on WCF and recent research efforts have concentrated considerably on WCF, in the following I devote more attention to WCF than the other feedback issues.

Focuses of Teacher Feedback

Early studies on teacher written feedback consistently showed that teachers played the role of language rather than writing teachers, focusing predominantly on written errors in their feedback (e.g., Cumming 1985; Zamel 1985) and treating writing primarily as a product. Since the introduction of process pedagogy in L2 writing contexts, more research has reported a shift in teacher written feedback from language form to issues such as content and organization (e.g., Caulk 1994; Cohen and Cavalcanti 1990; Conrad and Goldstein 1999; Ferris 1995; Saito 1994). In Ferris' (1997) study, for example, 15% of teacher feedback focused on grammar and mechanics, while 85% addressed content and rhetorical development (also see Ferris 1997; Ferris et al. 1997). In general, the recommendation in the feedback literature is that teacher written feedback should have a balanced coverage on all important dimensions of writing, that is, content, organization, language, and style (Ferris 2003, 2014; Hyland and Hyland 2006a; Zamel 1985), and feedback should be delivered to multiple rather than single drafts (Ferris 1997, 2014; Hyland and Hyland 2006a). In Lee's (2008) study of Hong Kong secondary teachers' feedback practices, however, over 90% of the teacher feedback addressed issues about the language form. Similarly, Furneaux et al. (2007) found that teachers in EFL school contexts (from five different countries) focused predominantly on grammar in their feedback. Such results are not surprising because in a large number of L2 school contexts a product-oriented approach to writing still prevails, and teachers are so preoccupied with language issues that they do not have sufficient time to respond to other aspects of students' writing. However, it is useful to note, based on a meta-analysis of feedback in writing conducted by Biber et al. (2011), that feedback on content and form is more effective than feedback on form alone.

Written Corrective Feedback (WCF)

A sizable amount of teacher feedback research has addressed the issue of WCF. Since John Truscott (1996) published his polemical article in *Language Learning*, arguing fervently for the abandonment of error correction in teacher written feedback, WCF has become one of the most vibrant research areas in L2 writing. Overall, there is a general consensus among feedback researchers that teachers cannot and should not refrain from giving WCF on student writing (Bitchener and Ferris 2012; Ellis 2010; Evans et al. 2010; Ferris 2010; Hyland 2010; Storch 2010), but some major concerns that teachers need to address include the extent to which teachers should respond

to errors in student writing and what WCF strategies should be used to optimize student learning opportunities and to bring about maximum student improvement.

The extent of WCF hinges on the question of whether teachers should respond to all errors in student writing or whether they should be more selective in their approach. These two approaches are referred to as comprehensive (or unfocused) WCF and selective (or focused) WCF (Ferris et al. 2013). One main argument in favor of focused WCF is that it is less overwhelming and more manageable for L2 students than unfocused WCF as the latter can easily lead to "information overload" (Bitchener 2008, p. 109). It is also argued that focused WCF can enable L2 students to develop a better understanding of the errors they make in writing (e.g., Ferris 1995; Hendrickson 1980). The reason is that when a small number of error categories is targeted, students are more likely to notice and understand the feedback (Ellis et al. 2008). Research evidence in support of focused WCF, however, is mostly conducted in experimental classrooms (i.e., laboratory-like rather than naturalistic classroom conditions) where a very small number of errors is selected – e.g., only one error category as in Bitchener (2008), Bitchener and Knoch (2008, 2009, 2010) and Sheen (2007). In real classrooms, however, L2 students have to pay attention to a large number of error categories in order to produce grammatically accurate writing (Van Beuningen 2010), and it is thus recommended that teachers should select at least several error categories, instead of one, for feedback (Ferris 2010; Storch 2010). Overall, feedback research findings are inclined toward a selective/focused approach to WCF; in fact, research that demonstrates the effectiveness of unfocused WCF is hitherto scarce (Truscott and Hsu 2008; Van Beuningen et al. 2008). Bitchener and Ferris (2012) conclude that a comprehensive, unfocused approach to WCF suits advanced learners who do not make a lot of errors in writing. For L2 school learners, it is advisable that teachers adopt a selective, focused approach to WCF, so that students can be helped to develop their written accuracy in a focused and incremental manner.

In the selection of errors for focused WCF, teachers can go for errors targeted for pre-writing grammar/writing instruction and/or select errors based on a number of principles (Lee 2015). First, teachers can make a distinction between errors that can be easily self-corrected (often referred to as "mistakes," such as spelling mistakes) and those that need to be pointed out by the teacher (i.e., those not amenable to self-correction) (Bitchener and Ferris 2012). Ferris (1999, 2011) has made a distinction between treatable (rule governed) and untreatable errors (nonrule governed), suggesting that WCF is most effective for treatable errors. Bitchener and Ferris (2012) suggest that teachers can focus on high-frequency and stigmatizing errors in students' own specific contexts – i.e., errors that are likely to label students as less proficient writers.

In addition to the extent of WCF and the selection of errors, an important consideration in WCF is what strategies teachers should use when they respond to errors. Broadly, WCF strategies can be divided into direct and indirect (see Example 6.1). The directness of WCF can be defined along two main dimensions: (1) error location – i.e., errors are directly located – and (2) provision of correct answers (Bitchener and Ferris 2012). In Example 6.1, Examples A, B, and C provide the

most typical kinds of direct WCF used by L2 writing teachers – namely, crossing out of unnecessary words/phrases (Example A) (where strictly speaking, correct answers do not have to be provided), insertion of omitted words/phrases (Example B), and circling/underlining errors and giving correct answers (Example C). In addition, teachers can provide metalinguistic explanation to supply explicit grammatical information about the errors, as in Example D (Bitchener 2008; Bitchener and Ferris 2012). Indirect WCF refers to indication of errors without providing correct answers (Ferris 2011), which can be uncoded or coded. In uncoded WCF, teachers simply underline/circle errors (Example E), whereas in coded WCF error codes are used to indicate the error types (Example F). Instead of using an error code (i.e., metalinguistic clue), teachers can number an underlined error and provide a metalinguistic explanation, as in Example G. While Examples E, F, and G locate errors directly, indirect WCF may also refer to indirect location of errors, as in Examples H, I, and J. In this kind of indirect WCF, teachers simply indicate the occurrence, number, or type of error(s) in the margin. In Example H, an * is used to indicate an error in a line of text. In Example I, a number is written in the margin to indicate the total number of errors in a line of text, whereas in Example J, an error code is written in the margin to indicate an error of that particular error type in a line of text. To sum up, as shown in Example 6.1, when errors are located and correct answers provided (see ticks in both the "locate error directly" and "provide correct answer" columns), such WCF is direct. When correct answers are not provided (see crosses in the "provide correct answer" column), such WCF is indirect. In giving indirect WCF, teachers can further decide whether or not to locate errors directly. When errors are not located directly (see crosses in "locate error directly" column), such indirect WCF is more challenging for students as they have to locate errors as well as correct them. Hence, teachers should use this strategy sparingly. Finally, when metalinguistic clues (i.e., error codes) or metalinguistic explanations are provided (see ticks in the "provide metalinguistic clue (error code) / explanation" column), such feedback is referred to as metalinguistic WCF (Ellis 2009). Metalinguistic WCF can be given when the feedback is direct (Example D) or indirect (Examples F, G, and J). While the use of error codes (coded WCF) is widely practiced by L2 writing teachers, providing written metalinguistic explanation is much less common as it is very time-consuming. The latter has been explored in previous experimental studies (e.g., Bitchener 2008; Bitchener and Knoch 2009) but may lack practical value for real classroom contexts. Instead of giving written metalinguistic explanation, a viable alternative is to provide oral metalinguistic explanation to all students in class, on top of individualistic WCF.

In characterizing direct and indirect WCF, some strategies are more explicit than others. In general, the provision of metalinguistic feedback (metalinguistic clue/explanation) increases the explicitness of WCF, with metalinguistic explanation being more explicit than metalinguistic clue (i.e., error code). In direct WCF, for instance, metalinguistic explanation given in addition to direct correction (Example D) is more explicit than simply providing a correct answer (Example C). In indirect WCF, coded WCF (Example F) is more explicit than uncoded WCF (Example E); providing metalinguistic explanation (Example G) is more explicit than the use of

an error code (Example F); and the indication of errors through an error code in the margin (Example J) is more explicit than simply indicating the occurrence or number of errors in the margin (Examples H and I, respectively).

Example 6.1 Written Corrective Feedback Strategies

Example	Locate error directly	Provide correct answer	Provide metalinguistic clue (error code)/explanation
Direct WCF			
(A) Yesterday I ~~was~~ went to church.	✓	✓	X
to (B) Yesterday I went church. ^	✓	✓	X
went (C) Yesterday I go to church.	✓	✓	X
went (D)Yesterday I go to church. Explanation You should use the simple past tense here because you are describing a past event.	✓	✓	✓
Indirect WCF			
(E)Yesterday I go to church.	✓	X	X
V (F)Yesterday I go to church.	✓	X	✓
❶ (G) Yesterday I go to church. ❶ You should use the simple past tense here because you are describing a past event.	✓	X	✓
(H) Yesterday I go to church. * (An asterisk in the margin means that there is one error in that line)	X	X	X
(I) Yesterday I go for church.2 (2 = 2 errors in that line)	X	X	X
(J) Yesterday I go to church. V (V = one "verb" error in that line)	X	X	✓

Research about the efficacy of WCF strategies is not conclusive but there is copious evidence about the benefits of an indirect approach to WCF rather than a direct approach where answers are provided (e.g., Ferris 2006; Lalande 1982). This is because indirect WCF engages students in "guided learning and problem solving" (Lalande 1982, p. 143), enabling them to reflect upon their existing knowledge or partially internalized knowledge (Bitchener and Ferris 2012), which can improve written accuracy in the long run. Some recent research has, however, found that

direct WCF may be more effective long term (Bitchener and Knoch 2010; Van Beuningen et al. 2008, 2012) and "preferable if learners are unable to correct their own errors" (Shintani et al. 2014, p. 105). While indirect WCF can guide the learners to self-correct the errors, thereby fostering reflection upon their existing knowledge (Bitchener and Ferris 2012), direct WCF is "more immediate" (Bitchener and Ferris 2012, p. 65) and provides more explicit information about the errors made. As for metalinguistic WCF involving error codes or metalinguistic explanation, research has not yet produced conclusive evidence (e.g., Ferris and Roberts 2001; Robb et al. 1986). In general, codes are useful in contexts where teachers put an emphasis on explicit grammar instruction; such metalinguistic clues can foster reflection and enhance cognitive engagement on the part of students (Ferris 2011). With highly explicit WCF that involves written metalinguistic explanation, there is research that demonstrates its benefits – e.g., Bitchener and Knoch (2008, 2010), Esfandiar et al. (2014), but again such evidence is mainly from experimental rather than real classrooms. In the absence of conclusive research findings, teachers should experiment with a range of WCF strategies with flexibility and vary them according to student needs (e.g., their proficiency and motivation). For instance, coded WCF can be confusing and frustrating in L2 school contexts where students do not receive explicit grammar instruction, and it can be discouraging and cumbersome if it is overused (Ferris 2011; Robb et al. 1986). However, coded WCF (with or without metalinguistic explanation) can be effective when it is supported by systematic grammar instruction (Ferris 2011, 2003).

Written Commentary

Apart from WCF, L2 teachers usually write comments on student writing. Research has, however, found that some teachers give vague, non-text-specific, and mostly negative comments (Cumming 1985; Semke 1984; Zamel 1985), appropriating students' writing (Reid 1994; Zamel 1985) and misinterpreting their meanings. As a result, teacher commentary can confuse and discourage students rather than encourage them and help them learn. In giving feedback, teachers should avoid appropriating student texts but deliver commentary through engaging with students and building relationships with them (Goldstein 2004, 2006; Hyland and Hyland 2006b), for example, through involving them in face-to-face conferences. In short, effective commentary is clear, concrete, and text-specific, including both praise and constructive criticism (Goldstein 2004; Hyland and Hyland 2001; Zamel 1985).

Written commentary can take several forms, including statements, imperatives, questions, and hedges (Ferris 1997; Sugita 2006). While Ferris (2014) suggests that questions are generally more desirable than imperatives since they enhance cognitive engagement and promote autonomy, Sugita (2006) has found that imperatives are more influential on student revisions than other comment types. Feedback advice should not be interpreted out of context, however. Younger L2 school learners, for example, may benefit from a more directive approach and hence the use of

imperatives in teacher commentary. As pointed out by Nurmukhamedov and Kim (2010), different comment types may prove more effective for different areas of writing or for certain errors – e.g., a question about content can help clarify ideas; an imperative about a grammatical error can lead to effective revision. The forms of teacher written comments should also vary according to individual student needs such as their proficiency level. Weaker learners, for example, may find it hard to interpret hedges in teacher commentary.

Oral Feedback

Although the large majority of feedback studies have addressed teacher written feedback, it has been pointed out that teacher written feedback is best followed up by oral feedback in face-to-face conferences, during which teachers can respond to individual student needs by clarifying meaning, explaining ambiguities, and allowing students to ask questions (Ferris 2014). From teacher oral feedback, students can also find out their strengths and weaknesses and get a better idea about how best to revise their writing. Despite these potential benefits, the meta-analysis of research on feedback in writing by Biber et al. (2011) has shown that oral feedback is less effective than written feedback for students' writing development.

Most teacher-student conferences take place in writing centers in tertiary contexts, either one-on-one or in small groups (Powers and Nelson 1995). Conferencing research has examined areas such as the purposes, roles, and nature of the tutor's talk (Han and Hyland 2016; Harris 1995), the topics discussed in conferences (Aljaafreh and Lantolf 1994; Cumming and So 1996; Williams 2002), meaning negotiation and its effects on students' revisions (Powers 1993; Weigle and Nelson 2004; Weissberg 2006; Williams 2002, 2004), interactions of tutors with native and nonnative tutees (Moussu 2013; Thonus 2004), and students' and instructors' perceptions of writing conferences (Maliborska and You 2016; Yeh 2016). From sociocultural perspectives, oral feedback delivered through the interaction between teacher and students can enable students to develop their writing abilities (Williams 2002), also providing them with mediated learning experience (see Chap. 5). Research on oral corrective feedback has specifically drawn on dynamic assessment, where teacher-student conferences can be viewed as a "social activity involving joint participation and meaningful transactions between the learner and the teacher" (Nassaji and Swain 2000, p. 35) that extends students' zone of proximal development (Poehner 2008). To leverage the potential of oral corrective feedback, it has to be "graduated" (Aljaafreh and Lantolf 1994, p. 468), beginning in a highly implicit form and gradually becoming more concrete and explicit, so that students learn to identify and correct errors and to gain self-regulation in the long run.

In L2 school contexts, however, conferences tend not to be a regular feature of writing classrooms for two main reasons. First, there is the issue of class size, particularly in EFL contexts where teachers have to grapple with the time constraint – namely, to cover the prescribed syllabus or curriculum, let alone the need to return

timely written feedback on students' ongoing writing. Second, the unequal power relationship between teacher and students makes it challenging for writing conferences to fulfill the purpose of encouraging active student participation and fostering learner autonomy.

Research-Practice Divide in Teacher Feedback in L2 School Contexts

Although feedback research has yielded some "best practice" advice for teachers, it appears that such advice has failed to filter down to classroom contexts. The realities of L2 writing classrooms indicate a huge gulf between research and practice. They are examined in the following.

Incongruity Between Teachers' Written Feedback and Recommended Principles

Based on data collected from 26 teachers of Hong Kong from 15 secondary schools and in-depth interviews with six of them (from six different schools), teachers' written feedback practice was found to be largely form focused, delivered to terminal drafts completed in product-oriented writing classrooms (Lee 2008). Instead of using a range of WCF strategies, the teachers were found to give direct WCF most of the time. Teacher written commentary was primarily negative, with about only 30% of the commentary presented in the form of "praise." Such findings were corroborated by those in Furneaux et al. (2007), who found that EFL school teachers focused inordinately on written errors when giving feedback, and they also tended to provide correct answers to students. Overall, L2 school teachers' feedback practices deviate largely from feedback principles recommended in the literature – i.e., teachers should provide balanced coverage on language, content, and organizational issues in their feedback, which should be given to intermediate rather than terminal drafts.

Insofar as WCF is concerned, while it is recommended that selective, focused WCF be adopted especially for students of lower language proficiency (and in the case of L2 school learners they generally fall into this category), teachers tend to respond to written errors comprehensively (Furneaux et al. 2007; Lee 2004, 2008, 2013). Although teachers are advised to choose their WCF strategies in a principled manner, there is little evidence that L2 school teachers' choice of WCF strategies is informed by systematic principles. In the study by Furneaux et al. (2007), the EFL school teachers used primarily direct WCF, providing correct forms for errors. Similarly, in Lee's studies (Lee 2004, 2008), the secondary teachers mainly adopted direct WCF without varying them according to the error type and student needs. In

Lee (2004), the participating teachers admitted that direct WCF was a means to save them the trouble of having to answer students' questions about their feedback in large classes and having to correct errors again when students turned in their corrections. Indeed, in L2 school contexts, teachers may not be fully aware of the range of WCF strategies available (see Example 6.1), their pros and cons, and the principles that govern their choice of WCF strategies (Lee 2013).

Factors Accounting for the Research-Practice Divide

Four factors were found to have influenced and shaped teachers' written feedback practices, explaining why the "best practice" advice was not translated into teachers' feedback practices (Lee 2008). First, the teachers were significantly constrained by their institutional context which mandated detailed marking of student written errors. Whether they liked it or not, teachers had to respond to errors comprehensively; they were even formally appraised on the amount of WCF they provided to students. All the participating teachers in Lee's (2008) study indicated that the schools encouraged the use of error codes (apart from underlining or circling errors) and suggested that teachers provide correct answers when they thought students were incapable of self-correction. The WCF strategies adopted by the teachers turned out to be rather limited, who ended up giving a lot of overt corrections (i.e., direct WCF) because they could not afford the time to answer students' queries if indirect WCF was used. The second factor concerns the issue of accountability. Teachers felt that they were not free agents but subject to an accountability system monitored explicitly by school administrators and implicitly by students and parents, who all favored comprehensive WCF. Teachers felt strongly that failure to provide comprehensive WCF would lead to negative evaluation and even criticism by all key stakeholders. Additionally, the examination culture within the education system, as in many L2 school contexts, made teachers put a strong emphasis on written accuracy in their feedback practices. The impromptu writing model characterized by public examinations, on the other hand, had a negative washback making teachers adhere to a product-oriented approach to writing. Finally, the teachers indicated the lack of teacher training as one important factor that influenced their written feedback practices. Some teachers were unaware of the "best practice" advice in the feedback literature; others were influenced by the apprenticeship of observation (Lortie 1975) and hence responded to writing in the ways their own teachers did.

Compared with tertiary teachers, school teachers are likely to be more prone to the influence of an array of contextual factors, including national and local educational policies and standardized, high-stakes assessment. In L2 school contexts, as revealed in Lee's (2008) findings, teachers' written feedback practices are subject to the influence of a myriad of contextual factors, such as philosophies about feedback, examination culture, and sociopolitical issues relating to power relations and teacher autonomy (Goldstein 2004, 2005; Hyland and Hyland 2006b). Helping L2 school teachers enhance their written feedback practices therefore entails change not only

in their beliefs and knowledge through teacher education (Ferguson 1993) but also in the cultural and political systems that shape teachers' work. As suggested in the section on "Implementing effective feedback practices in L2 writing" in Chap. 5, feedback does not take place in a vacuum; therefore, undertaking feedback innovations would involve transformation within the conventional feedback activity system (as informed by activity theory – see Chap. 5) – e.g., the goal of feedback (from a focus on comprehensive to selective WCF) and the support of colleagues (from teachers' isolated practice to development of a community of practice among colleagues).

Context and Teacher Feedback

The foregoing section on the research-practice divide has uncovered the complexity of feedback and underlined the importance to situate feedback practices within teachers' specific work contexts, since feedback is deeply influenced by contextual issues such as learners' characteristics, teacher beliefs, as well as the larger institutional context that governs teaching and learning. "Context" here is used to refer to "a unique combination of factors stemming from the institution and the program within which the writing, commenting, and revision takes place, and factors that teachers and students bring to the process, as well" (Goldstein 2004, p. 65). While teacher educators can instruct teacher learners in the "best practice" feedback principles, it is equally, if not more important, to be cognizant of the contextual constraints that impinge on teacher feedback practices. Such nuanced understandings can enable teacher educators to come up with strategies that suit the exigencies of the teaching and learning in L2 school writing contexts. A case in point is the taxing issue around the comprehensive/unfocused versus selective/unfocused WCF debate. In a number of L2 school contexts, teachers and learners (and parents too) are so accustomed to comprehensive WCF that replacing it with selective, focused WCF can present extremely formidable challenges. To tackle this tricky issue, teachers can consider adopting a middle approach that combines focused WCF with comprehensive WCF (Bitchener and Ferris 2012), where appropriate, e.g., giving comprehensive WCF to paragraphs rather than the entire texts or to shorter texts administered occasionally in the writing class (Evans et al. 2010). Instead of abandoning the ingrained practice of comprehensive WCF altogether, combining comprehensive and selective WCF may be a viable way forward.

In many L2 school contexts, feedback is not a matter of teachers' individual effort, but the implementation of effective feedback is contingent upon the involvement of all key stakeholders, including school administrators, students, and parents (Lee 2014, 2016). In some L2 school contexts, teachers may be made to play a subservient role due to the lack of full autonomy, and they may be further thwarted by a host of contextual constraints in their bid to implement feedback practices that are oriented toward assessment for learning. Also, the examination culture may make it difficult for good feedback practices to flourish. While reconciling the

examination and learning culture to facilitate effective teacher feedback practices is a knotty issue, the key to effective feedback practices may lie in an approach to teachers' continuing professional development that "places context at the heart of the profession" (Bax 2003, p. 278). Such professional development activities should involve all key members of the community, where they get together to discuss the specific constraints they are faced with and ways to tackle them. School leaders and administrators should also be included in such a contextualized approach to professional development, so that they understand teachers' concerns and support their feedback innovation by providing a "nonthreatening and motivating environment" (Lee 2016, p. 525). Since teacher feedback is influenced by a range of contextual factors, a context approach to professional development is crucial to help teachers develop contextualized understanding of how feedback can be best implemented to suit the needs of their specific context.

Guiding Principles for Effective Teacher Feedback

Before concluding the chapter, I provide some guiding principles for effective feedback, which are built upon sound classroom assessment practice examined in the preceding chapters, as well as the feedback literature reviewed in the above (Lee 2012). To recapitulate, teacher feedback corresponds to the three stages of learning examined in preceding chapters: "where I am going" (i.e., feed up), "how I am going" (i.e., feed back), and "where to next" (i.e., feed forward) (Hattie and Timperley 2007). Teacher feedback in the "feed back" stage has to be formative in nature, interwoven with teaching and learning, and provides useful information to help students improve their writing. The eight principles below can provide useful guidelines to enhance teachers' feedback practices, as well as a springboard for discussion in school-based professional development activities that focus on feedback in writing.

Less Is More

An overdose of teacher feedback is unhelpful as it is not manageable for L2 school learners. Teachers should be selective in their approach and be reminded that there is no need to respond to every single issue that they find problematic in student writing. They can select issues for feedback according to their instructional focuses, individual student needs, and the stage of the writing process. In responding to student stories, for instance, teachers can choose a few focuses for feedback, especially for the initial drafts, like story structure and several grammar items specific to the story genre, instead of pointing out every single trouble spot in student writing. Such selected focuses could be decided by the teacher and/or negotiated with students.

Respond to Errors Selectively

More feedback is not necessarily better feedback (Lee 2009). In the case of WCF, and particularly for L2 school students who are learning to write, less is probably more. Teachers should come up with a principled approach to the selection of errors, combining pre-selected error categories (that align with grammar/writing instruction) with a selective approach that highlights prevalent and/or recurring error patterns in student writing, as well as those that are amenable to self-correction. In addition, teachers could consider asking students to self-select one or two grammar focuses for teacher WCF and to monitor their written accuracy development in those areas, so that they develop a stronger sense of ownership. This is also a way to promote assessment as learning.

Use Feedback to Diagnose Strengths and Weaknesses

Feedback that helps promote assessment for learning is diagnostic in nature – i.e., it informs students of their strengths and weaknesses in writing. It is important, therefore, that teachers identify students' major strengths and the most critical areas in their writing that merit attention. These strengths and areas for improvement could be related to the "feed up" stage (i.e., where I am going), during which learning targets and success criteria for the writing task are set up. To ensure that written feedback is diagnostic, teachers can include two sections in their feedback: "major strengths" and "areas for improvement." Alternatively, teachers can use feedback forms like those suggested in Chap. 2 (e.g., Examples 2.2 and 2.3), where they can write comments on major strengths and/or areas for improvement with reference to each of the assessment criteria included in the forms. To provide diagnostic feedback on written errors specifically, teachers can perform error analysis to identify students' major strengths and weaknesses in written accuracy (see Example 2.7 for "Error ratio analysis sheet").

Adopt a Balanced Approach

Effective teacher feedback has to be balanced in its coverage. Teachers should steer away from a predominantly error-focused approach to incorporate feedback on content, language, organization, and style/genre. Feedback forms (see examples in Chap. 2) can be used to remind teachers of the need to respond to important dimensions of writing included in the forms. Balanced feedback, however, does not mean that teachers have to give feedback to all areas in a comprehensive manner. As suggested above, teachers should give an optimum amount of feedback according to their instructional focuses and student needs, as well as the stage of writing (i.e.,

whether it is the first, second, or final draft). For example, teachers can focus mainly on content and organization in the first draft and leave language issues to later drafts.

Be Concrete and Constructive

Effective feedback is clear, text-specific, and constructive, which is made possible if teachers deliver their feedback with reference to the success criteria they have established at the instructional (i.e., "feed up" – where I am going) stage. In so doing, they also help increase students' metacognitive awareness and equip them with the relevant metalanguage to talk about and evaluate their own writing. Supposing the teacher has provided clear instruction in the genre features of a story, a teacher comment like "I like the proverb you use at the beginning of the study; it can really grab the readers' attention!" would be rendered meaningful and constructive for the student writer, particularly when compared with a generic comment like "interesting story beginning."

Give Individualized Feedback

It is important that teachers vary their written feedback according to the needs of individual students. Highly motivated learners with strong language proficiency, for example, are likely to prefer detailed WCF, and hence a selective, focused approach to WCF could impact negatively on their motivation. Weaker learners may find questions or hedges in teacher written commentary confusing, and they may be better off receiving more imperatives from teachers to guide their learning. To cater for individual student needs, teachers can encourage students to request individualistic feedback focuses, apart from those specified by the teachers. Students can write their feedback requests on a cover sheet; they can also color-code specific parts in their texts (e.g., certain vocabulary or expressions they are unsure of) on which they want detailed feedback or metalinguistic explanation. Through giving student-specific feedback, teachers are able to enhance students' motivation and help them develop a stronger sense of ownership of their writing.

Use Feedback to Encourage and Motivate Learners

In classroom writing assessment that promotes assessment for/as learning, teacher written feedback has to take account of learner motivation (Assessment Reform Group 2002). Although it is inevitable for teachers to point out weaknesses in student writing, such feedback can be couched in more positive and encouraging terms, apart from the fact that teachers can praise students' strong points, efforts, and

improvement in writing. It is advisable that teachers take a personal approach to written feedback, using it to build relationships with students. A comment like "Although you have a few article errors, I can see that you've made good progress. Way to go, Sandy!" is much more encouraging and personal than "You still have trouble using articles in your writing!" (addressing the student writer personally can also help build rapport). If teachers are able to build a supportive learning atmosphere so that students can write with an understanding that learning to write in L2 is a difficult task and that making mistakes along the way is just normal and expected, students will look at teacher feedback in a positive light.

Use Feedback to Integrate Teaching, Learning, and Assessment

Teacher written feedback delivered in the "feed back" (i.e., how I am going) stage should be directly related to the learning goals and success criteria set up in the "feed up" stage, and it should lead to effective learning in the "feed forward" (i.e., where to next) stage. In other words, feedback should be aligned with instruction (i.e., "feed back" being linked with "feed up") and be prospective (i.e., "feed back" leading to "feed forward"), helping students understand what they can do to improve their future writing (to close the gap between a desired goal and the present state in their writing). It is therefore important that students engage in revision (without which the feedback will be retrospective) to act upon feedback. When teachers teach what they assess and assess what they teach, they relate the "feed back" to the "feed up" stage; and when teacher feedback points students to future directions, the "feed back" serves the purpose of "feed forward," thus bringing "feed up," "feed back," and "feed forward" together in an integrated cycle of teaching, assessment, and learning.

In summing up, teacher feedback has to be sensitive to individual student needs, pitched at their level so that it is comprehensible to students, and phrased in concrete and constructive terms so that students know exactly what to do to improve their writing. When students fail to understand teacher feedback, receive highly critical comments expressed in unpleasant terms, and feel overwhelmed by a large amount of feedback, they are likely to have negative affective reactions such as rejection, disappointment, and frustration (Mahfoodh 2017), making it hard for successful revisions and effective learning to take place.

Conclusion

Drawing upon the feedback literature in L2 writing, this chapter has reviewed salient findings from feedback research and uncovered the gap between research and practice. Context has emerged as a significant consideration in the development of effective feedback practices for classroom teachers, as well as sound professional

development practice for teacher educators. In Chap. 10, the last chapter of the book, I underscore the importance of teachers' feedback literacy (i.e., their ability to use feedback effectively to support student learning) as comprising knowledge that is "contextualized in the realities of teachers' contexts of practice" (Scarino 2013, p. 316). It is hoped that the research insights shared in this chapter, the attention drawn to contextual issues, and the guiding principles anchored in classroom writing assessment practice can help work toward enhancing teachers' feedback literacy.

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Chapter 7
Peer Feedback in L2 Writing

Introduction

Peer feedback has a pivotal role to play in the writing classroom, especially in classroom assessment that serves the purpose of improving student learning and empowering students to become autonomous and self-regulated learners (i.e., assessment for/as learning – AfL/AaL). In the literature, "peer feedback" is often used synonymously with related terms such as peer response, peer review, peer evaluation, peer editing, and peer assessment. In this chapter, I draw on the work of Liu and Hansen (2002) and define peer feedback as "the use of learners as sources of information and interactants for each other in such a way that learners assume roles and responsibilities … in commenting on and critiquing each other's drafts in both written and oral formats in the process of writing" (p. 1). Specifically, the focus of peer feedback is on the "communication process through which learners enter into dialogues related to performance and standards" (Liu and Carless 2006, p. 280). One major focus of peer feedback is, therefore, on the role of the learners, as well as the process through which they communicate ideas about "the amount, level, value, worth, quality of success of the products or outcomes of learning of peers of similar status" (Topping 1998, p. 250). While peer feedback is a process, it is also a product (Chang 2016) – as it also refers to the tangible feedback provided by peers on various aspects of writing, in the form of error feedback and/or commentary on content, organization, and other aspects of writing, be it in the oral, written, or computer-mediated mode.

This chapter begins by examining the theoretical foundations of peer feedback in L2 classroom writing assessment. It then reviews salient findings from peer feedback research and discusses the implications for classroom practice in the form of some frequently asked questions (FAQs). Finally, the chapter provides a number of tips for teachers to help them organize and plan effective peer feedback activities in L2 school contexts. Throughout the chapter, peer feedback is conceptualized as an essential strategy for AfL/AaL, mainly serving the purpose of enhancing student learning.

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I. Lee, *Classroom Writing Assessment and Feedback in L2 School Contexts*,
DOI 10.1007/978-981-10-3924-9_7

Theoretical Perspectives on Peer Feedback in Classroom L2 Classroom Writing Assessment

The use of peer feedback in classroom L2 writing assessment is informed by a number of theoretical perspectives, including process writing theory, collaborative learning theory, interaction theory in SLA, and sociocultural theory (see Yu and Lee 2016a, for a more detailed review).

Process writing theory sees writing as a nonlinear and recursive process of meaning making and knowledge transformation (Chenoweth and Hayes 2001; Flower and Hayes 1981), during which students engage in peer interaction to help their peers improve the quality of their writing. Through peer feedback, students build audience awareness and develop a stronger understanding of reader expectations of good writing in terms of content, organization, language, and genre (Liu and Hansen 2002). Peer feedback is also supported by the collaborative learning theory, which holds that learning is socially constructed (Bruffee 1984). Through peer interaction and collaboration, peer feedback provides "a facilitative socio-interactive environment in which L2 learners receive social support and scaffolding from peers" (Hu and Lam 2010, p. 373). From the perspective of language learning, and drawing upon works on interaction and second language acquisition, peer feedback provides opportunities for meaning negotiation and language practice, pushing students to produce comprehensible input, which facilitates second language acquisition (Long 1983, 1985; Long and Porter 1985; Swain 2006; Swain and Lapkin 1998, 2002). Specifically, research on collaborative writing has demonstrated that scaffolding provided by peers in pairs or groups can help students improve their learning by pooling their resources together (Storch 2011, 2013). Recent work on languaging, which is "the process of making meaning and shaping knowledge and experience through language" (Swain 2006, p. 98), further provides support for peer feedback in aiding students' language development.

Peer feedback is also underpinned by sociocultural theory, which sees learning as "a social phenomenon embedded in specific cultural, historical, and institutional contexts" (Villamil and de Guerrero 2006, p. 23). In other words, learning cannot be divorced from the social and cultural contexts (Lantolf and Thorne 2006; Storch 2007; Villamil and de Guerrero 2006). Through peer feedback, students' L2 writing development is mediated in the zone of proximal development (ZPD), that is, the distance between what a learner can do independently without assistance and what she/he can do with assistance, usually from more capable peers (teachers or parents) (Vygotsky 1978, p. 86). Within the ZPD, students can benefit from peer feedback by moving from a stage of other regulation (i.e., performing with assistance from others) to self-regulation (i.e., capable of independent problem-solving) (Villamil and de Guerrero 2006), which is highly pertinent to one of the key purposes of classroom assessment – that is, to empower learners to be owners of their own learning and to develop learners who are capable of self-regulated learning. It is noteworthy that student engagement in peer feedback builds their capacity to conduct self-assessment, which is central to AaL (see Chap. 4).

Finally, activity theory, a subbranch and extension of sociocultural theory, can provide useful theoretical perspectives to shed light on the role of peer feedback in L2 writing and classroom writing assessment (Jin and Zhu 2010; Thorne 2004; Yu and Lee 2015, 2016b; Zhu and Mitchell 2012). A central tenet of activity theory is that human activities are socially organized and goal-directed, with agency assigned to learners (Engeström 1987, 2001; Leont'ev 1978, 1981). In classroom writing assessment, students as agents of the peer feedback activity establish their learning goals and employ AfL/AaL strategies to facilitate learning (Lantolf and Pavlenko 2001).

FAQs About Peer Feedback: Research Insights and Implications for Classroom Practice

There exists a voluminous body of research on peer feedback in L2 writing (see Chang 2016). Below I select and synthesize key research findings and present them in the form of frequently asked questions (FAQs) about peer feedback, with clear ramifications for classroom assessment practice in L2 school contexts.

Why Peer Feedback? Is Not Teacher/Self-Feedback Sufficient?

The various theories in support of peer feedback as reviewed in the preceding section suggest that peer feedback is a beneficial activity in L2 writing. It has great potential in enhancing L2 students' writing development through heightening audience awareness and engendering meaningful interaction among peers; it can also foster learner autonomy and promote self-regulated learning (Hu 2005; Hyland and Hyland 2006; Liu and Hansen 2002). However, opponents argue that peer feedback is a time-consuming activity, and since students receive feedback from the teacher anyway and they can review their own writing – i.e., self-feedback – teachers can forget about peer feedback. This has prompted research that compares peer feedback with teacher/self-feedback.

Some recent research has consistently revealed the benefits of peer feedback as compared to teacher/self-feedback (Diab 2011; Ruegg 2015a, 2015b; Séror 2011; Zhao 2010). For example, Diab (2011) found that, compared with self-feedback, peer feedback could better help EFL university students improve their accuracy in writing. Also, peer feedback was found to complement teacher feedback and perceived as valuable by students themselves (Séror 2011). Zhao (2010) even suggested that peer feedback could be more helpful than teacher feedback as students in her study did not fully understand teacher feedback even though they attempted to incorporate it in their revisions. Such findings are echoed by Biber et al. (2011), who found that peer feedback was more effective than teacher feedback for L2

learners. In the study by Yang et al. (2006), the peer feedback group made more meaning changes than the teacher feedback group, suggesting that peer feedback may direct students' attention from form to meaning in writing. Similarly, Chen (2010) found that the writing consultants in her study focused on local errors, while peer feedback related to higher-order issues. Other research found that during peer feedback, students were likely to focus on a range of issues other than language, such as content and idea development (Suzuki 2008; Tsui and Ng 2010). Indeed, peer, teacher and self-feedback can serve different purposes and should all be integrated into L2 classroom writing assessment (Birjandi and Tamjid 2012; Matsuno 2007; Suzuki 2008). The implication for classroom writing assessment is clear. Peer feedback can complement teacher and self-feedback and is a useful strategy to promote students' learning and to help them improve their writing.

Does Peer Feedback Suit Older and More Proficient L2 Learners and Those from More Congenial Cultural Contexts?

While the large majority of peer feedback studies are conducted in college/university contexts, peer feedback is undervalued in primary and secondary contexts (Berggren 2015; Oscarson and Apelgren 2011). It is commonly assumed that asking L2 school learners, especially younger ones, to conduct peer feedback is a tall order. Some recent research, however, has demonstrated the feasibility and benefits of peer feedback in L2 school contexts. For example, Woo et al. (2013) investigated the use of a wiki for collaborative writing among 119 Grades 5 and 6 students in a Chinese primary school in Hong Kong. Findings showed that peer feedback could help support the collaborative writing process through wikis. Similarly, Berggren's (2015) study showed that Swedish secondary students improved their writing through engaging in peer feedback.

What about L2 learners with cultural backgrounds perceived as incompatible with peer feedback? In L2 contexts where teachers are looked upon as authorities, it is believed that students generally do not prefer peer feedback and trust teacher feedback much more than peer feedback (Yang et al. 2006; Zhao 2010). Indeed, early research showed that Chinese students avoided critical feedback for the sake of group harmony (Carson and Nelson 1994, 1996; Connor and Asenavage 1994) and were reluctant to "criticize their peers, disagree with their peers, and claim authority as readers" (Nelson and Carson 1998, p. 127). More recent research, however, has suggested that peer feedback does have a role to play in teacher-dominant cultures (Yang et al. 2006; Yu et al. 2016). Hu and Lam's (2010) survey study with Chinese students in Singapore has demonstrated that peer feedback is a socioculturally appropriate pedagogical activity. Tsui and Ng (2010), quite rightly, assert that "sweeping generalizations regarding local cultural traditions and the constraints they impose on pedagogical possibilities may lead to stereotyping, which is often unhelpful" (p. 365). In teacher-dominant L2 school contexts, the key to effective

peer feedback lies in how peer feedback activities are organized and whether training is provided, which will be examined next.

What Is the Role of Peer Feedback Training?

Research has found that peer feedback training has beneficial effects on students' revisions and writing quality (Goldberg 2012; Hu 2005, 2006; Hu and Lam 2010; Kamimura 2006; Kong 2013; Lam 2010; Liou and Peng 2009; Min 2005, 2006, 2008; Rahimi 2013; Van Steendam et al. 2010; Yang and Meng 2013). Hu (2005) experimented with an elaborate peer feedback training program with ESL university students in Singapore, which was found to have a positive impact in terms of boosting students' attitudes toward peer feedback and improving their writing. In Min's (2005) study, peer feedback training in the form of in-class demonstration and modeling of the peer feedback procedure increased the quantity of peer feedback, especially on global issues. In a similar vein, Rahimi (2013) showed that peer feedback training shifted students' attention from local to global aspects, compared with untrained students who mainly focused on language issues during peer feedback. More recently, Ruegg (2015b) found that students who were trained performed better in peer feedback than those not trained. Although the studies reported in the above were all conducted with L2 university students, the implications for younger L2 school learners are clear. If peer feedback training is found to help older learners, there is no reason why younger L2 learners do not need such teacher scaffolding. In the next section "Preparing for peer feedback: Tips for teachers," guidelines on peer feedback training will be provided.

In the Same Class, Why Does Peer Feedback Benefit Some Students but Not the Others?

Even in the same class taught by the same teacher, students bring to peer feedback activities different beliefs, motives, and stances (e.g., collaborative, dominant, passive – Storch 2002), which can influence the effectiveness of peer feedback. For instance, Yu and Lee (2015) have found that EFL university students with motives geared toward feedback giving and the learning process take a collaborative stance (rather than a dominant one) during peer feedback, which is beneficial to their learning and text revision. Also, when students are put into different pairs/groups, the group dynamics may influence the stances they adopt and hence the outcome of peer feedback (Chang 2016). Research on L2 collaborative tasks by Storch (2002) has revealed four interaction patterns: collaborative, expert-novice, dominant-dominant, and dominant-passive, and it is found that the collaborative pattern is most conducive to peer feedback. In other words, students working collaboratively

with their peers, rather than one posing as an expert and the other a novice, or one being dominant and the other passive, or both dominant, are the most desirable group interaction pattern for peer feedback.

Another interesting phenomenon relating to group dynamics emerges when students of different proficiency levels work together to give peer feedback (see Allen and Mills 2016). Conventionally, it is believed that students of lower language proficiency are unable to give effective peer feedback, and as a result, they tend to be marginalized in L2 writing classes that value peer feedback. Specifically when students work in pairs to give peer feedback, e.g., with a low-proficiency student working with a high-proficiency one, the former is likely to feel threatened and inhibited. However, when both students are of low language proficiency, they may feel inadequate with regard to helping each other improve their writing. Yu and Lee's (2016c) study, however, found that EFL students of low language proficiency could also contribute to peer feedback by working in small groups. Specifically, by working with peers of their own choice, staying with the same peers throughout the semester, being allowed to use L1, and remaining relatively motivated about peer feedback, the findings suggest that students of low language proficiency could also contribute to the peer feedback process.

Although the studies reported in the above are conducted with university rather than school students, the implications for classroom practice also apply to L2 school contexts. Teachers can demonstrate how a collaborative stance can be facilitated through peer feedback training. Such training can consist of concrete suggestions about how students should go about giving peer feedback, which will be explored in the following section on "Preparing for peer feedback: Tips for teachers." Teachers can also experiment with different grouping strategies that suit school learners. For example, younger L2 learners (such as primary students) may benefit from a smaller group size of two to three, rather than a larger one. Since one size does not fit all, teachers working with L2 school learners have to use grouping strategies flexibly to maximize learning effectiveness in their own contexts.

In Contexts Where Students Share the Same L1, What Language Should They Use During Peer Feedback?

When peer feedback is conducted in ESL contexts with learners from different language backgrounds, naturally English is used for peer feedback. In contexts where students share the same mother tongue like EFL contexts, however, students have at least two languages to choose from when they engage in peer feedback. Research has shown that L1 can be a useful mediating strategy that facilitates peer interaction (Villamil and de Guerrero 1996) and that some EFL students may not be proficient enough to engage in peer interaction in L2 (Hyland and Hyland 2006). While research on language use in peer feedback in EFL contexts is limited, there is evidence to show that L1 can serve as an important mediating strategy in peer

interaction and enhance the effectiveness of peer feedback (Villamil and de Guerrero 2006). Yu and Lee (2014) suggest that L1 may be particularly suited for giving feedback on content and organization. For EFL school learners who are developing their language proficiency, teachers can consider the option of allowing students to deliver peer feedback in L1 (in oral and/or written mode), instead of forcing them to do so in L2. In situations where L1 is used in peer feedback, the focus then is not so much on language learning but mainly the use of peer feedback to help students develop self-regulation and autonomy, with a view to enhancing their writing as well.

Can Technology Enhance Peer Feedback?

Technology definitely has a role to play in peer feedback given that we are now living in a technological age where even preschoolers in certain contexts are already exposed to technology both inside and outside the classroom. Research on computer-mediated peer feedback has demonstrated that compared with face-to-face peer feedback, online peer feedback can provide a less-threatening environment for students and more equal student participation (Ho and Savignon 2007; Savignon and Roithmeier 2004). Through online peer feedback, students can engage in meaning negotiation and interaction (Chang et al. 2011). However, evidence about the impact of computer-mediated peer feedback on the quality of peer comments and text revisions is inconclusive (Fitze 2006; Guardado and Shi 2007; Rouhshad et al. 2016).

Albeit the growing popularity of technology in education, computer-mediated peer feedback may present more problems to L2 school learners than tertiary learners, with which the bulk of computer-mediated peer feedback research is conducted. Particularly in L2 school contexts that are dominated by the examination culture, like EFL school contexts, the majority of students write in the product-oriented writing classroom and are heavily trained to prepare for public examinations which are primarily pen and paper based. In students' regular writing practice, they are usually required to handwrite their essays. Asking students to conduct computer-mediated peer feedback with word-processed essays may be seen as an additional burden. The importance of handwriting vis-a-vis keyboarding is beyond the purview of this chapter, though research has demonstrated that handwriting can help the development of cognitive, writing, and reading skills (Berninger et al. 2006). That said, it is still possible to promote computer-mediated feedback in L2 school contexts, particularly secondary classrooms where the use of technology may provide a source of incentive for giving peer feedback. Chapter 8 will more closely examine the role of technology in classroom writing assessment and feedback.

Preparing for Peer Feedback: Tips for Teachers

After reviewing salient peer feedback research findings and their implications for classroom practice, this section turns to the practice of peer feedback in L2 school contexts and examines some teacher-supported strategies that can help students reap maximum benefits from peer feedback activities in the writing classroom (Zhao 2014). It aims to provide some useful tips to help teachers plan and organize peer feedback activities effectively.

Explain the Purpose of Peer Feedback

For a lot of L2 school learners, peer feedback is likely to be a novel activity. It is therefore necessary for teachers to explain what peer feedback is, what it entails, and why it should be conducted. One of the best reasons to share with students is that the purpose of education is to make the teachers redundant in the long run. If students are able to engage in peer feedback meaningfully and productively, they are not only able to help their peers improve their writing but they also enhance their ability to review, critique, and improve their own writing (i.e., self-assessment). Instead of relying on the teacher as the sole supplier of feedback, it is important that students are trained and empowered to give peer feedback and to take control of their learning, so that they develop autonomy and self-regulation in learning. The following proverb should come in useful: "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime." Through peer feedback, students learn how to fish; the skills (ability to review, reflect on, critique, and improve one's writing) will stay with them for a lifetime.

Let Students Share Their Experience and Concerns, as well as Ask Questions

Some L2 school learners may have prior experience with peer feedback while some may not. Some may find the idea of giving feedback to peers totally impractical and unfeasible, particularly for students from collectivist cultures characterized by group harmony and power distance, where the issue of face may have negative influence on students' engagement with peer feedback (Carson and Nelson 1996; Hu and Lam 2010; Hyland 2000; Nelson and Carson 2006). Teachers should encourage students to share their experience and concerns and ask questions to help them establish a positive attitude toward peer feedback. From such sharing and discussion, teachers can introduce ideas central to the success of peer feedback, such as a collaborative stance/pattern of interaction (rather than a dominant or passive stance),

and spell out expectations clearly, such as the importance of collaboration and active student participation during peer feedback.

Create a Supportive and Secure Learning Environment

Peer feedback can hardly succeed when students feel insecure and uncomfortable about learning. Thus, teachers have to work hard to create a supportive learning environment and to bring home to students that making mistakes is a normal part of learning. In other words, students can and are expected to make mistakes not only in writing but also in giving peer feedback. They are not expected to give immaculate feedback to their peers, but instead they are encouraged to put in their best effort to help one another in a community of learning, where students feel supported by their peers. Oftentimes students feel hesitant to give and/or receive peer feedback since they do not trust their own ability to give effective feedback, and/or they do not think their peers' feedback can be useful. Teachers should emphasize that in a community of learning, what is valued most is the attempt and effort (i.e., the process) rather than the actual feedback product. Even when a student's feedback is not correct or useful, the recipient (i.e., the student writer) can make his/her judgment to decide whether or not to incorporate the feedback. This reminder is necessary, especially in contexts where learners tend to look to the teacher for the "right" answers.

Provide Motivation and Establish Goals of Learning for Each Peer Feedback Activity

Motivation plays a pivotal role in peer feedback because if students are not motivated they are not going to take peer feedback seriously and engage in it actively. To enhance motivation, teachers can help students develop a goal-oriented stance by drawing attention to a few selected goals for peer feedback – e.g., by asking students to set goals for themselves, reflect on them, and keep them in a log book for each peer feedback activity. Before writing, students can be asked to set some personal goals for a particular piece of writing. During peer feedback, they can ask their peers to comment specifically on those goals – e.g., the extent to which the goals were achieved in the writing. If one of the goals for story writing is to write a story with an attention-getting beginning, the peer can give feedback on that goal specifically. Then peer feedback can become a personalized and purposeful activity, which is potentially motivating.

Choose the Most Appropriate Mode(s) of Peer Feedback

Peer feedback can be delivered in different modes: oral, written, and/or online. It can be a combined mode such as oral plus written feedback – that is, students can write their feedback on the peer's text or a peer feedback sheet and then share the feedback orally. In general, written peer feedback is less pressurizing for students as it allows students more time to think about how to formulate the feedback; it can reduce the cognitive load particularly for less-proficient students (Ferris 2010). For oral peer feedback, students may have to think on their feet, and doing this, particularly for L2 school learners, may be an issue. In general, written peer feedback is best followed up with oral feedback so that students get a chance to clarify the written feedback by engaging in meaning negotiation and purposeful interaction. For oral and written peer feedback, teachers can provide support by giving students a template (see Example 4.3 in Chap. 4) or peer feedback sheets (see Examples 7.1, 7.2, and 7.3) to guide the activity. Alternatively, students can deliver peer feedback online. In L2 school contexts, particularly those involving younger primary learners, online peer feedback may be less common though the increasing role of technology in education can change this phenomenon drastically in the future.

Use Peer Feedback Sheets, Where Appropriate

To support student learning, teachers can consider using peer feedback sheets. Peer feedback sheets can be designed in such a way that allows students to write open-ended comments on different aspects of the peers' writing (see Example 7.1); they can also be designed in the form of a rating scale (see Examples 7.2 and 7.3) that requires students to respond to selected aspects. While peer feedback sheets can provide support for L2 school learners, caution is sounded by Hyland (2000), who argues that such sheets can distract students from genuine communication and turn peer feedback into a task to please the teacher (also see DiPardo and Freedman 1988). To maximize the potential of peer feedback sheets, it is best if students can be involved in the design, or they can be asked to contribute to it by suggesting a few areas that they want feedback on. Ideally, a different peer feedback sheet should be designed for a different peer feedback activity that is geared toward the needs of that particular writing task.

Although peer feedback sheets can contain open-ended questions or rating scales, a combination of these to suit the needs of the learners is possible. A peer feedback sheet can contain a few open-ended questions as well as a rating scale. It can be presented in the form of a checklist with additional space for open-ended comments for each item included in the sheet (see Example 7.3). Teachers should be flexible in the design of peer feedback sheets and vary them to avoid boredom for students. In one secondary classroom I have visited before, the teacher used the same peer feedback checklist for every single writing task. Students did not have

any input into the design of the peer feedback sheets, nor were they given autonomy to suggest areas that they wanted feedback on. As a result, the students tended to treat it as a task to please the teacher and adopt a get-the-job-done mentality in their approach to peer feedback.

Example 7.1 An Open-Ended Peer Feedback Sheet

1. What technique is used to begin the story? Does the story begin in a nice way? Does it catch your attention? Why/why not?
2. Does the story provide clear background information about the characters and setting? Is there any missing information? What else could the writer have included to present the background more clearly?
3. Doe the story have a problem? What is it? Is it interesting enough to make you want to read on? Why?
4. How does the story end? Does it end in an interesting way? Why do you think so?

Example 7.2 A Peer Feedback Rating Scale

My classmate can:			
Begin the story in a very interesting way			
Give clear information about the setting of the story			
Provide interesting details about the main characters			
Create a problem that arouses interest			
Describe the events in a logical sequence			
Provide an interesting ending			
Use the simple past tense to narrate past events			
Use suitable vocabulary to describe the setting and characters			
Use suitable time markers to link up the events			
Write simple dialogues			

Adapted from Appendix 2 in Lee (2007)
NB: Smileys are used in this example, which may suit younger learners. Alternatively, a Likert scale can be used – e.g., 1–4. Possible descriptors are "excellent" (4), "good" (3), "average" (2), and "needs improvement" (1). See Example 7.3.

Example 7.3 A Peer Feedback Rating Scale with Space for Open-Ended Comments

4: Excellent
3: Good
2: Average
1: Needs improvement

The student writer is able to	4	3	2	1	Comments
Content and structure					
Begin the story in an interesting way					
Provide clear background information about setting and characters					
Include a problem that arouses interest					
Present the events in a logical sequence					
End the story in an impressive way					
Language features					
Use the past tense accurately					
Use suitable vocabulary to describe setting and characters					
Use a range of time connectives appropriately					
Use simple dialogues appropriately					
General comments:					

Differentiated Peer Feedback to Suit Individual Student Needs

Just as instruction can be differentiated to cater for learner diversity, peer feedback can also be designed to meet individual student needs. Instead of giving students the same peer feedback sheet like Examples 7.1, 7.2, and 7.3, teachers can encourage students to adapt the peer feedback sheets by deleting, amending, or adding some "special request items" that suit their own needs. Teachers can let students have a soft copy of the peer feedback sheet and encourage them to modify it according to their own needs. Alternatively, a standard peer feedback sheet can be provided with some space for students to add in their own items. Overall, differentiated peer feedback means that students can vary the number of peer feedback items and focuses according to their own needs. Through doing this, peer feedback can become a truly learner-centered and purposeful activity that promotes AfL/AaL.

Grouping of Students

Grouping can have a direct impact on the outcome of peer feedback. In terms of group size, it may be best for younger learners to work in pairs or small groups, preferably not more than three (Liu and Hansen 2002). The advantage of pair work is that it is generally easier to set up and manage, but an obvious disadvantage is that if the two students do not get along, they have no one else to turn to and may perceive peer feedback as a waste of time. Group size may depend on the class size too. For example, teachers working with large classes may put students in small groups of four instead of pairs to facilitate monitoring.

Group rules are germane to the success of group work, including peer feedback. Within a group, for example, one student can be the leader, another one the time-

keeper, and the third one the monitor to make sure everybody has something to contribute to the peer feedback activity. These roles can be rotated so that students can experience different roles at different times.

Additionally, teachers have to consider whether to group students randomly, according to language/writing proficiency, motivation, or student relationships (i.e., friendship). Since students in schools stay with the same classmates for one whole academic year, it is advisable for students to experience peer feedback with different peers instead of staying with the same group throughout. Teachers can experiment with different grouping strategies, monitor the outcome, and even invite students to share comments on their experiences with different peers in different groups. Students' comments on their peer feedback experiences can serve as useful assessment information to help teachers improve their organization of peer feedback, which is in line with the spirit of AfL.

Frequency of the Peer Feedback Activity

In classroom writing assessment that emphasizes AfL/AaL, peer feedback has to be treated as a regular rather than a peripheral activity and be integrated into teaching and learning in the writing classroom. In Kashimura's study (2007) (as cited in Hirose 2008), peer feedback was used only three times during the academic year. The students developed negative attitudes toward peer feedback, with more than half saying that they would not want to conduct peer feedback again. By contrast, also conducted in Japan, Hirose (2008) showed that when peer feedback was integrated into the writing curriculum and conducted on a regular basis, students had positive attitudes toward the peer feedback activity. To promote AfL/AaL, therefore, peer feedback has to be an integral part of the writing class.

Integrate Peer Feedback with Other Language Activities

In L2 school contexts, writing is but one of the several language skills students need to learn and master. Critics of peer feedback often cite curricular constraints as a hindrance to regular peer feedback activities. To address this issue, teachers can integrate peer feedback into the language classroom and link it to the teaching of other language skills, such as speaking and listening. They can provide instruction in linguistic strategies (Hansen and Liu 2005) such as turn taking and meaning negotiation, helping students acquire relevant speaking and oral discourse skills that facilitate oral peer feedback. Besides, during peer feedback, students practice reading skills, conduct mini-textual analysis (e.g., analyzing the structure of a story), and develop critical thinking skills. When peer feedback is integrated into the language classroom to optimize opportunities for student learning, it is no longer an impediment to but a catalyst of learning.

Conduct Peer Feedback Training

Peer feedback training (see Berg 1999; Crinon 2012; Hansen and Liu 2005; Hu 2005; Hu and Lam 2010; Min 2006; Rahimi 2013; Rollinson 2005) can include awareness raising (e.g., through explaining purpose, spelling out expectations, and encouraging students to share experience and concerns), demonstration (e.g., using sample peer feedback on selected student essays or video demonstration of different peer interaction patterns), student practice (asking students to review a draft written by a previous student), instruction in appropriate response behavior (e.g., the need to acknowledge strengths and to give constructive and text-specific comments), and explanation of the peer feedback procedure (e.g., explaining how different peer feedback sheets are to be used). Teachers can also provide feedback on students' peer feedback practice – e.g., correcting inappropriate behavior and offering advice when students do not follow the suggested peer feedback procedure (Min 2016). Whatever strategies teachers use in their training, it is important that they are flexible and focus on those aspects of training that are important, practical, and practicable in their own contexts.

Give Students Different Focuses for Peer Feedback at Different Stages of the Writing Process

Peer feedback can take place at different stages of the writing process. Before writing, students can review their peers' mind maps, outlines, or graphic organizers. During writing, specifically after the first draft is produced, students can give peer feedback on content and/or organization. Such a feedback focus can divert students' attention from language, an area that the large majority of L2 students are preoccupied with. After writing (i.e., after the final draft is turned in), students can review their peers' revisions to find out the extent to which they have improved their writing or they can review their peers' pre-writing goals and give them suggestions about what else they need to focus on in their future writing.

It must be emphasized that peer feedback can hardly be effective if it is conducted in product-oriented writing classrooms, where only terminal drafts are collected. The reason is that when students give feedback to their peers' single drafts knowing that revision is not required, they are not going to take their peers' comments seriously. Thus, peer feedback and process writing should go hand in hand.

Use Teacher Feedback to Model and Supplement Peer Feedback

Students who have had little experience with effective teacher feedback will find it hard to give helpful peer feedback. Therefore, teachers should use their own feedback to model effective feedback – e.g., by balancing negative comments with

positive ones and by presenting commentary in text-specific and concrete terms. Another important matter to note is that if the teacher and peers give feedback on the same draft focusing on the same areas, students are likely to pay much less attention to peer feedback. Therefore, it is best for the teacher and peers to focus on different drafts or different areas – e.g., peers reviewing the first draft, teacher the second one, or peers commenting on content and teacher commenting on language.

Provide Opportunities for Students to Incorporate Self-Feedback/Assessment into Peer Feedback

Peer feedback and self-feedback should be used together to benefit student learning. Before peer feedback, students can first engage in self-feedback (i.e., reflect on and assess their own writing, identify strengths and weaknesses, etc.), and based on their self-feedback, they can make specific peer feedback requests, asking their peers to focus on certain aspects of their writing. This can make peer feedback a more purposeful, focused, and individualized activity. Even after receiving peer feedback, students can conduct self-evaluation by writing reflective notes in their learning log, reflecting on and self-assessing their writing based on the peer feedback. Instead of seeing peer feedback as separate from self-feedback, they can be used in conjunction to enhance learning.

Student and Teacher Roles in Peer Feedback

In L2 writing classrooms that promote AfL/AaL, students are active and at the center of learning. They should have a strong awareness that they are not only recipients but also givers of peer feedback; they are not only writers but also readers and reviewers. As a recipient/writer, they receive feedback from peers. As a giver/reader, they review their peers' writing and benefit by having their audience' awareness raised. They also learn from their peers' writing – both the strong areas that they can incorporate into their writing and their peers' weaknesses that they should avoid. More importantly, students have to be reminded that they need not accept all of their peers' comments; they can agree, they can agree partially, and they can disagree and reject the suggestions. Through reviewing the peer feedback received, students reflect on and assess their peers' comments and concomitantly reflect on and assess their own writing. Also, students can play an active role by conducting peer feedback on peer feedback in small groups. This is referred to as "intra-feedback" by Lee (2015), which is characterized by a procedure where students write their peer comments individually and get together with group members to review all the peer comments on the same essay. During intra-feedback, students discuss the

discrepancies between the peer comments, resolve uncertain issues, and if necessary go back to their own original peer comments and revise them.

Even though students are active during peer feedback, it does not mean that teachers should be passive. When students engage in peer feedback, the teacher acts as a facilitator or troubleshooter (Liu and Hansen 2002), answering queries and monitoring student progress. AfL aims at helping students enhance their learning; it also enables teachers to improve their teaching. Through observing and monitoring student learning during peer feedback, teachers gather firsthand information about students' learning to find out what they have learnt and mastered, and what they have not. Such assessment information can provide impetus for teachers to design lessons to fine-tune and improve their teaching. For instance, when a teacher finds that students are not capable of giving useful feedback on a certain aspect of students' story writing, be it story structure or dialogue writing, such information probably indicates that this particular aspect may have to be further reinforced in order to help students write better.

Decide Whether or Not to Assess/Score Peer Feedback

In some educational contexts, writing instructors assess or score peer feedback in order to encourage students to take the peer feedback activity seriously. In doing so, peer feedback could be turned into a semi-summative assessment activity. While there are both pros and cons to scoring peer feedback, in L2 school contexts, teachers should think twice about scoring peer feedback in writing classrooms that are committed to AfL/AaL. In many L2 school contexts, scores already play a paramount role in students' lives, but then for a lot of students, scores are a source of stress. While scores can provide extrinsic motivation, they can destroy intrinsic motivation for learning. In AfL/AaL, it is important to remember that scores are indeed not significant and may backfire (Butler 1987; Crooks 1988). Although scores and productive learning are not necessarily mutually exclusive, if peer feedback is scored, student attention is easily diverted to the product rather than the process of learning, which contravenes the principles of AfL.

Conclusion

In many L2 writing contexts, peer feedback is not an innovation; however, it is not readily embraced by teachers in L2 school contexts (Yim and Cho 2016), and some L2 students' aversion to peer feedback still presents a daunting challenge. Rollinson (2005) has rightly pointed out that "many students may need a significant amount of initial persuasion of the value of peer feedback, since they may not easily accept the idea that their peers are qualified to act as substitutes for the teacher, and critique their writing" (p. 26). Even though teachers may be convinced about the usefulness

of peer feedback and well versed in the procedure, there is a host of contextual issues they need to grapple with when it comes to implementation. Nonetheless, for teachers committed to the goals of AfL/AaL, peer feedback is an indispensable component of the classroom; it can provide training for self-assessment (Rollinson 2005), which is central to AfL/AaL.

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Chapter 8
Portfolios in Classroom L2 Writing Assessment

Introduction

Hailed as a useful form of classroom writing assessment and an alternative to large-scale writing assessment, portfolio assessment has, since the mid-1980s, become a popular tool for assessing writing in L1 contexts (Belanoff and Dickson 1991; Hamp-Lyons and Condon 2000; Yancey and Weiser 1997). Soon the literature on portfolio assessment in L2 writing contexts has begun to mushroom, and portfolio assessment is increasingly viewed as an effective means to measure L2 student writing progress. Theoretically, portfolio assessment is grounded in the social constructivist theory of learning, which posits that learning is ongoing and constructed through the active involvement of the learners (Alleman and Brophy 1998; Klenowski 2002). It also dovetails with the principles of assessment for/as learning, which involves students actively in the learning and assessment process. During the portfolio process, students obtain feedback from multiple sources (e.g., teacher and peers), and such interactions provide experiences within students' zone of proximal development (ZPD) (Vygotsky 1978) and help advance their learning. In sociocultural terms, portfolio assessment is seen as a mediating factor for student learning (Vygotsky 1986). It also plays a significant role in enhancing student motivation and promoting self-regulation, which are contributing factors to academic achievement (Zusho and Edwards 2011).

Although much of the writing portfolio assessment literature is situated in the tertiary context, this alternative approach to classroom writing assessment is also apposite to L2 school writing contexts. First, writing portfolio assessment provides students with opportunities to write, learn to write, and demonstrate growth in writing over time. If writing portfolios are adopted early on and implemented consistently throughout schooling, students will be given an abundant amount of time to hone their writing skills and showcase their writing progress, within each grade and from one grade to another. Second, while younger L2 learners often find writing a taxing and anxiety-laden activity (Wang et al. 2016), the portfolio-based writing

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I. Lee, *Classroom Writing Assessment and Feedback in L2 School Contexts*,
DOI 10.1007/978-981-10-3924-9_8

classroom provides a relatively low-stakes environment where students can write with less concern about time constraints than in traditional product-oriented writing classrooms (White 1994). Also, delayed evaluation of portfolio assessment takes some pressure off L2 learners by allowing them to focus on the process of learning, unlike traditional school writing contexts where grades for one-shot writing are emphasized. Finally, when twenty-first century skills put so much emphasis on learner autonomy and students' ability to take charge of their learning, writing portfolios provide a useful pedagogical tool to help promote students' self-reflection and self-regulation by putting them at the center of learning (Hamp-Lyons and Condon 2000; Lam 2013; Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick 2006), and these skills have to be fostered right at the outset of schooling. Therefore, portfolio assessment is ideally suited for L2 school writing classrooms.

This chapter begins by examining the key features of writing portfolios, focusing particularly on two kinds of writing portfolios that are suited for L2 school contexts. It then discusses the role of writing portfolios in classroom assessment, underlining the dual assessment purposes they serve – namely, assessment of learning (AoL) and assessment for/as learning (AfL/AaL). The chapter then explores the portfolio process in the writing classroom and how feedback can play a supportive role in portfolio-based assessment. Finally, the chapter evaluates the implementation of writing portfolio assessment in L2 school contexts by drawing on research insights and exploring the challenges arising from its implementation.

Features of Portfolio Assessment

A writing portfolio is "a collection of texts which the student has had the opportunity to develop and reflect upon over a long period of time" (Burner 2014, p. 140). At the core of portfolio assessment are three key elements – "collection, selection, and reflection" (Hamp-Lyons 2003, p. 179). Specifically, portfolio assessment involves "a purposeful collection of student work that exhibits the student's effort, progress and achievements in one or more areas. The collection must include student participation in selecting contents, the criteria for selection, the criteria for judging merit, and evidence of student self-reflection" (Paulson et al. 1991, p. 60); it focuses on documenting both the process and progress of student learning (Klenowski 2010).

It is clear from the above definitions that there is much more to writing portfolios than the mere collection of writing folders that comprise students' drafts. Portfolio assessment puts the onus on the learners to organize, reflect on, and take charge of their own learning (Hamp-Lyons and Condon 2000), and it helps students develop a strong sense of ownership of their writing (Yancey 1992). The three key elements of portfolio assessment – collection, reflection, and selection – require students to play an active role in the portfolio-based writing classroom. First, "collection" involves students in compiling multiple drafts of their writing throughout the course

or entire academic year, usually including a range of text types. The focus is not on the mere act of collecting drafts but more importantly on the effort to revise drafts and to keep track of students' own writing (Burner 2014). Secondly, "reflection" entails the process of self-assessment, where students reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of their writing, review their personal learning goals, and set new goals for their further development. Finally, "selection" describes the process, whereby students select the drafts for assessment; while they compile the drafts into the portfolio according to some criteria provided by or negotiated with the teacher, they reflect on their learning at the same time. It is noteworthy that collection, reflection, and selection do not happen in a linear sequence but that they occur iteratively throughout the portfolio process. While the portfolio process often begins with "collection," "reflection" and "selection" can happen simultaneously. Some scholars describe the portfolio process in terms of collection, reflection, and selection (e.g., Burner 2014), while others refer to an alternative sequence of collection, selection, and reflection (e.g., Hamp-Lyons 2003).

In addition to these three key elements of collection, reflection, and selection, portfolio assessment is characterized by delayed evaluation, which involves the teacher in grading students' portfolios only after they have been compiled. This aspect of portfolio assessment, like other features of portfolio assessment described below (see Burner 2014; Hamp-Lyons and Condon 2000), distinguishes it from traditional classroom writing assessment where student writing is graded at the end of each writing task. Another major characteristic of portfolio assessment is that it provides judgment on multiple student writing performances, usually on a range of topics/genres, rather than a snapshot of writing performance as in traditional classroom assessment. During the portfolio process, students are given time for revision of their writing. While they write largely without time constraints and test anxiety in the portfolio-based classroom (White 1994), most traditional classroom writing assessment is based on the timed model, where students produce single drafts within a time limit. Also, students are at the center of learning in the portfolio-based classroom, while in traditional classroom writing assessment, the teacher usually takes the center stage. In the portfolio-based classroom, emphasis is put on student learning and growth, and specifically students are encouraged to set goals to monitor their development along specific parameters, such as idea development (content), paragraphing (organization), and aspects of language use (e.g., verb tense accuracy). In traditional classroom writing assessment, however, students' attention is often drawn to their performance in each and every single writing task signified by a score or grade.

In the main, portfolio assessment puts a great emphasis on student development over time, with delayed evaluation taking some pressure off students as they are given an entire academic year, in the case of school learners (or even several years consecutively during schooling), to learn and to develop their writing skills. In traditional classroom writing assessment, however, the time constraint is often an issue, and because each piece of writing is graded, students may feel hard pressed to exhibit improvement within a short time. Portfolio

assessment promotes the teaching and learning of writing by giving students plenty of time to develop their writing (in line with process pedagogy), emphasizing interaction and communication with the teacher and peers throughout the portfolio process. As Roemer et al. (1991) state, "grading students' work in pieces, product by product, or making significant judgments of students' writing based on one writing sample produced under timed circumstances, has come to seem a violation of the very things we teach about writing" (p. 455). Conversely, portfolio assessment provides opportunities for teachers to implement some of the best practices in L2 writing as depicted above, like multiple drafting, revision, teacher/peer/self-feedback, and student self-reflection, which are in line with the principles of AfL/AaL.

Worthy of note is that portfolios are contexts and tools for assessment, rather than substitutes for assessment, as they have proved to be more suitable for local, classroom assessments rather than large-scale testing (Callahan 1999; Freedman 1993). As demonstrated in an especially vivid, negative example in Callahan (1999), the use of portfolios as accountability tests "has overshadowed the pedagogical component of the assessment" (p. 34), resulting in disconnection between assessment and classroom instruction. There are fundamental incongruities between portfolios as high-stakes accountability tasks in large-scale testing and the use of portfolios in the classroom, and it is classroom-based portfolios that this chapter focuses on.

Two Types of Writing Portfolios for L2 School Contexts

There are different types of portfolios, different ways to classify portfolio use, and hence different labels to describe the different kinds of portfolios. For the purpose of classroom writing in L2 school contexts, two kinds of writing portfolios are particularly pertinent – learning portfolios and showcase portfolios (Burner 2014; Lam 2013). Learning portfolios keep track of students' learning and contain all the writing samples (interim and final drafts) produced by students throughout the academic year, as well as self-/peer feedback and written reflections. Showcase portfolios comprise representative samples of writing selected by students according to teacher instructions and/or some stated criteria. Example 8.1 provides explanations (and instructions for students) about the two different portfolio systems.

Example 8.1 Writing Portfolios – Instructions for Students

Learning Portfolio

Please collect all the essays you write in this academic year and compile them into a portfolio. For each essay, include everything from pre-writing ideas (e.g., mind maps and outlines) to interim drafts (including teacher feedback and peer feedback) and final drafts, as well as personal learning goals and reflective journals

Showcase Portfolio

Compile a showcase portfolio that provides representative samples of writing that demonstrate your best abilities. Your showcase portfolio should include the following:

- A cover letter that outlines your personal goals for writing in this academic year
- The best three essays on different genres (include all the documents like pre-writing ideas, goal-setting sheets, interim drafts, teacher/peer feedback, final drafts, and reflective journals)
- A self-reflection about your progress in writing in this academic year

While learning portfolios are maintained by the students for learning purposes, showcase portfolios are submitted for formal assessment (though the final learning portfolios can also be formally assessed). During the compilation process of the portfolio, students submit drafts to the teacher, exchange drafts with peers, receive ongoing feedback from both teacher and peers, engage in revision, and reflect on their learning/writing. The ongoing evaluation of the portfolio is more informal and formative, whereas the final assessment is more formal and summative in nature. Thus, writing portfolio assessment is both formative and summative, serving the purposes of AoL and AfL/AaL (see the next section on "Writing portfolios and dual assessment purposes"). Example 8.2 illustrates a possible portfolio structure based on the showcase portfolio system, which may suit L2 school students.

Example 8.2 A Portfolio Structure for L2 School Students

A one-page cover letter that includes:

- The goals of the writing class in this academic year
- The personal learning goals you have set for your own writing
- A brief introduction to the works selected for the portfolio (e.g., why you chose them and what they say about you)

Three best essays selected from the six essays written in this academic year, including (for each essay):

- Pre-writing documents such as mind maps, outlines, and graphic organizers
- Your personal learning goals
- Interim drafts, as well as teacher and peer feedback
- Final draft
- Reflective journals

An overall self-reflection of the portfolio (one to two pages) that addresses the following:

- The goals of the writing class, your personal learning goals, the extent to which you have achieved your personal learning goals, and what you did to achieve them
- Your major strengths in writing
- The major areas that need improvement
- Where from here (your new goals for further improvement)

Writing Portfolios and Dual Assessment Purposes

Portfolio assessment serves dual assessment purposes. With a special emphasis on student active involvement, reflection, self-regulation, and progress, portfolios serve formative purposes – i.e., AfL/AaL. On the other hand, teachers evaluate students' writing portfolios to provide judgments of their learning and writing – i.e., AoL.

Realizing Assessment for/as Learning in Portfolio-Based Writing Classrooms

Portfolios are underpinned by metacognitive perspectives on learning, where self-reflection, self-assessment, and self-regulation play a primary role (Hamp-Lyons and Condon 2000; Lam 2014). At each stage of the writing process, students are actively involved and learn to take charge of their learning. At the pre-writing stage (where I am going), students acquire the learning goals and success criteria and are provided with opportunities to establish some personal learning goals for their

writing. During writing (how I am going), in particular when multiple drafting is involved, students make use of different kinds of feedback (from teacher and peers) to revise and improve their writing. Such feedback also serves as a source of stimulus for their self-assessment and self-reflection, helping them relate their writing to their learning goals and to identify their strengths, weaknesses, and areas that need improvement. After writing (where to next), students engage in further self-reflection – e.g., evaluating the extent to which their goals were achieved and setting new goals for further improvement.

During each stage of the portfolio process, students engage in metacognitive thinking – i.e., monitoring, controlling, and regulating of cognition (Belgrade 2013). They take control of their learning, monitor their own progress as writers over time, and enhance their self-regulatory capacities. Through students' efforts in compiling, selecting, and reflecting on their writing, writing portfolios can testify to students' development in writing and self-regulation, which is an important facet of AfL/AaL.

Assessment of Learning in Portfolio-Based Writing Classrooms

While students compile portfolios to keep track of their own writing development formatively, they submit their portfolios for summative assessment at the end of compilation. When teachers decide on the assessment criteria for summative evaluation, one fundamental question to ask is what should go into the portfolio and what assessment criteria should be used. For example, how many pieces of writing should be compiled, and what other artifacts should be collected? Should both process and product be assessed? Should they also assess the physical presentation of the portfolios? More importantly, should writing portfolios be assessed analytically or holistically?

Since each context is unique, it is not easy to come up with an assessment scheme that suits each and every L2 school writing context. All things considered, several principles should be applied in assessing portfolios of L2 school learners: (1) delayed evaluation, (2) sharing of explicit evaluation guidelines, and (3) analytic and diagnostic evaluation.

First, delayed evaluation makes it possible for both teachers and students to hold back summative judgment by focusing on the process of learning, so that students do not have to worry about their grades as they engage in the writing process. During the portfolio process, students' attention is drawn to the quality of learning, their active role in the learning and writing process, and how they should utilize the feedback from the teacher and peers to improve their learning. They receive a grade for their portfolio only at the very end of the portfolio process. In the spirit of AfL/AaL, as emphasized in Chap. 2, it is suggested that grades/scores not be given to final drafts during the portfolio process. Instead, what matters much more is quality feedback from the teacher and peers during the portfolio compilation process and students' efforts in self-reflection and self-assessment.

Secondly, teachers should decide what they are going to assess in students' portfolios and how they are going to assess them and disseminate such information very clearly at the beginning of the portfolio development process (Klenowski 2010). Example 8.3 shows a set of evaluation guidelines based on the portfolio structure illustrated in Example 8.2. The assessment rubric comprises four dimensions: writing process, quality of selected entries (i.e., writing products), personal reflection and growth, and presentation of the portfolio. Each dimension will receive a maximum score of five, with a total score of 20 for the entire portfolio. The guidelines can be adapted in accordance with the portfolio contents in different L2 school contexts.

Finally, as portfolio contents are wide-ranging, including drafts, reflective journals, and other artifacts that display student writing development, for the purpose of classroom assessment it is best to score portfolios analytically, rather than holistically, so as to provide students with diagnostic information about what they did well and less well (Lam 2014; White 2005). The assessment scheme in Example 8.3 is based on the analytic scoring approach, in which each dimension of the writing portfolio is scored; it can be expanded to include specific performance indicators for

Example 8.3 Writing Portfolio Evaluation Guidelines
5 = Excellent
4 = Good
3 = Average
2 = Below average
1 = Much room for improvement

Writing process
The portfolio demonstrates the student's consistent effort to revise and improve his/her writing by making good use of teacher, peer, and self-evaluations

Quality of selected entries
The selected entries demonstrate the student's growing competence in writing as evidenced by relevant/meaningful content, clear organization, fluency, and effective language use

Personal reflection and growth
The portfolio clearly demonstrates the student's awareness of his/her own writing development, strengths and weaknesses in writing, the extent to which the goals were achieved, and what further improvement is needed

Presentation of portfolio
The portfolio is well organized, is nicely presented, and contains all required entries

each level of the dimensions. Apart from scoring each of the dimensions, teachers are encouraged to provide descriptive, diagnostic commentary to inform students of their strengths and weaknesses in their writing portfolios. In so doing, even in summative assessment of portfolios (i.e., AoL), the spirit of AfL can be realized.

The Portfolio Process and Feedback in Portfolio-Based Writing Classrooms

In L2 school contexts where teachers usually dominate the assessment process and where students are passive and generally not encouraged to engage in self-reflection and assessment (Lee 2016), writing portfolios afford teachers with great opportunities to provide a feedback-rich environment (Hamp-Lyons 2006) and to experiment with a student-centered approach to classroom assessment. The portfolio process is characterized by an intertwined set of relationships between instruction, learning, and assessment, where instruction and learning are embedded within the assessment process pertaining to the three stages of learning referred to in preceding chapters – i.e., where I am going, how I am going, and where to next (Hattie and Timperley 2007).

Before Writing: Where I Am Going

For each writing task, the portfolio process begins with the question "where I am going." Teachers play an important role by providing students with specific goals which are relevant to the writing task and challenging enough for the target students. The goals have to be shared with students so that they can understand and articulate them and become metacognitively aware. Broad and generic goals such as "rich and relevant content," "clear organization," and "correct language use" are not going to be very useful because they fail to provide students with a clear sense of direction about "where they are going." Take story writing as an example. The learning goals should be specific enough to enable students to understand what makes a good story (see Example 3.1 for "Genre-specific goals for story writing").

As early as the "where I am going" stage, students should be encouraged to play an active role in the portfolio-based writing classroom. They should be given opportunities to reflect on the learning goals provided by/negotiated with the teacher, relate them to their own learning, become metacognitively aware of what needs to be done in the writing task (see Chap. 4 for examples of metacognitive questions students can ask), and then establish their personal learning goals for the target writing task. The importance of learning goals is underscored in Chap. 4 on AaL (see Example 4.2 which illustrates a student's personal learning goals for story writing).

During Writing: How I Am Going

To answer the question "how I am going," students need feedback that consists of concrete, specific information about their progress with reference to the learning goals/success criteria, so that they know how to proceed with their writing. Take story writing as an example again. Feedback can address some of the success criteria as follows:

- *The story begins with relevant background information about the time, setting, and characters*; *however, the story structure does not contain a clear indication of the problem.*
- *The story is interesting, but dialogues could have been included to make the characters come to life.*

Such feedback from the teacher and/or peers can provide incentives for students to revise and improve their writing. At this stage of the writing process, students can also engage in self-reflection and self-assessment – e.g., based on the teacher/peer feedback received. As they evaluate their own work, they can find out where they are going by referring to the same set of success criteria (as in Example 3.1) and/or the personal learning goals they establish for their own writing (as in Example 4.2).

After Writing: Where to Next

When the writing is finished, students need further feedback to find out how to bridge the gaps in their writing and to move forward. Generic and ambiguous feedback like "Good job, way to go!" or "There's plenty of room for improvement in your writing" is not particularly helpful. To address this "where to next" question, feedback can further challenge students to attain the learning goals, to make greater effort at self-regulation, or to provide more information about what has not yet been fully understood. Teacher feedback geared toward "where to next," again with reference to the learning goals/success criteria of story writing provided at the pre-writing stage, can include the following:

- *You have crafted a nice story that contains all the elements of the story structure. I encourage you to further work on the story opening and ending, mainly to include a more interesting opening that can grab the attention of the readers, and to end the story in a less ordinary way (*e.g. *that everyone lived happily ever after).*
- *You have already learnt the elements of the story structure. Check to make sure that you have included every single element of the story structure in your story.*
- *Time markers are useful to help you present the events in the chronological order. However, overusing time markers makes the writing a bit unnatural. Check to see if time markers are used appropriately.*

Since the feedback is task/genre specific, it may be tangential to students' next writing task (unless the genre is the same as the previous one). However, transfer is still possible if the feedback is about process and self-regulation, which will be discussed in the following subsection. To answer the "where to next" question, it is also important that students engage in self-reflection and set goals for themselves. They can keep a learning log, document their reflections and goals (see Example 4.4 "Student learning log" in Chap. 4), and monitor their learning throughout the portfolio process.

Example 8.4 illustrates the integral relationships between instruction, learning, and assessment in the multiple-draft portfolio-based writing classroom that is committed to AfL/AaL, with reference to the three stages of learning examined above.

While Example 8.4 illustrates the typical portfolio process that takes place in a multiple-draft writing classroom, portfolio assessment can be adopted even in traditional product-based writing classrooms where multiple drafting and peer review

Example 8.4 The Portfolio Process in the Multiple-Draft Writing Classroom

Before writing (where I am going)
Teacher shares learning goals/success criteria
Teacher engages in explicit instruction
Students engage in pre-writing activities (e.g., brainstorming, mind mapping, outlining)
Students set personal learning goals
Students ask metacognitive questions before they start writing

During writing (how I am going)
Students write Draft 1
Students receive teacher feedback and/or engage in peer feedback
Students continue to ask metacognitive questions about their writing
Students engage in self-reflection, self-monitoring, and self-assessment
Students keep reflective journals
Students revise Draft 1 and produce Draft 2

After writing (where to next)
Teacher provides feedback on Draft 2
Students continue to engage in self-reflection (e.g., their strengths and weaknesses)
Students review metacognitive questions posed earlier
Students evaluate goals and set new ones
Students keep reflective journals
Students produce final/presentation draft

Example 8.5 The Portfolio Process in the Single-Draft Writing Classroom
Before writing (where I am going)
Teacher shares learning goals/success criteria
Teacher engages in explicit instruction
Students engage in pre-writing activities (e.g., brainstorming, mind mapping, outlining)
Students set personal learning goals
Students ask metacognitive questions before they start writing

During writing
Students write single draft

After writing (how I am going and where to next)
Teacher provides feedback on student single draft
Students review metacognitive questions posed earlier
Students engage in self-reflection, self-monitoring, and self-assessment
Students evaluate goals and set new ones

are not regularly practiced (Hamp-Lyons and Condon 2000). Although the latter is not ideal at all, Example 8.5 shows that the portfolio process in the single-draft writing classroom is still possible. Instead of receiving feedback on interim drafts and using such feedback to revise their writing, students receive feedback on single drafts (how I am going), reflect on their writing, and set goals for their further development (where to next).

The portfolio process is cyclical and iterative in nature; in other words, the process delineated in Examples 8.4 and 8.5 is repeated for each and every single writing task in the portfolio-based classroom.

Four Levels of Feedback in Portfolio-Based Writing Classrooms

As shown above, the portfolio process is dialogic, involving the ongoing interaction between the teacher and students (teacher feedback) and between students and their peers (peer feedback). Also, the portfolio process attaches great importance to student self-reflection, where self-feedback is essential. Since the writing portfolio "has to be continually in the making and document work in progress" (Nunes 2004, p. 328), feedback has a most critical role to play in the portfolio-based writing classroom.

At different stages of the writing process, students can benefit from feedback from the teacher, their peers, and themselves. Although research has suggested that L2 students tend to value teacher feedback more than self- and peer feedback

(Jacobs et al. 1998; Yang 2011), these different sources of feedback should be given an equally prominent role in the portfolio process, addressing any of the four levels proposed by Hattie and Timperley (2007), namely, (1) feedback about a task, (2) feedback about the process, (3) feedback that promotes self-regulation, and (4) feedback related to the self (e.g., self-esteem, self-efficacy, and affective behaviors)

Feedback about a task (or product) gives information about how well a task is performed. In L2 portfolio-based writing classrooms, feedback about a task can address any aspect of the writing task, including content, organization, and/or language – e.g., "Your story structure is difficult to follow" (organization) and "inconsistent use of verb tense in your story" (language). It is important to remember that feedback about a task is more effective in the form of comments than grades/scores (Black and Wiliam 1998; Crooks 1998; Hattie and Timperley 2007). Feedback about process aims at improving strategies and processes, and hence compared with feedback about a task, process feedback is more likely to lead to deeper learning – e.g., "You could use the techniques learnt in class to begin your story in a more attractive way – e.g., a short dialogue, a proverb/saying, a conflict or a mystery." Feedback that promotes self-regulation "addresses the way students monitor, direct, and regulate actions toward the learning goal" (Hattie and Timperley 2007, p. 93) – e.g., "You have learnt that stories are narrated in the simple past tense. Check to see if your verb tense is correctly used in the story." Feedback about the self as a person is personal feedback directed to the learner – e.g., "You've done a great job!" Such personal feedback is not related to task performance nor the learning goals, strategies and processes, and students' self-regulation.

Effective feedback, according to Hattie and Timperley (2007), is feedback that proceeds from task to process and then to self-regulation, and the least effective feedback is feedback about the self. Of critical importance to the portfolio-based writing classroom is feedback about process and feedback that promotes self-regulation (Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick 2006), which can facilitate deep learning. Therefore, promoting student agency and active participation in the portfolio process is crucial to the successful implementation of portfolio assessment in L2 writing classes.

Evaluating Writing Portfolios as a Pedagogical and Assessment Tool for Classroom Assessment

Writing portfolios provide a sound pedagogical and assessment tool for L2 classrooms. Portfolio pedagogy combines a dual focus on process and product, which is a more holistic approach that reflects the true nature of writing than the traditional product-based approach. It aligns instruction with assessment and takes into account the centrality of formative feedback in the writing process, enabling teachers to implement best pedagogical practices in the writing classroom. More importantly,

writing portfolio assessment emphasizes students' active engagement through promoting self-reflection, self-assessment, self-monitoring, and self-regulatory capacities. Students can chronicle their own development, using relevant documents and artifacts to showcase their progress in writing. As a pedagogical tool, the AfL/AaL strategies that students learn during the portfolio process can also be transferred to other subjects or classrooms to maximize their learning. As a classroom writing assessment tool, writing portfolio assessment adopts an expansionist approach based on multiple samples produced over time, rather than a reductionist approach that emphasizes one-shot assessment based on a snapshot of student writing performance (Klenowski 2010). As a result, assessment is rendered more valid and reliable.

Research on writing portfolio assessment, though limited, has shown that writing portfolios have positive impact on students, boosting motivation, enhancing writing performance, and facilitating the learning process through tapping the formative potential of writing assessment (Burner 2014; Fox and Hartwick 2011; Lam 2013; Lam and Lee 2010). Students generally express a favorable attitude toward portfolio assessment after they have been exposed to it (Aydin 2010), and they are found to be more self-reflective, more language aware, and more independent (Fox and Hartwick 2011; Hirvela 1997). Recently, Graham et al. (2012) and Lam (2014) have shown that a specific focus on self-regulation in the portfolio-based classroom could lead to better performance in writing, though Lo (2010) has noted the difficulty some students have in engaging in a deep level of reflection. In addition to a positive impact on student learning, writing portfolio assessment is found to benefit teaching by bringing assessment and instruction more closely together. In the portfolio-based classroom, teachers provide explicit instruction in a range of skills such as revising, self-assessment, and self-reflection (Lam 2014), leading to teacher empowerment too (Porto 2001).

Much of writing portfolio research, however, has been conducted in postsecondary and tertiary contexts (e.g., Lam 2013; Lam and Lee 2010); empirical research on the impact of writing portfolios in L2 school contexts is particularly sparse (Hamp-Lyons 2007). Given the traditional outlook of many L2 school writing teachers, the heavy examination culture, and teachers' lack of exposure to portfolio assessment, implementing writing portfolio assessment is likely to present challenges to both teachers and learners. For example, the time-consuming nature of the portfolio process and the focus on student agency and teachers sharing responsibility with students may create barriers in traditional product-oriented writing classrooms that value single drafting and encourage students to play a passive role in learning. Since writing portfolio assessment "speaks to a changed attitude about the teaching and judging of writing" (Roemer et al. 1991, p. 456), teachers need to develop knowledge and skills and acquire the "right" attitudes, to implement writing portfolios as a pedagogical and classroom assessment tool. Teachers also need to learn how to merge instruction with assessment and how to teach students to set goals, self-assess, and reflect on their writing. They also have to learn how to help students utilize feedback (from teacher, peers, and self) effectively to maximize learning.

While writing portfolios are, from a commonsensical point of view, a better alternative to one-shot and timed essay writing, simply supporting writing portfolios "on faith" (Condon and Hamp-Lyons 1994, p. 277) is by no means adequate. More empirical research on writing portfolio assessment has to be carried out in L2 school writing contexts to find out the specific challenges teachers and students in school contexts face. For example, Lam's (2013) study showed that postsecondary students might prefer learning portfolios (where all drafts are compiled) to showcase portfolios (where best drafts are selected and compiled). It would be useful to find out what kind of writing portfolio may suit younger L2 learners studying in schools. Hirvela and Sweetland (2005) and Lam (2013) have found that students' consciousness of grades could distract them from the process of self-evaluation and self-reflection. In view of the fact that grades/scores normally play an important role in L2 school contexts, it would be interesting to explore the role of grades in writing portfolio assessment in L2 school contexts and whether delayed evaluation (i.e., grading the final portfolio) is a desirable option. In many L2 school contexts, students are accustomed to playing a passive role and have a strong tendency to rely on the teacher. Writing portfolios, however, put students at the center of learning, and compiling a portfolio can be labor-intensive and time-consuming. Some students may not be willing to reflect on their own learning/writing (Aydin 2010; Hirvela and Sweetland 2005), and others may engage in a surface level of reflection. How students can be motivated to participate in the portfolio process and helped to foster a deeper level of reflection are significant questions that provide fruitful areas for further investigations.

Conclusion

Referred to as the third generation of writing assessment (Hamp-Lyons 2001; Yancey 1999), portfolio assessment is considered a way forward to improving the quality of student learning and writing. While traditional L2 school writing contexts tend to emphasize AoL at the expense of AfL/AaL, writing portfolios present a splendid opportunity for teachers to combine the two functions and in particular to promote AfL/AaL, which is undervalued in a large number of L2 contexts. When teachers use portfolio assessment, assessment is put "at the heart of their teaching" (Hamp-Lyons 2001, p. 180), where teaching and assessment are interwoven. Student writing abilities can be assessed in a more valid manner in portfolio assessment than in traditional writing assessment based on a single performance (Brown and Hudson 1998; Gearhart and Herman 1998). Through delayed evaluation, students can learn to write, set goals, self-assess, self-reflect, and conduct peer assessment in a relatively low-stakes and anxiety-free environment. Their attention is drawn to the process of learning and writing, and the focus is on their own growth as a writer. When used at the classroom level, reliability can also be enhanced through clearly articulated portfolio contents and assessment rubrics (Crusan 2010; Weigle 2002).

Writing portfolios are not necessarily paper based. In this technological age, the use of the electronic portfolio is definitely a feasible option. E-portfolios allow students to showcase their writing abilities with the support of multimedia tools such as weblogs, podcasts, vodcasts, and wikis (Yancey 2009), which are generally suitable for contexts where a variety of artifacts and a diversity of content material are compiled, including audio and/or video clips – e.g., higher education, teacher education, and the workplace. In L2 school contexts, teachers can consider adopting paper-based writing portfolios, to begin with, and perhaps integrate technology at different points of the portfolio process where appropriate. The next chapter will turn to examine the role of technology in classroom writing assessment.

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Chapter 9
Technology in Classroom L2 Writing Assessment and Feedback

Introduction

In this information age, technology has permeated almost every corner of the world. Young people are technology savvy and are no longer contented with learning that solely uses the pen and paper and is confined by the four walls of the classroom. eLearning has, as a result, experienced unprecedented expansion in education in recent years. In writing, the use of technology is in consonance with the new literacy movement (Barton 1994; Barton et al. 2000; Gee 2008; Street 2003, 2004), which enlarges our understanding of literacy as a set of cognitive skills situated in the minds of individuals, to literacy events with specific social goals in different social contexts. To be literate in the globalized world, students need to "possess multiple print and computer literacies" (Bloch 2008, p. 12) and be able to read and write in the digital environment (Warschauer et al. 2013). The advent of technology has therefore opened up new possibilities for classroom writing assessment and feedback.

This chapter begins with a brief discussion of several technology-enhanced writing tasks particularly suited for the formative aspect of classroom assessment in L2 school contexts – digital storytelling, blog-based writing, and collaborative writing on wikis. Then the rest of the chapter examines the role of technology in teacher evaluation, peer evaluation, and self-evaluation of student writing. Finally, using the Writing ePlatform developed by the Hong Kong Education Bureau as a tool for promoting assessment for/as learning (AfL/AaL) in writing among schoolchildren, I illustrate how technology can be used to enhance student learning in L2 school writing contexts.

The original version of this chapter was revised. An erratum to this chapter can be found at https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-3924-9_11

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I. Lee, *Classroom Writing Assessment and Feedback in L2 School Contexts*,
DOI 10.1007/978-981-10-3924-9_9

Technology-Enhanced Tasks for Classroom Writing Assessment

In classroom writing assessment, the most traditional kind of writing task is paper based. In the digital age, the notion of literacy has been expanded to include multimedia literacies (Coiro et al. 2008). With the help of technology, students can employ digital media to produce their writing (Hafner 2013). They can write with the computer (e.g., word process instead of handwrite their essays) and compose their writing online (e.g., on blogs and wikis). They can produce digital compositions, "using language in combination with other semiotic resources for communication, entering into relationships with new kinds of audiences" (Hafner 2013, p. 830). In other words, technology-enhanced writing tasks involve both technical and social elements – the former mainly using Web 2.0 and the latter involving a broader understanding of the role of audience in writing. With social networking, online publishing can provide a powerful source of incentives for writing. Digital compositions, for example, can be read not only by the teacher and peers but also online audiences. In this section, I introduce three technology-enhanced tasks for classroom writing assessment which are suited for L2 school learners: digital storytelling, blogging, and collaborative wiki writing.

Digital Storytelling

Digital storytelling allows students to work individually or in small groups to produce a digital project that combines writing, digital images, and digital video (Hafner and Miller 2011). A digital story is a personal narrative (about a personal experience or personal reflection on a topic) presented orally in the first person and combined with multimedia like photos, music, and other sounds (Banaszewski 2005; Brenner 2014; Bull and Kajder 2004; Lambert 2006, 2009; Ohler 2008).

In the traditional writing classroom, students produce stories with a structure that includes orientation, complication, resolution, and coda (which is an optional element of story structure). In the digital writing classroom, students can produce digital stories with similar elements (Ohler 2006), beginning with background information that sets the scene for the story. Then the narrator is confronted with a problem or complication, followed by some sort of life-changing experience or self-discovery, which serves as a resolution to the problem. The digital story usually ends with a personal reflection which is thought provoking and meaningful. The digital images and video, together with the first-person narration, are able to create an enhanced effect on the audience.

For L2 school learners, a range of other genres can be used for digital storytelling. For example, students can create a digital recount of an important event, such as the 50th anniversary of their school, a memorable overseas trip, or a meaningful volunteering experience. Alternatively, students can produce a creative story using

the digital format, combining the story with multimedia – e.g., the twenty-first century Cinderella. Students can also produce a critique of a social issue (e.g., teen pregnancy, cyberbullying, and domestic violence) and express their personal thoughts on the topic in a digital story. Below I share two digital stories produced by two primary students[1]:

- A recount (Trip to Tung Chung) by a Grade 2 student in Hong Kong: https://youtu.be/AeazOaU192E
- A creative story (Little lion learning mathematics) by a Grade 3 student in Hong Kong (illustrations by the student himself): https://youtu.be/xMHSE-qZnBs

Peer/self-assessment can be incorporated at different stages of the digital storytelling process. At the scriptwriting stage, students can review each other's storyboards and help their peers improve the writing; they can also offer suggestions about the images or pictures chosen. Before narrating the stories, they can do rehearsals of the narration in pairs or small groups and help one another improve the input before they start recording the narration for their digital stories. Students can also engage in self-assessment. For example, students can narrate the script one sentence at a time or narrate the whole story in one go, and they can listen to the recording any time they like. If they are not happy with the quality of the narration, they can always redo it. Hence, self-assessment takes place, sometimes without being students themselves being conscious of it. To facilitate self-assessment, teachers should let students have the success criteria/learning goals in advance so that they can assess their own performance based on the same criteria/goals (see evaluation form in Example 9.1). Using the same criteria, students can review their peers' products and engage in peer feedback. Thus, AfL/AaL can be integrated into digital storytelling, during which students are actively involved in the learning and assessment process.

Example 9.1 Digital Storytelling Evaluation Form

Evaluating Digital Stories					
4 = Excellent					
3 = Good					
2 = Satisfactory					
1 = Needs improvement					
	4	**3**	**2**	**1**	**Remarks**
Content and Planning					
Original and absorbing story					
Well-structured story					
Well-paced narration					
Well-developed personal point of view					
Quality of Language					

[1] I would like to thank my son (Gareth Chan) and Harold Au for allowing me to use their digital stories in this chapter.

Accurate and appropriate use of grammatical structures					
Accurate and appropriate choice of words					
Speaking Performance					
Accurate pronunciation					
Appropriate stress and intonation					
Powerful and expressive vocal delivery					
Digital Literacy and Style					
Effective use of visuals to complement the storytelling					
Effective use of sound to complement the storytelling					
Overall comments:					

See Cheung and Lee (2013) for a discussion of the evaluation of digital stories

The benefits of digital storytelling are manifold. Since younger people are living in a "digital-media-saturated" (Brenner 2014, p. 22) age, technology use in classroom writing is likely to motivate and engage them. When students create digital stories, they practice integrated language skills: they read and write the script, paying attention to the use of grammar and vocabulary, and they speak and listen as they work on the narration (Brenner 2014). As students set out to research for relevant data for their digital stories, gather information and images, photos, music, etc. to complete the task, they not only develop their writing skills but also enhance their information and digital literacy (Cheung and Lee 2013).

Recent research on digital storytelling has shown that this technology-enhanced writing task could improve student motivation and language skills (Alameen 2011; Brenner 2014; Pardo 2014; Sevilla-Pavón 2015). In particular, research with school learners (e.g., Angay-Crowder et al. 2013; Castañeda 2013; Emert 2013; Honeyford 2013; Hur and Suh 2012; Thanabalan et al. 2015; Yang and Wu 2012) has shown that digital storytelling can "expand literacy repertories and means of expression" (Angay-Crowder et al. 2013, p. 43), engage students in authentic communication, and enhance critical thinking.

One of the best things about digital stories is that they are relatively easy to produce. Students only need to download a free, user-friendly software such as Photo Story 3 or Movie Maker. I have organized digital storytelling competitions for secondary students in Hong Kong, and local teachers' experiences show that digital storytelling can be fun, easy to organize, and rewarding. Cheung and Lee (2013) provide a clear, step-by-step guide on how students can be helped to create digital stories with Microsoft Photo Story 3. Also see Bull and Kajder (2004), Kajder et al. (2005), Martinez-Alba (2014), Pardo (2014), and Robin (2008) for useful steps and strategies for digital storytelling.

Blog-Based Writing

Blogs (weblogs) are websites that can be easily created and updated without any specialized knowledge of HTML programming. Typically a blog comprises entries which are presented in reverse chronological order on a single page (Bartlett-Bragg 2003). Since blogs are easily set up, user-friendly, and readily accessible, they provide a useful tool for developing student writing. Notably, blogs can be used as an alternative to paper-based journal writing. With just a click of the comment function button, students can post comments and communicate with the blogger, whereby authentic communication is facilitated (Arena 2008; Godwin-Jones 2003; Murray and Hourigan 2008; Richardson 2006; Ward 2004). Blogging platforms that may suit L2 school learners include WordPress, Blogspot, and Blogger.

In L2 school contexts, blog-based writing is a useful formative writing assessment tool that teachers can use to give feedback to students, to encourage peer feedback, and to guide their own instruction. Teachers can create a class blog and encourage students to upload entries and post comments on a regular basis. Through students' ongoing blog-based writing, teachers can help students develop fluency and build confidence in writing; they can also offer feedback to students and help them understand their strengths and major weaknesses in writing, on which further instruction can be based. Specifically, the class blog can serve as a platform to promote a sense of community among members of the class and to provide a collaborative space for discussion, exchange of ideas, peer evaluation, and self-reflection (Campbell 2003); it can also promote problem-solving and higher-order thinking skills (Murray and Hourigan 2008). Aside from a class blog, students can keep an individual learner blog, which is an online journal that students can update on an ongoing basis (Campbell 2003). Such blog-based writing can foster students' fluency in writing and develop their creative voice (Murray and Hourigan 2008). Students can read their peers' blogs, post comments, and interact with one another on a regular basis.

Research on blog-based writing has demonstrated various benefits. Blogs can develop a reflective learning culture through meaning making and social interaction (Oravec 2002, 2003). They can be used for establishing goals and common vision within a group and are particularly useful for promoting a collaborative culture and a sense of community (Miceli et al. 2010; Slavin 1989). Through blogging, students can actively engage in conversations with their classmates and connect to contexts beyond the classroom (Du and Wagner 2007). Blogging can also enhance learners' writing performance and promote learner autonomy (Bhattacharya and Chauhan 2010; Sun 2010); it can provide students with a larger audience for their writing, "erase the limitation of classroom walls" (Chen et al. 2011, p. E1), and is found to support student's emergent literacy development (Gebhard and Harman 2011).

Below are examples of class blogs run by some primary and secondary English teachers in Hong Kong[2]:

- A Grade 5 class blog documenting students' writing on "Eating out" and "Fables": http://pkps5d.blogspot.hk/
- A Grade 5–6 class blog that showcases students' "wonderful writing": http://pkps6a.blogspot.hk/
- A Grade 9 class blog that includes entries by both teacher and students: http://3cdynamic.blogspot.hk/?m=0

Collaborative Writing on Wikis

In addition to blogs, wikis are another Web 2.0 tool commonly used in L2 writing. While blogs put an emphasis on authorial voice and text ownership, wikis provide a platform for collaborative writing where students can alter the posted material by modifying content on the wiki page or adding new wiki pages. The best known example is Wikipedia, which is a jointly produced wiki and an online encyclopedia. Common wiki sites include PBWiki (https://my.pbworks.com/) and Wikispaces (https://www.wikispaces.com/).

Like blogs, wikis do not require specialized technical knowledge; they are a user-friendly tool that allows asynchronous communication. Students can work collaboratively in small groups to create wiki projects. Editing on wikis can be performed easily and restricted to members with a password. The history log of a wiki enables users to keep track of the history of members' contributions and edits, while the discussion space allows users to post comments and engage in discussion.

Of the limited research on wikis in L2 contexts (see Storch 2013 for a review), the large majority of studies are conducted with tertiary students (Kost 2011; Li 2013; Li and Zhu 2013; Li and Kim 2016) with findings primarily showing that students are positive about using wikis in the writing classroom. A small number of studies have investigated the use of wikis with L2 school learners (e.g., Lund 2008; Mak and Coniam 2008; Woo et al. 2011). Through working collaboratively with wikis in Hong Kong secondary classrooms, students found the writing experience more authentic and engaging, compared with traditional writing, and they were able to produce longer and more coherent texts collaboratively on wikis (Mak and Coniam 2008). Also conducted in Hong Kong, the study by Woo et al. (2011) showed that even Grade 5 primary learners could be receptive to the use of wikis. Students were found to enjoy using wikis and believed that the tool could help them write better and work collaboratively with their peers.

Like blog-based writing, wiki writing can serve as a useful tool for formative writing assessment of writing, lending itself readily to peer evaluation in particular.

[2] I would like to thank the two teachers (Kevin Wong and Ada Lam) who allowed me to refer to their class blogs in this chapter.

Based on students' collaborative wiki writing and peer evaluation, teachers can provide formative feedback and fine tune their writing instruction according to student needs. Below are two examples of secondary students' collaborative wiki writing:

- Wiki writing among Grade 7 students in a secondary school in Hong Kong: Spyc1a.pbwiki.com (as cited in Mak and Coniam 2008, p. 440)
- US-based High School Online Collaborative Writing project: http://schools.wikia.com/wiki/Main_Page

Technology and Teacher Evaluation of Student Writing

Responding to student writing is mind-numbing and time-consuming, and the effectiveness of teacher feedback has always been called into question. So might technology help by replacing the teacher or assisting the teacher in enhancing the effectiveness of feedback? In this section I explore and evaluate automated writing evaluation and screencast feedback as possible tools for enhancing teacher evaluation of student writing in L2 school contexts.

Automated Writing Evaluation

Writing assessment that relies on technology is referred to as automated writing evaluation (AWE), also known as automated essay evaluation or automated essay scoring (Deane 2013). AWE is defined as the evaluation and scoring of writing via computer programs (Shermis and Burnstein 2003). Instead of relying on the human rater, AWE uses the machine to generate electronic feedback in the form of scores and/or comments on content, organization, and/or language use. AWE was originally applied in standardized writing assessment in the 1960s (Page 2003), though more recently it has made its inroads into classroom writing assessment that serves formative purposes. Commercially available AWE programs that are designed for classroom use, such as *Criterion*, *My Access!*, and *Grammarly*, are some of the most common AWE[3] tools used in L2 contexts (see Warschauer and Ware 2006, for a detailed account of the commonly used AWE programs). Given the escalating numbers of L2 students (both ESL and EFL) around the world, there is a compelling need to find ways to provide timely, useful, and effective feedback on student writing, particularly in large classes.

Research on AWE is relatively sparse and has failed to yield conclusive evidence about the effectiveness of AWE in classroom writing assessment. Stevenson and Phakiti (2014) have conducted a review of 33 empirical studies that use AWE for

[3] AWE programs were not originally designed for L2 learners, though AWE programs are mostly marketed for the L2 student population.

formative writing evaluation, shedding light on the role of AWE in classroom writing assessment. Worthy of attention is that the majority of AWE research has been conducted in college/university contexts, with much less work done in the secondary context and even less in the elementary context. Also, AWE is most commonly used in the USA (the companies involved in the development of AWE are based in the USA), though AWE research has also been carried out in the Asian context (Lavolette et al. 2015; Liao 2016; Warden and Chen 1995). Most of the studies have investigated the effects of AWE on the written product, while some have focused on the writing process and students' perceptions of AWE. The body of research on AWE is small and the results are mixed. All in all, there is evidence to show that AWE can improve student writing outcomes, for example, as manifested in reduced error rates (e.g., El Ebyary and Windeatt 2010; Franzke et al. 2005; Lavolette et al. 2015; Liao 2016; Shermis et al. 2008; Warden and Chen 1995). Research that compares machine feedback with teacher feedback has not produced conclusive findings, but definitely there is no evidence to show that the machine can take the place of the human teacher. Just as feedback research in general has shown that teacher feedback can lead to improvement in revision rather than students' general writing development, as found by Stevenson and Phakiti (2014), there is only "modest evidence" (p. 62) about the positive effects of AWE on the quality of student text (upon revision) that has received AWE, rather than on general writing proficiency. Overall, while AWE has obvious advantages, like giving fast, instantaneous, and individualized feedback, and particularly useful for providing corrective feedback (Li et al. 2015), it may not be reliable in generating feedback on content and rhetorical issues (Warschauer and Grimes 2008). Although AWE is limited by its "insufficient coverage of the writing construct" (Shermis et al. 2013, p. 10), teachers can still employ automated methods to maximize student learning. For example, they can ask students to submit their first drafts to the AWE system for feedback on language, and after students have made their revisions, teachers can deliver feedback on areas not covered by AWE.

Opponents contend that AWE reduces writing to a technical and acultural act (Surma 2016) and that since writing is a social and contextualized activity, student writing is best evaluated by the human teacher rather than a machine (Deane 2013). This may be especially true in school contexts as younger learners (particularly elementary learners) are generally more eager to establish personal relationships with the teacher, and therefore may prefer human to machine feedback. Also, younger learners may not have sufficient and sustainable motivation to engage with computer-generated feedback, which not only lacks the human touch but may also contain too dense and complex information for them to decipher. Although AWE can free teachers up and reduce their workload, AWE programs were not designed with younger L2 learners in mind and may not be entirely suited to school student needs (perhaps except for older/more proficient secondary students). On the other hand, L2 school teachers themselves may lack knowledge, competence, and experience in using AWE programs; some of them may be skeptical of their effectiveness. Not until new AWE programs that cater to the needs of younger L2 learners are developed, tested, and proved effective, it is unlikely that existing AWE programs

designed for older learners can make forays into classroom writing assessment in L2 school contexts.

Screencast Feedback

Another way in which technology can be used to facilitate teacher feedback is screencasting. Instead of writing feedback on student texts, teachers can create screencast videos for delivering online feedback. Such electronic feedback allows teachers to combine spoken comments (audio) and on-screen actions (video) in order to show students how they can revise and improve their writing (Stannard 2006). By incorporating auditory and visual input, screencast feedback is an improvement over audio-based feedback since students do not just hear but also see teachers' edits and comments on the computer screen. Screencast feedback enables teachers to talk to students, and hence it is like a "halfway house" between giving students written feedback and conferencing with them face to face.

To produce a screencast video, teachers need a screencast software, such as Jing (http://jingproject.com), which is a free, user-friendly software that allows teachers to record their feedback in 5 min. The video feedback can be saved as a link and emailed to students. A sample screencast feedback produced through Jing can be found in Séror (2012, p. 108): http://www.screencast.com/t/uGh31Nh7fq. Screencast-O-Matic is another free downloadable software for recording video feedback: http://www.screencast-o-matic.com/. To video their feedback, teachers open the student text and get ready other documents that will be used when delivering the video feedback, such as the assessment rubric and other resources that will be used to illustrate or support the feedback. Screencast feedback thus enables teachers to gather relevant resources to provide students with additional support while commenting on their writing. For example, teachers can switch between the student text and the assessment rubric, showing students which particular part of the rubric is drawn upon to evaluate the student writing.

One advantage of screencast feedback is that students can view it as often as they like, pausing at any time as they see fit, and repeating parts that they are not clear about. Playing the video feedback with the teacher speaking to them and yet without the physical presence of the teacher can take away some of the pressure too. In the words of Séror (2012), "screencasting technology represents a low-cost, intuitive, and time-saving interface the multimodal nature of which can counter limitations typically associated with more traditional feedback approaches" (p. 105). In Mathieson's (2012) recent study comparing text-only feedback (text-based feedback via Track Changes in Microsoft Word) and text-plus-audiovisual feedback (text-based feedback via Track Changes in Microsoft Word plus screencast feedback), the participating students appreciated the text-plus-audiovisual feedback more than the text-only feedback, and they found it more useful in facilitating their learning. In particular, screencasting was found to render "the feedback more engag-

ing, comprehensive, and effective and that hearing the instructor's voice made the feedback feel more 'personal' and 'real'" (p. 149).

Screencast feedback is not without problems. When technology fails – e.g., if the audio quality is undesirable – the screencast feedback will be rendered much less useful than it is originally intended. And although the teacher is talking to the student through screencasting, it is not the same as face-to-face conferencing where students can interact with the teacher in real time. Screencast feedback therefore cannot replace conferencing. That said, in many school contexts particularly those that involve large class sizes, conferencing is rarely conducted, and screencast feedback can provide an option that allows teachers to talk to students about their writing. Indeed, teachers need not adopt polar positions, choosing between either traditional or technology-enhanced feedback; a more nuanced perspective involves a combined approach that capitalizes on the benefits of different modes of feedback (Silva 2012).

Technology in Self- and Peer Evaluation

In L2 school contexts, students tend to be reliant on teacher feedback. However, despite the best efforts of teachers, teacher feedback alone is inadequate to help students develop independence and self-editing skills. In writing classrooms that promote AfL/AaL, students have to be empowered to call the shots. This section introduces several web-based resources that can be exploited to help students edit and evaluate their own or their peers' writing.

Microsoft Word Tools for Spelling, Grammar, and Vocabulary

Equipped with spelling and grammar check functions and a thesaurus, Microsoft Word provides the most common technology-assisted tools instantly available to a wide audience and comes in handy for self–/peer evaluation. Misspelled words and grammatical errors are flagged with a red and blue squiggly line, respectively, and students can fix their spelling and grammar errors by capitalizing on the suggestions provided by Word. To improve the variety of word choice, students can use the built-in thesaurus to look for synonyms (or antonyms). Since L2 school learners may not be well versed in these functions provided by Word (as they may not use word processers to compose their essays on a regular basis), teachers can provide training to enable students to edit their writing using the spelling and grammar check functions and to enrich their word choice using the thesaurus.

Milton and Cheng (2010), however, warn of the limitations of the Word spelling and grammar checkers based on the parsing technology. Since L2 learner texts are difficult to parse for errors due to their unconstrained nature, the software may not be able to catch all grammatical errors (e.g., In "I concern you" the error is not

flagged by Word). Sometimes the grammar checker may fail to reflect the writer's original intention, and as a result the correct version suggested may not be helpful or accurate. For instance, in "It not worth it," the Word grammar checker suggests that it is a fragment when in fact the main verb is missing. For thesaurus, it provides a list of synonyms (or antonyms) as possible alternatives, but they are not necessarily appropriate in the context intended by the student writers. On balance, while it is a good idea to alert students to the Word spelling and grammar checking functions, it is important to make them realize the limitations of these online tools so that they do not turn to them as a "a deus ex machina for correction" (Milton and Cheng 2010, p. 34). As teachers introduce students to the range of technology-assisted tools available to help them evaluate their own writing, it is important to draw attention to the limitations of these resources and to encourage students to develop their own grammatical judgment through testing their evolving hypotheses of L2. With the Word thesaurus, students should be warned that it is unwise to replace their original words with the suggested synonyms unthinkingly; instead they have to pay attention to the appropriate use of vocabulary in context. Concordancing, which we turn to in the next section, will be useful for this purpose as it enables students to examine language use in context.

Concordancing

Concordancing gives students access to "databases of authentic language uses culled from multiple sources" (Yoon and Hirvela 2004, p. 259), which are comprised of a large amount of authentic target language discourse (i.e., corpus/corpora) through which students can develop more nuanced understandings of usage or meaning in context. A concordance can be a software (e.g., Check My Words, Milton 2006) or web based (e.g., British National Corpus). Through consulting concordancing resources, students engage in a discovery-based approach to learning, during which they can verify the problems they pose, get answers to their problems, or edit their writing. Oftentimes concordancing does not give students model or correct answers right away, but they have to find out what works or what does not work in their writing through thinking and reflection. This is in line with AfL/AaL, which develops students' ability to take charge of their own learning. There is research evidence showing that concordancing can help reduce student written errors (e.g., Gaskell and Cobb 2004; Luo and Liao 2015; Todd 2001). Research has also demonstrated that concordancing can allow students to solve language-related problems in writing, such as collocation and simple confirmation (Lai and Chen 2015; Yoon 2008), and that it can be used in tandem with other complementary resources (e.g., dictionaries) to benefit student writing (Yoon 2016).

Although students of the twenty-first century are generally technology savvy, L2 school learners have to be introduced to relevant concordancing resources and shown how to utilize them to benefit their writing. With proper training and support,

concordancing can be a useful and productive reference tool for improving written accuracy and promoting learner autonomy (Yoon 2011). Quinn (2015) has proposed a learner training program that familiarizes students with the use of corpora as a reference tool to enhance their writing. First, students can be introduced to the concept of a corpus (the "what" and "why") and then provided with simple online practice. Then, they make use of concordancing to improve language use in their texts, focusing attention on word collocations and lexical substitutions. After receiving teacher feedback, students make further use of concordancing to correct their errors in writing. They can even conference with the teacher to talk about the challenges presented by concordancing, during which the teacher can respond to student individual needs.

It is important to note that concordancing resources are not meant as panaceas, nor substitutes for the teacher and peers for feedback. They are used to enhance writing, increase independence, and improve self-/peer editing skills, which are all crucial to AfL/AaL. Examples of web-based concordancing include:

- British National Corpus: www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk
- Collins WordBanks Online: www.collins.co.uk/page/Wordbanks+Online
- International Corpus of English: http://www.ucl.ac.uk/english-usage/projects/ice.htm
- The Corpus of Contemporary American English: corpus.byu.edu/coca/
- Just the Word: http://www.just-the-word.com/
- Treebank of Learner English: http://esltreebank.org/

Other Online Tools for Self–/Peer Evaluation

Apart from checking language use in writing (e.g., Word spelling, grammar, and thesaurus, as well as concordancing), there are online tools that enable students to address more global issues in writing. Microsoft Word, for example, provides annotation tools for students to give peer comments on both global and local issues. With the "comment" tool, students can give feedback on different parts of the peer's text, and such feedback can be emailed back to the author for review. The "Track Changes" tool, on the other hand, allows students to edit, add, and/or delete the peer's text, while the author can keep track of the original version and decide whether to accept or reject the suggested changes. In addition, Google Docs provides a web-based platform for students to edit google documents stored on the server online, during which peer feedback can be provided. Screencast technology can also be exploited to facilitate self- and peer evaluation. After teachers have modeled feedback delivery through screencasting, students can work in collaborative groups and produce screencast feedback for their peers. To encourage metacognition and self-regulated learning, students can conduct self-evaluation using screencast technology and examine their own writing by asking relevant metacognitive questions and analyzing their own strengths and weaknesses. Student videos can be sent to the teacher, who can give further comments to help students improve their writing.

Research about the potential of online feedback for L2 learners is mostly conducted in tertiary contexts and mainly addresses the potential benefits of computer-mediated peer feedback, which is found to suit students who feel inhibited to give feedback in face-to-face situations (Ho and Savignon 2007; Savignon and Roithmeier 2004). In writing classrooms that emphasize AfL/AaL, both self- and peer evaluation should be encouraged. In L2 school contexts, where learners are less mature and proficient than their tertiary counterparts, the choice of suitable online tools is crucial. Teachers have to provide not only guidance but also training and practice so that students use the online tools with confidence and competence. The next section introduces a new Writing ePlatform designed by the Hong Kong Education Bureau, which demonstrates how technology can be used to facilitate self- and peer evaluation.

The Writing ePlatform: A Hong Kong Example that Puts Students at the Center of Learning

Recently, the Hong Kong Education Bureau (EDB) and the Center for Language Education at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST) (commissioned by the EDB) have developed a new Writing ePlatform that aims to promote AfL/AaL among upper primary and lower secondary students (i.e., Grades 4–9). Unlike AWE, the Writing ePlatform is not a teacher evaluation tool. Instead, it comprises a number of tools that promote a discovery approach to learning and encourages students to reflect, self-assess, and develop greater fluency, accuracy, and independence in writing. It is a technological tool that facilitates AfL/AaL in the writing classroom.

Although the Writing ePlatform is designed for Hong Kong school students with a focus on language errors, because of its potential for promoting AfL/AaL, this section provides a description of this electronic platform[4] to illustrate how technology can be used to provide formative feedback, integrate assessment and learning, and encourage students to take responsibility for learning. The Writing ePlatform can be accessed at:

http://writingelab.edb.hkedcity.net/.

A trial teacher account and a trial student account have been created for interested readers:

- Trial teacher account username: trialte1; password: x0dbwt
- Trial student account username: trial01; password: ubn735

[4] I was invited by the Education Bureau to comment on the Writing ePlatform at its trial stage and later to co-present (together with other teacher educators) a workshop for school teachers in Hong Kong that demonstrated how assessment as learning could be integrated into the Writing ePlatform. Consent to use materials from the Writing ePlatform, including the screenshots from Examples 9.3, 9.4, 9.5, 9.6, 9.7, 9.8, 9.9, and 9.10, has been formally obtained from the Education Bureau, Hong Kong.

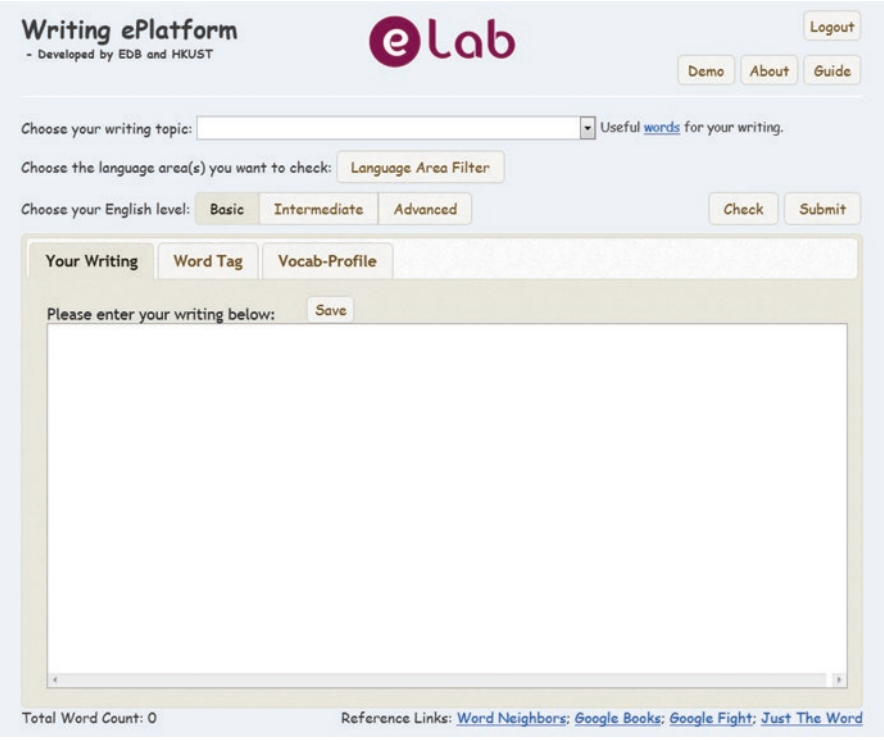
Features of Writing ePlatform

The Writing ePlatform is comprised of the eLab and a number of tools with different functions, which are outlined in the following:

1. Writing eLab

Writing eLab (see Example 9.2) is the student interface where students submit their typed written texts for instant corrective feedback, as well as suggestions on how to improve their writing. Students choose from a total of 11 topics such as "An enjoyable trip," "Fun ways to improve English," and "Writing about my best friend." The error rules of the ePlatform were established from a corpus of 1800 student essays written on these topics, where common errors made by local students were compiled, with additional rules based on the works of Milton (2006, 2011) and Milton and Cheng (2010). The ePlatform also allows students to select the feedback according to their English proficiency level – namely, basic, intermediate, or advanced.

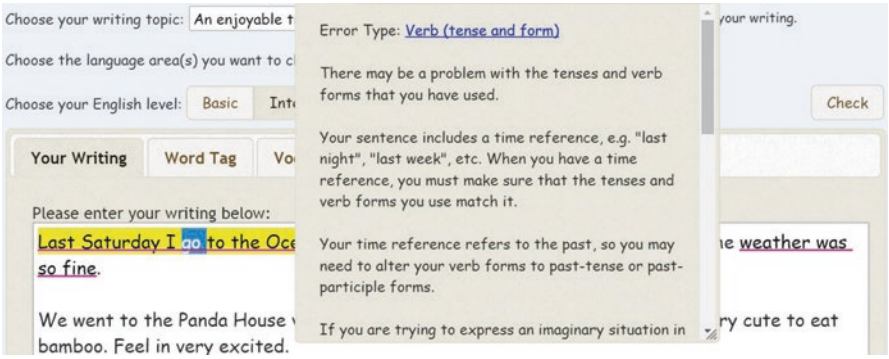
Example 9.2 eLab of the Writing ePlatform



2. Instantaneous corrective feedback

After students have submitted their writing, potential problems in the text will be underlined in red (see Example 9.3). Students can click on the underlined texts and get feedback on how they can improve those problematic parts of the text. The example in Example 9.3 is a problem relating to the verb ("Last Saturday I go to …"), with explanations provided.

Example 9.3 Instant Feedback on Problematic Texts

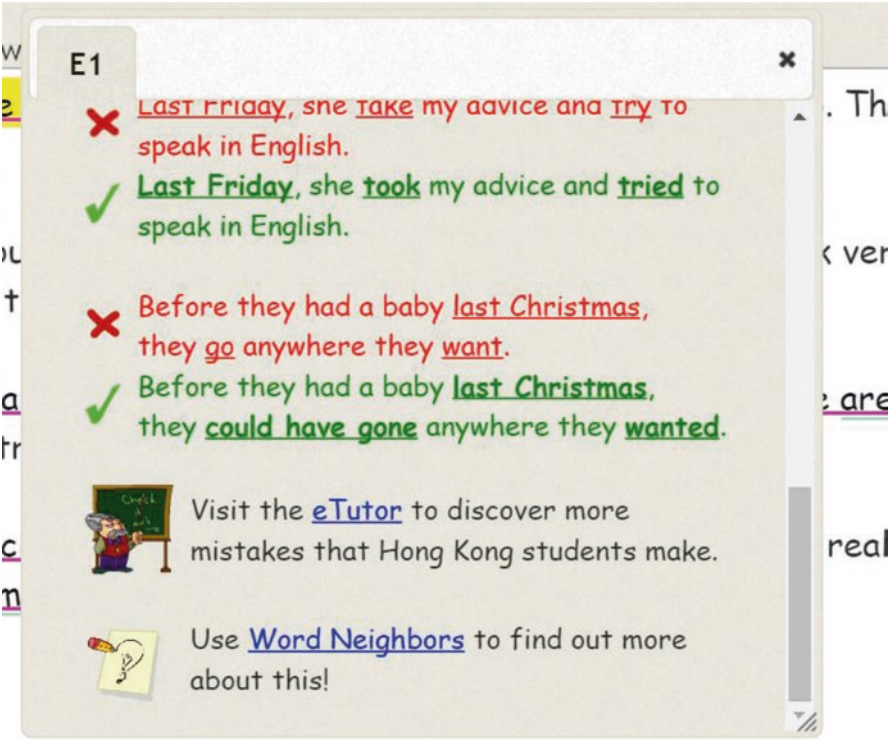


To obtain focused feedback on specific language items, students can choose "Language area filter" (see eLab in Example 9.2) and select the language areas they want feedback on. For example, they can tick "articles" and "prepositions" to receive feedback on these two areas only.

3. Web-based tools: eTutor and Word Neighbors

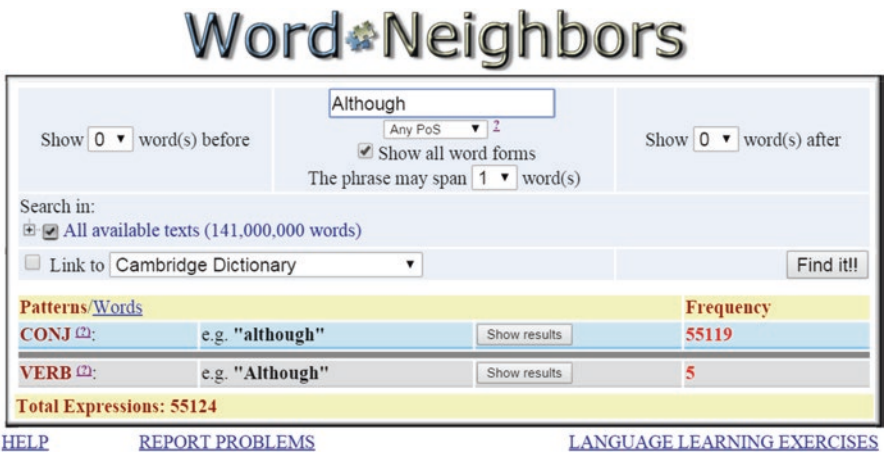
On the instant feedback page, after reading the explanations about the problematic texts highlighted in red (see Example 9.3), students can also go to eTutor and Word Neighbors (see Example 9.4) to get additional help and support. eTutor (Example 9.5) is a web-based portal that provides learning materials on common errors organized around writing topics and error categories. There are supplementary video materials to support learning, giving students help to enhance metacognitive awareness of their own errors. Word Neighbors (see Example 9.6) is a concordance that provides students with additional help with regard to word choice and collocation.

Example 9.4 eTutor and Word Neighbors



Example 9.5 eTutor

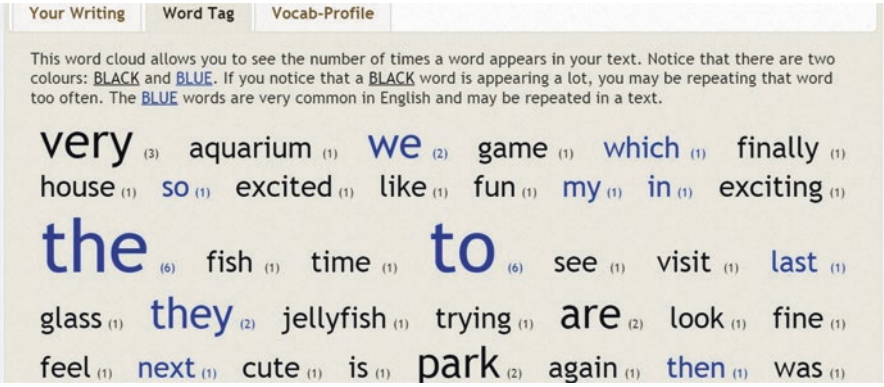
Example 9.6 Word Neighbors



4. Word Tag

To enable students to find out the vocabulary use in their writing, they can click on "Word tag" (see eLab in Example 9.2) and see the number of times a word is used in the text (Example 9.7). In blue are high-frequency words where repeated use is just common in English writing (e.g., function words). In black, however, are words that have been used quite a lot. These are words that students may want to replace, where appropriate. Overall, "Word tag" can provide useful assessment information to enable students to monitor their use of vocabulary in writing.

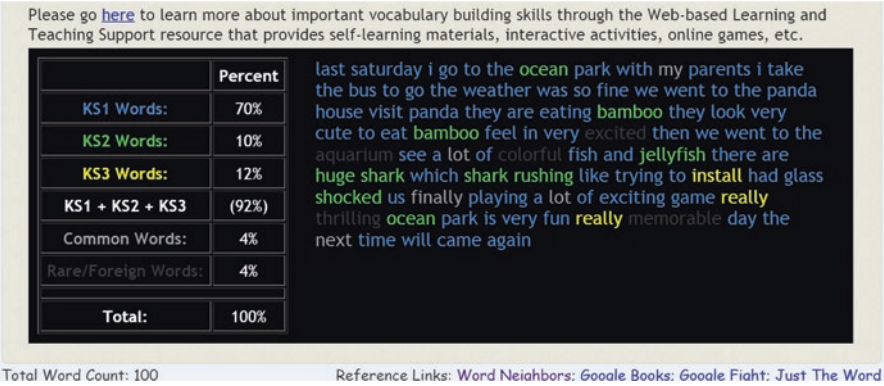
Example 9.7 Word Tag



5. Vocab-Profile

The Vocab-Profile (see eLab in Example 9.2) enables students to find out the types of vocabulary used in their text with reference to the word lists for Key stage 1 (Grades 1–3), Key stage 2 (Grades 4–6), and Key stage 3 (Grades 7–9) provided by the Hong Kong EDB (Example 9.8). In other words, students will be able to find out the range of vocabulary used in the text – specifically the proportion of words that fall within different key stages. A Grade 7 (Key stage 3) student, for example, may find that 70% of the words in her text belong to the word list for Key stage 2 (Grades 4–6). Such assessment information can help students become aware of their range of vocabulary use in writing and take follow-up action, where necessary.

Example 9.8 Vocab-Profile



6. Useful vocabulary for the writing topic

On eLab, students can also click on "Useful words for your writing" next to the writing topic (see eLab in Example 9.2) and find lists of vocabulary on the topic, which are categorized into different subtopics such as "Describing things," "General content words," and "Society, people, and personal information" (see Example 9.9). They can click on the words to find out their meanings and usage. Example 9.10 shows the results of a student's attempt to search for the word "aspect" as an alternative word for his/her writing.

Example 9.9 Useful Words for the Writing Topic "An Enjoyable Trip"

Suggested vocabularies for "An enjoyable trip"

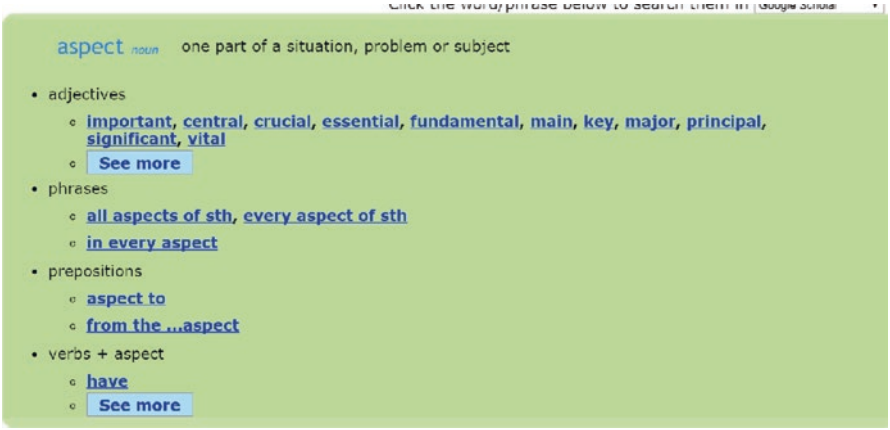
Describing Things

aluminium	angle	approximate	artificial	audio	awkward	base	billion
broad	bundle	capacity	cardboard	category	cement	centimetre	chain
clay	coarse	column	compact	concrete	copper	criteria	cube
curve	cylinder	damp	dear	decrease	delicate	dim	dimension
disgusting	dual	dull	edge	elastic	exact	expand	feature
fine	foot	genuine	giant	gram	heap	hollow	ideal
identical	inch	increase	kilogram	kilometre	least	length	litre
mass	maximum	mere	metre	mild	mile	milligram	millilitre
millimetre	million	minimum	minus	minute	mock	moving	multiple
multiply	naked	neutral	normal	object	outdated	pale	parallel
pattern	pile	plain	plus	pound	precious	precise	proportion
pure	quantity	random	rare	ratio	raw	regular	rosy
rubber	rust	scale	scarce	sequence	series	sole	steady
steel	stiff	substance	subtract	sum	super	swollen	tonne
touching	tough	underground	uniform	upright	vacuum	visible	visual
volume	wax	yard					

General Content Words

affect	army	aspect	cause	characteristic	condition	consider	cool
dare	deal	distance	effect	element	equipment	fact	factor
fear	function	furniture	gang	image	object	obstacle	position

Example 9.10 Search Results of the Word "Aspect"



aspect *noun* one part of a situation, problem or subject

- adjectives
  - important, central, crucial, essential, fundamental, main, key, major, principal, significant, vital
  - See more
- phrases
  - all aspects of sth, every aspect of sth
  - in every aspect
- prepositions
  - aspect to
  - from the ...aspect
- verbs + aspect
  - have
  - See more

Potential of Writing ePlatform for Promoting AfL/AaL

Unlike AWE tools such as *Criterion* and *My Access!,* the Writing ePlatform is not intended to take the place of the human teacher. It is an online tool that provides a corpus-based, human-assisted system to help students identify major errors, to provide scaffolding to support student learning of lexicogrammatical features relevant to their writing task, and to encourage self-assessment, self-reflection, metacognition, and independent learning (McMinn and Leung 2013). The Writing ePlatform

can be exploited in a process- and AfL/AaL-oriented classroom that puts students at the center of learning, facilitating self-evaluation within the process cycle. Students write the first draft on a topic that falls within one of the 11 topics included in the Writing ePlatform. Then they submit their draft to the eLab, which analyzes their problems in writing and provides instant feedback. Based on such feedback, and with the help of the web-based tools, students will revise their text and submit a revised draft. Hence, the electronic feedback provided serves as feed forward, too, to help students improve their writing.

Both the teacher and peers can have important roles to play during the writing process. When students are working on the ePlatform, teachers play the role of a facilitator, making themselves available to offer assistance and advice where necessary. By gathering information about students' common errors diagnosed by the ePlatform, teachers can use the assessment information to plan their grammar instruction and provide grammar reinforcement activities. Students can also work with a partner when reviewing their writing on the ePlatform and get further feedback from their peers to improve their writing.

While the Writing ePlatform is a means to help students learn to improve their writing, it has a number of limitations. The corpus is based on only 11 writing topics, designed for Grade 4–9 students in Hong Kong schools. Also, the ePlatform provides feedback on language use only, and it is not able to catch all errors for students. Electronic feedback generated by the ePlatform should therefore be used together with teacher/peer feedback on content, organization, and other issues. Although the ePlatform does not identify all language errors for students, it diagnoses the major errors in student writing, and hence the feedback is manageable. It is instant, and hence timely, and the convenience brought by technology can make sure that feedback is delivered on an ongoing basis (hence constant feedback). Overall, the ePlatform is able to provide timely, constant, and manageable feedback, which is in line with the notion of "dynamic written corrective feedback" proposed by Hartshorn et al. (2010). Finally, but no less important, although students may demonstrate strong familiarity with technology use, they should not be left to their own devices. Instead teacher coaching, modeling, and instruction at different stages are crucial to the success of technology use in the writing classroom.

Conclusion

This chapter examines the role of technology in classroom writing assessment and feedback. Research on this area is in the ascendant, and to date the findings generated by the growing body of research are promising, suggesting that L2 teachers can make better and further use of technology to promote school learners' writing development. One size, however, does not fit all. Technology use in classroom writing assessment and feedback is influenced by a number of factors, including the institutional context, curriculum goals, the learners' age, needs, proficiency level, access to technology, attitudes of teachers and students, and their skills in using

technologies. Since technology is changing fast, teachers need to keep up-to-date with the newest developments in technology use. More importantly, both teachers and students have to be cognizant of the limitations of technology and the challenges arising from its implementation. And however exciting technologies are, they cannot take the place of the human teacher but should be used as a "supplement to classroom instruction" (Ware and Warschauer 2006, p. 108).

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Chapter 10
Classroom Assessment Literacy for L2 Writing Teachers

Introduction

The turn of the twenty-first century has witnessed "a phenomenal increase in the testing and assessment responsibilities placed upon language teachers" (Fulcher 2012, p. 113), and as a result, teachers' assessment literacy has been an important topic for discussion and research (Popham 2008; Vogt and Tsagari 2014). More than two decades ago, US assessment scholar Rick Stiggins sounded an alarm about teachers' inabilities to conduct effective language assessment; he wrote: "we are a nation of assessment illiterates" (Stiggins 1991, p. 535). In the same decade, the UK assessment for learning reform (Black and Wiliam 1998) also triggered considerable interest in teacher assessment literacy. Since then, there has been an increasing realization throughout the world that teacher assessment literacy is underdeveloped (Jin 2010; Popham 2011; Volante and Fazio 2007) and that it warrants urgent attention on teachers' professional development programs.

In L2 school contexts, teachers' lack of assessment literacy is a cause for concern. Throughout schoolchildren's more than 10 years of schooling, teachers administer assessment of different kinds on a regular basis, and assessment illiterate teachers are likely to fail their responsibility in designing sound and effective assessments, jeopardizing learning and teaching with dire consequences for students' future learning. Therefore, examining how assessment literacy can be developed among L2 teachers in school contexts is of paramount importance. With a specific focus on classroom writing, this chapter examines the assessment literacy that L2 school teachers need for conducting effective classroom writing assessment. While the preceding nine chapters have addressed different aspects of classroom writing assessment geared toward helping writing teachers enhance their classroom assessment literacy, this final chapter provides a con-

The original version of this chapter was revised. An erratum to this chapter can be found at https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-3924-9_11

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I. Lee, *Classroom Writing Assessment and Feedback in L2 School Contexts*,
DOI 10.1007/978-981-10-3924-9_10

clusion to the book by discussing what it means for teachers to possess classroom assessment literacy to conduct effective classroom assessment in L2 school writing contexts.

Teacher Assessment Literacy

Assessment literacy refers to teachers' knowledge and understanding of the principles and practices of effective assessment (Carless 2011; Crusan et al. 2016; Popham 2004; Stiggins 2002; Volante and Fazio 2007; Xu and Brown 2016). Specifically, the term "language assessment literacy" is used (Inbar-Lourie 2008) to refer to assessment literacy for language teachers, comprising skills, knowledge, and principles of language testing and assessment (Davies 2008). Language assessment literacy is a multidimensional concept that encompasses "a repertoire of competences" (Pill and Harding 2013, p. 382); it enables teachers to create, develop, and evaluate language tests/assessments; analyze, interpret, and report assessment data accurately and appropriately for different purposes; and provide feedback to learners to help them improve learning (Inbar-Lourie 2008; Stiggins 1999). Assessment literacy, however, should not be examined in a vacuum but instead it is intertwined with the social and historical context in which assessment takes place (Davies 2008). As Scarino (2013) aptly puts, assessment is "situated in distinctive institutional and policy contexts that confer on the assessment process particular characteristics and requirements" (p. 311). As different educational systems around the world are witnessing a paradigm shift from summative to formative assessment, assessment literacy should take into consideration principles and practices relevant to classroom/formative assessment, in addition to skills and practices pertaining to large-scale standardized testing (Stiggins 1991). In the context of language learning, in different parts of the world, the local curriculum and assessment frameworks place a great deal of focus on assessment for learning (AfL) – e.g., Australia, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, and the UK. This new assessment culture necessitates language assessment training for teachers that enables them to use formative assessment practices to support learning and teaching. With a focus on classroom writing assessment and feedback, this book is concerned with classroom assessment literacy that entails knowledge of effective ways to assess student learning and writing and to give feedback in the writing classroom.

Recent research on teacher assessment literacy has shown that teachers in general lack assessment literacy (e.g., Campbell and Collins 2007; Coombe et al. 2012; Malone 2013; Mertler 2004; White 2009) and feel ill-equipped to assess students' performance (e.g., Mertler 2009; Zhu 2004). Volante and Fazio (2007) surveyed 69 preservice primary teachers to gauge their level of assessment literacy and found a low level of self-efficacy among them across each of the four years of the teacher education program. Similarly, the primary teachers in Yamtim and Wongwanich's

(2014) study demonstrated a low level of classroom assessment literacy. Vogt and Tsagari's (2014) study indicated that the assessment literacy of pre- and in-service teachers from six European countries was underdeveloped. Research about the impact of language assessment training has yielded mixed results. The experimental study by Fan et al. (2011) showed that after training the assessment knowledge of the 47 in-service secondary school teachers, especially those with low-level prior knowledge, had improved. However, the assessment training provided to the European preservice and inservice teachers in Vogt and Tsagari's (2014) study was found to be inadequate, and as a result the teachers had to turn to mentors and colleagues for advice, which ran the risk of "perpetuating inappropriate assessment methods" (p. 392) routinely used by experienced teachers. Many of the participants in the study expressed a need to receive further assessment training that catered to their needs in their own specific educational contexts. Lam's (2015) recent study about the language assessment training needs of Hong Kong preservice teachers showed that language assessment training in Hong Kong was insufficient; the language assessment courses scrutinized in the study were found to fall short in terms of helping preservice teachers bridge the gap between theory and practice in the context of assessment reform in Hong Kong. Overall, research suggests that teacher assessment literacy is not up to scratch and that quality assessment training is much needed.

Classroom Assessment Literacy for Writing Teachers

In L2 contexts, writing teachers also lack adequate assessment training (Crusan et al. 2016; Dempsey et al. 2009) and need assessment literacy to carry out effective writing assessments. This chapter focuses on classroom assessment literacy (rather than assessment knowledge about large-scale testing and summative tests), which enables L2 writing teachers to use classroom assessment "for effectively utilizing the assessment process and outcomes to develop and improve the quality of instruction of teachers and learning of students" (Yamtim and Wongwanich 2014, p. 2998). The relationship between classroom assessment and teaching and learning is underlined by Popham (2009): "the more importance that the teacher ascribes to classroom assessments, the more profound will be the impact of such assessments on a classroom's day-to-day instructional activities" (p. 7). Writing teachers' classroom assessment literacy is essential for "the development of quality of learning and instruction" (Yamtim and Wongwanich 2014, p. 2999), and hence one major goal of assessment training for L2 writing teachers is to help them become facilitators of learning (Fulcher 2012, p. 116). Simply put, classroom assessment literacy can "play a powerful role in teaching students better … and markedly improve students' learning" (Popham 2011, p. 271).

Knowledge Base of Writing Teacher Classroom Assessment Literacy

Drawing on the teacher/language assessment literacy literature, the knowledge base of classroom assessment literacy for writing teachers is defined in terms of their ability to do the following (Chappuis et al. 2012; Inbar-Lourie 2008; Plake and Impara 1997; Popham 2004; Stiggins 1999, 2002; Volante and Fazio 2007):

- Understand the different purposes of classroom writing assessment and how they can be used to maximize student learning.
- Utilize feedback effectively to improve student learning.
- Involve students in self-assessment/peer assessment, goal setting, self-monitoring, and self-reflection.
- Employ different classroom writing assessment tools to maximize student learning, e.g., teacher feedback forms, error ratio analysis, the error log, peer feedback, and portfolio assessment.
- Design effective classroom writing assessment tasks to evaluate student writing, e.g., technology-enhanced writing tasks.
- Use assessment effectively to motivate students and help them learn.
- Make use of classroom assessment to improve instruction.

While the above is not intended as an exhaustive list of the components of classroom writing assessment literacy, it encapsulates the major competences L2 writing teachers need in order to develop their assessment abilities to conduct classroom writing assessment effectively.

Feedback Literacy as a Key Component of Classroom Writing Assessment Literacy

Feedback literacy is specifically highlighted as an indispensable part of writing teachers' classroom assessment literacy, defined as teachers' ability to use feedback effectively to support student learning. Although Sutton (2012) focuses on the students in his discussion of feedback literacy, referring to it as "the ability to read, interpret and use written feedback" (Sutton 2012, p. 31) and to "act upon, or feedforward, the feedback given" (Sutton 2012, p. 37), I maintain that feedback literacy pertains to both teacher and learners. In order that students become feedback literate, teachers have to be feedback literate in the first place since they have to provide opportunities and support to facilitate students to read, interpret, and act upon teacher feedback. Although feedback literacy is still a nascent concept in the L2 writing literature, it has a vital role to play in helping teachers deliver useful feedback and in enabling students to utilize feedback productively. Therefore, feedback literacy should be accorded an important place in writing teachers' classroom assessment literacy development.

Amidst the limited literature about teachers' feedback literacy, there is research that shows that teachers lack feedback literacy – i.e., they are not using feedback effectively to promote student learning. The preservice ESL teachers in Guénette and Lyster's (2013) study were found to overuse direct corrections at the expense of indirect feedback strategies. The secondary teachers in Lee's (2004) survey study reported that they used a limited range of error feedback strategies, and the error correction task they completed showed that only slightly over half of their corrections were accurate. Bailey and Garner's (2010) study suggested that teacher feedback did not generally have the intended positive effect, and teachers themselves were ambivalent about the value of feedback. Also, when participating teachers provided feedback, they needed to conform to the institutional requirements, procedures, and priorities, which resulted in conflicts between their conceptions of the pedagogical purposes of feedback on the one hand and the demands of the system on the other. Similarly, the secondary teachers in Lee's (2011a) study felt that they were hamstrung by the constraints in their work contexts, which posed obstacles to both effective feedback practices and possible feedback innovations. Thus, teacher feedback literacy for L2 writing, as part of classroom assessment literacy, requires knowledge that is "contextualized in the realities of teachers' contexts of practice – as pedagogical or practical and experiential knowledge" (Scarino 2013, p. 316). At the core of teacher feedback literacy is an understanding of the social context which is enmeshed with teaching, learning, and assessment. As pointed out in Chap. 6, context plays a significant role in teacher feedback; therefore, the development of teachers' feedback literacy needs to take account of the multifarious contextual factors that influence their feedback practices. Just as teacher assessment literacies are understood as "contextualized and culturally responsive practices" (Yu and Brown, 2016, p. 154), teacher feedback literacy has to take into consideration a contextualized perspective.

Although feedback literacy is singled out in this section, I do not make a distinction between feedback literacy and classroom assessment literacy in this chapter because the former is part of the latter.

Research on L2 Teachers' Classroom Writing Assessment Literacy Development

In L2 writing, there is a dearth of research that addresses teachers' classroom assessment literacy development. The small body of research has demonstrated a few important factors that are crucial to teachers' development of effective classroom writing assessment practices. To begin with, lack of training has been highlighted as a critical factor to explain teachers' assessment illiteracy. In L2 writing, the fact that teachers have adhered to traditional, form-focused written corrective feedback practice for ages, despite its overall ineffectiveness in helping students improve their writing, is due to the fact that teachers' feedback practices are largely modelled on

their own teachers' previous practices (Lee 2008) – i.e., apprenticeship of observation (Lortie 1975). In her study of the development of four secondary teachers of English in Hong Kong, Lee (2010) explored the impact of training on teacher learning, including the ways they perceived writing assessment and feedback. It was found that through problematizing and challenging taken-for-granted assumptions about conventional practices (e.g., an error-focused and teacher-dominated approach to feedback) on a writing teacher education course, the teachers developed new perspectives on teacher feedback (i.e., the importance of a balanced approach that covers content, language, and organization in teacher feedback) and the importance of student involvement in the writing classroom (e.g., the role of peer feedback). Having undertaken small-scale classroom research (e.g., exploring peer feedback in their own classroom), the teachers deepened their understandings, changed their cognitions, and developed personalized theories that benefited teaching and learning in their own writing classroom. Lee (2010) also found that exposure to the professional/research literature was able to stimulate and inspire the teachers; through critically reflecting on the readings the teachers were able to connect theory and research to practice, and they also began to realize the importance of blending the idealism of good practice with the realities of the classroom. From Lee (2010), it is evident that training comprised of critical reflection, classroom inquiry, and relevant academic reading is critical to writing teachers' classroom assessment literacy development. Min's (2013) single-case study of a college teacher's self-study focused specifically on feedback literacy, demonstrating that teacher professional development in the area of feedback could take place in the form of self-reflection activities undertaken by teachers themselves. Through collecting and analyzing the teacher's own reflection journal entries, learning log, and written feedback on students' samples over time, it was found that the teacher developed new cognitions; enhanced her written feedback practice, e.g., changing from a prescriptive stance to a more probing and collaborative reader stance; and improved her procedural knowledge in giving written feedback. Min's (2013) findings echo those of Lee (2010), suggesting that teachers' critical reflection is central to their assessment literacy development.

Teachers' attempts at innovations are a crucial part of their classroom assessment literacy development. Research studies on L2 writing teachers' assessment innovations are, however, few and far between. Recent research by Lee and her coresearchers has focused on L2 school teachers' attempts to undertake assessment and feedback innovations (e.g., Lee 2011b, 2015; Lee and Coniam 2013; Mak and Lee 2014; Lee et al. 2015, 2016), which witnessed school teachers' adoption of AfL/AaL in writing and experimentation with a selective approach to written corrective feedback. A number of important implications have emerged from the findings of these studies. Firstly, all of the studies were based on some form of partnership between the university and schools, which was found to have an instrumental role to play in enhancing teachers' classroom writing assessment literacy. The ongoing support provided by external experts not only sharpened the participating teachers' knowledge and skills but also boosted their confidence in the AfL/AaL strategies they embraced in their writing classrooms. Thus, ongoing and sustained

professional development, rather than one-shot and short-lived workshops, is essential to help teachers develop their knowledge and skills for designing effective classroom assessments (Koh 2011). Additionally, teachers' isolated and piecemeal attempts at assessment innovations were found to be unproductive and unlikely to reap success (Lee et al. 2016). Communities of practice need to be established, and common visions at the school level have to be developed to help facilitate and sustain change in the writing classrooms. It is important that professional development is embedded within teachers' day-to-day work (Koh 2011) and that teacher collaboration takes place in professional learning communities at the workplace so that teachers can discuss issues and challenges relevant to them (Fullan 2005; Kristmanson et al. 2009; Plakans and Gebril 2015). Finally, but no less important, is the development of students' assessment literacy. Some of the participating students in Lee (2015) and Lee et al. (2015) expressed negative attitudes toward student-centered assessment activities such as peer evaluation. This is not surprising particularly in EFL contexts where students perceive the teacher as the key assessor and sole authority. The effective implementation of AfL/AaL, however, hinges largely on students' understanding of learning goals and success criteria and of what makes a good piece of writing. In AaL in particular, since students are key assessors during the assessment process, preparing them for effective AaL practice and changing their attitudes and expectations are essential. It takes time to effect change in the mind-sets and attitudes of students, but through targeted instruction and building a secure and supportive learning environment for students to experience success with alternative assessments in the writing classroom, new attitudes can be fostered and inculcated so that students can be helped to become assessment capable in L2 writing classrooms. An important goal of teachers' assessment literacy development, therefore, is to produce students who are assessment literate.

Future Directions

Teachers usually spend one quarter to one third or even as much as half of their teaching time in assessment activities (Stiggins 1991; White 2009). In the case of L2 writing, teachers may spend even a larger amount of time assessing and providing feedback on student writing. In different parts of the world, however, teachers conduct assessment activities without formal training (Hasselgreen et al. 2004), and there tends to be a lack of emphasis on assessment in teacher training or professional development programs (Stiggins 2002; Volante and Fazio 2007). This holds true for L2 writing, as writing teacher education is by and large underdeveloped (Hirvela and Belcher 2007), and writing teachers receive little training in assessment and feedback (Crusan et al. 2016; Lee 2008). Professional development for improving L2 writing teachers' classroom assessment literacy is indeed a high priority. Specifically, professional development should be scaled up to involve more schools and more teachers, including preservice teachers.

In addition to participation in professional development activities, pivotal to assessment literacy development is teachers' adoption of assessment initiatives (Inbar-Lourie 2008). As elaborated by Timperley and Alton-Lee (2008, p. 340):

> To make a difference to their students' learning, however … the content of what teachers learned needed to result in some changes to their practice, because it is teaching practice that influences the learning opportunities for students.

Teachers' assessment literacy and their assessment initiatives, however, are tied up with their professional practice in their own specific context (2013). Such context relates not only to the classroom but also the school and entire educational system. Admittedly, teachers play a significant role in designing effective classroom writing assessment and feedback, but the school and system factors (Carless 2005, 2011; Fullan 1982, 1991) cannot be overstated. At the school level, the school, school leadership, culture, curricula, assessment policy, etc. have to be supportive of the implementation of AfL/AaL as well as formative feedback in process-oriented writing classrooms. At the system level, although educational policies in many parts of the world do put a high premium on AfL, the intransigence of the public examination system which is in many ways incompatible with the principles of AfL presents a severe challenge to fully realizing the spirit of learning-oriented writing assessment. Professional development to help teachers with effective and feasible classroom writing assessment practices should, therefore, embrace a situated perspective (Koh 2011) and preferably a participatory mode of teacher learning, where teachers gather together in professional learning communities in the workplace to discuss ways to develop effective classroom writing assessments and feedback amidst all the challenges they face in their own work contexts.

Conclusion

It is more than fitting to conclude the book with a chapter on classroom assessment literacy as the primary goal of the book is to explore how classroom writing assessment and feedback can be used effectively to promote student learning in L2 school contexts. This book is written in the hopes of enhancing L2 writing teachers' classroom assessment literacy so that they can develop a strong grasp of effective assessment principles and practices in their day-to-day role as writing teacher-assessors, i.e., to design "instructionally relevant assessment" (Shepard 2000, p. 13), to utilize feedback appropriately and effectively, and, above all, to develop assessment skills to bring assessment and teaching into alignment so as to improve student learning. To recapitulate, L2 writing teachers' classroom assessment literacy development entails training and initiatives that enhance understanding of:

- The pivotal role of classroom assessment and feedback in enhancing student learning of writing (Chap. 1)
- The principles of classroom assessment designed to help students improve learning (Chap. 2)

- How assessment for and as learning can be implemented in the writing classroom (Chaps. 3 and 4)
- The critical role of feedback in classroom writing assessment (Chap. 5)
- How teacher feedback can be effectively used to maximize student learning (Chap. 6)
- How peer feedback can be employed to bring about effective learning (Chap. 7)
- Writing portfolios as a pedagogical and assessment tool for improving student learning (Chap. 8)
- The important role of technology in classroom writing assessment and feedback (Chap. 9)
- The centrality of teachers' classroom assessment literacy to effective teaching and learning of writing (Chap. 10)

Indeed, effective assessment practices are fundamental to the teaching of second language writing (Crusan et al. 2016). Assessment literacy for teachers is not a fad; it is a must (Popham 2009) – the lack of which is referred to as "professional suicide" (Popham 2004, p. 82). Ending on this note, I hope that my book will be taken seriously though, with all humbleness, it is but a small step toward developing L2 writing teachers' classroom assessment literacy.

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Errata to: Classroom Writing Assessment and Feedback in L2 School Contexts

Icy Lee

Errata to:
I. Lee, *Classroom Writing Assessment and Feedback in L2 School Contexts*, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-3924-9

Erratum to: Chapter 2 – Purpose, Theory, and Practice of Classroom L2 Writing Assessment
DOI 10.1007/978-981-10-3924-9_2

In page 13, 5th and 6th line of 2nd paragraph were incorrectly published as (3) monitoring the problem, and (4) evaluating after the problem is solved

This has been correctly published as (4) monitoring the problem, and (5) evaluating after the problem is solved

Erratum to: Chapter 4 – Assessment as Learning in the L2 Writing Classroom
DOI 10.1007/978-981-10-3924-9_4

In Page 47, the first line of the 1st paragraph was incorrectly published as, be encouraged to monito ng an error log (see Example 2.8 in Chap. 2), where they

This has been correctly published as, be encouraged to monitor their written accuracy development by keeping an error log (see Example 2.8 in Chap. 2), where they

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The updated online versions of these chapters can be found at
https://DOI 10.1007/978-981-10-3924-9_2
https://DOI 10.1007/978-981-10-3924-9_4
https://DOI 10.1007/978-981-10-3924-9_6
https://DOI 10.1007/978-981-10-3924-9_9
https://DOI 10.1007/978-981-10-3924-9_10
https://DOI 10.1007/978-981-10-3924-9

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I. Lee, *Classroom Writing Assessment and Feedback in L2 School Contexts*,
DOI 10.1007/978-981-10-3924-9_11

Erratum to: Chapter 6 – Teacher Feedback in L2 Writing
DOI 10.1007/978-981-10-3924-9_6

In Page 71, 4th line of the 2nd paragraph in *Oral Feedback* was incorrectly published as talk (Han and Hyland 2017; Harris 1995), the topics discussed in conferences

This has been correctly published as talk (Han and Hyland 2016; Harris 1995), the topics discussed in conferences

And this correction was updated in the reference list also in page 80 as Han, Y., & Hyland, F. (2016). Oral corrective feedback on L2 writing from a sociocultural perspective: A case study on two writing conferences in a Chinese university. *Writing and Pedagogy, 8*(3), 433–459.

Erratum to: Chapter 9 – Technology in Classroom L2 Writing Assessment and Feedback
DOI 10.1007/978-981-10-3924-9_9

In page 135, 7th line of 2nd paragraph was incorrectly published as encourages students to reflect on, self-assess, and develop greater fluency, accuracy

This has been correctly published as encourages students to reflect, self-assess, and develop greater fluency, accuracy

Erratum to: Chapter 10 – Classroom Assessment Literacy for L2 Writing Teachers
DOI 10.1007/978-981-10-3924-9_10

An entry was incomplete in the reference list. The complete reference was given below:

Bailey, R., & Garner, M. (2010). Is the feedback in higher education assessment worth the paper it is written on? Teachers' reflections on their practices. *Teaching in Higher Education, 15*, 187–198.