A CASE STUDY ON FEEDBACK ON EAP WRITING IN A HEI IN OMAN

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Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to the woman who raised me when I was a child, my late grandmother, who passed away on 29th of December 2014. May Allah's mercy and forgiveness be upon her soul. Amen!

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Abstract

This research explored how feedback on English for Academic Purposes (EAP) writing was interpreted, enacted and developed by students, teachers and college leaders in a higher education institution (HEI) in Oman. The focus of the study was on probing the views and discursive practices of students and teachers, and on the college policy and guidance in relation to feedback on academic writing. The research posed a question that had largely been examined in previous research, such as Carless' (2006) study which explored the different perceptions of teachers and students towards the feedback process, assessment and marking in an L2 writing context. However, previous studies had not captured the underlying complexities, or the different levels of context surrounding the feedback practices, such as the influence of EAP writing on feedback practices. Therefore, this study investigated feedback on EAP writing in a particular HEI in Oman, where it explored feedback in a natural setting, putting emphasis on the social practices of teachers, students and college leaders. This study interviewed participants to find out their beliefs about feedback and EAP writing, as well as scrutinising the college stated policy about feedback. The study also examined actual feedback practices through observation, analysis of student writing and analysis of college documents.

The findings of this study showed that feedback practices in the Omani institution did not occur in isolation but were always surrounded by contextual influences. The analysis revealed that the practices of feedback were influenced by three levels of context: the local, the EAP writing and the institutional. First, feedback practices were found to be shaped by classroom interactions that occurred between teacher and students, or among students themselves, which were constructed by their beliefs about feedback and EAP writing, student self-directed learning, and teacher practices in giving feedback. Additionally, it was found that feedback practices were constructed in line with EAP writing pedagogy and academic conventions; e.g. student response to feedback

was determined by their understanding of EAP academic conventions. Finally, feedback was found to be influenced by the institutional context which concerned college support for feedback, including coaching, to help use and interpret policies and feedback.

Practical and theoretical implications are offered to researchers, teachers, students and college leaders based on the findings of the study. For example, based on the overall investigation of contextual influences in the institution, it is recommended to encourage teachers and students in their feedback practices, minimise any structural constraints that impede their practices, communicate college instructions clearly, build the competence of teachers and students, and provide transparent results for teacher and student efforts in enhancing their feedback practices.

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List of Abbreviations

CF   Corrective Feedback

WCF   Written Corrective Feedback

ESL   English as a Second Language

L1   First Language

L2   Second Language

FL   Foreign Language

CoAS Colleges of Applied Sciences

HoED Head of English Department

PD   Programme Director

HE   Higher Education

HEI   Higher Education Institution

MoHE   Ministry of Higher Education

SCL   Student Centred Learning

Conventions for Extracts from Interviews and Observations

(?): indicates unclear recording

... : indicates omitted material

( ): indicates additions or explanations inserted in an extract by the researcher

(( )) .... this symbol is used to describe physical acts or describe performance

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Chapter One: Introductory Chapter

1.1. Introduction

This introductory chapter introduces the topic of the thesis, identifies the main issues, and explains the origin and the direction of my interest in feedback given about writing in Omani EAP classes. It gives the broad background of the study. The chapter starts with the context of my personal experience and in relation to English for Academic Purposes (EAP) writing at one of the Colleges of Applied Sciences (CoAS) in Oman. It then presents the research rationale and objectives, followed by an outline of the thesis.

1.2. Contextual Background

The background to the study is my own experience and the Omani context, which are discussed in this section.

1.2.1. Personal Experience

Feedback for academic writing in English is my area of interest because of my own professional experience. In 2010, I was the coordinator of an English for Academic Purposes (EAP) writing course in one of the Colleges of Applied Sciences (CoAS) in Oman. Such colleges are governed by the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE). The course aimed to teach adult (higher education) students to write in English, for the purpose of subsequent study. These students would, after one year of an intensive general English programme, go on to study a range of subject-specific modules, along with the EAP writing module, to assist them with writing their assignments in English.

Interestingly, during the year that I worked in the CoAS, both students and teachers highlighted concerns about the use of feedback to improve their writing. I experienced complaints from EAP writing teachers that

their students were not responding to their feedback and that their efforts were in vain. At the same time, the students themselves complained about their teachers' feedback practices and regarded them as being unhelpful in their EAP writing development. As a coordinator, it was clear to me that there was either a lack of communication or a lack of shared purpose about the role and use of feedback to improve students' writing.

In the CoAS where I was employed, feedback was given great consideration. This institution had assessment criteria, textbooks, a project outline, and a course description that guided the use of feedback for writing. It attempted to shape the practices of feedback through the use of policies for feedback and teaching activities. For example, as will be discussed in Section 1.2.2., teachers are instructed to give face-to-face feedback sessions on students' project writing in week 10. However, the complaints of both students and teachers were also concerned with the institutional requirements and policies about feedback and writing practices. For example, some students complained about feedback given on the research skills, which are parts of the academic conventions of EAP writing that are taught in the project outline. This was because they did not see them as valuable in enhancing their EAP writing development.

In the context of my work in 2010, the focus of action pertaining to such complaints was procedural. The Head of the English Department (HoED) and I met the students and staff to reach mediated solutions and to discuss any complaints about institutional policies. This was an important part of ensuring that students' needs were met and that a letter to the MoHE could be sent, explaining the action taken. However, I felt that it would be fascinating to see whether something could be done to make feedback more useful to students and teachers. This experience was the basis of my interest in feedback about writing in an EAP context, and it raised a number of questions for me. I wondered why those students did not amend their work based on teacher feedback and why they seemed to show indifference to it. I thought this was possibly because they did not find the feedback useful, or if they found the manner in which the

teachers practised feedback confusing or irrelevant. Alternatively, it was possible that the students did not value EAP writing or that the practices they experienced were unclear to them. The students' understanding and use of feedback was a puzzle, and that is why it is a key issue for my research.

The complaints from the teachers about the students' use of feedback was another area of interest. Some teachers suggested that the students did not use feedback to improve their writing. This raised questions about what the teachers were expecting the students to do and why, which in turn led me to ask what the teachers believed the role of feedback in academic writing should be. I was interested in the teachers' beliefs about their EAP writing and their beliefs about feedback practices and whether they found the feedback useful in improving students' EAP writing. This is why teachers' understandings about feedback and the use of feedback in EAP writing are key issues in my research.

Finally, my experience coordinating EAP writing courses raised questions about the institutional guidance and policy from the MoHE. These policies existed to help teachers and students to use feedback well, but from the students' and the teachers' complaints, they were clearly not fully fit for purpose. I wondered exactly what was useful and what could be improved. I was also concerned about how the students and the teachers understood and used the criteria and policies guiding the feedback. For this reason, I have included the institutional context of EAP in HE in my study and, as a teacher, I would like to understand how teachers and students use, understand, and interpret policies and guidelines for feedback in EAP. Although, at the start of my study, these seemed to be straightforward processes, I have come to believe that the institutional policies and guidance are a very important part of the context of feedback, which shapes how the feedback is understood.

Coordinating EAP writing was an integral and substantial part of what I did in 2010. I had to maintain frequent contact with three parties, namely, the teachers, the students, and the college and ministry leaders, and

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discuss with them EAP writing and, sometimes, the feedback practices. It was unclear what the three groups did or believed, or how these beliefs overlapped, and it is that gap and ambiguity which underpins this study.

1.2.2. EAP Writing at the Colleges of Applied Sciences (CoAS)

As discussed in Section 1.2.1., my personal experience raised several questions related to the beliefs and practices of students, teachers, and college leaders regarding feedback in EAP writing. Therefore, the present study focuses on the use of feedback within one context: an Omani Higher Education Institution (HEI). There is little existing investigation of feedback practices in Omani HEIs, and none that addresses the views of participants. For this reason, I have conducted a study in an Omani HEI, specifically, one of the Colleges of Applied Sciences (CoAS). This section explores the nature of EAP writing in the CoAS, in particular, the importance of English and academic writing, and the teaching instruction for writing and assessment of the EAP module are investigated in this study.

In 2005, based on market needs, the MoHE in Oman decided to change six teacher training colleges into Colleges of Applied Sciences (CoAS) that provide degree programmes in Information Technology, Design, International Business Administration, and Communication Studies. All modules in these programmes are taught in English except for one module, called Arabic Skills. This is because English is seen as being crucial for future employment, whether in the government sector or in private institutions. Besides, there are growing numbers of job opportunities where English is the only means of communication in the working environment (MoHE, 2013). This means that mastering the English language is a pressing need for the students, whose first language (L1) is Arabic, to make them conversant and fluent in English.

Admission to the CoAS is based on students' overall grades in the General Education Certificate Examination, an examination run by the

Omani Government. In this examination, English is only one subject. Accordingly, since there is no minimal language requirement for the English proficiency level of the students entering the CoAS, huge discrepancies in the levels of these students might be expected. Nevertheless, before starting their academic degrees, students have to pass the Foundation Year (FY) programme. At the beginning of the FY, students are required to sit an English placement test, which is equivalent to the IELTS. As illustrated in Table 1, based on the results of the test, students will be sorted into four levels (A, B, C, and D). Students who have scored a grade equivalent to IELTS 4.5 have to pass an English Challenge Test (consisting of listening, speaking, reading, and writing) to enter Year 1. Those who fail the Challenge Test enter Level A (MoHE, 2011).

IELTS Scores	Levels
Beginner (equivalent of IELTS 2.5 or less)	Level D
Elementary (equivalent of IELTS 3.0)	Level C
Pre-intermediate (equivalent of IELTS 3.5)	Level B
Intermediate (equivalent of IELTS 4.0)	Level A
(equivalent of IELTS 4.5)	Set for an English Challenge Test

Table 1: Equivalent levels of IELTS and CoAS Placement Test, Adapted from MoHE (2011, p.2)

Passing the English language test in the CoAS is, therefore, very important for students, and for the CoAS, to ensure student progression to degree courses. English language teaching in the CoAS starts from the FY (Levels D, C, B and A) and then continues during the first and second years of the degree programme. As shown in Table 2, the FY has

six modules, ranging from 10 to 24 contact hours per week (there are 15 weeks per semester). These modules must be taken and passed within the allocated four-semester period prior to Year 1. Then, after the FY, students take two modules in Years 1 and 2 alongside some of their discipline modules. As shown in Table 2, the module for Year 1 has 10 contact hours per week, and the module for Year 2 has 8 contact hours. The modules for Years 1 and 2 are taken within the allocated two-semester period. All these modules of teaching English aim to prepare students to enter their degree programme and study their subject-domain modules through the medium of English. As shown in Table 2, the FY prepares students with general skills of language knowledge, reading, speaking, listening, and writing that are needed in degree studies. Then, in Year 1, students are introduced to different types of essay and research skills to enable them to search for topics in their area and write relevant papers. Finally, in Year 2, students are taught the particular needs of their disciplines, such as the linguistic features specific to their subject.

Years	The English Language Modules Taken	Contact Hours/ Week	Semesters	Purposes of the Modules
FY	General English Skills (Level D)	24	four-semester period (Autumn, Spring, Autumn, Spring)	Prepare students with general English skills (language knowledge, reading, speaking, listening and writing) required in a degree course
	General English Skills (Level C)	20		
	General English Skills (Level B)	11		

	Academic English Skills (Level B)	10		
	General English Skills (Level A)	11		
	Academic English Skills (Level A)	10		
Year 1	English for Academic Purposes (EAP)	10	two-semester period (Autumn, Spring)	Introduces students to different types of essays and research skills of summarising, paraphrasing and quoting.
Year 2	English for Academic and Specific Purposes	8	two-semester period (Autumn, Spring.	Addresses the discipline-specific language needs of certain departments (e.g. IT, Business and Communication).

Table 2: The English Language Modules and their Purposes in FY and Years 1 and 2 of CoAS, adapted from MoHE (2011, 2013)

My study focuses on an English for Academic Purposes (EAP) module taught in Year 1. EAP is a dominant English preparatory programme in HEIs, which aims to prepare students to study their subject-domain courses in English (Bruce, 2011). Bruce asserted that EAP is "a needs-

driven activity" (p.7) in that analysis should be made to meet students' needs for academic skills and competence. He referred to two situations that he considered important when performing a needs analysis: present situation, which concerns students' prior educational knowledge, and the target situation, which considers the knowledge students need for their discipline. I chose to undertake my study using this module, because it is in this module that students begin to receive feedback on their academic writing. This choice will be explained further in Chapter Three.

Based on the course description of the EAP module, it is expected that one class teacher delivers the course to one class of 15-20 students (see Table 3 below). The module is allocated 10 hours of teaching per week for a semester of roughly 15 teaching weeks. There are four office hours and six contact hours per week.

No. of Students	Approx. 15-20 Students	
No. of Teaching Weeks	15	
Contact Hours Per Week	Office	Class
	4	6
Total of Teaching Hours	4 x 15	6 x 15

Table 3: Number of Students and Teaching Hours of the EAP Module, Adapted from the Course Description of the EAP Module (Appendix 1)

The course description also shows that there are four basic skills introduced in the EAP module: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. However, EAP writing, which is the focus of my research, is the most dominant one. Based on the course description, as shown in Table 4, the three skills of speaking, listening, and reading altogether have 4 teaching hours per week, while the EAP writing in its own has 6 teaching hours. The EAP writing includes two types of classes: project classes and textbook-led classes. The two classes are given equal teaching hours per week, 3 hours. In addition, the importance of writing is shown in the

EAP course assessment. Table 4 shows that 65% of the total marks were given to EAP writing, while the other three skills altogether were given 30%. This given weight means that EAP writing is regarded as the most significant means to express the competence acquired from the EAP module taken.

Skills	Teaching Hours Per Week	Distribution of Marks
Writing	3 for Project Classes 3 for Textbook-led Classes	50% Project Writing 15% Final Writing Exam
Listening, Speaking, Reading	4 for all	10% Listening 10% Speaking 10% Reading

Table 4: Teaching and Assessing Language Skills in the EAP Module, Adapted from the Course Description of the EAP Module (Appendix 1)

As shown in the table above, the EAP writing includes two types of classes: project classes and textbook-led classes. Project classes are guided through the project specifications and the project outline (see Appendix 23 for Project Specifications and Appendix 17 for Project Outline). These classes aim to teach students how to undertake a small-scale piece of secondary research (i.e., it involves reviewing other people's work), which should be reported through an oral presentation and a written report. The project outline and project specifications give instructions for undertaking project writing through a number of tasks: choosing a research topic, planning a work schedule, gathering information to answer the research question, organising information, planning a presentation, delivering the presentation, planning and drafting the report, and submitting the report. In addition, students are taught some research skills, such as paraphrasing, summarising, and quoting. These skills are essential for students to gather research information and answer research questions.

The textbook-led classes are based on a course textbook titled 'Effective Academic Writing' (Savage and Mayer, 2012), which supports EAP teachers to teach academic writing from sentence level to researched essays. The book presents five types of essays descriptive essays, narrative essays, compare-contrast essays, opinion essays, and cause-and-effect essays. The teaching concentrates on the specific rhetorical conventions of each type of essay. Rhetorical conventions concern the ways of organising writing based on their functions, such as narrative, recounts, arguments, procedures, reports, description, explanation, and exposition (Hyland, 2007; Ivanič, 2004). The organisation is based on repeated regularities of patterns of discourse, and it consists of combinations of linguistic features and rhetorical functions which extend over longer stretches of text (Charles, 2007). For example, in the context of my study, the EAP module organises essays based on their rhetorical situations. The teaching focus in Unit 6, for instance, is on the rhetorical focus and grammatical features of cause-and-effect essays: cause-and-effect organisation, clustering information, phrasal verbs, the future with *will*, *will* with *so that*, and future possibilities with *if* clauses (see Appendix 19 for the rhetorical focus and grammatical features of all types of essay). In addition, the writing processes taught to write these types of essay include brainstorming, outlining, drafting, reviewing, and editing.

Based on the course description of the EAP module (see Appendix 1), the writing conducted in project classes is eventually subjected to summative assessment, which measures the extent to which students' work meets the task criteria thus resulting in marks or grades (Yorke, 2003; McGarrell and Verbeem, 2007). The writing part of the project is evaluated against five marking criteria which are task achievement, grammar, spelling, vocabulary, organisation, and mechanics of language (see Appendix 16 for the rating scale for the EAP module). On the other hand, based on the course description of the EAP module, the textbook-led writing is not rated for assessment. However, project writing should concern one type of essay introduced in the textbook. Likewise, there is a final writing exam that concerns one type of essay introduced in the

textbook. The final exam carries 15% of the total mark (see Table 4 above), and it is also marked against the same marking criteria as is used for project writing.

Before project writing is subjected to summative assessment, students receive formative assessments that are shaped by the college policy and teaching activities. Formative assessments consist of activities required from students, i.e., to do their work, and from the teacher, i.e., to assess the work and give feedback on it (Yorke, 2003; McGarrell and Verbeem, 2007). These activities give feedback in such a way that it directly informs future teaching or learning (McGarrell and Verbeem, 2007). In other words, when incorporated into classroom practice, they provide the information about student understanding at a point when timely adjustments can be made to ensure students achieve targeted standards-based learning goals. In the context of my study, there are several tasks and activities that students and teachers are required to perform to enhance the quality of students' writing and give feedback on it. For instance, based on the project outline (see Appendix 17), teachers are required to provide feedback on students' writing throughout the different eight tasks that the project writing undergoes. Then, in week 10, they are instructed to give face-to-face feedback sessions on students' first draft of writing. In addition, project writing is also guided through the feedback practices of the textbook-led writing, as the project concerns one type of essay introduced in the textbook. In textbook-led writing classes, students have to conduct several activities while writing their textbook-led essays to help them edit their work, such as in-class discussion (i.e., teachers give feedback on a piece of writing on the board), peer-editing, and self-editing tasks, as well as some online tasks.

Formative assessments in the EAP course are typically – but not exclusively – handled and supervised by teachers – as are those already mentioned, such as face-to-face feedback sessions, in-class discussion, peer-editing, and self-editing tasks. They may also involve students as peer assessors. In fact, students can obtain formative assessment

indirectly when they assess each other's work in peer-editing tasks, and they should be able to evaluate their performance with reference to these. They may also see assessments given to different pieces of writing in in-class feedback and compare their performance with these pieces. In addition, the formative assessment in the EAP module can be obtained from people outside the classroom or outside the immediate HE context, such as relatives or friends, or from other teachers who are from different departments or programmes of study. This is because the formative assessments in this module can also take place in the course of events rather than being specifically stipulated in the curriculum design. Students, for instance, are instructed to work on their referencing and citations outside classroom. This means that they will probably get feedback from external sources, such as relatives and friends.

Additionally, the EAP module engages students in handling and assessing their own writing without their teachers' assistance. The last section of the course textbook which is 'Editing Your Writing' is designed for students' own use. In this section, students are required to perform a set of tasks and activities to edit their own writing such as self- and peer-editing tasks. These tasks involve students as both assessors of their own writing and resources to other students. This section also offers some guidance to assist students when assessing their own or their peers' writing. Students, for instance, are asked to evaluate their own writing as well as their peers' writing against a set of criteria listed in a peer- and a self-editor sheet (see Appendix 22 for the peer editor sheet). Additionally, this section includes 'Online Writing Tutor', a website that includes a set of activities, tasks and exemplars to guide students when editing their writing. For example, the online exemplars concern different processes of writing such as brainstorming, outlining and drafting. They aim to help students know what is expected in each stage of writing and understand where they are and where they need to be.

1.3. The Rationale and the Objectives of the Study

This study attempts to explore the culture of feedback in an Omani HEI. The term 'culture of feedback' was initially introduced in a study of organizations outside education, by London and Smither (2002), referring to an "organization's support for feedback, including non-threatening behaviorally-focused feedback, coaching to help interpret and use feedback and a strong link between performance improvement and valued outcomes" (p.81). London and Smither place emphasis on institutional support for feedback, but I have considered how feedback is actually given and received by the participants within the institution, as well as the guidance for feedback provided by the institution. The "culture of feedback" in my study consists of the beliefs, behaviours, objects, and other characteristics common to the members of a particular group or society.

Based on this approach to feedback and the contextual background of this study, mentioned in Section 1.2., four objectives need to be explored in this study; these are:

1. exploring the beliefs and practices of teachers, students and college leaders about feedback and EAP writing;
2. investigating the institution's policy on feedback in relation to assessment and how teachers and students understand this;
3. examining the previous experience of the students in terms feedback and writing practices in relation to the course demands; and
4. exploring how teachers and students are helped to handle and interpret college policies and guidance properly.

These objectives and the related definition of a culture of feedback suggest that feedback needs to be investigated as situated social practices, and not just as corrections on pieces of writing. The social practice of feedback involves the way feedback operates in the light of college policies, and beliefs and expectations of students and teachers about the production of academic written texts.

The following sub-sections clarify the rationale behind the above-mentioned objectives of the study in detail.

1.3.1. Beliefs and Practices of Teachers, Students and College Leaders about Feedback and EAP Writing

In this study, there is an attempt to explore the beliefs and the practices of college leaders, teachers and students regarding feedback and EAP writing with the aim of understanding feedback on EAP writing from the points of view of the people who are most concerned with its development. The study attempts to unveil what these three groups (i.e. teachers, students and college leaders) think about what constitutes a "good" academic essay, how teachers respond to their students' writing, and how students react to their teachers' feedback.

Section 1.2 shows that there are different possible sources of giving feedback and guidance in the First Year EAP writing. The institution in question, for instance, attempts to shape the practices of feedback through the use of policies for feedback and teaching activities, as instructed in the written documents of the first-year EAP module (course textbook, project outline, project specifications and course description). For example, as mentioned in Section 1.2.2, the project outline instructs teachers to give face-to-face sessions on student project writing in week 10. The course textbook also suggests various practices of feedback such as in-class feedback and self- and peer-editing tasks. However, other practices of feedback are likely to be shaped by the individual teacher's and students' understandings and beliefs about what constitutes good practice. This was clear from the complaints of students and teachers about each other's feedback practices and college policy for feedback and teaching activities, which were discussed in Section 1.2.1. The importance of these groups' beliefs and practices about feedback and EAP writing has been intensively demonstrated in previous research as will be discussed in Section 2.4. For example, Orrell (2006)

explored teacher practices and beliefs about feedback and found that these are bounded by the relationship between expectations and actions.

Ultimately, all the-above mentioned sources of guidance for giving feedback in an HEI must be underpinned by beliefs about what constitutes good academic writing practice. Previous research has demonstrated the influence of EAP writing pedagogy on feedback practices, which will be discussed in detail in Section 2.4.1. For example, research suggests that teachers' beliefs about writing influence their teaching practices and their evaluation of student writing, including the use of feedback (Kathpalia and Heah, 2017; Zamel, 1985). Therefore, a lack of shared understanding of an effective approach to teaching writing between teachers and students, or teachers and policy documents, is likely to confuse students. For this reason, the present study aims to understand the practices and beliefs about feedback and EAP writing of students, teachers, and policy makers, as stated in the college documents, such as project outline, project specifications and course textbook.

1.3.2. The Institution's Policy on Feedback and Assessment

My study aims investigate the feedback given in response to both the formative assessment of tasks, and the summative assessment made later in the module. To be reminded, summative assessments measure the extent to which students' work meets the task criteria, while formative assessments is the process of making a judgement about a student's work in such a way that it directly informs future teaching or learning (McGarrell and Verbeem, 2007). The investigation of both types of assessments is seen as significant in this study because, as discussed in Section 1.2.2, they both work in collaboration in the EAP module. The project writing and final exam are subject to summative assessment; however, in order to ensure that students achieve the targeted task criteria, the college issues instructions for formative assessments, such as face-to-face feedback sessions, in-class discussions, peer-editing

tasks, and self-editing tasks. These are included in textbook-led activities and the project outline.

The importance of formative and summative assessments in feedback practices have been emphasised by a number of researchers (e.g. Black and Wiliam, 1998; Coffin et al., 2005; McGarrell and Verbeem, 2007; Seviour, 2015). These researchers argue that teachers' feedback in L2 writing consists of both formative and summative assessments. Black and Willaim (1998), for instance, condemned the current research that has placed greater emphasis on summative assessments and limited focus on formative assessments. They argued that the standards of achievement should be raised through focusing on both enhancing learning and achieving higher quality outcomes. They add that teachers and students need to work collaboratively on what students already know and what they need to know more, on which to base follow-up activities that lead to better achievement. Therefore, this study places emphasis on the practices of teachers and students in negotiating understandings to achieve learning.

With such an aim, this study then takes a broad definition of feedback, proposed by Irons (2007), which refers to any information, activity, or process that enhances students' learning and helps students achieve high quality learning outcomes. This definition expands feedback to include not only the outcomes of the product (i.e., written or spoken feedback), but also feedback as an 'activity' or a 'process'. The definition emphasises two purposes of feedback, which are collecting "evidence" of students' EAP performance and understanding what such evidence implies for their next steps in learning; these include ways teachers and students take actions and negotiate understandings to achieve learning. The premises behind this definition will be further explored in the literature chapter in Section 2.2.

1.3.3. The Previous Experience of the Students about Feedback and Writing Practices

The third objective of this study is to explore students' prior learning experience around feedback and writing practices in relation to the course demands. It has been discussed in Section 1.2.2 that the college guidance and policies about feedback, EAP writing, and assessment exist to help teachers and students to shape feedback so that best use is made of it. However, such guidance and policies may not have been fully suitable for their purpose. As discussed in Section 1.2.1, students complained about these institutional requirements and policies. For example, some students complained about the research skills introduced in the project outline because they did not see them as valuable in enhancing their EAP writing Such reaction to research skills could be possibly due to student inexperience of them. Previous research has explored student responses to academic conventions of a new discipline and subject (Carless, 2006; Lea and Street, 1998). These studies found that the change from one module/tutor/topic to the next caused variations in practice and interpretations of feedback because students and teachers can have different understandings of what constitutes subject knowledge. Indeed, as will be discussed in Section 2.5.2, Al-Badwawi (2011) conducted her PhD study in the CoAS in Oman on first-year students' experiences of EAP writing and she revealed that students had difficulties with research skills, such as difficulty in incorporating information from sources to argue their viewpoints. This was because there was a gap between the FY and Year 1; students moved from writing simple paragraphs to writing different types of essays using research skills. Her findings then show that it is worth investigating students' understanding of the EAP writing conventions in relation to the demands of the EAP module.

In other cases, it would also be valuable to explore students' prior experience of feedback practices in relation to EAP module feedback activities and tasks. In Section 1.2.2, the idea of the course textbook containing a set of formative assessments, such as self- and peer-editing

tasks, is discussed. These tasks might be new to first-year students' learning experience. Based on the findings of a group of studies (e.g., Higgins et al., 2002; Beaumont et al., 2008; Amrhein and Nassaji, 2010; Mahfoodh and Pandian, 2011), college students in their first years of studying may struggle with their self-directed-learning, which is the type of learning in which students are expected to seek feedback and consultation from their peers or look for guidance from other external sources of feedback, such as textbooks, relatives, and friends (Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick., 2006). These studies revealed that there are markedly different feedback practices between schools and universities; universities encourage independent learning while school students depend heavily on their teachers. In fact, a study conducted by Emenyeonu (2012) in the CoAS in Oman demonstrated first-year students' inexperience with self-directed tasks. This study revealed that students think that the teacher should do everything for them, so they do not feel satisfied when they are asked to do work by themselves. Therefore, it is important to explore students' previous feedback experience in the light of institution expectations.

1.3.4. Change Management in the Institution

As mentioned in Section 1.2.2., the college issues instructions regarding teaching and learning EAP writing, as well as about assessing and giving formative feedback on student writing. However, to ensure the effective application of these policies, there is a need to help teachers and students to handle and interpret them properly. This involves ensuring employees receive the coaching, training, leadership, and awareness that they need to achieve the required goals (Hayes, 2014), in this case, giving effective feedback on EAP. This is the main premise of change management, which is believed to be needed on the professional front because it is the core of development (Hayes, 2014). Thus, it is important for this study to consider how change management may help teachers and students in managing feedback, or otherwise.

One of the key aspects of change management that needs to be explored in the context of my study is how college policy and guidance are managed in the institution in terms of clarifying the expectations of college leaders about students' writing and the outcomes of teachers' and students' efforts in achieving the expected goals. As shown in Section 1.2.1, students and teachers have complained about institutional policies and guidance for feedback and EAP writing. One reason for these complaints was because they did not know the values behind these practices for enhancing students' EAP writing. For example, students did not believe that introducing research skills was important for the development of their writing. Fullan (2008), a key researcher on change management in educational settings, declared that good leaders should understand how change takes places in an organisation. He presented some recommendations for effective change management, one being to provide students and teachers with ongoing and clear access to the outcomes of their efforts to ensure continuous success. Therefore, it is worth investigating how students and teachers evaluate the benefits of the college policies and guidance in enhancing EAP writing.

Another issue that needed to be investigated in the context of my study concerns supporting teachers in managing assessment and giving feedback. As shown in Section 1.1.2, teachers are required to assess project writing and the final writing exam against five marking criteria, and prior to that, they are requested to provide formative assessments that help students achieve their task criteria. To ensure effective applications of these practices, teachers might need to be trained in their assessment practices. Schmitt and Hamp-Lyons (2015) argued that all EAP teachers should take courses that help them to administer and interpret assessment practices. In fact, as will be shown in Section 2.4.3.1, some studies (Higgins et al., 2002; Manning, 2013) have provided evidence of teachers' lack of understanding about the complexity of assessment development and interpretation. Fullan (2008) believed that teachers need to be supported in their organisation to develop their teaching. One of the ways he recommended to do this is "hiring people who have

potential" (p. 71) and then continuing to develop their skills, knowledge, commitment, and willingness to develop.

Moreover, another issue of interest in my study is the teaching and learning context, which includes deadline for submission, teaching load, class size, and student timetable. To help teachers and students achieve the required goals, there is a need to provide a supportive teaching and learning context. As shown in Section 1.1.2, some of the college policies offered by the CoAS involve the use of online resources, and some of them could be constrained by time because of the deadline for submission and individual face-to-face sessions in project writing. Thus, this study aims to evaluate the application of college policy and guidance in light of the teaching and learning context. In fact, Al-Badwawi (2011) investigated the teaching and learning context in the CoAS and revealed a lack of access to the internet and to computers. In addition, she found that students were under pressure because of the demands and requirements of their EAP modules or other modules, such as course assignments, exams, and other assessed tasks. Furthermore, there was a lack of coordination between the departments. This was because all assignments and assessed course work were due in the last few weeks before the final examination.

Overall, the discussion of change management suggests that it is essential to explore how efficiently the college policies have been managed in terms of how teachers and students are prepared, equipped, or supported to achieve the college objectives. On this basis, institutions need to set some approaches to help teachers and students utilise policies properly and without restrictions. Fullan (2008) declared that good leaders can use their theory of action, such as the recommendations he proposed to manage development in their institutions, while being open to new data or unexpected elements that arise on the way. He contended that to understand how change takes place in a school or academy, there is a need to understand the standard of management in the organisation. For this reason, this study focuses

on how college policies for feedback practices, EAP writing, or assessment are implemented in the CoAS and how teachers and students are prepared, equipped, and supported to achieve the goals set by the college to provide some recommendations of change management in the CoAS.

To conclude Section 1.3., this research aims to study the beliefs of teachers, students, and college leaders with regard to feedback and EAP writing; examine college policy on feedback as opposed to assessment; investigate the suitability of the course demands to students' understanding of academic conventions of EAP writing and previous learning experience of feedback practices; and explore change management related to feedback policies and practices in the college. Within this understanding of feedback, the 'culture of feedback' in this study consists of the practices and beliefs of the teachers, students, and college policy makers including the practices of summative and formative assessments, change management, and students' understanding and experience of feedback and EAP writing.

The abovementioned objectives show the feedback practices in this study are not investigated as neutral or separate from the contexts and the people where they occur. Rather, they are examined and interpreted within a specific social context. In other words, the focus of this study is not on examining the value of certain sets of effective feedback practices, but rather, this study attempts to understand the effects of different contexts on feedback practices and support the existence of various feedback practices as situated and socially constructed and that need to be understood within their own contexts. There is a wide discussion about the social practices of feedback in the literature on assessment by several scholars (e.g., Guénette, 2007; Bruton, 2009; Van Beuningen, 2010), which will be presented in Section 2.3. These scholars argue that feedback practices differ depending on different participants, settings, and fields.

1.4. Outline of the Thesis

Following the introductory chapter, this study includes five other chapters. Chapter 2 presents a literature review of related research and theories. This chapter explores three main areas. The first part deals with defining 'assessment for learning' and 'feedback as a social practice', which place an emphasis on the social practices of feedback. The second part deals with previous research on the contextual influences that affect teacher and student practices of feedback including the studies conducted in Oman. Finally, the limitations of and gaps in previous research, which are identified throughout the chapter, are summarised to set my study goals and research questions.

Chapter 3 explains the design and methodology of the study, including the paradigm of the research design, the methods of data collection, the case study used in this research, the setting and the participants, ethical considerations, considerations of validity, and the analysis of the collected data.

In Chapter 4, the main findings and the results are presented, while Chapter 5 discusses the findings. Finally, Chapter 6 mentions the practical and theoretical implications of the study and presents some suggestions for future research.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

The preceding chapter has discussed the site of my research and identified the issues that attracted my interest. This chapter aims to review the literature underpinning the issues raised in the introduction chapter and makes clear why I chose to focus on these issues.

The present study problematises feedback as a social practice. This is a very important approach, derived from the literature and discussed in detail in Section 1.3. It has implications for the study because it moves this study away from focusing attention on the final outcomes of the feedback, to considering broader concerns of the influence of a particular social context on feedback. There are different levels of context that can be examined when exploring feedback on EAP writing in HEIs depending on how broadly the term "context" is defined. For example, Lea and Street (1998), who explored academic writing in HEIs, argued that feedback on students' academic writing is the interplay of the conventions governing academic writing, the local context where student-teacher interactions are taking place, and the institutional relationships of power and authority. Indeed, the trends in the literature about context recognise the existence of feedback practices as situated, socially constructed acts of teaching, embedded in the different levels of context of the institution. First, EAP writing is seen as conceptually intriguing because it bridges two important domains of feedback practices: students' practices and teachers' practices. Some of the studies reviewed demonstrate the impact of the conventions of EAP writing on students' understanding of and attitudes towards feedback (Lea and Street, 1998; Carless, 2006), while other studies reviewed in this chapter addressed the impact of EAP writing pedagogy on teachers' practices of feedback (Hyland, 2003b; Hyland, 2007; Zamel, 1985). The literature also explores the use of policies and guidance about feedback, and managing assessment, and makes some key points about the institutional role in providing a supportive environment for teachers and students to practise their feedback freely,

such as through reducing practical constraints in terms of the size of classes, the workloads, and the teaching schedules (Lee, 2011). Moreover, some studies have demonstrated the role of feedback interactions inside classroom. These have been explored through study of the practices and beliefs of teachers and students (e.g., Orrell, 2006; Mahfoodh and Pandian, 2011) and research studies about self-directed learning, whereby students seek feedback and consultation from their peers or look for guidance from textbooks to identify their weaknesses rather than merely relying on their teachers (Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick, 2006).

Thus, from these perspectives about feedback, this chapter is based on the premise that feedback practices are influenced by students' and teachers' understanding and use of feedback, and by influences in the context of EAP writing and the institution. These affect how feedback practices take place. The literature review is divided into three parts. The first part starts by discussing the implications of 'Assessment for Learning (AfL)' in Section 2.2 and 'feedback as a social practice' in Section 2.3, which emphasise the significance of the social context in understanding the practices of feedback. The second part of this review of the underpinning literature, Sections 2.4 and 2.5, emphasise studies that have contextualised feedback into several discursive practices and contextual factors within HEIs. This concerns five contextual influences that underpin the context this study aims to explore: EAP writing, context for teaching and learning, assessment, teachers' and students' beliefs about feedback, and self-directed learning. After presenting these contextual influences, this chapter then introduces the relevant research conducted in Oman in Section 2.5 to show the issues unique to Oman that may influence feedback. I have located the research conducted on the EAP writing context since my research is an example of this type of context.

Finally, the last part of this literature review (Section 2.6.) presents a summary of the trends and gaps in the previous research about feedback

for EAP writing, which are identified in Sections 2.4 and 2.5. This is a critical evaluation of previous studies, including an examination of the methods and methodology they deployed, the findings they presented, the implications of the research, and the related research gaps. Section 2.6 also explains how the gaps will be filled by my study. Then, Section 2.7 clarifies how the research questions were formulated based on the gaps identified in this chapter.

2.2. Assessment for Learning (AfL)

This study includes a particular focus on feedback, which is informed by my reading and experience of AfL. For this reason, I will discuss the basic AfL issues that have shaped my approach to feedback on EAP writing in this study. The first of these is a now famous definition of AfL as "the process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by learners and their teachers to decide where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go and how best to get there" (Broadfoot et al., 2002, pp.2–3 cited in Wiliam, 2011, p.10). In short, the key purpose of AfL is to inform both teaching and learning so that teaching is effective in promoting learning. An important point is that this definition emphasises not only how evidence should be used, but also by whom. By emphasising the roles of both teachers and learners, this definition establishes that AfL is not something "done to" students by teachers and simply communicated through feedback, but is a process of assessment in which students actively take part. Therefore, making the "evidence" (mentioned in the definition above) understandable to learners, as well as to teachers, is a central tenet of AfL. I argue that this is the role of feedback - not just to correct students' work, but to ensure they are able to understand what such correction implies for their next steps in learning. I will argue that feedback, in this view of AfL, is about the ways teachers collect "evidence" of students' EAP performance, the ways they mediate this to students, the ways students understand this feedback and how they act upon it, as well as the ways teachers and students understand the

practices they are engaged in. Therefore, feedback, if viewed from an AfL perspective, is much more than just corrections of pieces of writing - it is a set of social practices involving both teachers and students in taking action and negotiating understandings to achieve learning (e.g., Ferris, 2003; Kathpalia and Heah, 2017).

Existing research into feedback in EAP writing has taken a wide range of perspectives about assessment and feedback, and so studies employ a broad range of terminology. Some research on AfL (e.g. Black and Wiliam, 1998; Seviour, 2015; Kathpalia and Heah, 2017) has split feedback into feedback for two types of assessment: formative and summative. Formative assessment is the process of making a judgement about a student's action, product, or competence in such a way that it directly informs future teaching or learning, while summative assessment is the process of making a "snapshot" judgement about a student's competence, work, or actions, which does not directly inform the teaching action, but which may be recorded as a means of comparing pupil achievement, recording progress, or evaluating teaching or learning (Yorke, 2003; McGarrell and Verbeem, 2007). Thus, summative assessment is an accountability measure that is used as part of the grading process, while formative feedback collects evidence of students' performance to inform teachers and students about the next steps needed in promoting learning.

As discussed in the introduction chapter, my study aims to investigate the feedback given in response to formative and summative assessments. The EAP writing in my context is subjected to both summative and formative assessments. For example, in project writing, the summative assessment works in collaboration with formative assessment. Before the final submission of a writing project, several formative assessments are carried out, such as conducting the face-to-face feedback sessions for the first draft of the project. This step was necessary to raise the standard of students' achievement. This all indicates that the formative aspect of assessment is an opportunity afforded to students to learn from

their assessment before undertaking their final or summative assessments.

Formative assessment is considered an essential aspect in AfL research, including its influence on the development of L2 writing. McGarrell and Verbeem (2007) and Coffin et al. (2005), for instance, declared that most of the teachers' feedback in L2 writing occurs in a continuum of two extremes, namely, summative and formative assessments. They explained that feedback cannot be based on purely formative or summative assessments and that the feedback process consists of formative and summative assessments. In support, Black and Wiliam (1998) conducted a lengthy research review of 250 publications that collectively involved learners of different ages, different subject areas, and different countries. These authors argued that assessment should not merely focus on expected outputs, such as an increase in the knowledge and competence of students, better test results, and greater teacher satisfaction; rather, it should also deploy formative assessment as a key tool to raise standards of classroom achievement. In fact, they contended that students' achievement can be raised by enhancing what is happening in the classroom in terms of assessment and feedback.

Black and Wiliam's article about AfL had a huge influence on assessment and feedback across education - including in the EAP world. For example, Seviour (2015) outlined an approach taken to the assessment of EAP writing on the pre-sessional EAP courses at Nottingham Trent University, and he discussed how it was redesigned to emphasise process over end product. The approach made it possible to assess the development of a single 2,500-word academic essay over a 6-week period. As illustrated in Figure 1, assessing an academic essay involves a set of assessment practices, such as peer-reviewing, teacher formative feedback, student editing, assessing, and giving grades. Thus, assessment of EAP writing on the pre-sessional EAP courses at Nottingham Trent University opted for an approach that involved a multi-stage process of formative and summative assessments.

```
Students engage with source material in class and independently        WEEK 1
                          ↓
Students produce draft essay plan                                       WEEK 2
                          ↓
Teacher provides formative feedback on draft plan
                          ↓
Students produce final essay plan                                       WEEK 3
                          ↓
Teacher assesses final plan (15% weighting)
                          ↓
Students write first draft of essay in class (with access to plan and sources)
                          ↓
Students edit draft and submit to Dropbox and to Turnitin               WEEK 4
                          ↓
Peer review and formative teacher feedback on first draft
                          ↓
First draft feedback viva (assessed with 15% weighting)
                          ↓
Students carry out additional research to develop draft in line with feedback
                          ↓
Students write second draft and submit to Turnitin                      WEEK 5
                          ↓
Students review second draft and submit to Dropbox
                          ↓
Teacher assesses final draft (70% weighting)                            WEEK 6
                          ↓
Teacher provides formative feedback and grade for final draft
```

Figure 1: Seviour's Approach in Assessing Academic Essays on the pre-sessional EAP courses at Nottingham Trent University (Seviour, 2015, p.86)

The stages of assessment listed in Figure 1 could be seen as facilitative or intermediate in that they go beyond the curricular purpose of the assignment and typically take an inquiring stance towards the writing, where teachers try to understand the intended meaning and provide suggestions for improvement in the second draft. In fact, to guide the choice of the redesigned learning and assessment activities, Seviour (2015) and his colleagues used Gibbs and Simpson's (2005) eleven conditions under which assessment supports students' learning; this suggests that feedback should be timely, frequent, understandable, detailed, and linked to criteria, and that students should have opportunities to act on their feedback in order to improve their work. Seviour sees that the overriding aim of assessment practices is to

promote student motivation and understanding of the task criteria, as well as providing feedback to support progress towards achieving learning objective(s).

It could also be noticed from the multi-stage process outlined above that students are trained to take a greater role in the practices of feedback that students play a key role in the effectiveness of feedback and have an active role in making it inform their work. The figure shows that students should be involved as assessors of their own learning to write their essay. The stages of assessment, illustrated above, engage students with the various assessment tasks used and what is expected of them at each stage. Nevertheless, student ownership of their own work does not mean the absence of teacher involvement. In contrast, the reinterpretation and revision are conducted through possible sources of feedback, such as teacher and peers. Teachers are also critical in designing assessment tasks and setting learning goals and criteria for success.

Indeed, Black and Wiliam (1998), in an attempt to define and delimit formative feedback within broader theories of pedagogy, suggested that whatever happens inside in the classroom should not be merely the responsibility of teachers. They condemned the current situation in which the teacher is usually left alone to deal with what happens inside the classroom, and they believed that policy makers and others should give teachers direct help in raising the standards of achievement. They emphasized that teaching and learning should be interactive, and so both teachers and students should take part in formative assessment. Thus, the researchers contended that assessment refers to all activities undertaken by teachers and their students in assessing students' work. Teachers and students need to work together on what students already know and what they need to know more, on which to base follow-up activities that lead to better achievement.

To conclude, AfL makes the assumption that to improve students' writing, the focus of feedback should be on follow-up activities that directly inform

future teaching or learning, which needs to be understood and shared by students. Thus, my study attempts to explore how feedback is used to promote achievement, broaden learning, and provide opportunities for developing self- or peer-assessment tasks.

This view towards feedback has led to another path of discussion, feedback as a social practice. To better understand the practices of teachers and students, feedback needs to be understood within its social context, e.g., in terms of the needs of different participants, settings, and fields (Guénette, 2007; Bruton, 2009; Van Beuningen, 2010). The significance of social context for understanding the practices of feedback will be detailed in the following section.

2.3. Feedback as a social practice

In this section, I review the literature with regard to 'feedback as a social practice' because, as discussed above, I think that the practices and understandings of feedback in a given educational setting (such as the Omani college) are likely to be negotiated between participants, and so are relatively specific to that situation. In this section, I discuss why this is.

The literature on feedback offers different context-free strategies for giving feedback on students' writing, i.e., these strategies can be used for any group of participants and in various settings and fields. Ellis (2009b), for instance, presents a typology of teachers' options for providing corrective feedback (CF) in students' written work, i.e., correcting linguistic errors. By inspecting previous studies of written feedback and teacher handbooks, Ellis identified some basic strategies for giving feedback and some for student responses to feedback. For example, one strategy he identified is the 'focus of feedback', which concerns whether teachers focus on particular area(s) of writing, such as verb tenses, punctuation, or content, or attend to all errors in the writing (Ellis, 2009b).

Ellis (2009b) also offered some options associated with some feedback practices. For example, he referred to two strategies related to CF, namely, direct CF and indirect CF. As shown in Figure 2, direct feedback means teachers providing the correct forms in students' grammatically inaccurate writing, for example, through crossing the error out and writing the correct forms above it (Ferris, 2006). Therefore, if students revise direct feedback, they only need to transcribe the corrections made into their final draft.
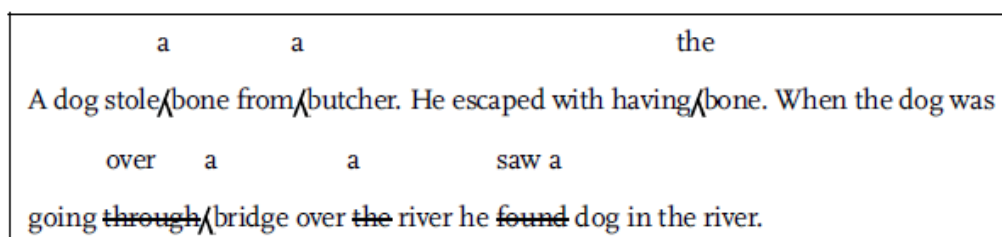
Figure 2: A sample of Direct Feedback (Ellis, 2009b, p.99)

On the other hand, indirect feedback involves merely indicating the location of the error or the nature of it using a correction symbol without providing the correction (Ferris, 2006). The symbols used in indirect feedback are a means to guide students to correcting their own mistakes, such as 'SP' for spelling (Lee, 1997). Figure 3 shows a sample of indirect feedback which uses two correction symbols: 'X' for missing word, and 'X—X' for wrong word. This means that students are made aware that there is an error, and they are left to do the correction by themselves.
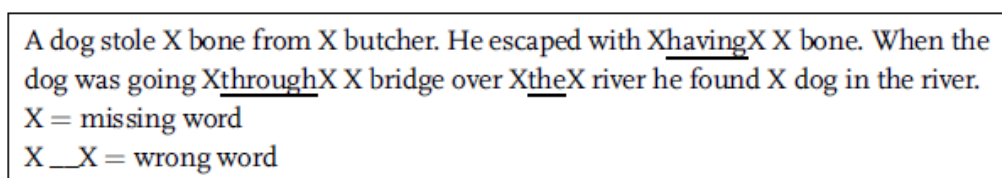
Figure 3: A sample of Indirect Feedback (Ellis, 2009b, p.100)

Nevertheless, the studies that concern exploring strategies for providing feedback offer different inconsistent recommendations for best feedback practices. For instance, with regard to direct and indirect feedback, Lalande (1982) revealed that those students who received indirect CF

outperformed those who did not; Robb et al. (1986) found that both types of correction were equally effective; Chandler (2003) found that direct CF was the most effective in improving writing accuracy, not only in revisions, but also in subsequent writing; and Ferris and Roberts (2001) demonstrated that, whereas direct CF resulted in the largest accuracy outcomes in revisions, indirect feedback was the most effective in improving accuracy in subsequent drafts. Thus, all the studies offered different implications for practices regarding giving direct or indirect CF.

One possible interpretation of the inconsistencies in 'best practices in giving feedback' is that the previous research did not examine the influence of social context on practices of feedback. As explained in the introduction chapter in Section 1.3 and Section 2.2, feedback is a social practice, i.e., feedback practices are shaped with regard to institutional polices and beliefs and the practices of students and teachers about the production of academic written texts. The implications for 'best practices of feedback' have been refuted by scholars such as Bruton (2009), Guénette (2007), and Van Beuningen (2010) because they are designated as context-free implications, i.e., they are applicable to various participants, settings and fields. These scholars have argued that there is no perfect practice in giving feedback because it all depends on the social context. Guenette, for instance, concluded that there are no corrective feedback practices because they are shaped by "classroom context, the type of errors students make, their proficiency level, the type of writing they are asked to do, and a collection of other variables that are as of yet unknown" (p.52).

In support of the abovementioned scholars' argument, two studies (Lyster and Saito, 2010; Storch and Wigglesworth, 2010) that investigated the effectiveness of different types of feedback revealed some contextual influences that had an impact on their results. For example, Storch and Wigglesworth conducted a study to investigate learners' processing of direct and indirect feedback, but the results were inconclusive. The researchers revealed that the effectiveness of the two

types of feedback depended on the learners and the extent of their engagement with feedback because it was influenced by linguistic and affective factors, such as students' beliefs, attitudes, and goals. They emphasised that these factors play an important role in the uptake and retention of feedback. Similarly, Lyster and Saito (2010) conducted a meta-analysis to investigate the effectiveness of oral CF on English development, and their findings showed that CF was affected by the age of the learners: the young learners were more sensitive towards CF, but they learned more from it than older learners.

In fact, even if researchers attempt to control the external variables, they may not reach ethical and accurate results. Guénette (2007) emphasised the importance of keeping variables controlled to better understand feedback; however, he emphasised the difficulty of experimenting with particular variables and keeping others constant. For example, he noted the importance of the control group, but nevertheless, he believed that from a pedagogical perspective, it is unethical to exclude one group from receiving feedback in a 'real' writing class. In addition, Guénette argued that it is important to include all variables in a research design because they are all valuable in providing interpretations for the effectiveness of feedback.

Indeed, one essential aspect that has been ignored in some of the previous research on feedback is student engagement with feedback, which my study aims to explore. Some researchers (e.g., Higgins et al., 2001; Carless, 2006) have argued that the previous research on feedback used an over-simplified model of communication, i.e., a message (feedback) is transferred from a sender (teacher) to a receiver (student) through a medium (e.g., written comments). They explain that this model ignores the complexity of students' responses to feedback because it simply assumes that their response is a result of teachers' practices of feedback. However, questions are raised regarding how far the practices in giving feedback lead to revision and how far revision leads to writing improvement. A study conducted by Ferris (1997) showed

that only half of teachers' comments used by students enhanced their writing, and the rest had a detrimental effect. Furthermore, Ferris (2006) conducted another study on students' response to feedback and found that 9.9% of the students made no correction and 9.9% corrected wrongly. Hence, Ferris's studies demonstrate that students do not necessarily act on their feedback and, if they do, they may not necessarily respond correctly.

Therefore, it could be argued that students' response to feedback needs further investigation. Higgins et al. (2001) claimed that students' use of feedback is rather complex and has different understandings and applications; for example, some students may look closely at their comments, and others may have a less conscientious look at some selected comments. The literature on feedback offers different definitions of learner engagement. For instance, Hu and Kuh (2001, p.3 cited in Trowler, 2010, p.4) defined learner engagement as "the quality of effort students themselves devote to educationally purposeful activities that contribute directly to desired outcomes". However, Han and Hyland (2015), who explored how learners engage with written corrective feedback (WCF), viewed learner engagement as more complex than this. They contended that learner engagement is connected with the cognitive, the behavioural, and the affective responses to feedback. They derived this assumption about students' response from Ellis's (2010, cited in Han and Hyland, 2015) componential framework for CF. Ellis proposed three perspectives for investigating learner engagement: the cognitive perspective, the behavioural perspective, and the attitudinal perspective. He defined the three types of engagement as follows:

- Cognitive engagement is "how learners attend to the CF they receive" (Ellis, 2010,p.342 cited in Han and Hyland, 2015, p.32), which could be through noticing, making mental notes, memorization, and visualization.

- Behavioural engagement refers to learners' uptake or revisions of CF, which concerns revision operations, and revision and learning

strategies, which facilitate their processing of feedback, such as consulting external sources like grammar books, dictionaries, or peers.

- Attitudinal engagement concerns learner affective responses to CF, such as anxiety and dislike.

Han and Hyland (2015) found that these three levels of engagement interplayed with each other. For example, they noticed that when there was a vague understanding of feedback, the students were able to clarify feedback through individual oral discussion with their teacher, and by seeking external assistance from friends, relatives, and the internet. They also found that an effective response can be created from unsuccessful cognitive and behavioural engagement with feedback. This all suggests that the student response to feedback is not a simple process. Therefore, it needs to be intensively investigated through different types of engagement and the connections between them.

To conclude Section 2.3., feedback is a social practice. The strategies that previous research has offered for feedback, such as the ones discussed in this section, may not be applicable to all fields, participants, or settings. Furthermore, such strategies imply there is a simple mode of communicating feedback in that they ignore the complexity of students' responses to feedback because they simply assume that providing these strategies ensures student engagement. As mentioned in this section, student engagement with feedback entails different cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioural responses. Therefore, the focus of my study is not merely on the de-contextualised ability to encode and decode feedback; rather, this study aims to understand feedback within its socio-cultural context, which shapes the production of EAP writing. Thus, this literature review places importance on the contextual influences that affect the production of EAP writing, as discussed in the section below. The focus of the following section is on both teacher and student practices of feedback in an attempt to understand how these practices are interpreted, enacted, and developed in the light of contextual influences.

2.4. Contextual Influences

As mentioned in the introduction chapter, five contextual influences that are relevant to the context of my study are selected to be the theoretical underpinnings of this study: EAP writing, assessment, beliefs about practices of feedback, self-directed learning, and the teaching and learning context. As explained in the introduction chapter, these contextual influences have been selected because they originated from the research aims and from the contextual background discussed in the introduction chapter including my experience of feedback, and the EAP writing context in CAS. Here, I aim to emphasise how the research literature informed that choice. The following five sub-sections present these influences that shape both the teacher and student practices of feedback.

2.4.1. The EAP Writing

This section discusses the influence of the EAP writing - the course investigated in this study - which was introduced in the introduction chapter. This section highlights the influence of the EAP writing requirements and demands on teacher and student practices of feedback. The EAP writing affects feedback practices in the two aspects of approaches to teaching EAP writing and discourse. The following two sub-sections discuss these two areas.

2.4.1.1. Approaches to Teaching EAP Writing

Research suggests that teachers' attitudes toward writing influence their teaching practices and their evaluation of student writing, including the use of feedback. For example, Beach and Bridwell (1984, p.312 cited in Zamel, 1985, p.80) commented that teachers' beliefs about writing "serve as filters that train their attention to qualities (or lack thereof) in student

writing". In the same vein, Kathpalia and Heah (2017) argued that teacher feedback practices can depend on their adopted writing pedagogy. They assumed that, because of the changes that have occurred recently in teaching writing, the attention to feedback practices has shifted from summative assessment, which focuses on writing as a product, to formative assessment, which contributes to the development of writing processes. Therefore, because writing practices are expected to affect teacher feedback practices, this section introduces the different approaches to teaching EAP writing and discusses the influences of these approaches on the practices of giving feedback. As explained in the introduction chapter, one of the key issues this study emphasises is the use and interpretation of college policies, guidelines, and textbooks - all documents mandated in this setting and which can be seen as "including" some of the values, beliefs, and practices of EAP of the setting.

To prepare students for the new experience of EAP writing in HE, a range of approaches to teaching writing have emerged in EAP contexts. This review focuses on three approaches that are seen as relevant to the context of my study: the product, the process, and the rhetorical approaches. The product approach has a pragmatic perspective towards the nature of EAP writing, which views the teaching of writing as mainly focusing on context-free skills, such as grammar, and the mechanics of language (Street, 1984; Baynham, 1995). The process approach is based on recursive cognitive processes of formulating and reformulating meaning, e.g., brainstorming, outlining, planning, drafting, discussing, editing, and proof-reading (Hyland, 2003b; Hyland, 2007). The rhetorical approach aims to enable writers to use language to communicate and achieve purposes in particular situations (Hyland, 2009).

The three approaches to teaching EAP writing are discussed in this section because the college documentation used in EAP writing can be seen to reflect all three of them. For example, I would argue that the content of the course textbook reflects the rhetorical approach to EAP

pedagogy. The textbook (Savage and Mayer, 2012) gives instructions to teach writing through the specific rhetorical conventions of different types of essays. As discussed in the introduction chapter, essay rhetorical conventions consist of combinations of linguistic features and rhetorical functions, which extend over longer stretches of text (Charles, 2007). Thus, this reflects the rhetorical approach, which views writing as context-dependent and embedded in the discursive practices of the academic community (Hyland, 2009). The course textbook sees writing as an act of social practice, and therefore, sees EAP writing as empowering students. Through being taught rhetorical conventions , students can participate in social groups that recognise those conventions .

However, the content of the course textbook could also show evidence of the influence of a product approach to EAP pedagogy. It emphasises a list of features of the text types which can be evaluated as "correct" or "incorrect". As such, this implies the focus of learning is the student, which could be understood as a decontextualized skill located in the individual, i.e. the focus is on the context-free skills that an individual might need to succeed academically (Street, 1984; Baynham, 1995). Additionally, the product approach could be highly significant in my study because, in the study conducted by Sommers (1982), it was revealed that most teachers' comments are not "text-specific and could be interchanged from text to text" (p.152). In other words, students tend to have common comments, questions, and suggestions on their writing that could be applicable to different types of writing.

Furthermore, the course textbook and the project outline emphasise a list of processes that a learner needs to go through to master academic writing. As explained in the introduction chapter, the course textbook highlights different writing processes, which include brainstorming, outlining, drafting, reviewing, and editing. Similarly, the project outline teaches that writing is based on a number of tasks: choosing a research topic, planning a work schedule, gathering information to answer the research question, organising information, planning a presentation,

delivering the presentation, planning and drafting the report, and submitting the report. As such, the pedagogy of teaching project writing reflects the process approach to teaching EAP writing, which places emphasis on the writer's capacities and writing processes (Lea and Stierer, 2000, Hyland, 2007).

The three approaches have very different implications for assessment and feedback, which are relevant to this study, so a brief discussion of the pedagogy and the impacts on feedback is given below in the three sub-sections.

2.4.1.1.1. The Product Approach

The premise behind the product approach to teaching EAP writing is that writing is a process of encoding meaning in a way that conforms to a system of universal rules (Jordan, 1997). Paltridge (2004) stated that this approach is based on the notion of 'controlled composition' which is textual manipulation of fixed norms and structures to produce new sentences. This suggests that the students can manipulate the patterns in any context, such as from one discipline to another. As such, the practices in giving feedback in the product approach are framed independently of any context. On the other hand, as will be discussed below, this approach could differ in other feedback practices, such as in the timing and focus of feedback.

The product approaches can affect the focus of feedback. The focus of feedback in the product approach is based on mechanical accuracy and the control of language. Hyland and Hamp-Lyons (2002) contended that feedback in controlled composition highlights the errors that are related to the linguistic structures. This is because writing is taught through guided composition with the emphasis on explicit teaching about grammatical structures. In support, a study conducted by Zamel (1985) found that the product approach made teachers see themselves as language instructors instead of writing instructors in that they over-

emphasized the surface features of writing, such as linguistic structures, vocabulary, organization, and cohesive devices.

Another impact of the product approach on feedback practices is with regard to the timing of feedback, i.e., how often feedback is given, at which stage in the writing process, and how soon after receiving students' writing (Coffin et al., 2005). The product approach has one chance for feedback only. This is because its emphasis is on the final product of writing. Indeed, Zamel (1985) found that treating student writing as a finished product does not give the notion that writing goes through processes over time. In other words, the feedback process occurs just once because the product approach gives a chance for one-draft writing only. With such practices for the timing of feedback, some educators (e.g., Zamel, 1985; Weaver, 2006; Nicol et al., 2011) have criticised the product approach. For example, one of the criticisms associated with the product approach is with how soon students receive feedback after submitting their writing. Weaver (2006), for instance, found that in most of the coursework in a modular system, students only received feedback after they had completed their module. Therefore, he found that the students did not have time to react to their feedback, as it was too late to be helpful. This means that immediate feedback is recommended in the product approach.

2.4.1.1.2.   The Process Approach

The process approach has a different premise. This approach is 'inner-directed', i.e., writing is not taught, but is learnt through the writing processes, such as brainstorming, outlining, planning, drafting, discussing, editing, and proof-reading (Lea and Stierer, 2000; Hyland, 2007). Therefore, an extreme emphasis of this approach could be that the norms and structures of any type of writing do not need to be taught. This is because the process approach is based on the assumption that the academy is a homogenous culture whose practices and norms are applicable in any discipline. As such, the practices of feedback in this

approach are also shaped independently from any context, i.e., the teachers' comments can be applicable to any discourse or discipline.

The impact of the process approach on the feedback practices can be also evident on the focus of feedback. Some scholars (e.g., Kathpalia and Heah, 2017; Hyland, 2007; Zamel, 1985) have suggested that the process approach focuses on recursive cognitive processes of formulating and reformulating meaning through the experience of writing and rewriting. Zamel, for instance, contended that going into the processes of writing diverts teachers from focusing only on the features of language and merely giving "reflex-like reactions to surface level concerns" (p.96). He believed that teachers' attention is given to training students how to handle the complex cognitive processes, focusing on planning, on guiding students to gain competence in the strategies of writing, and on developing ideas and meaning.

Additionally, the process approach has an impact on the timing of feedback. Because the teaching of EAP writing in this approach is on the writing processes that a learner goes through, teachers deploy timely feedback, i.e., providing feedback in stages (Nicol et al., 2011). In other words, teachers use drafts or task sequences with different stages, such as brainstorming, planning, drafting, editing, and reviewing. Such timely feedback could solve the issue of delayed feedback. Nicol et al. believed that because students have feedback in sessions, they are able to handle their revision in intervals.

Teachers can manage timely feedback in the process approach with minimum effort. Nicol et al. (2011) emphasised that providing feedback in stages may not necessarily increase teachers' efforts, as teachers divide the amount of feedback into different stages. Additionally, teachers may get the students to do peer feedback at the intermediate stages. In fact, the process approach is believed to be extended from teachers' written correction to include self-assessment, peer feedback, one-to-one conferencing, audiotaped feedback, and reformulation (Kathpalia and

Heah, 2017). This means that the teacher's efforts in providing feedback to different processes can be minimised.

From the above discussion of the product and the process approaches, it is clear that the two approaches differ in their influence on the timing and the focus of feedback. However, the literature on these two approaches could be criticised for two reasons. First, it should be argued that most of the assertions about the impact of these two approaches on feedback practices are based on speculations, and so they need to be supported with stronger evidence. Specifically, the investigation of the impact of the process approach on feedback practices is largely speculative and deserves to be investigated further. In addition, another argument that could be made against the existing literature on the product and the process approach is concerning the issue of the transferability of writing norms and structures. It could be queried whether all disciplines share similar academic conventions and thus have similar ways of constructing meaning. This view of transferability has been widely refuted by some researchers (Baynham, 1995; Hyland, 2007), who believe that each discipline should be considered as a separate culture which has its own norms and practices of academic writing. Their view is that there is a need for a more discipline-sensitive approach that considers the diversity of textual production.

This discussion has paved the way for discussion of another approach to teaching academic writing, namely, the rhetorical approach, which views writing as socially constructed by the communicative purpose of the text. As discussed at the beginning of this section, this approach is also relevant to this study. To reiterate, the course textbook utilised in the institution in question offers instructions for teaching EAP writing through the rhetorical conventions of different types of essay.

2.4.1.1.3.   The Rhetorical Approach

Another perspective to teaching writing examined by L2 researchers is the rhetorical approach (Kusel, 1992; Hyland, 2015). This approach is founded on the notion that writing is governed by a communicative purpose and so is constructed to achieve this purpose. It focuses on the communicative intentions that shape different rhetorical patterns of writing, such as "listing, chronological order, cause and effect, classification, argumentation, comparison and contrast, problem and solution" (Smith, 2014, p.1). These patterns reflect the ways that texts work as communication across disciplines (e.g., politics, science, journalism, business, technology). For example, the writing related to technology suggests "a factual description (explaining how something works), a narrative of personal experience (an encounter with a computer helpline), an argumentative essay" (Hyland, 2007, p.154). Clearly, then, the rhetorical approach demands the ability to deal appropriately with the varying rhetorical expectations of different disciplines.

The different patterns of writing listed above are characterized by their varieties of rhetorical conventions, including grammar and vocabulary (Hyland 2004; Neff Van Aertselaer, 2006; Charles, 2007; Smith, 2014), and organisational structures, such as elements of introductions and conclusions (Kusel,1992; Palmer et al, 2010). The writers' focus goes beyond the surface syntactic structures and vocabulary to incorporate the language forms that serve in communication. The writers need to recognise the different rhetorical patterns of writing to infer the connections between linguistic features and purposes (Smith, 2014; Hyland, 2015). For example, one of the connections is the use of cohesive devices, such as conjunctions, adverbs, or adverbial expressions, that help to structure and organise different patterns of academic texts (Smith, 2014). Smith, for instance, referred to the linking devices that concern a pattern of compare and contrast essays, such as *however*, *although* and *on the other hand.* He pointed out that the teaching of these devices within a composition text ought to help students

recognize and write compound and complex sentences and thus, overall, enable them to compose coherent, purposeful text.

Hence, the key point in the rhetorical approach is that writing is a process of encoding meaning in a way that conforms to a set of specific rhetorical conventions. Therefore, one of the principals of this approach is that the students' conscious awareness of the recursive features of rhetorical patterns should be considered essential at their initial stages of writing. Based on the results of his research, which focused on linking devices that signal a pattern of comparison and contrast, Smith (2014) saw feedback practices as an interactive collaboration between the teacher and the students, and identified the need for the teacher to have an authoritative role in the learning process. At the beginning, students need to gain an explicit understanding of how target texts should be structured and why they should be written in the ways they are. However, the authoritative scaffolding diminishes as students progress, and ultimately, they will have the knowledge and skills to work on their own (Kusel, 1992; Smith, 2014; Hyland, 2015).This means that the role of the teacher is authoritative rather than authoritarian, i.e., the teacher provides students with adequate guidance to enable them to control their written texts.

Nevertheless, the role of teachers should be easier, as they supposedly share common homogeneous textual conventions with their students, which guide the process. The rhetorical approach puts teachers in a better position to reflect on students' writing and to view their students' work with a more critical eye. This occurs as they join with their students in categorizing and analysing a particular rhetorical pattern of writing, thereby making them intervene successfully in the writing of their students and provide more informed feedback on writing on a specific text type (Hyland, 2015). Thus, it could be argued that this pedagogy could be considered as one of the approaches that are best attuned to the communicative needs of particular academic settings.

Many L2 researchers (e.g., Bartholomae, 1986; Kusel, 1992; Becher and Trowler, 2001; Charles, 2007; Hyland, 2015) have highlighted the

importance of this approach to EAP writing, especially for success in a particular discipline. These researchers advanced the notion that forms express functions, which vary according to context. They emphasised that text construction is a rhetorical and not just a cognitive process. They also explained that writers may need to supply assumptions from memory, but the text itself also plays an important part in this process. Becher and Trowler (2001), for instance, argued that a discipline is an "academic tribe", and in order to be part of the discipline community, learners have to write within the norms and structures of this "tribe". Bartholomae (1986) similarly stated that to succeed in an academic culture, the student has to learn ways of selecting, reporting, arguing, evaluating, and concluding that define his or her field of discipline. He emphasised that a learner

> must learn to try on a variety of voices and interpretive schemes – to write, for
> example, as a literary critic one day and an experimental psychologist the next,
> to work within fields where the rules governing the presentation of examples or
> the development of an argument are both distinct and, even to a professional,
> mysterious. (p.403).

Indeed, Kusel (1992) explored the rhetorical approach to the composition of academic essays and found that essay writing is influenced significantly by the conventions adopted by the subject department. Similar findings can be found in a case study of writing in nursing education conducted by Baynham (2000), which showed that students who had been taught writing through a skills-based approach (writing is taught through context-free skills, such as referencing, essay writing, grammar, and mechanics of language (Street, 1984; Baynham, 1995)) were unable to respond to the requirements of academic writing across different disciplines. This was because writing is informed by the particular texts associated with different disciplines, each of which has its own distinct way of making meaning.

To help students cope with the rhetorical patterns of different academic disciplines, many HE institutions provide them with EAP courses, both before and during their academic studies. As discussed in the

introduction chapter (Section 1.2.2), these courses aim to prepare students to study their subject-domain courses in English and meet their needs for academic skills and competence (Bruce, 2011). Palmer et al (2010) stated that these courses have a general consensus about what essay writing should entail. These include the organisational elements of an essay, such as the *thesis statement, topic sentence* and *supporting sentences*, and various rhetorical patterns, such as *cause-effect essay, position essay, problem-solution essay* and *report.* Thus, such courses suggest teaching writing through definable rhetorical and organisational templates.

In the context of my study, the EAP course textbook has a rhetorical focus. The course textbook shows that there is one dominant text type introduced in Unit 1 of the course textbook, which is the essay. As shown in Table 5, the essay has specific textual features that concern the rhetorical focus and language and grammar focus.

Unit	Academic Focus	Rhetorical Focus	Language and Grammar Focus
1 Paragraph to Short Essays	Writing	- Paragraph Structure - The Topic Sentence - Unity and Coherence - The Paragraph and Short Essay	- Simple and Compound Sentences - Run-on Sentences - Dependent Clauses

Unit	Type of Text
	• Short Essay Organisation

Starting from Unit 2, the essays are characterized in terms of rhetorical functions. Five types of essay are introduced in the course textbook as shown in Table 6 below. (The content of the course textbook can be seen in Appendix 19.)

Unit	Type of Text
2	Descriptive Essays
3	Narrative Essays
4	Comparison-Contrast Essays
5	Opinion Essays
6	Cause-and-Effect Essays

Table 6: The Types of Essays in the EAP Course Textbook (Savage and Mayer, 2012, pp. iv-v)

Each type of essay has its own textual features. Table 7, for instance, shows the rhetorical focus and language and grammar focus of opinion essays. (The rhetorical conventions of all essays can be seen in Appendix 19.)

Unit	Rhetorical Focus	Language and Grammar Focus
5 Opinion Essay	• Opinion Organisation • Facts and Opinions • Counter-Argument and Refutation	• Quantity Expressions in Opinion Essays • Connectors to Show Support and Opposition

Table 7: Rhetorical Conventions of Opinion Essays in the EAP Course Textbook (Savage and Mayer, 2012, p.v)

The types of essays are introduced in four different processes that are designed to gradually enable students to write independently. As shown in Figure 4 below, the first process is 'stimulating ideas' in which students are asked to analyse a model to stimulate their ideas about the theme introduced in each unit. The next step is 'brainstorming and outlining' in which the students are asked to deconstruct a model to learn about the organisation of the introduced essay and then apply these patterns in their outlines. In Step 4, the students are also required to deconstruct another model to learn about the language and grammar of the introduced essay. After these three steps, the students write their essays. Finally, Step 4, 'Editing Your Writing', is an independent phase where the students are given some tasks and activities that help them edit and evaluate their own writing compared to essay rhetorical patterns.
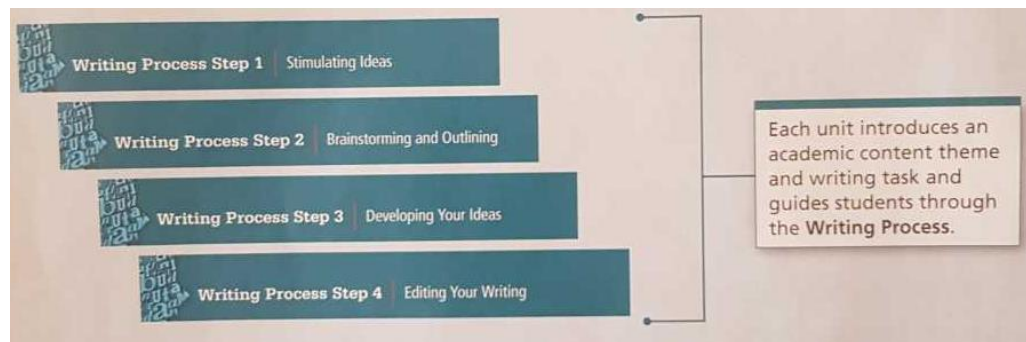
Figure 4: The Teaching of Rhetorical Patterns in in the EAP Course Textbook (Savage and Mayer, 2012, p.v)

2.4.1.2. Discourse

Discourse is the language in which teachers' comments are encoded (Higgins et al., 2001). This section discusses the issue of discourse in relation to the academic conventions of EAP writing. It highlights the student response to these conventions, particularly, how students respond to feedback related to them. More specifically, it discusses two particular influences of discourse on student response to feedback: student cognitive and student emotional engagement with feedback.

2.4.1.2.1. Student Cognitive Engagement

Students might not be able to understand the meaning of the implicit messages underpinning feedback when they are associated with disciplinary knowledge or particular academic conventions, such as the rhetorical features of essays. The issue of discourse and academic conventions was discussed in Lea and Street's (1998) qualitative study, which analysed the institution and the discipline, as constituted in power and discourse, to find out how disciplinary knowledge is constituted, enacted, developed, and learned. They found that the learning context is complex, especially in a new discipline and when switching between subjects, and they explained that students and teachers can have different understandings of what constitutes subject knowledge, and thus students can be misled by their teachers' comments. This can also be

supported by Carless's (2006) study, which found that the change from one module/tutor/topic to the next caused variations in practices and interpretations of feedback. Carless concluded that when feedback is subject-specific, it becomes worthless for other subjects.

These two studies, Lea and Street (1998) and Carless (2006), suggest that discourse should be based on a particular shared and accessible understanding between the teacher and their students. This indicates there is a need then to simplify the language of feedback to facilitate students' cognitive engagement with it. Indeed, some researchers (e.g., Ferris, 1995; Lee, 1997; Weaver, 2006; Lee, 2009), who explored student response to feedback recommended adapting the language of feedback to the students' level of English proficiency. These researchers found that students can vary widely in their background and in their command of the grammar, structures, and vocabulary, and so they might find feedback difficult to decode. In fact, Lee's (1997, 2009) two studies, which explored teachers' practices of feedback, showed that teachers changed the explicitness of their feedback based on the level of the students' English proficiency because students who had a lower level were unable to locate their errors, and so the teachers had to resort to direct feedback.

However, the above suggestion for simplifying the language of feedback could be criticised for two reasons. First, the validity of the studies conducted by the above researchers (Ferris, 1995, Lee, 1997, Weaver, 2006) can be queried because the results could be due to the students' short memory. To explain, the researchers based their studies merely on surveys that relied on students' recall of feedback practices they had experienced. The negative impact of the short memory was evident in Ferris's study when 11% of students stated they had experienced problems understanding their teachers' comments, but were unable to recall any specific examples.

Second, simplifying the language of feedback may not always be the perfect solution. In Ferris's (1995) study, for instance, the students had difficulty applying their teacher feedback because they struggled with

understanding feedback that had "specific grammar terms (fragment, verb tense) and symbols used to indicate a grammatical error (abbreviations, arrows, and circles)" (p.44). Her study then suggested that the difficulty of feedback was associated with students' command of grammatical knowledge rather than of the academic conventions of EAP writing, such as rhetorical conventions of different types of essay. If feedback is embedded in the academic conventions of different discourses or disciplines, then there is a need to help students understand and differentiate different academic conventions rather than just simplifying the language of feedback.

However, understanding academic conventions might in itself be difficult to handle. Newell-Jones et al. (2005) explored some students' experiences in academic skills development in HE, such as their experience in referencing. They found that students' inability to reference correctly was not a matter of them misunderstanding the conventions. Rather, it was a matter of an inadequate command of the process of using referencing. Therefore, Newell-Jones et al. suggested that students might benefit from teaching materials or interactive teaching that focus on the process of using sources, rather than from teaching that focuses solely on the definition of terms.

Alternatively, students may resort to textual borrowing to adjust to the demands of a new academic discourse. Textual borrowing is borrowing some excerpts from a source text through copying it or paraphrasing it by making changes in vocabulary or structures (Keck, 2014). Pennycook (1996) argued that textual borrowing is an essential transitional way to get students immersed in a discourse community. He commented that there are "useful things to be learned from reusing the structures and words from others' texts" (p. 225). Similarly, a study conducted by Keck (2006) found that L1 and L2 writers use textual borrowing as a strategy for learning the academic language of the discipline. Therefore, textual borrowing could be used to immerse students in the new discourse, and

thus the difficulty of understanding the language of feedback on a specific discourse can be minimised.

However, textual borrowing could be questioned in research into writing because it could be labelled as plagiarism, which is associated with cheating. Plagiarism is defined as "the use of an author's words, ideas, reflections, and thoughts without giving credit or adequately acknowledging sources" (Okoro, 2011, p.174). Some studies gave evidence that textual borrowing was a result of 1) a lack of exposure to the skills of summarising, paraphrasing, and citation, as shown in surveys of students in China and Japan (Shi, 2006); or 2) a culture that does not value creativity and critical thinking, and instead encourages memorisation and imitation (Gu and Brooks, 2008). This all implies that the issue of textual borrowing should be viewed with caution because it can be interpreted differently from the intention of coping with discourse.

All in all, regardless of the ways that learners use to cope with discourse, there is certainly a need to understand the implicit messages behind feedback. This review has identified some ways in which the nature of discourse can be important in feedback, and the implications depend on which approach to writing pedagogy is adopted. From some perspectives, it is simply a matter of the clarity of the message between teachers and students about key skills. From other perspectives, the discourse is shaping and negotiating understandings about writing and the agency of the writer.

2.4.1.2.2. Emotional Impact of Discourse

Discourse can also provoke students' emotional engagement with feedback when teachers construct a didactic relationship with students, e.g., they do not negotiate their feedback with their students. In a didactic relationship, students might be disappointed to understand feedback related to a certain discourse, such as rhetorical conventions of a certain type of essays. Alternatively, they might feel upset because they disagree

with their teachers' feedback. Carless (2006), who intensively explored issues of discourse, power, and emotion in feedback, found that there is a danger in the feedback language being too final, i.e., not open for negotiation. His findings reveal that the asymmetrical power relations may invoke negative emotions, which can be a barrier to students learning from feedback. Similarly, when interpreting feedback in students' academic writing, Lea and Street (1998) found that if comments are in the form of imperatives, i.e., authoritarian, they cause a confusion in interpretation that obstructs learning. The authors clarify that these forms simply indicate that the point is incorrect, and this can weaken student engagement with feedback, as they may not agree with the comments and think they are unfair.

Teachers may intentionally use academic terms of a higher level to construct a didactic relationship with students. Coffin et al. (2005) indicated that some teachers may use language to "construct a relatively hierarchical and overtly didactic relationship" (p.118) in order to emphasize a power differential between them and the students. In support of this view, Higgins et al.'s (2001) article, based on ongoing research into feedback in HE, suggested that teachers in an institution act dually, as assistants and as conveyers of judgment. However, they emphasised that teachers usually convey their judgment with an elevated status to enhance the power of their judgment, such as through utilising some academic terms that are beyond the understanding of their students.

Nevertheless, such authoritative feedback may have a negative impact on students' responses, as demonstrated in the studies mentioned earlier (Lea and Street, 1998; Carless, 2006). In fact, if the language of feedback tends to be authoritarian or judgmental, then there might also be a danger of focusing merely on the drawbacks in ways students perceive as very negative. Consequently, the negative comments can damage students' confidence, which make them less engaged with their feedback as demonstrated by a number of studies (e.g., Lea and Street, 1998; Higgins

et al., 2001; Hyland and Hyland, 2001; Carless, 2006). Carless noted the importance of confidence, finding that students who had greater confidence in what they did tended to be more receptive to their feedback than those who lacked confidence.

The above discussion, then, suggests that authoritative feedback should be avoided to maintain students' self-confidence. However, as argued in Section 2.4.1.2.1, students need to master academic conventions to be part of their discourse community. Thus, the language of feedback needs to be constructed using academic terms relevant to the students' discourse. Hyland (2006) pointed out that L2 writers who come from a culture where teachers tend to be directive prefer getting correction on grammar errors and dislike feedback being given on other newly introduced areas. However, if teachers avoid giving feedback on these areas based on their students' preferences, students might struggle to cope with the new discourse in their learning. An alternative solution, designed to keep students' confidence high, might use mitigation strategies, which are deployed to reduce the negative impact of authoritative language. For example, Lea and Street (1998), who investigated academic writing through the issue of discourse, power, and emotion, urged using mitigated comments such as 'in my opinion ...'. They believed that such comments express an interpersonal relationship between the students and their teacher and show the teacher's view of what has been written in ways that engage the student's attention and participation, without engaging negative emotions.

The value of using mitigation strategies in feedback was demonstrated in a study conducted by Hyland and Hyland (2001). The two researchers extensively investigated written feedback in terms of three functions: praise, criticism, and suggestions. They utilised three sorts of mitigation strategies in their study for the purpose of softening criticism: 1) hedging devices (i.e., using modal verbs and imprecise quantifiers in feedback), 2) question forms (e.g., the first body paragraph - does it need more supporting statements?), and 3) personal attribution (e.g., I find it difficult

to see the connections between the paragraphs). Their findings showed that these strategies were beneficial for students' motivation and self-confidence because they minimized the force of criticism and encouraged a collegial relationship between the teacher and their students.

To conclude, discourse is an essential element in understanding student response to feedback, and based on the earlier discussion of AfL, it is a central part of feedback in ways that develop understanding of the content, the nature, and the implications of feedback on EAP writing. Indeed, the studies discussed above suggest it can be regarded as one of the main complexities of feedback because of the implications of power and emotion inherent in discourse relationships. Higgins et al. (2001) and Nicol et al. (2011) argued that social interaction and negotiation between students and teachers can solve the issues of discourse, power, and emotion. These researchers proposed that an interaction between the two parties (i.e., the teacher and the students) enables students to ask for clarification at that moment and enables teachers to check their students' understanding of the feedback and to register their needs and preferences.

Nevertheless, addressing the complexities of the discourse does not guarantee the students' response to it. Some students might not be willing to act on their feedback even though they understand it or are satisfied with it. The literature on feedback shows that this could be because of the context for teaching and learning, which will be discussed below.

2.4.2. Context for Teaching and Learning

The context for teaching and learning can hinder or support teachers' and students' practices of feedback. The institutional constraints, such as teachers' heavy workload, the number of students and assignments, and deadlines might hinder the feedback practices. One of the changes in UK

institutions that Coffin et al. (2005) noted is a shift from a small number of students toward policies that aim to widen access to institutions, which decreases the small groups' opportunities for teaching and limits the time available for the teacher to comment on students' written work. In fact, the institutional constraints can also affect students' practices of feedback. The learning context includes the size of classes, student workloads, timetables or schedules, the deadlines for submission, and the institute's procedures, such as changing the modularity. Thus, the context might negatively affect students' performance and their understanding of feedback if it puts the students under pressure (Lea and Street,1998).

The negative impacts of institutional constraints on feedback practices have been demonstrated by several studies. For example, Young (2000) conducted a small-scale quantitative research project to investigate students' responses to feedback on assignments. He found that because of changes in modularity and increasing class sizes, teachers were unable to provide feedback based on students' understanding. Easthope and Easthope (2000) also explored the effect of excessive workload through interviews with teachers. They found that an intensification in the workload reduced the amount of attention and time that teachers gave to classroom preparation and feedback.

The teaching and learning context can even restrict teachers and students from practising feedback based on their beliefs. Lee (2009), who explored the extent to which teachers' beliefs influence their practices, found that, although the teachers believed that writing should go through various processes, they practised one-draft writing due to time pressure. Similarly, Amrhein and Nassaji (2010), who investigated the perceptions of ESL students and teachers about the different types and amounts of written CF, found the teachers were giving less explicit feedback, not only because they wanted to promote their students' autonomy, but also because of their workload, as overt correction was too time-consuming.

Therefore, for feedback to work effectively, there is a need to minimise institutional constraints. This should be largely the institution's responsibility. The institution needs to provide a supportive teaching and learning environment. For example, teachers' workload should be minimised to enable them to spend time and effort providing individual feedback based on their students' understanding. Students also need to be supported in their response to feedback. This could be through extending their deadline so that they have ample time to act on their feedback. The institutional support has been referred to in Orrell's (2006) model, presented in Section 2.4.3.1. The model illustrates that feedback practices should be consistent with learning objectives and classroom conditions.

Alternatively, teachers can deploy certain strategies to minimise the institutional constraints. Various studies have highlighted strategies for managing the constraints of individual feedback. For instance, one suggested strategy for saving time is through using other sources of feedback, such as self-correction and peer editing, instead of teachers' feedback (Amrhein and Nassaji, 2010). Similarly, Kathpalia and Heah (2017) suggested that, to save time, teachers should recognise students' rhetorical and grammatical problems through a diagnostic writing sample in the first week of class and then make these problems the focus of their feedback. Likewise, Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006) suggested having students reflect on their teacher's feedback, as this determines their needs and necessities.

To conclude, the above discussion suggests that teachers' and students' practices of feedback can be restricted by some teaching and learning constraints. Thus, there is a need to provide a supportive environment so that teachers and students practise their feedback effectively. Nevertheless, another constraint for feedback practices discussed in the literature is assessment, which will be explored below.

2.4.3. Assessment

As explained in the introduction chapter, one of the key issues that this study emphasises is teachers' and students' use and interpretation of college policies, one of which is assessment. This investigation is significant in this study to explore the impact of assessment on feedback practices. In the literature on assessment, there is a wide discussion of the 'washback effect' in language assessment, whereby assessment has an effect on teaching and learning (Elshawa et al., 2016). Although the concept of 'washback' has been explored by a number of applied linguistics researchers, its scope is controversial. Some researchers narrow down the scope of the concept to the classroom in terms of its influence on teachers' and students' actions and behaviours (e.g., Messick, 1996; Elshawa et al., 2016). For example, Messick viewed washback as "the extent to which the test influences language teachers and learners to do things that they would not necessarily otherwise do" (p.243). On the other hand, other researchers have taken a broader view of 'washback' and have extended the scope to include materials, curricula, and society. For example, Wall (1997, p.291 cited in Hayes, 2003, p.10) broadly defined washback as "any of the effects that a test may have on individuals, policies or practices, within the classroom, the school, the educational system or society as a whole". Taking this broad definition, assessment affects not only learning and teaching processes and strategies, but also the educational curriculum in terms of its goals, objectives, materials and procedures.

This study takes an institution-centred view of the washback effect on the teaching and learning practices within this setting. This is because, as stated earlier in this section, the study aims to examine how assessment is interpreted and utilised by teachers and students in their feedback practices. To underpin this approach to the washback effect on the practices in the setting, the review discusses existing research about the impact of assessment on practices of giving feedback and students' responses to feedback and relates them to this study.

2.4.3.1. The Impact of Assessment on Teacher Practices of Feedback

Practices in feedback and assessment are interconnected because (Section 2.4) feedback is a social practice. Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006) and Higgins et al. (2002) highlighted that feedback does not occur in isolation; rather, it is usually related to assessment goals that are published or required by the institution. Similarly, McGarrell and Verbeem (2007, p.229) argued that any writing assignment is framed by the institutional context as shown in the following:

- course objectives: what skills the students are supposed to learn by the end of the course
- assignment objectives: what skills the students are supposed to achieve in the assignment
- marking criteria: how the assignment is assessed
- the genre required: what type of writing is required (e.g., stories, academic essays, personal journals).

Therefore, feedback practices differ among teachers and classes depending on course requirements and the focus of the assessment.

Some studies have demonstrated influences of assessment on the practices of feedback. For example, Lee (2008) examined written feedback provided by English teachers to student texts to identify the factors that influence teacher practices of feedback. Her interview data revealed that the teachers were accountable to a school policy that restricted their response to student writing in certain ways. For example, when she asked teachers why they did not utilise drafts in their practices, they stated that they did not have time, as they had to cover all the types of writing that would be included in the examination. She added that when teachers were asked about their main emphasis on accuracy, they said that accuracy was the major focus of the exam.

In 2009, Lee explored the extent to which teachers' beliefs influence their practices and found ten mismatches between their beliefs and their actual

practices, which were due to assessment. For example, she revealed that because of the examination culture in schools, teachers had to focus on accuracy, fluency, and vocabulary to prepare students for examinations. In fact, she found that teachers awarded grades to students' writing, even though they believed that grades distract students from engaging with feedback, and this was because of the summative function of feedback, i.e., those grades were counted in the final grade.

Another study that showed similar impacts of assessment on feedback was conducted by Orrell (2006), who examined academics' espoused theories about feedback and compared them with their actual practices. Orrell found that academics were unable to give balanced attention to summative and formative feedback because of the course assessment. He declared that academics claimed that they attempted to give attention to both summative and formative roles simultaneously; however, they failed because of the pressure to teach students to pass the course rather than to encourage learning.

The above three studies (Orell, 2006; Lee, 2008; 2009) show that assessment can have an impact on feedback practices in terms of the teachers' time and flexibility in their practices. In fact, Lee (2008) clarified that the teachers commented that they would eventually be evaluated by the school principal based on the extent to which they adhered to the school's policy, and accordingly, they felt disempowered to act on any their own beliefs that were incongruent with this policy. The teachers in her study also admitted they did not use innovative feedback practices because they did not want to be blamed by the school leaders for less than exemplary exam results.

However, the validity of these teachers' claims must also be scrutinised. Lee's two studies (2008, 2009) relied on what the teachers told her. Thus, the reasoning that the teachers gave might just have been excuses to create justification for their practices. Lee (2008, 2009) herself acknowledges that the reasons that the participants gave might be excuses to justify the limitations in their feedback practices. This indicates

the need for studies that employ methods other than self-report, including classroom observations or the analysis of college policies.

Nevertheless, regardless of the validity of the previous research that has provided evidence for the influence of assessment on feedback practices, there is clearly a need to provide a supportive environment for teachers to prepare their students for their tests and to adapt their feedback practices with assessment. In the literature on assessment, there is a limited number of references to building a constructive alignment between assessment, teaching, and learning. Orrell (2006), for instance, referred to the importance of providing a supportive environment for assessment practices. Figure 5 shows Orrell's model, adopted from his PhD dissertation, which explores how feedback is shaped by teaching, learning, and assessment within an institution. He explained that assessment objectives should be consistent not only with curriculum content, but also with feedback practices, which themselves should be consistent with learning objectives and classroom conditions.
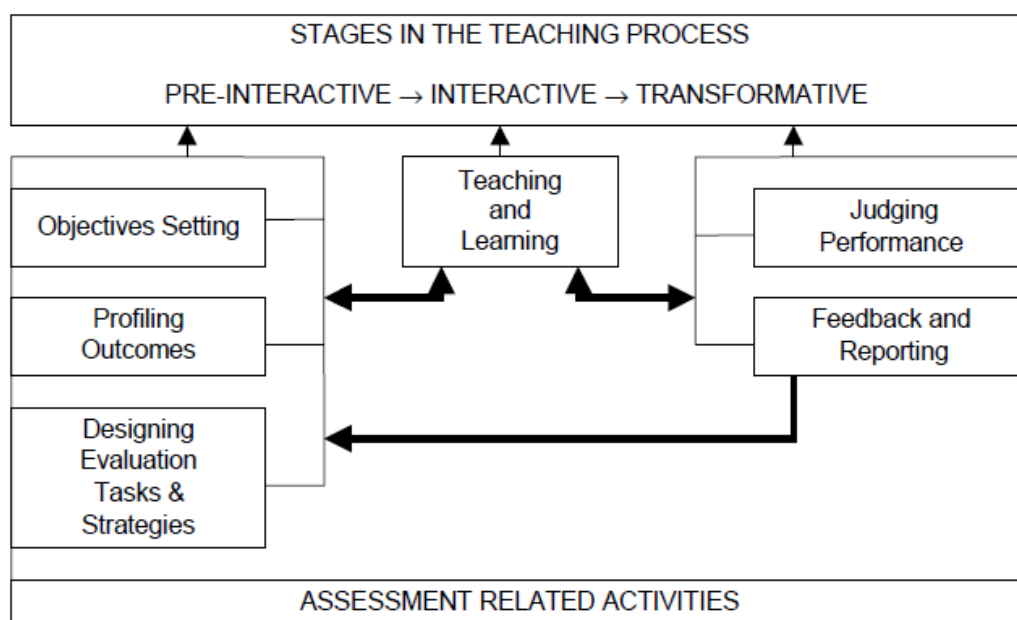
Figure 5: Orrel's Model of Teaching/Assessment Process (Orrell, 2006: 442)

Orrel believed that it is the institution's responsibility to improve assessment and feedback practices and ensure that all processes are mutually consistent. The Quality Assurance Agency's (QAA) Code of

Practice on Assessment of Students in UK (2000, p.10 cited in Weaver, 2006, p.382) reported that "institutions should ensure that appropriate feedback is provided to students on assessed work in a way that promotes learning and facilitates improvement".

In addition, teachers themselves might need to be trained in their 'assessment literacy', as Schmitt and Hamp-Lyons (2015) called it. Schmitt and Hamp-Lyons argued that all EAP teachers should take courses that help them to administer and interpret assessment practices because they all are involved in marking and rating students' work. Higgins et al. (2002) found that only 33% of the respondents in his study claimed to understand the marking criteria. They declared that the marking criteria might be difficult to grasp because the teachers struggle to articulate what is good quality, as the notion of quality is based on tacit knowledge. Similar findings were found in the study conducted by Manning (2013), which revealed that EAP teachers lacked understanding of the complexity in assessment development and interpretation. Manning found that respondents developed their knowledge of assessment practices on the job and had never consulted the assessment literature. These findings, then, suggest the need for a clear framework and training for assessment practices.

To conclude, the institution needs to ensure effective understanding and application of assessment, not only through providing a supportive teaching context, but also through training teachers in how to apply assessment appropriately.

2.4.3.2. The Impact of Assessment on Student Response to Feedback

Assessment can provoke students' extrinsic motivation, i.e., they perceive feedback as judging their level of achievement. Some studies (e.g. Higgins et al., 2002, Weaver, 2006) that have explored students' perceptions about feedback found that students viewed feedback as a means to raise their marks. For example, based on a questionnaire and

semi-structured interviews conducted with students, Higgins et al. revealed that the majority of students wanted feedback comments that merely showed them how to improve their work and attain better grades. Higgins et al. found that the importance of grades to students was clear when they showed a great desire to know the assessment criteria, as these criteria were strongly linked to their grades. In this regard, as will be mentioned below, some scholars have assumed that extrinsic motivation has a positive impact on students' responses to feedback, while others believe it has a negative impact.

Assessment can promote students' learning and make them more engaged with their feedback. Seviour (2015) stated that the EAP courses require students to pass specific grades before progressing to their degree courses, and therefore, this makes students spend time and effort to reach the grade that is required to pass and ensures their full engagement with their academic courses. Likewise, Gibbs (2006) emphasised that "assessment frames learning, creates learning activity and orients all aspects of learning" (p.23). This assertion could be supported by Weaver's (2006) study, which showed that students' engagement with feedback was enhanced when feedback was connected with attaining good grades. Weaver found that when students noted that comments given on their writing were not set in the context of the assessment criteria, they reacted negatively to subsequent drafts, e.g., they were less engaged with the feedback they had been given.

The above discussion suggests that marks have a positive impact on students' behavioural engagement with feedback. Therefore, feedback should be set in the context of assessment criteria to enhance students' engagement with it. In fact, this is one of the recommendations given by the abovementioned researchers as well as by other scholars, such as Hattie and Timperley (2007) and Maclellan (2001). These educators emphasised that students need to know where they are going in order to understand how to accomplish their tasks. This is because students' revision in response to feedback improves once they have clear goals for

writing. This, then, signifies the importance of familiarising students with the objectives and formats of assessment to increase their engagement with feedback.

Nevertheless, the above recommendations could be weakened in light of the negative impact of assessment on students' responses to feedback. Gibbs and Simpson (2005) and Carless (2006) contended that, if marks are the students' ultimate aim, then their emphasis is on raising their personal ability rather than on improving the piece of work they have done. Therefore, they assumed that if students have poor marks, their self-efficacy, their learning, and their engagement with the feedback are lowered. Higgins et al. (2001) also believed that once students have reached their desired mark, feedback ceases to be valuable to them. In fact, Hay and Mathers (2012), who disseminated and evaluated autonomous learning, contended that extrinsic motivation has a negative impact on students' reaction to formative feedback. They noted that students with extrinsic motivation ignore formative feedback and concentrate on summative feedback to help them reach a passing grade.

With the above two discussions of the positive and negative impacts of assessment on students' response to feedback, it becomes difficult to suggest whether to set feedback in the context of assessment. Moreover, it should be clarified that the above arguments are weak for two reasons. First, it should be mentioned that the negative impact of assessment on feedback was based on speculation. The positive impact of assessment on feedback has been supplemented with evidence from the findings of some research-based studies (Higgins et al., 2002; Weaver, 2006); however, the evidence provided has some limitations because it was based on interviews with students, and, therefore, the students' actual responses were not provided.

Second, it is not necessarily the case that students have one extreme of motivation; e.g., merely raising grades. Rather, they may have a combination of two motives: extrinsic motivation, i.e., raising grades, and intrinsic motivation, i.e., improving learning. This has been demonstrated

by a number of studies. For example, Carless (2006) found that although students indicated they were interested in marks and would look at them first, they also acknowledged that they were interested in all the feedback given and that they would revise it to monitor their development in writing or use it as a template for subsequent assignments. Similarly, Hyland's (2000) study showed that, while 90% of the students attributed great value to raising their grades in their future writing, they also believed that feedback could assist them in identifying their strengths and weaknesses in writing.

In fact, even Higgins et al. (2002), who perceived students to be obsessed with marks, acknowledged that his data showed conflicting views: although students pointed out that they were committed to raising their grades to gain qualifications, a large majority stated that they had joined HE because they enjoyed leaning. They added that further evidence suggesting that students were not totally instrumental emerged when they were asked to identify the features of a good assignment; some of them stated features that had no connection with marking criteria, such as 'critical analysis'. Therefore, they concluded that "many of today's students have a consumerist awareness reflected in a focus on achieving a grade alongside intrinsic motivations" (p.61).

Based on the above discussion, the influence of assessment on students' responses to feedback needs further investigation, giving consideration to both extrinsic and intrinsic motivation regarding feedback. One of the methods of exploring students' motivation is through examining their beliefs about the role and practices of feedback and EAP writing in general. The influence of student beliefs on their response to feedback has been referred to in the literature on feedback, which will be discussed in the section below.

2.4.4. Beliefs of Teachers and Students about Feedback Practices

The literature on feedback showed that practices of feedback can be affected by teachers' and students' beliefs about feedback. For example, with regard to teachers' beliefs, it is contended that they "serve as filters that train their attention to qualities (or lack of) in student writing" (Beach and Bridwell, 1984, p.312, 1984 cited in Zamel, 1985, p.80). Such an assumption has been widely explored in previous research in education. Borg (2003), for instance, extensively explored the role of teachers' beliefs in their pedagogical practices and found that teachers are "active, thinking decision-makers" (p.81). He used the term 'teacher cognition' to refer to what teachers believe, know, and think, and he strongly emphasised that teachers' cognition is the dominant power in teaching.

The impact of beliefs about feedback on practices has been demonstrated in some previous studies (e.g., Orrell, 2006; Mahfoodh and Pandian, 2011). Orrell's study, for instance, showed that teacher practices of feedback are bounded by the relationship between expectations and actions. One of his findings was that teachers believed that students were deviated by marks from 'learning to learn' to 'learning to pass', and accordingly, this pressured teachers to shape their teaching and feedback in such a way as to get students to pass rather than to encourage them to learn. Similarly, Mahfoodh and Pandian, who conducted a qualitative study on EFL students' responses and perceptions of WF found that students did not seek feedback from their peers because they did not believe they were reliable sources of feedback.

The power of beliefs about feedback can even dominate the institutional policies and students' needs. Based on two studies conducted by Lee (2009) and Orrell (2006), which explored teachers' practices and beliefs about feedback, the teachers' practices of feedback were tied with their philosophy of teaching and writing. Accordingly, the teachers were resistant to any institutional changes in their practices that contradicted their personal beliefs. Likewise, Lee (2009) found that the power of

teachers' beliefs may dominate students' needs. For example, she found that, despite knowing that students (especially weaker ones) may be unable to decipher the codes, the teachers use correction codes while marking students' papers because they see their value for writing development.

With the emphasis on the power of beliefs about feedback over practices, two common suggestions have been offered in this regard. One suggestion is a teaching reform that aims to make better changes in teachers' beliefs of feedback and thus achieve high-quality feedback (e.g., Orrell, 2006; Ellis, 2009a; Lee, 2009, 2011). Lee and Orrell concluded that the practices of feedback are ultimately determined by teachers' beliefs, even though they are influenced by the institutional system. Consequently, they recommended implementing a constructive and non-defensive teaching reform. Lee (2009) stated that "uncovering the beliefs that underlie teachers' practices can help identify the factors that contribute to effective feedback" (p.14). Lee (2011) also referred to some factors that may facilitate or inhibit feedback reform: teacher training, support from the school principals and parents, feasibility of change (i.e., teachers need to make sure that this change yields better results), and practical constraints, such as the size of classes, the workloads, and teaching schedules.

Another suggestion offered on the basis of the impact of participants' beliefs on feedback practices is the need for matches between teachers' and students' beliefs about feedback to enhance learning. Some scholars (e.g., Smith, 1991; Dheram, 1995; Orrell, 2006) have contended that if there are mismatches between teachers' and students' beliefs about feedback, students' response to feedback would be negatively affected. For example, Smith (1991) emphasised that if there is a mismatch between teacher-created salience and learner-perceived salience of 'input enhancement', as in the case of a teacher-centred approach, then no development is attained.

However, sharing beliefs should not be based on shaping teachers' practices to students' preferences. This is because students' preferences may be affected by their limited learning experience. The findings of Amrhein and Nassaji (2010) are evidence of this case. Amrhein and Nassaji investigated ESL students' and teachers' perceptions of the usefulness of different types and amounts of written CF. They found that the students showed their preference for marking all types of errors, while their teachers preferred selective errors. The researcher revealed that when students and teachers explained the reasons for their preferences, the teachers were found to discriminate better between minor and major errors, with major errors being those that interfere with communicating ideas. Thus, the way to create shared beliefs is probably not as simple as adapting teachers' practices in all settings.

As an alternative suggestion, beliefs can be shared through opening a discussion with students about the rationale behind teachers' feedback strategies and writing practices. In fact, this area has been proposed in L2 research under the name of 'assessment dialogue' (Hyland, 2000; Higgins et al., 2001; Diab, 2005; Carless, 2006). For example, Diab recommended that teachers demonstrate and explain to students the benefits of their feedback practices on writing development, including those which students do not prefer. The researchers' argument reflects the famous comment by Telegu, as reported in Dheram's (1995) study, which is that "in order for the cart to move in the right direction, its two bullocks need to understand not only the purpose of their efforts but also each other" (p.160).

However, the above two suggestions, teacher reform and sharing beliefs, could be complicated by the findings of a growing number of studies that have found mismatches between teachers' or students' beliefs and their actual practices (e.g., Carless, 2006; Beaumont et al., 2008; Lee, 2009; Norouzian et al., 2012). For example, Carless revealed two cases that showed contradictions between students' beliefs about feedback and their responses to it, as follows:

- The students believed in the value of consultation sessions and regarded them as more human and interactive than just receiving feedback by email because they can talk and negotiate about their assignments with their teachers. However, in actual practice, they did not take the initiative to ask their teachers for these sessions as they claimed.

- The students stated that they did not dare to negotiate about their feedback with their teachers because the teachers shaped a strict authoritative relationship with them. However, their teachers reported instances when their students negotiated their marks, not for the sake of changing them but for a resubmission of their assignment.

Even Orrell (2006), whose findings revealed matches between teachers' actual feedback practices and their espoused theories, quoted some instances of mismatches as well. One example he found of a mismatch is that although teachers indicated that they were giving feedback to facilitate learning and develop self-evaluation and improvement, in actual practice, they tended to be more summative in orientation, i.e., summary grade justification. Thus, teachers' espoused theories may not always be an accurate reflection of their practices.

Therefore, the assumption that "beliefs lead to practices" must remain questionable. However, such mismatches between beliefs and practices of feedback could possibly be interpreted differently in two ways: the complex nature of beliefs and the investigation of beliefs.

Complex Nature of Beliefs

The mismatches between beliefs and practices of feedback could be associated with the complex nature of beliefs. Pajares (1992) considered beliefs to be a 'messy construct', and he maintained that beliefs have been difficult to study because of "definitional problems, poor conceptualizations, and differing understandings of beliefs and belief

structures" (p.307). Beliefs in the ESL context are generally defined as "opinions and ideas that learners (and teachers) have about the task of learning a second/foreign language" (Kalaja and Ferreira, 2003, p.1). However, other various definitions of 'beliefs' exist in the literature on education. Pajares (1992) pointed out that a review of the literature suggests that the terms 'views', 'attitudes', 'perceptions', 'personal theories', and 'conceptions' have been used interchangeably to refer to beliefs due to fine differences between them.

The complexity of defining beliefs can be also attributed to two widely discussed issues, which are the relationship between beliefs and teachers' knowledge, and the relationship between beliefs and practices. First, as discussed earlier in this section, students' beliefs can be subjected to limitations in their knowledge about feedback. As mentioned, the study of Amrhein and Nassaji (2010) found that teachers were better than students in discriminating between minor and major errors in terms of their interference with communicating ideas. In fact, even teachers' beliefs can be affected by teachers' limited knowledge. Both Lee (2008) and Beaumont et al. (2008) found that the beliefs of their participating teachers were based on consultations with their colleagues and their marking experience, and that the teachers had not been trained in how to give feedback.

Another complication with beliefs is their relationships with practices. There is a debate regarding whether beliefs influence practices or practices have an impact on beliefs. It was discussed earlier in this section that teachers' and students' practices are a result of their beliefs. In fact, based on this assumption, Lee (2011) and Orrell (2006) came to the conclusion that exploring teachers' beliefs can help support teachers' professional development, i.e., through reflection on their beliefs about practices, teachers can decide what needs to be changed to achieve better practices. Nevertheless, this suggestion can be debated by two other views of beliefs and practices. Guskey (1986) presented a model, supported by some previous research, which describes staff

development and the process of teacher change. The model, presented in Figure 6 below, shows that teachers change their beliefs after they have changed their practices and seen evidence of the positive impact of these changes on students' outcomes.
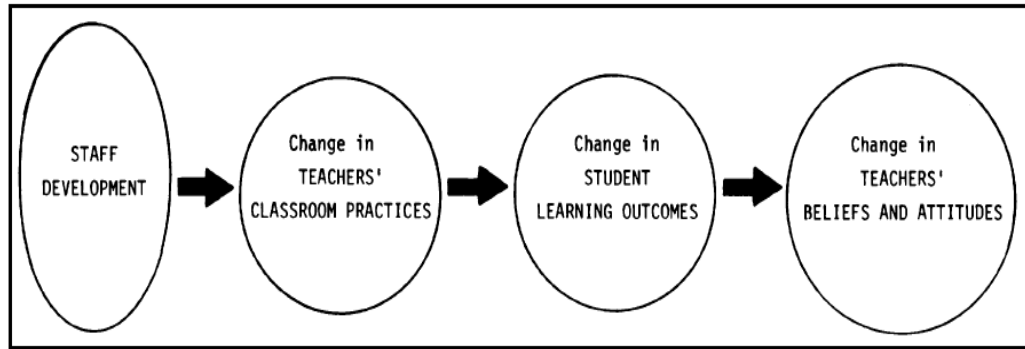
Figure 6: Guskey's Model of the Process of Teacher Change (Guskey, 1986, p.7)

On the other hand, there is another view suggested by some educators, such as Phipps and Borg (2009), which offers an interaction between beliefs and practices, i.e., beliefs affect practices and practices may lead to changes in beliefs (Phipps and Borg, 2009). Phipps and Borg emphasised that there is a need to understand the complex relationship between beliefs and practices through exploring the reasons behind both. They added that it is more productive to explore teachers' actual practices and then to question them about their practices than to utilise questionnaires about what teachers believe and do. Thus, with these three views about beliefs, the studies that have relied on the assumption that 'beliefs lead to practices' should be taken into consideration.

Investigation of Beliefs

In addition to the complexity of beliefs, the mismatches between beliefs about feedback and actual practices can also be attributed to how 'beliefs' have been investigated. Some studies, which will be mentioned below, investigated participants' general 'beliefs' through utilising questionnaires or interviews. However, such investigations could be criticised for two reasons discussed below.

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First, some studies have not explored the causes behind participants' beliefs (e.g., Maclellan, 2001; Carless, 2006; Beaumont et al., 2008; Amrhein and Nassaji, 2010). Educators such as Phipps and Borg (2009) have contended that there is a need to explore the underlying reasons behind beliefs and practices in order to understand the complex relationship between them. Borg (2003), who has conducted large-scale research on teacher beliefs, has indicated that teacher thoughts, knowledge, and beliefs are shaped by schooling, professional coursework, contextual factors, and classroom practices. Therefore, the mismatches between participants' beliefs and their practices about feedback that were found in some previous studies, such as the ones mentioned earlier in this section (e.g., Carless, 2006; Beaumont et al., 2008; Lee, 2009; Norouzian et al., 2012), could have possibly resulted from some contextual influences. In such a case, it is much more accurate to explore beliefs by understanding the reasons behind them.

Second, the method of data collection when investigating beliefs should be considered. Some studies have relied on questionnaires and interviews to explore participants' beliefs (e.g., Diab, 2005; Lee, 2008, 2009; Amrhein and Nassaji, 2010; Mahfoodh and Pandian, 2011). Therefore, a question can be raised as to how far these instruments can be considered a reliable tool to explore the actual intentions of participants. Pajares (1992) argued that "beliefs cannot be directly observed or measured but must be inferred from what people say, intend, and do" (p.314). Instead, Pajares's argument suggests it is better to get participants to reflect on their actual practices.

In fact, even questioning participants about their practices might not be enough on its own. It has already been stated in Section 2.4.3 that Lee (2008, 2009) and Mahfoodh and Pandian (2011) concluded their studies by pointing out that teachers might have only given excuses when giving the reasons for their feedback practices in order to justify the limitations in these practices. This indicates the need to observe the validity of the reasoning that participants give through other methods of data collection,

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such as observations, analysis of students' writing, and college documents that give instructions for giving feedback.

To conclude, the above discussion indicates that teachers' and students' beliefs can affect their practices of feedback; however, this area should be investigated with caution. It is not sufficient to explore general beliefs. Rather, there is a need to elicit students' and teachers' beliefs through questioning their actual practices and then validating this questioning through different methods of data collection, such as observations and analysis of students' writing, rather than merely relying on a survey that may yield only claims. In addition, there is a need to explore the reasons behind students' and teachers' beliefs because beliefs can be shaped by professional knowledge or college policies and by the teaching and learning context.

2.4.5. Self-directed Learning

This section discusses self-directed learning. This type of learning helps students to become self-directed learners, i.e., they seek feedback and consultation from their peers, or they may look for guidance from textbooks to identify their weaknesses rather than merely relying on their teachers (Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick, 2006). Such a purpose reflects one of the main principles of AfL which shapes the approach to feedback taken in this study, which is discussed in Section 2.2. AfL aims to get students to become self-regulating learners who are able to "judge performance relative to goals, generate internal feedback about amounts and rates of progress towards goals, and adjust further action based on that feedback" (Butler and Winne, 1995, p.258). Furthermore, self-directed learning is significant in an HE context. Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006) commented that in recent years, the teaching approaches to EAP writing in HE are becoming more student-centred whereby students

are expected to search for different sources of feedback other than their teacher, such as their own, or that of their peers or their textbooks.

However, earlier assessments that students have experienced at school may minimise self-directed learning. There is a group of studies (e.g., Higgins et al., 2002; Beaumont et al., 2008; Amrhein and Nassaji, 2010; Mahfoodh and Pandian, 2011) that examined the students' experiences of feedback prior to university entry. These studies found that the two systems have markedly different assessment approaches; the school makes students dependent on their teacher while the university emphasises independent learning. For example, according to a study by Beaumont et al. (2008), students reported that in school, it is usually the case that their papers are marked without them being involved in the feedback process; consequently, when they move to university, they struggle to act independently on their learning. Therefore, the students' learning experience could be regarded one of the obstacles to self-directed learning.

In other cases, self-directed learning could be affected by students' trust in the sources of feedback. In a study conducted by Mahfoodh and Pandian (2011), which explored students' beliefs and their response to their teachers' written feedback on L2 writing, it was found that students believed that teachers were the most knowledgeable about grammar, writing, and teaching in general. Therefore, they accepted their teachers' authority over their writing, even though they were sometimes not convinced about their comments. The students admitted that they rarely sought feedback from their peers, friends, or relatives because they did not trust their feedback as much as they trusted feedback from their teachers. Therefore, students' trust in the sources of feedback can affect their behavioural acts.

Furthermore, self-directed learning can also be associated with students' self-efficacy, that is, their beliefs about their abilities (Mastan and Maarof, 2014). Mastan and Maarof stated that self-efficacy determines a learner's willingness to perform his or her writing task, and preserves students'

determination in the face of difficulties, complexities, and anxiety as they go through the writing process. They maintained that language learners are the most likely to face hardship in their writing in comparison with native-speaker learners because they have to deal with both language and content issues. In support of this view, some studies have found a strong relationship between learners' self-efficacy and their performance, such as the ones mentioned in Pajares' (2003) review about self-efficacy beliefs, motivation, and achievement in writing. This suggests there is a need to increase students' self-efficacy to promote their self-directed learning.

The above discussion suggests that students need to be supported in their self-directed learning. Yorke (2001) stated that first-year students may leave the university because they are "unprepared or unready for the experience of higher education" (p.116). This, in fact, is supported by Higgins' (2002) study, which revealed that students expressed their feeling of being unsupported due to the university's independent mode of learning, which contrasted strongly with their former school experience. Therefore, there is a need to reinforce students' self-directed learning. Beaumont et al. (2008) urged that the prime aim of the first-year curriculum should be teaching students how to be self-directed learners. This suggestion was based on the findings of their study, which explores staff and student perceptions of feedback quality in HE.

An overview of the implications offered for self-directed learning in the literature suggests that three methods can be utilised to support students' self-directed learning: changing students' beliefs about self-directed learning, promoting autonomy-supporting feedback, and developing students' evaluative knowledge. These three implications will be discussed below.

Student Beliefs about Self-directed Learning

Self-directed learning can be enhanced through changing students' beliefs about it. Self-efficacy is not necessarily stable, as it can be influenced by other people's judgements of one's ability. This was demonstrated by the study of Duijnhouwer et al. (2010), which explored the effects of feedback on students' self-efficacy beliefs, goals, and performance. This study revealed that self-efficacy beliefs may change based on teachers' feedback, suggesting that teachers can move students from being dependent on them to being self-directed learners through reinforcing their self-efficacy beliefs.

In this regard, another suggestion, proposed by Hyland (2000), is having full communication with students to discuss not only the feedback strategies they believe in, but also any writing problems and approaches to writing and learning. Hyland conducted a qualitative longitudinal study to examine the issue of autonomy in ESL writing. She found that an open discussion with students about feedback practices and writing problems is one of the best ways of having effective feedback practices and enhancing students' beliefs about self-directed learning.

Autonomy-supporting Feedback

Teachers can encourage students to adopt self-directed learning by giving 'autonomy-supporting feedback', as Busse (2013) called it. Some feedback practices make students think and work on their progress rather than just relying on their teachers' feedback. Four practices of feedback, some of which were mentioned in Section 2.3., were demonstrated to have an influence on students' autonomy, as is pointed out below.

- Indirect feedback: Lalande (1982) found that giving feedback indirectly through underlining the errors or indicating the kinds of error has long-term effects on developing students' self-correction ability.
- Revision: Chandler (2003) compared feedback with revision and without revision, and the findings suggested that the group who

had not been asked to revise their work submitted their writing without noticing the feedback or processing their corrections.

- Sources of feedback (i.e., the provider or initiator of feedback (Lee, 1997)): Handley and Wiliams (2011) found that giving students exemplars annotated with feedback before submission of their assignments was a good source of feedback and enhanced their engagement with feedback.

- Timely feedback (i.e., giving feedback in stages (Nicol et al. (2011)): Gibbs and Simpson (2005) in their study, outlined eleven conditions related to teachers' and students' practices with feedback. One of the conditions they emphasised is that, in order to support learning, assessment should be distributed across weeks rather than taken at the end of the course. This was because giving feedback in stages engages students in their learning and leads them to take a deeper approach to learning.

In brief, the above studies suggest that students need to be encouraged to be self-directed learners through giving them opportunities to edit their own work and seek feedback from different sources rather than merely relying on their teachers. However, it should be noted that these recommendations are context-free, i.e., they are proposed to be practised by any participant and in any field and setting. Section 2.3 has given a broad discussion about the weaknesses of the context-free recommendations for feedback practices.

Student Evaluative Knowledge

The autonomy-supporting feedback practices may not be effective if students do not have the necessary evaluative knowledge. Truscott (1996), who is the main opponent of error correction, questioned students' ability to provide feedback adequately and consistently. Therefore, he contended that it is not surprising to find that previous studies have not convincingly proven the usefulness of corrective feedback (CF). Thus, while students might have many opportunities for

autonomy-supporting feedback, they might be unable to provide accurate feedback. Therefore, they need first to have evaluative knowledge to develop their self-directed learning.

To develop evaluative knowledge, the self-directed tasks need to be properly structured. For example, to enhance the quality of peer-editing tasks, Kathpalia and Heah (2017) and Ferris (2003) declared that these tasks need to be carefully and systematically implemented. Ferris, for instance, recommended conducting peer feedback consistently, training students for peer feedback, and forming pairs thoughtfully based on cultural background, specialization, gender, writing ability, and personality to ensure smooth interaction between them. She also suggested structuring peer feedback in sessions, e.g., by managing the time in each phase. Additionally, she recommended monitoring peer feedback sessions by providing a feedback form, that is, a checklist of grading criteria, and extending peer feedback beyond the classroom, e.g., through online platforms.

Setting feedback in the context of marking criteria in particular has been widely discussed in the literature on feedback. Some researchers (e.g., Weaver, 2006; Nicol et al., 2011) have emphasised that students need to understand the criteria and requirements of assignments in order to help them close the gap between what they do (actual performance) and what is expected of them. Weaver, for instance, found that setting feedback in the context of learning outcomes and assessment criteria helped improve communication between students and teachers, and developed a student-centred approach to learning and teaching. Therefore, this signifies the need to have clear goals so that students know how to self-monitor their learning.

Sadler (2009) and Hawe and Dixon (2014) even recommended sharing the experience of marking with students to help them develop evaluative knowledge that would assist them in determining the quality of their writing in the light of multiple criteria. Sadler, who explored the use of pre-set criteria for assessment and grading, argued that direct experience in

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the evaluation and revision of writing is the most effective way to develop evaluative knowledge and that "no amount of telling, showing or discussing is a substitute for one's own experience" (p. 49). In support, Hawe and Dixon (2014), who explored students' evaluative expertise in the writing classroom, commented that students should be provided with evaluative experience, which they believe should be a part of the teaching design. This experience, they argued, helps students develop a shared understanding between them and their teachers or their peers about the learning goals of writing and what constitutes a quality piece of writing.

To conclude Section 2.4.5, student self-directed learning has been considered an essential component of students' response to feedback in the HE context. Students need to move from relying on their teachers to working autonomously. Both the institution and the teachers have a role in promoting self-directed learning through reinforcing students' beliefs about autonomous learning, providing autonomy-supporting feedback, and developing students' evaluative knowledge.

The above review shows that feedback is a social practice, and there are several contextual influences on the practices of giving feedback and students' responses to it. As this study is conducted in Oman, there is a need to introduce some of the contextual issues that might influence feedback in this context. So far, I am not aware of any comprehensive study that has investigated students' and teachers' beliefs about feedback on EAP writing and their actual practices in Oman. However, there are some studies, though scarce, that give an insight into the teaching and learning of EAP writing in the context of Oman, which will be discussed in the following section.

2.5. EAP Writing in the Omani Context

This section provides insights into the teaching and learning of EAP writing in Oman to clarify the unique context of this country. However, not all the contextual influences on teaching and learning that have been found in previous studies are presented below. The study has selected the ones that are relevant to the contextual influences discussed throughout this chapter: plagiarism, research skills, self-directed learning, and the teaching and the learning contexts.

It should be noted that very few studies have been conducted on EAP writing in Omani HEIs. Additionally, as will be shown below, all the relevant studies, a part from AlBakri (2016), did not investigate teachers' or students' actual practices. This does not underestimate the value of these studies; however, their focus does not match the purpose of this study, which is to explore feedback from the beliefs and practices of the participants. In addition, these studies were based on participants' recall about feedback, making the findings subject to fallible memories.

2.5.1. Plagiarism

Plagiarism could be one of the obstacles that teachers face when teaching EAP writing in CoAS in Oman, which is where this study was conducted. Two research-based studies conducted in the CoAS revealed cases of students plagiarising: Al-Badwawi (2011) and Al Issaei (2012). Al-Badwawi's (2011) PhD study explored first-year students' experiences with the demands of EAP writing and the contextual factors that shape this experience. She used document analysis and semi-structured interviews with teachers and students from different departments and with college leaders. The findings revealed that students encounter difficulties during the process of writing assignments, one of which is plagiarism. This was declared by both the students and their teachers. The students reported that they tended to write their research in Arabic, and then they used web services, such as Google translate (a software tool), to translate it into English.

Likewise, Al Issaei (2012) investigated the writing assessment framework implemented for first-year students to identify the weaknesses in EAP writing assessment and to offer some remedial and practical solutions. She conducted semi-structured interviews with 13 English practitioners from the CoAS; she asked them about the effectiveness of the current assessment in their context and what alternatives they could suggest to promote the merits and minimise the insufficiencies. Her results revealed that one of the most acute challenges was related to the issue of plagiarism. Al Issaei commented that the issue of plagiarism should have been reduced by the college's use of Safe Assign, a software programme that was designed to detect any plagiarised work in written assignments by illustrating the percentage of plagiarism in each assignment. However, she declared that the practitioners did not find this software highly reliable because the students used tricks such as omitting commas and full stops to obtain lower matching rates in the software. Therefore, the researcher urged practitioners not to rely totally on this software, but rather, to provide individual feedback throughout the research process.

Different reasons have been proposed for Omani students plagiarising from internet texts. One reason, which two of the above researchers revealed, is students' lack of knowledge on how to reference properly. As shown in the introduction chapter, in Section 1.2.2., students are introduced to research skills in project writing, such as referencing, quoting, paraphrasing, and summarising. Therefore, it is of relevance to examine previous Omani research in this area.

2.5.2. Research Skills

Another area that in which Omani students could have problems regarding their writing is research skills, such as referencing, quoting, paraphrasing, and summarising. Two studies conducted in the CoAS revealed that students had difficulties with these skills: Al Issaei (2012) and Al-Badwawi (2011). Based on the participants' interviews, Al Issaei found that his students lacked knowledge on how to document properly.

Therefore, she emphasised the need for sufficient research-based activities to enable students to practise the skills of paraphrasing, summarising and referencing. She added that students needed to be familiarised with the value of research papers and that research skills should be incorporated into the curriculum to promote a research environment. She explained that the research project was taught as a separate entity and that the course book did not contain any teaching on research skills.

Al-Badwawi (2011) also reported that the first-year students had difficulties with research skills. It was found that the students faced obstacles when incorporating information from references to argue their points of view because they did not understand why the use of references is required. She found that this was because the students lacked previous training in research skills. For example, the students reported that they had difficulty using proper referencing mechanisms. This difficulty did not concern the use of the bibliography; rather, it was about the appropriate use of in-text referencing to incorporate quotations into their texts. The students pointed out that they were given handouts explaining the use of in-text referencing and the bibliography; however, they were not trained in how to incorporate references into the different sections of their assignments. Additionally, the students reported having difficulty in paraphrasing and summarising from other documents because of their low language level and the lack of training in these skills.

To conclude, Omani students might need more training on research skills, such as paraphrasing, summarising, and referencing to enable them to use resources efficiently. In fact, equipping students with research skills might be necessary to promote their self-directed learning. The following section will discuss self-directed learning in Oman, which is one of issues that may affect students' responses to feedback.

2.5.3. Omani Students' Beliefs about Self-directed Learning

As self-directed learning was discussed in Section 2.4.5, this section focuses on this issue in Oman. Studies Emenyeonu (2012) and AlBakri (2016) have revealed that Omani students lack self-directed learning. Emenyeonu (2012) conducted a study to review the meaning of student-centred learning (SCL) in the Omani context and examined the challenges that obstruct the implementation of SCL. The study interviewed 30 teachers and 60 students from one CoAS and from an International College of Engineering and Management, asking them about their experiences of SCL in the classroom. The results revealed some barriers to SCL in Oman. For example, the students' poor perception of SCL is one of the obstacles to their self-directed learning; the students think that the teacher should do everything for them, and thus, they do not feel satisfied when they are asked to do work by themselves, thinking that it is the responsibility of their teachers, who are paid to teach them. Another barrier to SCL in Oman is the teachers' teaching methodology; some teachers do not encourage self-directed learning because they do "excessive Teacher Talking Time (TTT), lecturing, power concentration on the teacher rather than sharing control with the learners" (p. 250).

Another study that revealed similar findings was by AlBakri (2016). AlBakri conducted an exploratory case study in a public college in Oman to explore teachers' beliefs about feedback and the contextual factors that affect their written corrective feedback (WCF) practices. She used semi-structured interviews with 6 writing teachers and she analysed 18 students' written assignments which had been marked with WCF. Her study revealed that all the teachers shared the belief that the majority of their students, mostly males, lacked autonomy and were not committed to taking WCF seriously. One teacher declared that she used not to correct spelling errors in her previous teaching context; however, in Oman she had to correct them because her students did not bother to correct their own mistakes. In fact, she commented that the teachers

repeated some expressions such as "they don't bother, they don't ask questions, they don't make any effort, and they're not committed" (p.60).

The two above studies show that Omani students might not be self-directed learners, as they do not bother to work on their own and prefer their teacher to do everything for them. Emenyeonu (2012) found that teachers' teaching methodology can promote or discourage self-directed learning. However, another influence on promoting self-directed learning could be the context for teaching, such as internet facilities or learning via computer. Al-Badwawi's (2011) study revealed some of the influences of the teaching context on first-year students' learning in the CoAS, which will be discussed below.

2.5.4. Context for Teaching and Learning in Omani HEI

Al-Badwawi's (2011) study, which was referred to in Sections 2.5.1 and 2.5.2, explored the influence of the programmes and structures of CoAS on teaching and learning. She found that there was a lack of access to internet and computers. The students in her study complained that there was a limited number of computers in the college laboratories, and so, most of the time, they were occupied. In addition, they declared that the internet was slow and that it took them a lot of time to download a web page or an article.

Another issue she found was time management. The students in her study stated that they were under pressure to process their learning. This was because of the demands and requirements of their EAP modules or other modules, such as course assignments, exams, and other assessed tasks. They also said that there was a lack of coordination between the departments, as all assignments and assessed course work were due in the last few weeks before the final examination.

Finally, there was also the issue of students' readiness for academic writing. She found that both the teachers and students reported that the

requirements for writing tasks in Foundation Year Programme and in Year 1 were totally different. The two groups indicated that there was no smooth transition between the two different writing systems. They explained that there was no provision made to train students in the new tasks of writing, such as writing long essays using the research skills of summarising, paraphrasing, and quoting.

This chapter gives an overview of the scholarly and research-based studies on feedback on academic writing that exist in the literature, including the studies conducted in the context of my research. However, although these studies provide rich insights into the issue of feedback, they have some drawbacks and limitations, which have been identified and discussed in the appropriate sections. The following section summarises the limitations and gaps of these studies to form the basis of my research questions, methodology and research methods.

2.6.   Summary and Implications for the Present Study

This chapter has reviewed the literature about how teachers shape their feedback practices and how students respond to feedback. The beginning argues for the adoption of an AfL perspective and emphasises 'feedback as a social practice'. These are the key issues in investigating feedback on EAP writing, and these points are supported by a review of the different approaches taken in previous research, including summative and formative assessments and the context-free implications for feedback practices.

In the second part of this chapter, studies exploring feedback in the EAP writing context were reviewed including the studies conducted in the context of my study. The findings of these studies underscore the complexities of feedback practices and the types of contextual influences that shape teachers' and students' practices of feedback. Although each HE context is different, and although teachers' and students' practices of

feedback are far from being identical, these findings provide a general insight into the contextual influences that may influence feedback practices. This review places emphasis on five contextual influences (EAP writing, assessment, teacher and student beliefs about feedback, context for teaching and learning, and self-directed learning), which are considered relevant to the aims of this research, as explained throughout this chapter.

However, as discussed in this review, some limitations and gaps were found in the previous research that explored the contextual influences of feedback, which can be summarised into three main sections: the levels of context, the participants in the study, and the methods of data collection. This summary involves drawing together the problems and gaps identified in previous studies and then showing how they have shaped the design of the current study.

2.6.1. The Levels of Context

The discussion in this chapter included theories and research that addressed the five contextual influences. However, as argued in this chapter, most of the research focused on the local context, i.e., feedback interaction inside the classroom. This included the investigation of practices and beliefs of teachers and students (e.g., Lee, 2009; Orrell, 2006; Carless, 2006). While existing research provides a number of important insights, especially with regard to the lack of shared understanding of best feedback practices between teachers and their students, it devotes scant attention to other levels of context, such as EAP writing and the institutional context. The influence of the EAP writing pedagogy on feedback has been explored in some scholarly research. There are several arguments about such influence raised by some scholars such as Beach and Bridwell (1984 cited in Zamel, 1985) and Kathpalia and Heah (2017); however, as stated in Section 2.4.1, they are largely speculative and deserve to be investigated further.

Similarly, as shown in Section 2.4.2, some researchers (e.g., Orrell, 2006; Weaver, 2006) refer to the role of the institution in the effective practices of feedback, but this issue is not well developed in EAP research. For example, Orrell argued that it is the institution's responsibility to create consistency between curriculum content, feedback practices, learning objectives, and classroom conditions. However, as pointed out in this chapter, there is little reference to such constructive alignment in education or similar work in language assessment.

In consequence, such topics being so under-researched provides scope for further investigation of the role of EAP writing and institutions in the context of my study, which intends to offer a deeper understanding of both.

2.6.2. The Participants of the Study

The discussion of the contextual influences mainly concentrates on the students' understanding and use of feedback; teachers' beliefs and practices of feedback; and the college policies and guidelines for feedback in EAP and how teachers and students use, understand, and interpret them. However, as argued throughout the chapter, there is almost no attempt to explore the three groups (students, teachers, and institutions) altogether except for few studies, such as Diab (2005) and Mahfoodh and Pandian (2011), though it should be clarified that the college policy in their studies has been examined from students' and teachers' perspectives only.

As shown in this chapter, the three groups play a significant role in feedback practices. In their discussion of Afl, Black and Wiliam (1998) confirmed that formative feedback should not be the responsibility only of teachers. Rather, students and policy makers should also be involved in raising the standards of students' achievement in writing. Lea and Street (1998) also acknowledged that meaning is contested between three different parties: the institution, the teacher, and the students.

Hence, this study attempts to explore feedback from the practices and viewpoints of three groups: the college, the teachers, and the students.

2.6.3. Instruments of Data Collection

The contextual influences have been explored through interviews and surveys (e.g., Maclellan, 2001; Higgins et al., 2002; Diab, 2005; Carless, 2006; Weaver, 2006; Beaumont et al., 2008; Lee, 2008; Amrhein and Nassaji, 2010; Al-Badwawi, 2011; Al Issaei, 2012; Emenyeonu, 2012). However, throughout the literature review, some criticisms of the previous research regarding the use of these instruments have been discussed. One criticism made was with regard to how far these instruments can be considered reliable tools to explore the actual intentions of teachers or students. The abovementioned studies have explored the practices of feedback from participants' statements. For example, the students in the studies of Higgins et al. and Weaver confirmed that assessment made them engage positively with feedback. However, their actual responses to feedback had not been examined, so the extent to which they reflect actual practices remains uncertain. This, then, creates a clear incentive for further research to explore actual practices.

Additionally, the instruments of data collection may not provide accurate reasoning for feedback practices. Lee (2009) investigated teachers' beliefs and practices in written feedback based on a questionnaire, an analysis of students' writing, and follow-up interviews with some teachers. She found that teachers gave different explanations for the constraints of their practices, such as college policy about feedback or exam pressure; however, she was not certain whether they were real explanations or just mere excuses for the limitations in the teachers' practices. She then suggested shedding more light on the incongruity between beliefs and practices through adopting an ethnographical approach to probe the underlying reasons for teachers' practices. In contrast, this study intends to explore the reasons that teachers give

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through employing a multiple-method approach, which includes interviews, observations, and analysis of students' writing and college documents, thus contributing data that can provide a deeper and more comprehensive insight into feedback practices.

To conclude, the limitations in previous research have provided insights that helped shape the design of my study as shown above. These insights helped to formulate the research questions for this study, which are outlined at the outset of the next section.

2.7. Research Agenda

The limitations and gaps of previous research on feedback summarised in the section above helped in formulating the research aims and questions for my study, which will be discussed in this section.

This research aimed to use three levels of context to explore how feedback is interpreted, enacted, and developed in the context of this study. The three levels of context, ranging from a smaller context to a larger context, are local/immediate context, EAP writing, and institution. These three levels have been adapted from Yiu (2009), who found that disciplinary writing is interplayed by three levels of context: 1) the immediate or the local context, which concerns the environment in which writing takes place and the interactions that occur between student and teacher or peers; 2) the disciplinary context, which covers the demands made on students' ability by different subject disciplines; and 3) the institutional context, which concerns how the disciplinary writing is translated into a programme of study in the college.

I use this notion of the three levels of context to model the culture of feedback. However, as my study deals with an EAP writing that aims to prepare students to study their subject-domain courses in English (Bruce, 2011), the disciplinary context is not the focus of this study. Rather, the focus will be specifically on the EAP writing context. The study, then, approaches feedback from the following levels:

- The local/immediate context refers to the environment in which feedback practices occur, placing emphasis on the contextual influences that shape interactions inside the classroom, such as the teachers' and students' beliefs, and self-directed learning.

- The EAP writing context concerns the varying requirements made on student writing from teachers or from the college, which reflects the norms and structures governing text production. This mainly concerns the approaches to teaching EAP writing and students' knowledge of the academic conventions of the domain.

- The institutional context addresses the college's support for feedback, such as teachers' assessment literacy; building a constructive alignment between assessment, teaching, and learning; and providing a supportive context for teaching and learning in terms of the size of classes, the workloads, and teaching schedules.

The beliefs and practices of teachers, students, and college leaders form the basis of the exploration on feedback in the abovementioned levels of context. However, this study's focus is not on selecting appropriate and effective feedback practices based on sharing beliefs. It is rather an attempt to view feedback from a hierarchical approach, that is, institutions', teachers' and students' practices and beliefs, and give importance to these hierarchies in understanding feedback practices. The study also does not aim to show that one hierarchy replaces or supersedes another; rather, it sees that all the hierarchies may encapsulate each other.

To summarise, the current study's aims are to explore the culture of feedback in an Omani institution at three levels of context (classroom context, EAP writing, and institutional context), with three groups of participants (teachers, students, and college leaders). The 'culture of feedback' in this study includes the actual practices of and responses to feedback in the classroom; the teachers' and students' beliefs about feedback and EAP writing; and the college policies about feedback, assessment, and EAP writing. These aspects of interest will be explored

utilising multiple methods of data collection, such as interviews, prior observations, observations, follow-up interviews, and analysis of student writing and college documents.

To achieve the abovementioned goals, this study aims to explore how feedback on EAP writing is understood and practised in HEI in Oman. Thus, the research question is as follows:

- How is the feedback on EAP writing interpreted, enacted, and developed by participants in an HE college in Oman?

To answer this question, the study conducts an exploration of feedback practices through the beliefs of participants as well as through analysis of their actual practices and analysis of college policy. Therefore, this study intends to answer the following sub-questions:

1. What is the college policy for giving and responding to feedback on EAP writing?
2. What are the teachers' practices of feedback and students' responses to it in EAP writing?
3. What are the teachers' and students' beliefs about the role of feedback, the practices of providing feedback, and responses to it in EAP writing?

My study attempts to highlight these areas and contribute to the ongoing debate about feedback. It forms an intensive investigation into how and why feedback practices are constituted. For an EAP teacher-coordinator, such as myself, who has utilised different types of feedback practices with HE students, and who has responsibility for coordinating the teaching of EAP writing courses, a fruitful research approach would be to investigate feedback in a naturalistic context using a case study in the HE context. No study has yet attempted to explore how feedback is interpreted, developed, and enacted in an Omani HEI. Therefore, my study is conducted in an Omani HEI.

The next chapter gives more details about the methodology and methods utilised in this study.

Chapter Three: Method and Methodology

In order to answer the research questions, I undertook an exploratory case study on feedback on EAP writing in a HEI in Oman. This chapter details the methodology and methods used for the research. It begins with discussing the paradigm of this study. Then, it discusses the exploratory qualitative approach used in this research, arguing for it being the best approach for my study. This is followed by a description of the research site and participants. Next, data collection methods are described. After that, considerations of ethical issues and the validity of the study are discussed. Finally, the method of analysis of the collected data is clarified.

3.1.   The Approach Taken in the Study

My study employs a qualitative approach. This approach examines reality as being socially constructed in the minds of participants and within situational constraints. The approach is believed to be "an interpretive naturalistic approach to the world" (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005, p.3), which means that qualitative researchers explore situations in a natural setting where they can understand, describe and explain a social phenomenon. The reason behind adopting this approach is because it is consistent with the constructivist-interpretive paradigm that this study falls within. The constructivist-interpretive paradigm advocates that reality is constructed in the minds of individuals and varies from one to another (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). This paradigm best fits the goal of my study, which is to explore feedback from the views and practices of teachers, students and college policies.

The study also employs an exploratory approach to research because this is useful where there is little information about the phenomenon (Robson, 2002, Marshall and Rossman, 2014). As discussed in the literature review, feedback can be influenced by different contextual influences, including "a collection of other variables that are as yet

unknown" (Guénette, 2007, p.52). Hence, this study intends to explore the contextual influences that have not been fully explored in previous research on feedback. In addition, as pointed out at the end of the literature chapter, there is no study that has attempted to explore how feedback is interpreted, developed and enacted in an Omani HEI. Therefore, an exploratory study will be useful in this context.

3.2. Case Study

A case study of an institution – including teachers, students and college policies – was chosen for the current research. The literature on methods and methodology offers various definitions of a case study; however, all the definitions agree that a case study is "a well-established research strategy where the focus is on a case (which is interpreted very widely to include the study of an individual person, a group, a setting, an organization, etc.) in its own right and taking its context into account" (Robson, 2002, p.178).

There are two reasons why this research utilises a case study method to explore feedback in an Omani HEI. First, as explained in the previous section, this study aims to explore feedback in a natural setting to identify any contextual influences on feedback practices. Such an aim fits one of the purposes mentioned for a case study. Yin (2013) emphasises that researchers resort to case studies deliberately when they want to cover the contextual conditions. He adds that a case study provides descriptions of individuals and the setting, with contextual conditions which give contextual interpretations of the subject of the case.

Second, a case study was selected to be the method of this study because it provides a detailed and comprehensive account of the context. As stated in the literature review in Section 2.7., this study aims to investigate feedback comprehensively through interviews, observations and analysis of college documents and student writing. To fit such an aim, a case study is believed to be a tool for providing a holistic and

intensive account of a phenomenon (Yin, 2013). This is because a case study limits the scope of the setting and participants to enable intensive analysis and investigation of a single phenomenon using multiple sources of evidence (Cohen et al., 2013, Yin, 2013).

3.3. The Site and the Research Participants

The study was conducted at one of the Colleges of Applied Sciences (CoAS) in Oman. Within the institution, decisions were made to limit the scope of the case. This is because it would be impractical to study the understandings of all participants teaching or studying EAP writing courses, or explore the policies of all EAP writing courses in the institution. In fact, studying all participants and policies might even lead to superficial data collection because the focus would be comprehensive rather than intensive. The following two sub-sections describe and justify the choice of the sample in terms of the number of participants and the type of sampling.

3.3.1. Number of Participants

From the institution of this study, three classes were selected; including three teachers, and three focus groups of six students. This number was decided based on the recommendation of some scholars in methodology who suggest setting the number of participants to provide rich and, at the same time, adequate data for answering the study questions. For instance, Mason (2002) argues that the number of participants in qualitative research should be sufficient to address the research questions but not too large in order not to be distracted from the intensive focus of the research. In support, Creswell (2012) suggests that the more participants are included, the less detail is obtained. Therefore, the number of participants was set to obtain an intensive focus on the data and, at the same time, to cover the range of data needed to answer the research questions. On the other hand, the number of college leaders

was decided based on the sampling procedures, which will be discussed in the following section.

3.3.2. Type of Sampling

This study utilised:

- convenience sampling, in which participants are chosen based on practical criteria, such as participants' willingness to participate or easy accessibility (Dornyei, 2007), and
- purposive sampling, in which participants are selected based on the purpose of the research (Creswell, 2012).

First, with regard to the selection of teachers and students, convenience sampling was used. Burgess (2002) declares that what matters in qualitative research is the willingness of the participants to cooperate, practicality, and convenience of access. For my study, convenience sampling was highly important because the teachers and students were expected to spend much time and effort in this study, as there were eight interviews for each participant, each lasting from 10 to 50 minutes.

Based on the bibliographical data of the research participants, the students varied in their level of writing proficiency. Appendix 26 shows the students' total grades in project writing and final exam. Similarly, the three teachers who volunteered to take part in the study had different qualifications and levels of experience in teaching, as shown in Table 8. This study recognises that the teachers and students may not be representative, but this is not a problem because representativeness is not the concern of qualitative research. As explained in Section 3.1., this study falls within a constructivist-interpretive paradigm which advocates that reality is constructed in the minds of individuals and varies from one to another.

Teacher	Education	Teaching Experience
Teacher 1	BA degree in English language Teaching and MA degree in Translation Studies.	5 Years 8 EAP Courses
Teacher 2	CELTA, DELTA and MA in English Language Teaching	3 Years and a half 8 EAP Courses
Teacher 3	Postgraduate certificate of education to teach modern languages and a diploma in TESOL	14 Years and a half 10 EAP Courses

Table 8: Teachers' Qualifications and Experience

Based on convenience sampling, the first-year EAP module was also selected rather than the foundation-year or the second-year academic writing modules. Those teachers who wanted to volunteer in the study were two from the Foundation Year, four from First Year and two from Second Year. Therefore, because it was planned to investigate three classes, the three teachers from First Year were chosen.

On the other hand, purposive sampling was utilised in the selection of college leaders. This is because, as emphasised by Creswell (2012), this sampling method aims to select participants who can provide an accurate and comprehensive picture of the phenomenon. Not all college leaders are able to provide a full and precise picture of the policies about EAP writing, feedback and assessment practices. Three main persons had a direct association with these policies, including the Programme Director of English (PD), the Head of English Department (HoED) and first-year EAP coordinator. The PD was interviewed because he was the chair person in designing the EAP courses in CoAS, and the main person in charge of making and amending college policies about EAP courses in terms of writing practices and assessment. The HoED was interviewed

because he was responsible for supervising the coordinators of EAP courses and offering them assistance and support. The first-year EAP coordinator was also selected as her role was to supervise the teachers of the first-year EAP module and receive any complaints from their students. She was also the link between the college and the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE), which is the governing authority of CoAS. Therefore, all these selected college leaders could provide rich and comprehensive information that no other leaders could provide.

3.4. Data Collection

The case study was conducted throughout a whole semester of an academic year using different methods of data collection. This study used interviews, observations and documentary analysis to collect data. I begin this section by explaining first the rationale behind choosing these research methods. Then, I explain the methods in use. Finally, I provide details on the data collection process by explaining the different stages of the data collection process, the size of the data, and the methods of recording data.

3.4.1. Purposes of Research Methods

The study used multiple methods to answer the three research sub-questions proposed at the end of the literature chapter because different sorts of research questions require different instruments of data collection. Table 9 illustrates which instruments were used for each sub-question.

Research Questions	Instruments
What is the college policy for giving and responding to feedback on EAP writing?	Analysis of College Documents Interviews with College Leaders

What are the teachers' practices of feedback and students' responses to it on EAP writing?	Observations Analysis of Student Writing Interviews with Teachers and Students Following Each Observation
What are the teachers' and students' beliefs about the role of feedback, and the practices of feedback and responses to it on EAP writing?	Interviews with Teachers and Students Before Observations Interviews with Teachers and Students Following Each Observation Final Interviews with Teachers and Students

Table 9: Methods of Data Collection for Research Questions

The following three sub-sections further clarify the purposes of the above-mentioned research methods.

3.4.1.1. Documentary Analysis

The documentary analysis addressed three issues: college policy, teacher practices in giving feedback and student response to feedback.

Different documents were analysed in the study. First, the college policies regarding feedback in EAP writing were explored through analysis of all college documents designed for the first-year EAP module. The exploration included course textbook, course description, project outline, project specifications, rating scale and final examination. Moreover, as written feedback was explored alongside oral feedback, all the students' written compositions in the three groups during the semester were collected to explore teacher written feedback in terms of direct and

indirect feedback and the focus of feedback. In addition, the second-draft pieces of writing were also collected to explore students' behavioural responses to the feedback given to their first draft; i.e. how they acted on their first-draft feedback.

Documentary analysis provides objective information about college policies, and teacher and student practices of feedback. In previous studies (e.g. Lee, 2008, 2009), the college policy was addressed through participants' interviews. However, Lee declared that the participants' interviews may be merely claims for justifying limitations in their feedback practices and he urged researchers to study the validity of the interviews. The documents in my study can be used to cross-check some of the assertions made in the interviews. Merriam (2002) declares that this method provides an objective source of information about college policy compared to other methods of data collection, such as interviews.

3.4.1.2. Observations

The observations were helpful in capturing the actual practices of teachers and students which could not have been gained from other methods of data collection such as interviews. This is because interviews are subject to participants' short memories as demonstrated in the literature chapter in Section 2.6.3. In addition, they may not give an accurate description of practices, which could be because participants feel reluctant to comment negatively on their practices as mentioned in the above section. Unlike interviews, observations can capture actual data from live situations (Cohen et al., 2013). That means they allow researchers to explore the interactions in a real-life context.

3.4.1.3. Interviews

Interviews were utilised in this study for three purposes. First, they were used to explore the teachers' and students' beliefs about the role and the

practices of EAP writing, and the role and practices of feedback (see Appendices 3, 4, 7 and 8). Second, they were used as a complement to college document analysis; the college leaders were interviewed to clarify the rationale and implementation of college policy (see Appendix 2). Finally, they were used as a complement to observations and analysis of student writing; interviews following observations elicited the teachers' and the students' feelings, intentions, thoughts and experiences about their actual feedback practices (See Appendices 5 and 6).

3.4.1.4. Summary

In summary, the multiple methods used in this study were chosen to ensure comprehensiveness, complementarity, and validity. Comprehensiveness is achieved by providing a holistic and intensive view of teacher and student practices of feedback. In terms of complementarity, each method provides particular information that other methods omit or cannot provide sufficiently. In other words, the strength of one method would compensate for the weakness of another. Finally, validation is achieved by cross-checking data through multiple methods. For example, the analysis of documents can cross-check the reasoning associated with college policy.

3.4.2. Types of Methods

As mentioned above, the data collection methods used in this research are: observations, interviews, and document analysis. However, there are various types of each data collection method. In this section, I describe the type(s) of observations and interviews that were used in this research.

3.4.2.1. Type of Observations

As discussed in Section 3.1, the ontological position taken in this research is that "a researcher can 'capture' naturally occurring phenomena by entering or observing a setting" (Mason, 2002, p.141). Therefore, in order to keep this position, this study utilised a direct type of observation: the researcher's role is that of non-participant observer; that is, he/she only observes what is happening and does not participate in any interaction that occurs during the observation (Drury, 1992). This type of observation was necessary to keep the teachers and students undistracted, as far as possible, by the researcher's existence at the back of the classroom.

3.4.2.2. Types of Interviews

Different types of interviews were used: semi-structured interviews, focus groups and individual interviews. These different types were chosen to fulfil different purposes, as will be explained in the following two sub-sections. It should be clarified that students' interviews were conducted in Arabic (the students' mother tongue) because of their lack of fluency in the target language. Conducting interviews in Arabic maximised participation and input because it helped students speak freely without constraint. This decision was made after conducting a pilot study, discussed in Section 3.5., where it was revealed that students were unable to express their thoughts and experiences clearly due to their lack of fluency in English. The process of translating interviews into English was not without challenges. I had to make the decision whether to use literal (word-by-word) or free translation (inexact equivalence). The literal translation is fairer to the participants; however, the meaning could be impeded, and the readability of the text could be reduced, along with the understanding of the text (Birbili, 2000). Therefore, free translation was conducted in my study to make excerpts clear to the readers. However, there were attempts to achieve exact equivalence between the original

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and the translated text as long as the meaning was clear. The translation process was conducted with a help of an English translation expert.

3.4.2.2.1. Semi-structured Interviews

A semi-structured interview was employed in this study: some questions were prepared in advance and some were generated during the interview. This type of interview is believed to keep the interviewer and interviewees within the area of relevance to the research while also being flexible enough to refer to any associated issue or to change the order of questions whenever needed (McKenzie et al., 2005). Therefore, this type of interview was valuable to: 1) the research because it offered detailed insights about feedback in the Omani context, and 2) the researcher because she was a novice in qualitative research and so there was a fear of losing control over the information produced and thereby veering from the study focus.

The questions that were prepared in advance or generated during interviews differed depending on the category of participants. For college leaders, the questions concerned the rationale and the implementation of college policies about writing, assessment and feedback (see Appendix 2). On the other hand, the questions to teachers or students differed between their first interviews, interviews following each observation, and final interviews. The questions in the first interview addressed the participants' general beliefs about the role and practices of feedback, EAP writing and assessment (see Appendices 3 and 4). The interview questions following each observation depended on the observed practices. The questions addressed how teachers practised feedback on writing and why, and how students responded to their teachers' feedback. The students were even asked about the written feedback they had on their pieces of writing, if available. Some of the questions were prepared in advance and some were written while observing the classes (see Appendices 5 and 6). The final interview addressed questions about the teachers' and students' overall

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impression about the feedback practices they had during the semester and their beliefs about the teaching context and college policies (see Appendices 7 and 8).

3.4.2.2.2. Individual Interview and Focus Group

The interviews conducted in this study were with individuals, except for the students. In interviewing the students, a focus group was held in each class; all selected students were gathered and asked questions. A focus group is different from a group interview because data is generated through interactions between the participants themselves and not simply between the interviewer and participants (Cohen et al., 2013). The purposes for utilising focus groups with students and individual interviews with the rest of the participants will be explained below.

Focus groups were used with students because of being "… data rich, flexible, stimulating to respondents and aiding their recall, and cumulative and elaborative, over and above individual responses" (Fontana and Frey, 1994, p.365). In fact, the group interactivity helped students to produce rich information about their beliefs because, being exposed to different ideas about feedback from the other participants in the group, the students better understood and formulated their own positions. In addition, the interaction enhanced the quality of information provided as students were found to provide checks for each other.

As teachers and college leaders had various timetables, and as there was the possibility of disagreement over best practices, individual interviews were used. In addition, individual interviews with teachers were needed after observations as the questions addressed their own particular practices. Nevertheless, the individual interview was also found to have its own advantages. For example, it allowed the participants to express themselves freely without the influence of others. Moreover, detailed information was gained about their feedback practices and the reasoning behind them.

3.4.3. The Data Collection Process

This section presents the process of data collection. I begin the section by first explaining the data collection stages. Then, I present the size of the collected data. Finally, I provide details on how the data was recorded.

3.4.3.1. Stages of Data Collection

The data collection took place in three stages, from February 2015 until June 2015, as shown in Table 10 below.

Stages	Date of Collection	Data Collected
Stage 1	February 2015	Collecting College Documents Interviewing College Leaders Conducting Teachers' and Students' First Interview
Stage 2	March-June 2015	Conducting Observations and Follow-up Interviews
Stage 3	June 2015	Conducting Teachers' and Students' Final Interview Collecting the Three Groups' Writing

Table 10: Stages of Data Collection

3.4.3.2. The Size of Collected Data

A significant set of data was obtained by the end of data collection, as summarized in Table 11 below. In Total, 18 observations were conducted during the whole semester: six observations for each of the three classes. For interviews, in total, there were 48 students' and teachers' interviews conducted. This included eight per teacher and eight per student focus group. The eight interviews consisted of the initial interview, the six interviews following observations, and the final interview. For the collection of students' writing samples, there were 18 drafts of project writing, one draft per person, and 53 samples of textbook-led writing (Group 1: 13, Group 2: 16, Group 3: 24). This combines all of the textbook-led writing of the three groups during the whole semester. Finally, as shown below, six college documents relating to first-year EAP module were collected and three interviews with college leaders were conducted.

Method of Data Collection	Data Collected
Teachers' First Interview	Interviews with all the participating teachers
Students' First Interview	Interviews with all the participating groups of students
Class Observations	6 observations per class
Teachers' Interviews following Observations	6 interviews per teacher
Students' Interviews following Observations	6 interviews per group of students
Teachers' Final Interviews	Interviews with the 3 teachers
Students' Final Interviews	Interviews with the 3 groups

Students' Writing	18 drafts of project writing, one draft per person. 53 samples of textbook-led writing (Group 1: 13, Group 2: 16, Group 3: 24)
College Documents	College course book Course description Project outline Project specifications Final examination for 1st year EAP Module Rating scale for 1st year EAP module
College leaders' interviews	HoED PD 1st Year EAP coordinator

Table 11: Data collected from the fieldwork

The number of observations was decided based on agreement with the three teachers and their timetables. This was divided between project and textbook-led classes. The course description of the EAP writing module shows that the course is divided into two types of classes: classes that cover the course textbook and classes that cover project writing. Both classes were associated: the textbook-led classes dealt with the writing practices that aimed to prepare students to write their project. Therefore, I decided to divide the number of observations between the two classes because both of them held importance in understanding the feedback practices in the institution.

3.4.3.3. Recording of Data

Different means were used to record data. For example, with regards to the recording of interviews, they were all video- and audio-recorded except for Teacher 3 who asked for audio-recording only plus field notes in the last two interviews for personal reasons.

However, with regards to observations, two different means of recording were used. First, the observations were video- and audio-recorded. The whole lessons were recorded in order to avoid interrupting participants when pausing and resuming recording. However, later on in the analysis of the collected data, all observations were structured into different practices of feedback and the irrelevant recordings were omitted. Second, an observation scheme was used to record the observations through two sections: teacher practices in giving feedback and student responses to feedback (see Appendix 9 for the observation schedule). The first section includes sub-sections which are: timing of feedback, task revision/new piece of writing, focus of feedback, direct and indirect feedback, and sources of feedback. The second section covers student participation in tasks, students seeking clarification from teachers, and students seeking clarification from peers. There is also a section for additional comments.

Both means of recording observations (audio- and video-recorders and the schedule) were used to complement each other. The observation schedule helped to record the feedback practices that were missed in the video- or audio- recorders, such as things written on the board and student responses at the back. In the same vein, the video- or audio-recorders helped to capture some details that were missed in the schedule which were needed in the analysis later on.

The above sections clarified how the research methods and methodology were designed in this study. However, some were re-designed after a pilot study that was utilised to trial the study methods and methodology. The following section gives a detailed account of how the pilot study helped to modify the above design and the instruments of my research.

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3.5. The Pilot Study

Before starting the fieldwork, this study was piloted in the CoAS. A pilot study is "a small-scale trial before the main investigation, intended to assess the adequacy of the research design and of the instruments to be used for data collection" (Sapsford and Jupp, 2006, p.103). The pilot study was conducted in November 2014. The aims of the pilot were to:

- test the suitability and efficiency of the research design and instruments,
- identify any technical or contextual constraints and difficulties in the collection procedures, and
- obtain first-hand experience of conducting qualitative research.

As a novice researcher in qualitative studies, this trial was valuable for me. It gave me experience in handling this type of research and testing the validity and reliability of my study instruments and design before going into the actual study.

3.5.1. Procedures of the Pilot Study

As a pilot study is meant to be small-scale, the number of participants, interviews and observations were small. One class (one teacher) and one focus group of three students were selected on a voluntary basis. Before going into the study, all documents regarding policy for EAP writing, assessment and feedback practices had been collected. Then, the HoED and the EAP coordinator were interviewed to explore their beliefs about the policies and the rationale behind them. Afterwards, the teacher and the focus group were interviewed to get their general beliefs about feedback and EAP writing. Then, two class observations were conducted: one textbook-led class and one project class. After each class, the teacher and the focus group were interviewed. At the end, the students' marked first draft was collected for analysis.

Although all my instruments were tested as planned, several challenges and shortcomings emerged. These challenges and shortcomings helped in making modifications in the actual study design and the instruments, and in warning of the technical and contextual constraints. The lessons learned from the pilot study are discussed below.

3.5.2. Lessons Learned from the Pilot Study

Many issues and challenges emerged from the pilot study. The key lessons learnt were as follows:

- Through the pilot study, experience was gained on how to get official permission to access the college, and on how to access the participants.
- It was not planned to interview the Director of the Programme of English (PD) but, after piloting, it was revealed that he was the main policy leader in the curriculum of EAP writing in terms of the design of course specifications, project outline and the selection of the course textbook.
- Experience was gained on how to conduct semi-structured interviews. It gave me a chance to add some prompting questions which were used in the fieldwork to get the participants to talk and avoid long silences.
- Experience was also gained on conducting a focus group, including: 1) how to make the sessions interactive, not only between the researcher and the students but also between the students themselves, and 2) how to get the shy students to be more talkative.
- The post-interviews were not planned in the study and, after piloting, it was found it would have been beneficial to have a final interview to get the participants' overall impression of how the feedback practices went during the semester.
- The pilot study helped to test the quality of recording and revealed the technical problems with audio and camera recorders. From the

first interview, it was realized that the camera recorded for 26 minutes only and then stopped. So, the timing of the camera recording should be set in advance. Furthermore, the audio recorder had to be placed near the interviewees to gain a clear recording. It was difficult to transcribe the first interview conducted in the pilot study because of the poor quality and clarity of the recording as the recorder was too far from the interviewee.

•   Transcribing the interviews and the class observations took more time than expected, almost three weeks. This alerted me to start transcribing during the data collection stage and not to leave it until the end of the fieldwork.

•   The analysis of the students' marked writing revealed a lot of valuable outcomes about the practices of feedback, such as the focus of feedback, and direct and indirect feedback. However, during the analysis, it was realised that one piece of writing was insufficient, and it would be more useful to collect all the focus group's writing during the semester.

•   The pilot study revealed that students were unable to express their thoughts in English. The purpose of the research was to get students to express their experiences and thoughts as much as possible and so conducting interviews in English with students was a failure.

Hence, the pilot study was very helpful in facilitating the design and the conduct of this research.

3.6. Ethical Concerns

Ethical issues concern the protection of the interests and rights of the participants in the research (Denscombe, 2014). Ethics were considered at every stage of the research design of this study. First, full approval was granted from the ethics committee of the School of Education, University of Nottingham, in October 2014 (see Appendix 10). The university requires researchers to complete the School of Education ethical

guidelines which are based on the British Educational Research Association's Revised Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (2004). The university ethical guidelines include:

1. the research ethical proposal that briefly states the research aims and questions, proposed methods of data collection, and the procedures and methods of how to gain access to prospective research participants (see Appendix 11); and
2. a draft information sheet and a draft consent form to be given to the participants of the study (see Appendix 12).

The next step taken with regard to ethical concerns was gaining access to, and acceptance by, the institution of the study, as recommended by Cohen et al. (2013). Initially, in order to gain official access to the institution in Oman and collect data, a letter approved by the Research Ethics Committee in Nottingham University that explained the purpose of the study and types of data required was sent to the Director General (DG) of the CoAS in the MoHE in Oman (see Appendix 11). The DG in turn sent an official letter of approval to the dean of the college in question, who forwarded the letter to the Head of English Department (HoED) in the institution requesting their cooperation.

The HoED provided me with the contact details of those teachers who wanted to take part in the study. Similarly, through the selected teachers, I got a list of those students who wanted to volunteer. All the participants were given the informed consent form to sign, which covered how long the data would be kept, access to the data, and how it would be anonymised (see Appendix 12). Participants were assured that they could withdraw at any point if they wished. The transcripts of their interviews were also sent to the participants for approval. For the same reason, the results of the study were sent to the participants before submitting the final PhD thesis.

Another principle of ethics is with regard to participants' stress, loss of self-esteem and physical harm (Bryman, 2015). This study took steps to avoid causing pain or distress to participants. It minimised disturbance to

the teachers and students through convenience sampling which allowed the participants to check their schedules and willingness to collaborate with the researcher in the field work. In addition, in order to reduce physical discomfort or mental stress, the observations and interviews were scheduled at a time convenient for the participants. The interviews following each observation could have caused some disturbance to the participants because there were six follow-up interviews per teacher and focus group. Nevertheless, these interviews took much less time than the first and the final interviews, just ten to thirty minutes each.

3.7. Considerations of Validity

Validity in qualitative research concerns "the honesty, depth, richness, and scope of the data achieved, the participants approached, the extent of triangulation and the disinterestedness or objectivity of the researcher" (Winter, 2000, cited in Cohen et al., 2013, p.133). This study is subject to the issue of validity for two reasons. First, it is based on a case study and case studies have been criticised for the biases that can occur in their interpretation (Stake, 1995). That is to say, the researcher has to carefully decide what to include and exclude when constructing meaning, which questions the objectivity of the data. Second, this study takes an interpretivist position, an approach that does not claim that data is generalizable, unlike in quantitative research (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). To explain, feedback is subjective by its nature, i.e. there is no absolute interpretation of the phenomenon because it varies from one context to another due to contextual influences such as participants' beliefs, college policies, and teaching context. This means that the findings of my study may not be applicable to all contexts. Nevertheless, having a subjective focus does not mean that this study did not take any action to make it more valid and reliable. Several steps were taken to ensure validity, as explained below.

First, the practices of giving feedback and student responses to it were observed during different lessons with the same participants throughout

the semester. This is because, as stated by Creswell and Miller (2000), "the longer (the constructivists) stay in the field, the more the pluralistic perspective will be heard from participants and the better the understanding of the context of participant views" (p.128). Staying longer in the field helped in gaining a more comprehensive picture of the feedback practices in the college and in obtaining an in-depth understanding of the college polices and participants' beliefs about feedback.

Second, following the suggestion offered by Shenton (2004), to avoid biases in the data, the participants voices were richly represented in the results chapter. This helped to get their direct thoughts and experiences. By this, the readers can make their own interpretations of the findings. In fact, the participants were also given the opportunity to validate the interpretations made for their practices by reviewing the findings of the study, as stated in Section 3.6.

Third, following the recommendation of Cohen et al. (2013) and Creswell and Miller (2000), different methods of data collection were utilised, such as interviews, observations and document analysis, to increase the validity of the findings in three ways. As explained in Section 3.4.1., the multiple sources of data helped to gain a more holistic view of feedback practices, to complement information, and to cross-check similarities and differences via different methods of data collection. Therefore, the multiple sources of data helped to improve the validity of the results of this study.

Fourth, the types of interviews selected in this study helped to increase the validity of the data collected. First, as discussed in Section 3.4.2.2., the focus groups helped students better understand and formulate their own positions among the ones they heard. Furthermore, they enabled students to double-check the information they provided. Similarly, the semi-structured interviews utilised in this study provided rich explanation and clarification about data. They gave opportunities to the interviewees to clarify the points they made in great depth.

Fifth, the recording of observations was done unobtrusively. As mentioned in Section 3.4.3.3., although the study focuses on feedback only, the whole lesson was recorded. This helped to avoid interrupting participants' practices when pausing and resuming recording. The researcher also sat at the back so that her existence was not too obvious, which allowed students and teachers to act more normally.

Finally, with regard to generalizability of this research, a case study is not meant to be representative; however, it can provide insights that might be applicable to similar situations and contexts (Cohen et al., 2013). Some authors refer to the need for in-depth description of the research process to help the reader decide whether they want to replicate case studies in a similar context (Creswell and Miller, 2000). Therefore, this study provided thick description of the Omani context, the design of the study and the analysis procedures.

At the end, as agreed by Stake (1995), it is the reader who can decide what applies to their context. In fact, due to different views of what is real in the constructivist-interpretive approach, the sharing of what is observed and experienced is always problematic, and so it is almost impossible to satisfy and convince all readers.

3.8. Analysis

The data analysis process was started during the field work through informal analysis activities to allow the researcher to become familiar with the collected data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The informal data analysis began from jotting down initial impressions about the collected data while listening and note-taking during the interviews and observations. A familiarity with the collected data was also developed through transcribing all the interviews with teachers and college leaders and translating all interviews with students during the field work (See Section 3.4.2.2), which helped to relate them to the study aims and make connections between them. Furthermore, notes were made of what data were missing and what still needed to be collected in order to fill the gaps

and answer the research questions. After finishing data collection, the data were reviewed, so the researcher could become more familiar with it, and an attempt was made to find whatever data were missing. Subsequently, eight students and the three teachers were contacted through emails and by phone and were asked to send any missing data. For example, the teachers were asked to send the grading scheme for the EAP writing exam. WhatsApp discussions were also held with eight students, asking them for clarification in regard to their pieces of writing that had been collected. Finally, after the complete set of data had been obtained, an informal report about the initial impressions and interesting thoughts found in the study was made. The output of the informal analysis was sent to the researcher's supervisors for them to view and respond to it.

The informal analysis helped the researcher to picture an overview of the data. However, it was still very primitive, and it was not possible to make any in-depth analysis. Thus, the data were next scrutinized in more depth using several strategic steps. The following part explains the approach to data analysis and the practical steps that were taken to analyse the data.

The data collected were divided into three classes, which were referred to as Class 1, Class 2, and Class 3. For the reader's convenience, and to preserve the participants' anonymity, the teachers of those classes were labelled Teacher 1, Teacher 2, and Teacher 3. The three groups of students were called Group 1, Group 2, and Group 3. The students in in each group were labelled as follows:

Group 1: G1S1, G1S2, G1S3, G1S4, G1S5, G1S6

Group 2: G2S1, G2S2, G2S3, G2S4, G2S5, G2S6

Group 3: G3S1, G3S2, G3S3, G3S4, G3S5, G3S6

3.8.1. The Approach Taken in this study

Blackstone (2012) stated that it is essential to examine the relationship between theory and research (i.e., collected data) to establish an

appropriate analysis approach. She declared that there are two main approaches to analysis: deductive approaches, which start with a theory and then aim to test its implications with the collected data, and inductive approaches, which investigate patterns in the data and then try to develop a theory that could explain them.

In the present study, both deductive and inductive approaches were adopted. The aim of this study is to analyse some aspects of the feedback practices and beliefs of participants that have been explored in other studies. This, therefore, required a deductive approach to analysis. The elements of the deductive analysis framework have been included in literature about feedback in other contexts, and this study aimed to understand how these work in the specific context of this research, that is, the Omani HEI. However, no research about feedback on students' writing has been done in this context and, as argued in the review of the literature, the phenomena investigated – teachers', students', and college leaders' views of feedback as well as their practices - are heavily influenced by the context. For this reason, parts of the analysis must be inductive to create a picture of these issues as they exist in this context.

To guide the deductive analysis, this study relies on a model adapted from Yiu's (2009) study which found that disciplinary writing is interplayed by three levels of context: the immediate or the local context, the disciplinary context and the institutional context. As discussed in Section 2.7., this study adapted this model to explore the culture of feedback in my study. In correspondence to three levels of contexts of Yiu, my study investigates feedback practices from the local context, EAP writing context, and institutional context. Each level of context includes some contextual influences, which were discussed in the literature chapter. Figure 7 illustrates the contextual influences in the three levels. These influences are used as a framework for the deductive analysis of this study. The first level concerns the contextual influences that affect the feedback interactions inside the classroom, such as the teachers' and students' beliefs about feedback and self-directed learning. The second

level, EAP writing, concerns the impact of discourse (i.e., student engagement with the academic conventions of EAP writing) and approaches to teaching EAP writing on feedback practices. Finally, the third level addresses the college's support for feedback, such as assessment (e.g., assessment literacy and a link between assessment, course objectives, and feedback) and teaching and learning context (e.g., teaching loads, student timetables, deadline for submission, and the size of the class).

Figure 7: The Three Levels of Context Investigated in the Study adapted from Yiu's Study (2009)

Nevertheless, as mentioned above, the data analysis also adopts an inductive approach. Accordingly, the contextual framework presented in Figure 7 will be influenced by data-driven aspects. Such influence will be further explained in Section 3.8.2. In addition, it should be noted that

although these contextual influences are divided into different layers, there might be relationships between each layer of context and the others. For instance, as discussed in the literature chapter in Section 2.4.4., teachers' and students' beliefs about feedback could be influenced by their professional knowledge, college policies, and the teaching and learning context.

The explored three levels of context and the relationships between different layers in the context will be discussed in detail Chapter 5. Chapter 5 uses the model presented above as an organiser to discuss the results revealed from the analysis.

3.8.2. The Process of Analysis

The literature offers different processes and steps of analysis regarding the methodology. In my study, the data analysis process adapted the guidelines set by Gläser and Laudel (2013), which are depicted in Figure 8. Gläser and Laudel suggested a set of iterative steps linked with research questions and prior theory to develop causal explanations, which is one of the goals of social science research. They recommended first linking raw data to the research questions and removing data that is repetitive or not relevant. Additionally, to further reduce the amount and the complexity of the collected data, they urged structuring the data into categories. They considered these two steps as essential to arrive at explanations of processes or social situations that are explored through the last two steps: searching for patterns and subsequently integrating them. After the final steps, Gläser and Laudel recommended turning the sequence around and starting from the text again. They contended that the analysis process is non-linear, as the researcher goes back and forth between the original data and the analysis steps.
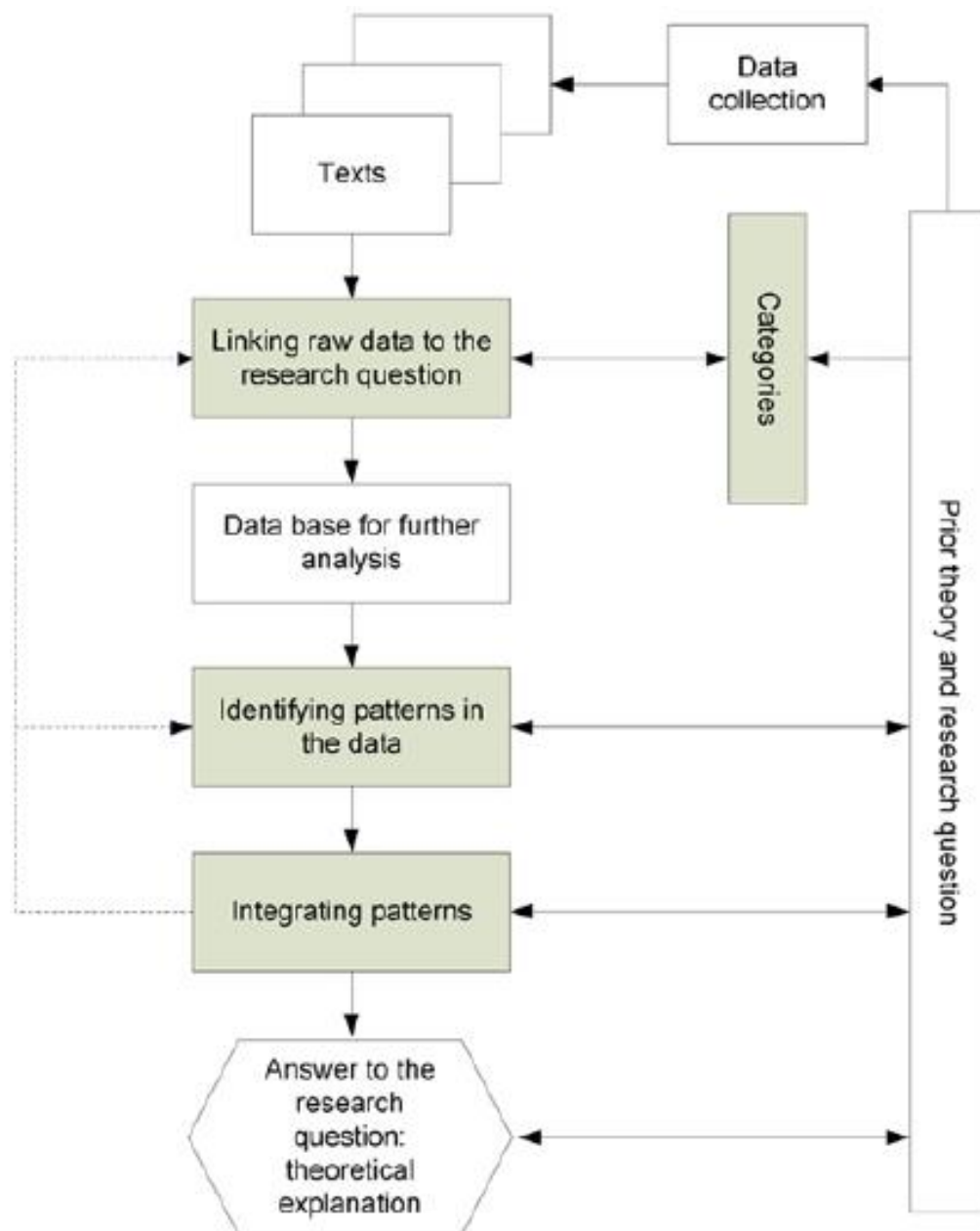
Figure 8: Steps between Texts and Explanation, Gläser and Laudel (2013, p.22)

Such a pattern fits the design of my study for two main reasons, as it involves first, reducing the complexity of the data and, second, recognizing emerging patterns and themes from the collected data. With regard to reducing the complexity, the method makes it possible to organise the collected data and link them to the research questions and prior theoretical background of the study. My study deals with three research sub-questions, and each addresses a different aspect of analysis, as will be explained in Section 3.8.2.1. Therefore, the data analysed should be guided by the information requirements derived from

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each question. Additionally, the linking to prior theory is also a significant part of the analysis because, as explained in Section 3.8.1, my study aims to analyse some aspects of the participants' feedback practices and beliefs that have been explored in other studies. With regard to identifying and integrating patterns, this method allows the researcher to identify key relationships that tie the data together into a sequence. This is because such a method aims to provide contextual interpretations of the subject of the case. In a similar way, my study aims to explore how feedback practices are interpreted, developed, and enacted in EAP writing in Oman and to identify any contextual influences on feedback practices. Therefore, it is essential to identify possible relationships between the different aspects of analysis of the three questions.

Figure 9 represents the processes that the analysis of this study adapted from Gläser and Laudel's (2013) guidelines. It can be seen from this figure that the collected data were subjected to processes of linking, categorising, and connecting. In the first cycle of analysis, I separated the collected data into three aspects of analysis, which covered the three research sub-questions. Then, I structured them into categories to provide an organisational grasp of the collected data. Different categorising systems were used with different research questions. Finally, the outcomes from the analysis of the three questions were integrated into the final process of analysis, i.e., connecting analysis, which entails identifying key relationships that tie the data together into a sequence and recognising the main and the supportive or explanatory themes (Maxwell and Miller, 2008; Ezzy, 2002; Braun and Clarke, 2006; Gläser und Laudel, 2013).

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┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│            Raw Data             │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
                 ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│   Linking Data to Research Sub- │
│        Questions (1,2,3)        │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
                 ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│    Categorising Data to Codes   │
│           and Themes            │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
                 ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│       Connecting Analysis       │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
                 ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│    Answer to the main Research  │
│      Question: Contextual       │
│         Interpertations         │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
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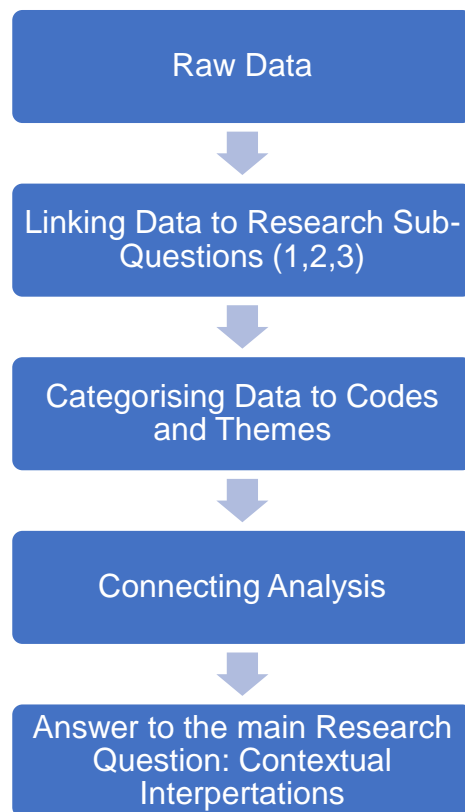
Figure 9: The Processes of Analysis by Research Questions, Adapted from Gläser and Laudel (2013, p.22)

This final process of analysis ended, as Braun and Clarke (2006) declared, with "a collection of candidate themes, and sub-themes, and all extracts of data that have been coded in relation to them" (p.90). As will be shown in Section 3.8.2.3, the analysis produced 8 main themes and 30 supportive or explanatory themes. These final themes will be used as the headings for the next chapter, that is, the results chapter. These themes will also be used to modify the model utilised in this study (Section 3.8.1), which serves to organise the sections in the discussion chapter.

The rationale and the practical applications of the processes of analysis listed in Figure 9 are discussed below in the following three sub-sections.

3.8.2.1. Linking Raw Data to Research Questions

This study aimed to answer three research sub-questions, which were listed at the end of the literature chapter.

1. What is the college policy for giving and responding to feedback on EAP writing?

2. What are the teachers' practices of feedback and students' responses to it in EAP writing?

3. What are the teachers' and students' beliefs about the role of feedback, the practices of providing feedback, and responses to it in EAP writing?

Each question addresses a different aspect of analysis. Therefore, it was necessary first to begin the analysis with linking the collected data to their relevant research question because the data collection was guided by information requirements derived from these questions. This step included identifying, locating, and separating the raw data based on the research questions (Gläser und Laudel, 2013). Gläser und Laudel emphasised that not all data are relevant to a specific question and that much of what is collected in the fieldwork is insignificant or repetitive. Therefore, they recommended recognising data that are relevant for answering the research questions and deciding which aspect of analysis or question the information belongs to.

In order to detail the link between the data and the research questions, the sources of collected data were separated. For example, to address Question 1, not all the data were analysed; student writing, for instance, was not seen as part of the policy. Rather, documentary materials and interviews with college leaders were analysed. Accordingly, the data analysed for Question 1 were the following:

• course textbook

• project outline

- marking criteria

- course specification

- rating scale for 1st Year EAP writing

- HoD's interview

- PD's interview

- first-year EAP Coordinator's interview.

Question 2 focuses on the actual practices of students and teachers. Therefore, in order to answer Question 2, data analysis mainly focused on class observations and students' pieces of writing. In addition, the analysis also included the students' and teachers' reflections on their practices. These reflections were obtained from follow-up interviews, final interviews, and online discussions. Finally, the analysis for Question 3, which addresses teachers' and students' beliefs about writing and feedback was based on first interviews, interviews following observations, final interviews, and online discussions.

3.8.2.2.   Categorising Data

Gläser und Laudel (2013) stated that the next step after linking the data to the research question should be creating a system of categories. They regarded this process as a necessary step to further reduce the amount and the complexity of the collected data, so this facilitates searching for patterns and identifying connections between them, which is the basic aim of the analysis of my study. The categorising-based approaches to qualitative data analysis vary depending on their underlying methodologies. Maxwell and Miller (2008) referred to two commonly used types of categorising strategies in research: coding and thematic coding. These types of categorising strategies sort data into what was said, by whom, and when. A code, for instance, is a "symbol applied to a section of a text to classify or categorise it" (Robson, 2002, p.477); while themes

are broader patterns or units of similarity that combine similar codes by their generic relationships (Maxwell and Miller, 2008). Figure 10 presents an example of four codes applied to short extracts from Teacher 3's first interview: teacher beliefs about written and oral feedback, teacher beliefs about self-directed learning tasks, teacher beliefs about direct and indirect feedback, and teacher beliefs about focus of feedback. Based on their generic relationship, all these codes were combined together into a broader theme of 'teacher beliefs about feedback practices'. As will be explained in Sections 3.8.2.2.1 and 3.8.2.2.2, these codes and themes were derived from theoretical considerations prior to the data analysis or from the information in the collected data itself based on repeating ideas.
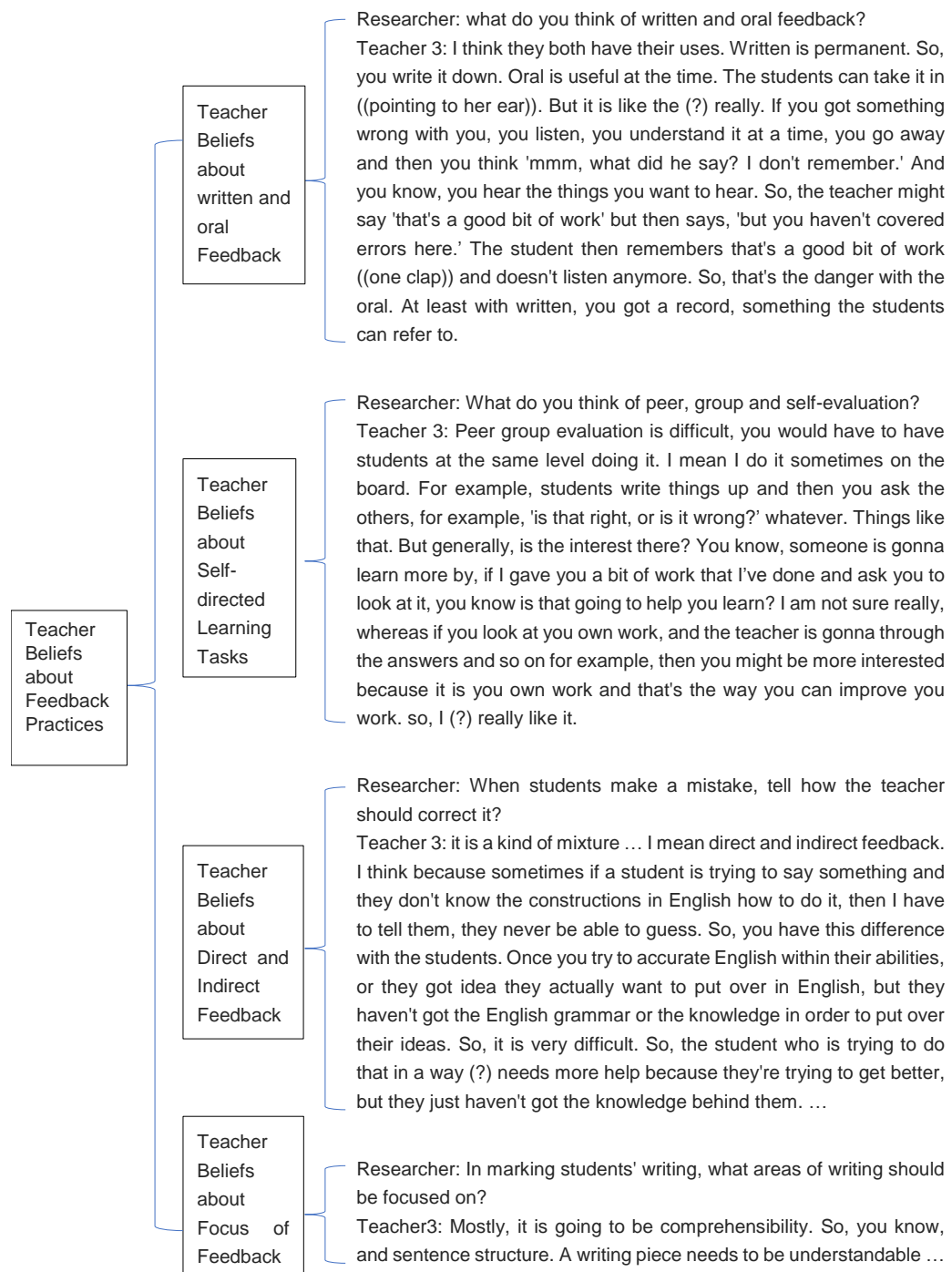
Figure 10: A sample of The Coding and Thematic Coding Process

Thus, the use of codes reduces the large set of data into meaningful groups, and the use of themes organises the groups by making the relationship between codes clearer. In fact, thematic coding was essential in the analysis of this study. This was because the coding process resulted in many different codes (see Appendix 13), which made it difficult to see the connection between them easily.

All the data collected were categorised using NVivo10 (Castleberry, 2014), as shown below in Figure 11. The programme made it easy to sort and save the data into the relevant codes. In NVivo, the codes are referred to as nodes, and these help to gather related material into one place. Figure 11, taken from NVivo, shows a sample of Teacher 2's first interview, which was coded for 'teachers' belief about the focus of feedback'.
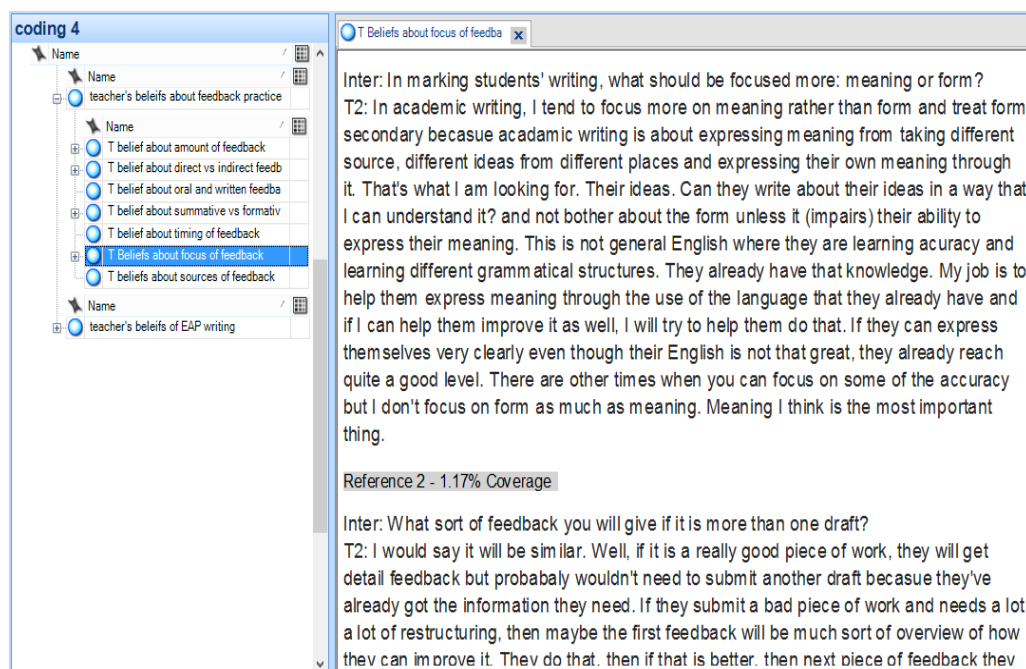
Figure 11: Categorising Data through NVivo10 (Castleberry, 2014)

The grouping of the codes into themes was also facilitated through NVivo. The nodes in NVivo were ordered into hierarchies depending on their generic relationships (see the figure above). In fact, this programme also helped in coding the videos of the observations and the PDF documents of the college guidelines and students' writing (see Appendix 27).

The following two sub-sections explain the practical steps taken in the categorising process, namely, generating codes and searching for themes. This includes how the data from the three questions were reduced into meaningful segments and how names were assigned to the segments.

3.8.2.2.1. Step 1: Generating Codes

As mentioned at the beginning of this section, this study followed different coding systems for different questions. The following sections explain how the coding process went for the three questions.

Question 1: What is the college policy for giving and responding to feedback on EAP writing?

The data analysed for Question 1 were course textbook, project outline, marking criteria, course specification, rating scale for 1st Year EAP writing, HoD's interview, PD's interview and the first-year EAP Coordinator's interview. To analyse these data, both deductive and inductive approaches were used. The deductive approach involved coding the data using literature-based codes. This means that the codes were based on themes from the literature that matched the collected data, such as assessment criteria, assessment tasks, and deadline for submission. For example, the following extract taken from the project outline was coded into deadline for submission.

9	29/3-2/4/2015	**First Draft: Written report** Students research project is to be uploaded to the safe assign link Preparing students for the project presentation. Explaining to them the oral presentation criteria, the right format of the power point presentation and the academic outline	*Presentation Preparation* *Deadline for Project(First Draft) Submission*

Figure 12: Deadline for Project (First Draft) Submission (Appendix 17)

However, as policies are context-dependent, an inductive approach was applied to generate codes that were close to the data and thus closer to the context. Accordingly, data-informed codes were generated, such as 'EAP writing pedagogy of the course textbook', 'EAP writing pedagogy of the project outline', 'college tasks for self-directed learning' and 'college instructions for face-to-face feedback'. For instance, the following extract from the course textbook was coded into the EAP writing pedagogy of the course textbook:

Rhetorical Focus

Short Essay Organization

An effective essay must have the following elements.

Introduction

• A hook is an opening sentence that attracts the reader's attention.

• The sentences after the hook give background information that helps the reader understand the topic.

• The last sentence in the introduction, the thesis statement, is very important because it gives the topic and the controlling idea of the entire essay.

Body Paragraphs

• An essay has at least one body paragraph in which the writer develops the thesis statement from the introduction. The body paragraph begins with a topic sentence, followed by supporting details.

Conclusion

• An essay ends with a conclusion that summarizes or restates the main idea in the thesis statement.

Figure 13: Teaching Rhetorical Focus of Essay Organization (Savage and Mayer, 2012, p.17)

Question 2: What are the teachers' practices of feedback and students' responses to it on EAP writing?

Similar to the analysis performed with regard to Question 1, analysing data to answer Question 2 adopted both deductive and inductive approaches. The following sections explain how the two approaches were used in analysing teachers' and students' practices of feedback.

Teacher Feedback Practices

The deductive approach involved deriving initial codes from the literature review chapter that concerned practices for giving feedback, such as 'focus of feedback', 'direct and indirect feedback', 'timing of feedback', 'drafts', 'peer-editing tasks', 'group-editing tasks', and 'self-editing tasks'. For example, the following task conducted in Class 3 was coded into teacher practices for self-editing tasks.

Figure 14: A Self-editing Task conducted in Class3 (Savage and Mayer, 2012, p.112)

However, the literature-based codes did not fully describe all the data collected concerning teachers' practices for giving feedback. Therefore, an inductive approach was adopted to create data-informed codes to include the different aspects of feedback practices. For example, the focus of feedback was sub-coded into one of the following:

- feedback on task achievement

- feedback on grammar

- feedback on vocabulary

- feedback on mechanics of language

- feedback on essay organization

- feedback on essay rhetorical conventions

The first five codes were based on the marking criteria of the project outline and the final writing exam. The last code was related to one of the

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course textbook objectives, which is to introduce the rhetorical conventions of different types of essay.

Student Response to Feedback

When analysing students' response to feedback, initial codes derived from the literature describing student engagement with feedback were used, such as 'student understanding of indirect written feedback', as shown in the following excerpt.

> G1S6: He used a symbol, I think 'st' which I don't understand, and the teacher had not explained what it means before. (Group 1's Interview Following Observation 5)

Then, as the data were analysed, more codes were added to describe the content of utterances more specifically. For example, the above code (student understanding of indirect written feedback) was further sub-coded into correction codes and the level of detail. The above excerpt fits the first code while the second code is concerned with written feedback that contains one-word or two-word comments, like 'rewrite', 'not clear' and 'not sentences', and some phrases such as 'does not make sense' and 'too long for one sentence'. For example, the following extract taken from the writing of one the participating students contains a 'rewrite' comment, and so it was coded into 'the level of detail in indirect written feedback'.
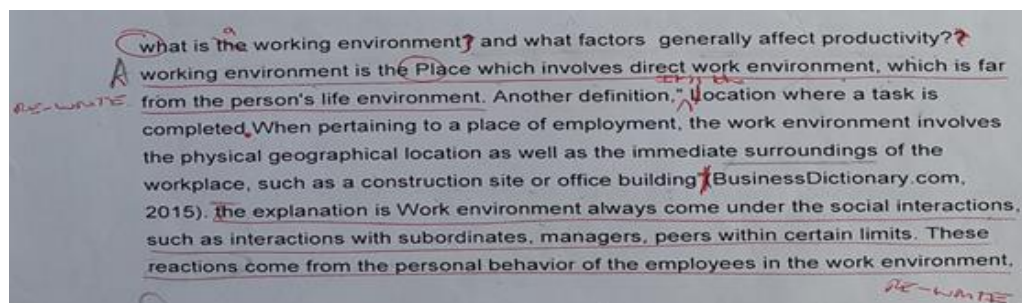
Figure 15: The Level of Detail in Written Feedback, G2S6'S Project Writing

Question 3: What are the teachers' and students' beliefs about the role of feedback, and practices of feedback and responses to it on EAP writing?

In the same vein as for the previous two questions, Question 3 followed deductive and inductive approaches to analysis. The deductive approach involved deriving initial codes from the literature review chapter which addressed student and teacher beliefs about feedback and EAP writing, such as 'teacher beliefs about drafts', as in the following excerpt.

> Teacher 2: It (a second draft) can be useful. If you give feedback on let's say a first draft, then you expect the students to have made some improvement to it. So, when you see the second, you will be able to see that they have made improvement. Have they understood what you ask them to do? If they haven't made much improvement or the changes that made haven't really improved anything, then maybe they haven't really understood what they've been asked to do (Teacher 2's Interview Following Observation 2)

Then, as the data were analysed, more codes were added, as more themes emerged from the data. For example, the code for 'teacher beliefs about direct and indirect feedback' was further sub-coded into 'teacher beliefs about direct and indirect oral feedback' and 'teacher beliefs about direct and indirect written feedback'. The following excerpt, for instance, was relevant to oral feedback.

> Teacher 1: Sometimes the students get some kind of a shock from the teachers when they get negative feedback or try all the time .. try to correct them. They (students) try to pull themselves from participation. They don't really like the lesson any more. That's why you should always give them self-confidence (Teacher 1's First Interview).

3.8.2.2.2. Step 2: Searching for Themes

The next practical step taken in the categorising analysis was collating codes into broader potential themes. Like in coding, this step followed different coding systems for different questions. Initially, all the codes were grouped into main themes based on the research questions, i.e.,

the research questions were used as a framework for the main themes. Based on the research questions, the main themes used in the study were as follows:

- For Question 1, the main themes are college policy for feedback, college policy for EAP writing pedagogy and college policy for assessment.

- For Question 2, the themes are teacher beliefs about feedback, teacher beliefs about EAP writing, student beliefs about feedback, and student beliefs about EAP writing.

- For Question 3, the themes are teacher practices for giving feedback, student response to feedback, and teacher practices of EAP writing pedagogy.

Figure 16 shows the themes used for Question 1 as adopted from the NVivo programme.
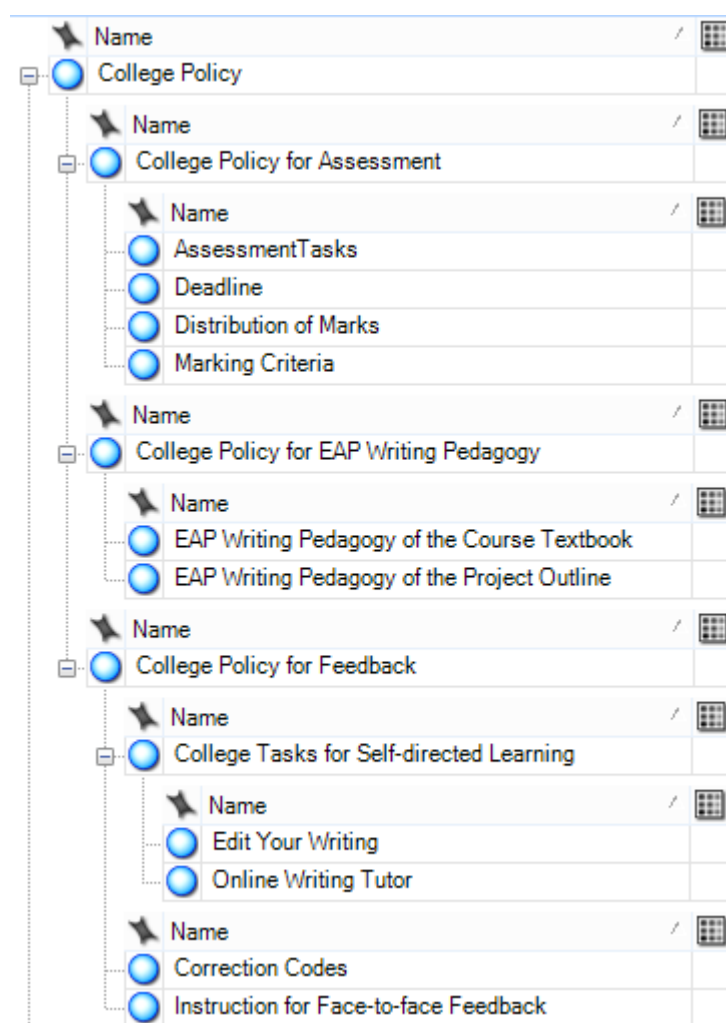
Figure 16: Themes used for Question 1

As can be seen from the above figure, there are also sub-themes within the main theme. These sub-themes further describe the themes. Some of them were generated from the data, such as with regard to 'college tasks for self-directed learning', which are presented in the table above. However, there are also some sub-themes that were derived from the literature chapter. For example, the theme for the 'student response to feedback' in Question 3 (see Appendix 13) comprises three sub-themes: 1) student behavioural response, 2) student attitudinal response, and 3) student cognitive response. These three sub-themes were adopted from the framework used by Ellis (2010 cited in Han and Hyland, 2015), which describes student engagement with feedback. This framework was found to best fit the collected data regarding student response to feedback.

The end result of the categorising process was a large set of codes and themes. Samples of output from NVivo can be seen in Appendix 13. Creating the categories entailed constant comparison, i.e., "comparing and contrasting new codes, categories and concepts as they emerge - constantly seeking to check out against existing versions" (Denscombe, 2014, p.113). This involved reviewing the collected data constantly, looking for similarities and differences in them, and then adding, combining, or deleting some codes and themes to take account of all the collected data. In fact, the data were coded eight times before the categories were finalised (please see Appendix 13).

This categorisation resulted in a more manageable list of themes that facilitated the next part of the analysis, connecting analysis. The following section clarifies this analysis.

3.8.2.3.   Connecting Analysis

The first part of the analysis, that is, using different categories for each question, gave a clear picture of the connections among the collected data based on the similarity-based ordering, i.e., it sorted similar data into the corresponding codes and themes. This analysis was descriptive in that the data were sorted and compared both within and between categories based on their relationships of similarity (Maxwell and Miller, 2008). Maxwell and Miller saw categorising strategies as compensating for the loss of contextualities, but stated that it is limited to the presentation of raw or edited data. They then proposed an alternative analysis, specifically, a "connecting analysis" or "contextual approaches" (p.467), which is conducted "by identifying key relationships that tie the data together into a narrative or sequence and eliminating information that is not germane to these relationships" (p.467).

One common strategy followed by some researchers in identifying relationships in the data is integrating themes that have been identified in the thematic coding and making connections between them, i.e.,

identifying how these themes relate (Ezzy, 2002; Braun and Clarke, 2006; Gläser and Laudel, 2013). Researchers who support this strategy have argued that these relationships should explain why something occurs and provide data that support the interpretation. Ezzy, for instance, advised that the last step in thematic analysis should be selective or theoretical coding in which the researcher has to identify the main codes around which other codes can be organised. He suggested that some codes can be basic ones, and others may serve as supportive or explanatory codes. Similarly, Braun and Clarke (2006) supported reviewing the themes after generating them by judging that the candidate themes capture the contours of the entire data set. This process entails thinking about the relationships between the different codes, themes, and sub-themes, and re-arranging and organising the coded extracts according to the new understanding. It involves recoding old data in line with a refined understanding of the boundaries and properties of the themes and sub-themes.

The connecting analysis is seen to be compatible with my main research question. A research question that asks about how feedback practices are interpreted, enacted, and developed in a specific context cannot be answered exclusively by categorisation strategies, which fracture texts into discrete elements. Therefore, I sought an additional analysis that would identify connections between the descriptive categories I had already identified (see Appendix 13). As will be explained below, this entailed identifying a new set of themes that focused on possible relationships between the first set of descriptive categories. In other words, this analysis attempted to recompose the former categories into a coherent whole in a relational order. Thus, this step of analysis was conducted in combination with the first cycle of analysis. As discussed at the beginning of this section, Gläser and Laudel (2013) saw the categorising process as essential in the subsequent steps of searching for patterns in the data and the integration of these patterns.

As mentioned above, the aim of identifying connections between themes is to explain why something occurs and to provide data that support the interpretation (Ezzy, 2002; Braun and Clarke, 2006; Gläser and Laudel, 2013). As my study aims to provide contextual interpretations for feedback practices, I used the two levels of codes described by Ezzy (2002): the main code and the supportive or explanatory code. However, I used the term 'theme' instead of 'code' because this study reduced the large set of codes into more manageable themes. For example, Figure 17, which is taken from NVivo, shows that 'teacher practices for focus of feedback' is a main theme because it is associated with a number of explanatory themes. Such a connection between themes was made through deductive and inductive analysis, as will be explained in Sections 3.8.2.3.1 and 3.8.2.3.2.
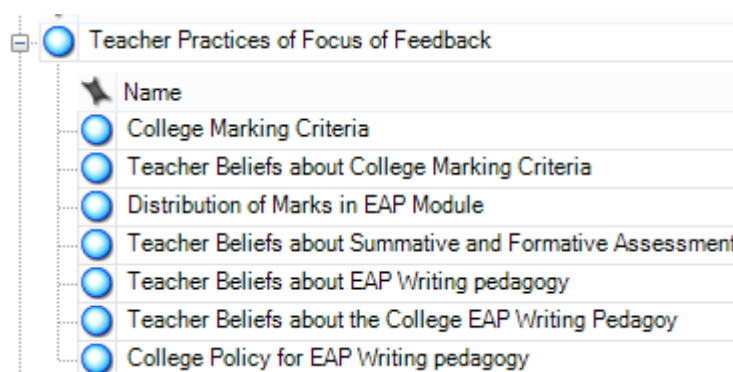
Figure 17: The Explanatory Themes for Teacher Practices of Focus of Feedback

It can be seen from Figure 17 that the new connecting themes were identified not for each research question, but right across the data. The main theme shown above covers the feedback practices taken from the analysis of Question 2 while the explanatory themes cover the themes that emerged from the analysis of Questions 1 (college policy) and 3 (participants' beliefs), which describe the contextual interpretations for feedback practices. In fact, as will be shown in the following two sub-sections, the explanatory themes could also include themes from Question 2. For example, some students' responses to feedback were found to be a result of their teachers' feedback practices. This means that

the connections were made through the entire set of data as analysed in the first cycle.

The following two sub-sections explain the practical steps taken in the deductive and inductive analysis of connecting themes. This includes how a tentative list of connections was made between the different themes that emerged from the three sub-questions and how these connections were linked to the model adopted in this study (see Section 3.8.1).

3.8.2.3.1. Step 1: Deductive Analysis of Connecting Themes

The first step in the deductive analysis involved creating a list of potential literature-based connections. I based the list on the theoretical model adopted in this study, (Section 3.8.1), which included five contextual influences that shape the teachers' feedback practices and students' responses to feedback (EAP writing, assessment, beliefs about practices of feedback, self-directed learning, and the teaching and learning context). The deductive analysis relied on identifying the possible connections between themes through these five contextual influences. For example, referring to Figure 17 above, the analysis located a connection between the main theme 'teacher practices of focus of feedback' and the following seven explanatory themes:

- college marking criteria
- teacher beliefs about college marking criteria
- distribution of marks in EAP module
- teacher beliefs about summative and formative assessment
- teacher beliefs about EAP writing pedagogy
- teacher beliefs about the college EAP writing pedagogy
- college policy for EAP writing pedagogy

Such a connection was derived from the literature where it was discussed how the 'focus of feedback' is shaped by the EAP writing pedagogy (Zamel, 1985; Kathpalia and Heah, 2017), assessment (Orell, 2006; Lee,

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2008; 2009), and teacher beliefs about feedback practices (Orrell, 2006). For example, Lee (2009) found that because of the examination culture in schools, teachers had to focus on accuracy, fluency, and vocabulary to prepare students for examinations.

This step of analysis was then refined through reviewing connections, i.e., evaluating the emergent connections and exploring them through the data. The output from the analysis in the previous steps (i.e., coding and thematic coding) was used as a basis for the refinement process. This involved searching for evidence of the connections recognised by reviewing the extracts of relevant themes (main and explanatory). Through reading and rereading the coded extracts in each of these themes, significant evidence for this connection was identified. The following excerpt, for instance, shows one of the pieces of evidence found for the connection made between the main theme 'teacher practices of focus of feedback' and the explanatory theme 'marking criteria'. This piece of evidence was taken from Observation 3 in Class 3 where Teacher 3 provided feedback on addressing the topic properly. This focus of feedback is related to one of the points mentioned in task achievement - a marking criterion. In fact, the evidence provided below showed that Teacher 3 made an explicit warning about marking this area of feedback focus.

> Teacher 3: Some of the essays I already have from people, I am sorry to say, they did not answer the question. You only get two marks in the exam if you do not answer the writing question. Please, make sure you read the question carefully and you understand what you need to write. Because it is the biggest problem for people if they are not understanding the question. They may not understand the question or read quickly imagining they are into it, but they are not. So, it is very, very important. Let's look at the questions now. Let's look at them on page 158. (Class 3, Observation 3)

NVivo was used as a supplementary technique in the refinement process in two cases. First, the pieces of evidence found for the connections were uploaded into the relevant relationship node in NVivo. NVivo helps to create relationship nodes that name and define the connections found

(see Appendix 14). This does not mean that, in this case, NVivo helped to explore connections by itself. Rather, it was the researcher who identified the connections. However, NVivo saved any identified connections. Whenever a connection between data was found, a relationship node was created in NVivo which linked the feedback practices and their reasoning together in one place, such as the link between student search for feedback and assessment (see Appendix 14 for some relationship nodes).

Additionally, I had to use NVivo to explore the main themes through the number of coding references of some feedback practices. The number of coding references was needed to analyse teacher practices regarding the focus of feedback, and regarding direct and indirect feedback. This was necessary to show the main emphasis of teachers' focus of feedback or whether they gave more direct or indirect feedback. For example, as shown above, the analysis identified a connection between the themes 'teacher practices for focus of feedback' and 'teacher beliefs about EAP writing pedagogy'. The analysis explored the 'teacher practices of focus of feedback' through several coding references. Figure 18, for instance, showed the coding references for Teacher 1's focus of feedback in Observation 1. The chart shows that Teacher 1 placed greater emphasis on 'organisation of essay' and 'essay rhetorical conventions' in comparison to other areas. Such practice was found to be connected with his beliefs about EAP writing. Teacher 1, in four interviews, commented that EAP writing should be taught through essay organisation and essay rhetorical conventions because these areas develop students' competence in EAP writing.
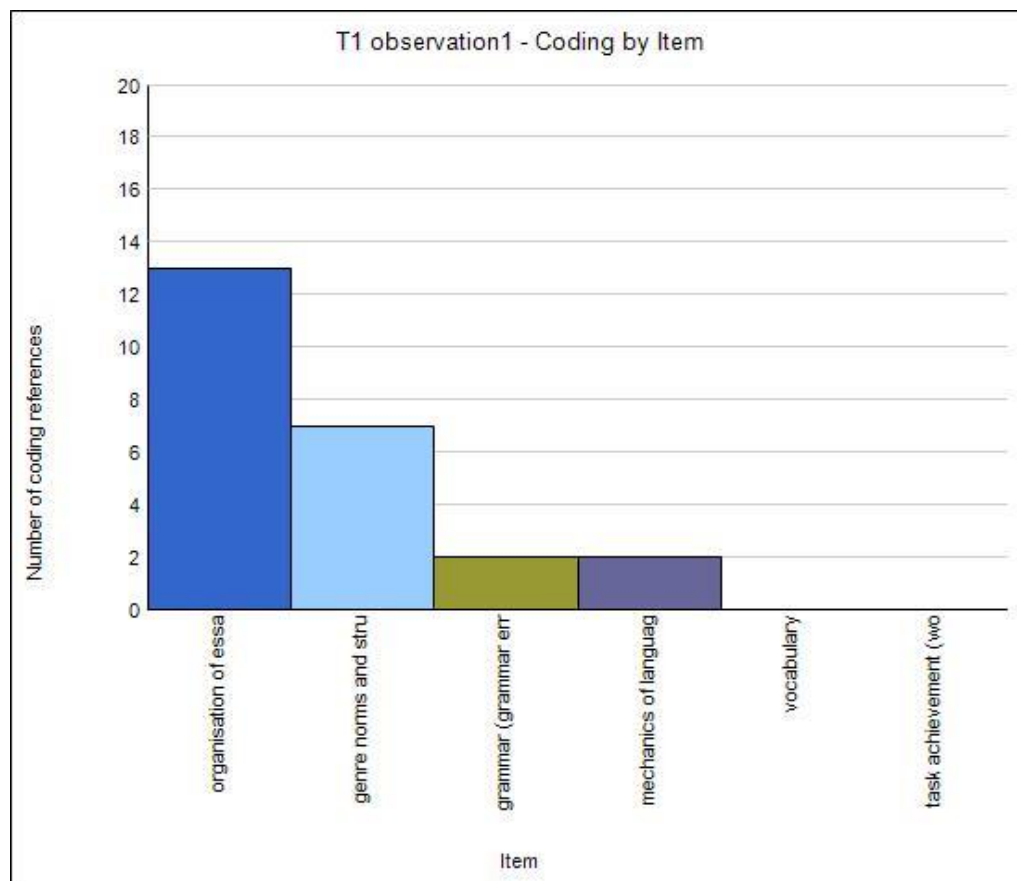
Figure 18: Frequency of Coding References of Focus of Feedback by Teacher 1 in Observation 1

3.8.2.3.2. Step 2: Inductive Connecting Analysis

As parts of analysis were inductive, some connections were identified from the data collected. The inductive-driven connections located in this process differed from the five contextual influences discussed in Section 2.4, such as student beliefs about EAP writing, teacher and student beliefs about college policy, and teacher practices in giving feedback. For example, the theme 'student response to the focus of feedback' was found to be connected with their beliefs about EAP writing as well as some literature-based themes, such as their understanding of academic conventions of EAP writing and their beliefs about summative and formative feedback (see Figure 19 below).
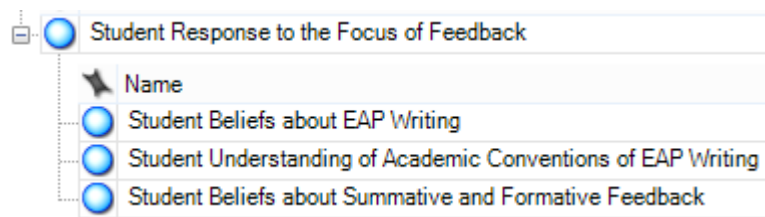
Figure 19: The Explanatory Themes for 'Student Response to the Focus of Feedback'

This identification of the new connections was directed by interviews following observations, which were used as a framework to explore how themes were connected. In the follow-up interviews, teachers and students gave justifications for their feedback practices where they connected their practices to contextual interpretations.

To identify connections using the follow-up interviews, all the classes and observations conducted in the fieldwork were separated to retain the unique context of each class and observation so that connections could be made easily and accurately. First, the study separated Classes 1, 2, and 3. Then, the six observations conducted in each class were isolated and subsequently linked with their follow-up interviews (see Figure 20).

Class 1	Class 2	Class 3
• Observation 1 • Observation 2 • Observation 3 • Observation 4 • Observation 5 • Observation 6	• Observation 1 • Observation 2 • Observation 3 • Observation 4 • Observation 5 • Observation 6	• Observation 1 • Observation 2 • Observation 3 • Observation 4 • Observation 5 • Observation 6

Figure 20: The Separation of Classes and Observations in Data Analysis

The separation process helped to locate the connections between the main themes and the explanatory themes. For instance, the above-mentioned connection between students' response to the focus of feedback and their beliefs about EAP writing was derived from the interviews following Observations 2, 4 and 5 in Class 1; Observations 6 in Class 2; and Observations 1, 4 and 6 in Class 3. After Observation 2, for instance, Group 1 were asked about their negative attitudes towards

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feedback on essay rhetorical conventions. They stated that focus on these areas of writing does not help in developing EAP writing. Rather, they thought that grammar and the mechanics of language are more essential to produce good EAP writing.

By the end of the deductive and inductive analysis, I had a final coding scheme with 3 higher order themes (focus of feedback, direct and indirect feedback, sources of feedback), which include 8 main themes and 30 supportive themes, as depicted in Appendix 15. For example, Figure 21, taken from NVivo, shows a part of the coding scheme related to 'direct and indirect feedback', which includes two main themes and five supporting themes. To evaluate how the final themes capture the contours of the data and judge their coherence, I went back to the entire data set and re-coded old themes in line with the new refined themes and the sub-themes listed in Appendix 15.
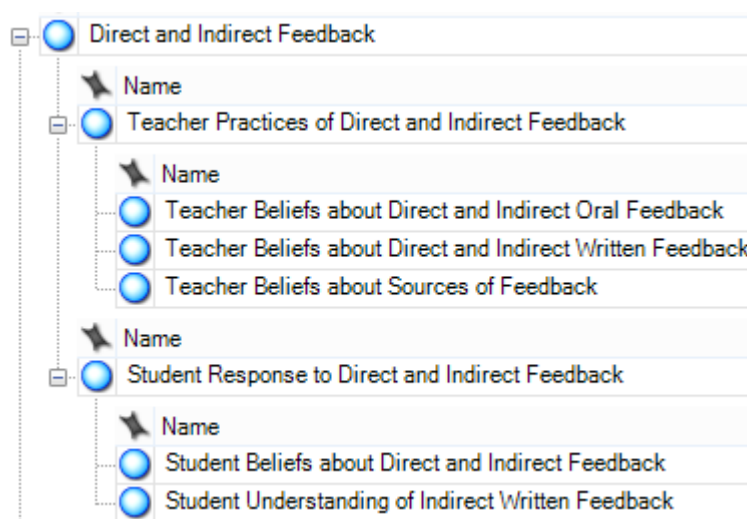
Figure 21: Final Coding Scheme related to Direct and Indirect Feedback

The connecting analysis helped to present the broader 'story' of the data and showed how different extracts fit into different connections. In the case of this study, these extracts told a story of the participating teachers' and students' practices of feedback and the reasons behind them. These connections were made in accordance with the first part of the analysis.

Each of the analytic processes (categorisation process and connecting analysis) yielded a distinctive outlook on the collected data. Together, they provided a deeper understanding of the feedback practices in their context and offered a more informed and holistic outcome. This, then, supports the recommendation by Maxwell and Miller (2008), who urged the use of the two processes of analysis to complement each other and to add richness to the understanding of the phenomenon. In fact, Gläser and Laudel (2013) saw the categorisation process as essential in the subsequent search for patterns in the data and the integration of these patterns. They described the integration of patterns as "highly creative, and it remains to be seen how much support for them can be provided by qualitative data analysis methods" (ibid, p.13).

The themes listed in the final coding scheme (see Appendix 15) will be used as the headings for the next chapter, that is, the results chapter. The introduction of the results chapter will explain the ordering of these themes in detail. These themes will also be used to organise the text of Chapter 5 (the discussion chapter). The explanatory themes depicted in this analysis are the basic contextual influences that shape the model utilised in this study, which is discussed in Section 3.8.1. This model will be the organiser for Chapter 5 in that the headings of the chapter are based on the contextual influences found in each layer of the model.

3.9. Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the methodological underpinnings of my research in detail to provide the readers with adequate information about it and to clarify its validity. To summarise, the constructivist paradigm was selected to signify the multiple perspectives towards the issue of feedback. An exploratory qualitative research approach was followed to investigate the contextual influences on feedback, which have not been fully explored in the literature. To gain a better, more valid and comprehensive understanding of the issue in its context, the issue of feedback was explored throughout the whole semester and using

multiple methods of data collection, namely, semi-structured interviews, document analysis, and observations. These instruments were all piloted and modified in advance. Then, consideration was taken with regard to the ethical issues and the validity of the research. Finally, the data were analysed through coding, thematic coding, connecting analysis, and generating topics for the written report.

The next two chapters are organised based on the themes that emerged from the analysis and the theoretical model adopted in this study, as discussed in Section 3.8.1. First, the results chapter covers the themes derived from the final process of the analysis i.e. connecting analysis (see Appendix 15). These themes are related to the objectives of the study listed in the introduction chapter in Section 1.3. As shown in Appendix 15, the themes are associated with the beliefs and practices of teachers, students, and college leaders; college policy on feedback, EAP writing and assessment, students' previous experience in EAP writing and feedback; and the institution's support for feedback in terms of assessment and teaching and learning context.

After that, the results are discussed through the theoretical model adopted in this study. As discussed in Section 3.8.2.3, to explore connections between themes, the analysis utilised a model derived from the literature chapter. This model is also used to act as an organiser to discuss the results in Chapter 5. In accordance with the model, the contextual influences derived from the analysis will be organised based on three separate levels of context: local context, EAP writing, and institutional context. The first level addresses the contextual influences that shape student-teacher interaction inside the classroom, such as analysis of the teachers' and students' beliefs about feedback and self-directed learning. The second level addresses the approaches to teaching EAP writing and discourse. The third level concerns the college's support for feedback in terms of teaching and learning context and assessment.

Chapter Four: Results

4.1. Introduction

In this chapter, the findings of the study are presented. As explained in the conclusion of the previous chapter, the headings of this chapter are based on the final themes that were revealed from the analysis. These themes emerged after three processes of analysis which were based on the research questions, summarised in Figure 22. First, all the data were grouped into codes. There were three different coding systems for the three questions: on feedback practices, participants' beliefs and college policy. After that, the codes were organised through thematic coding. This process involved grouping similar codes into corresponding themes (i.e. a more general coding), in order to minimize the large set of codes and easily see the connections between them. At the end, the themes were reorganised into main and explanatory themes to answer the main research question about how feedback was enacted, interpreted and developed. The final themes derived from analysis may be found in Appendix 15. These final themes which were generated from the connecting analysis will be used as organising points for this chapter.
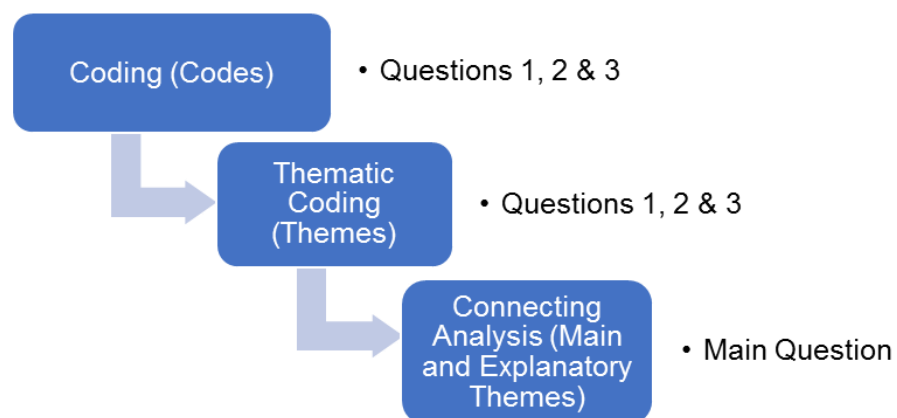
Figure 22: A Summary of the Processes used in the Analysis

As an example of organising this chapter, the themes related to the focus of feedback will be presented as follows:

1. Focus of Feedback

1.1. Teacher Practices of Focus of Feedback

    1.1.1. Assessment

    1.1.2. EAP Writing Pedagogy

1.2. Student Response to Feedback

    1.2.1. Student Beliefs about EAP Writing

    1.2.2. Student Understanding of Academic Conventions of EAP Writing

    1.2.3. Student Extrinsic Motivation

These topics are arranged in sequential order. The ordering was made through two steps: ordering the main topics and ordering the sub-topics (i.e. main and explanatory themes). The ordering of the three main topics (focus of feedback, direct and indirect feedback and sources of feedback) was based on their referencing. That is to say, the earlier sections are used as a reference for later sections. For instance, 'focus of feedback' is put in the first section because it will be referred back to in some sub-sections in the 'sources of feedback' and 'direct and indirect feedback'. Such referencing and connections will be clarified in this chapter.

For the sub-topics, to help the reader get a clear picture about the results from the beginning, the report starts with how teachers practised their feedback and then it moves to how students responded to their teachers' feedback (see the ordering of 'focus of feedback' in the above figure). However, for the topic of 'sources of feedback', the organisation varies. As shown in Appendix 15, there are three sub-topics for sources of feedback: teacher practices for self-directed tasks, student search for feedback, and college tasks for self-directed learning. The first one follows the same ordering as others (i.e. starts with teacher practices of feedback and is followed by student response to them); however, the other two sub-sections concern only student response to feedback.

To show the validity of analysis and interpretation, Braun and Clarke (2006) recommend selecting compelling examples from the data. Accordingly, to show evidence of the connections made between themes

and sub-themes, the findings of this study are embedded with excerpts from interviews and observations and extracts from college written documents and student writing. The evidence for interpretation is richly presented because, as explained in Section 3.7, this gives a chance for the reader to make their own interpretation of the findings as they read the participants' direct thoughts and experiences and their actual practices.

In addition to that, there are a number of charts for coding references, and other illustrative tables throughout the chapter to clarify and illustrate how the analysis was achieved. As discussed in the previous chapter Section 3.8.2.3, the number of coding references in particular were used in two cases: teacher practices of focus of feedback, and teacher practices of direct and indirect feedback. This was necessary to show the main emphasis of teachers' focus of feedback as well as whether teachers gave more direct or indirect feedback.

As a reminder, this study covers three classes, as summarised in Table 12. For the reader's convenience and the participants' anonymity, both the teachers and the students are labelled. There are six students in each class.

Classes	Teachers	Students
Class 1	Teacher 1	G1S1, G1S2, G1S3, G1S4, G1S5, G1S6
Class 2	Teacher 2	G2S1, G2S2, G2S3, G2S4, G2S5, G2S6
Class 3	Teacher 3	G3S1, G3S2, G3S3, G3S4, G3S5, G3S6

Table 12: Composition of Classes

As discussed in the methodology chapter in Section 3.4.3.2., two types of EAP writing classes were investigated: textbook-led and project

classes. Therefore, this chapter covers both sorts of classes and, when necessary, makes comparisons between them in terms of the feedback practices.

4.2. Focus of Feedback

The first main theme presented in this chapter is 'focus of feedback'. The focus of feedback is a term that has been used by some scholars, such as Ellis (2009b), to indicate areas of writing emphasised in the feedback, such as verb tenses, punctuation or content. This analysis categorised the areas of writing into six codes, as shown in Table 13.

Codes for Focus of Feedback	Issues Addressed in the Codes
Task achievement	Assigned topic, meeting word limits and APA references style
Grammar	Range of structures required for the task, complexity and accuracy of grammar use
Vocabulary	Range of vocabulary required for the task
Mechanics of language	Hand-writing, spelling, punctuation, paragraph indentation and capitalization
Organisation	Content of three main sections of any essay: introduction, body paragraphs and conclusion
Essay Rhetorical Conventions	Patterns of organisation and grammatical features in the different essay types, like verb

	tense, phrasal verbs, prepositional phrases, adjectives, connectors and quantity expressions

Table 13: Codes used for Focus of Feedback

These codes were based on the five marking criteria of the EAP module (grammar, vocabulary, mechanics of language, organisation, and task achievement), except for essay rhetorical conventions, which were based on the course textbook that emphasises them.

Figure 23 shows a sample of how the focus of feedback has been coded in written feedback: red circles for 'Task Achievement', blue circles for 'Grammar', orange circles for 'Mechanics of Language', and green circles for 'Vocabulary'.

Figure 23: Coding 'Focus of Written Feedback'

Similarly, oral feedback was coded as follows:

Excerpt from Class 1, Observation 6	Codes
Teacher1: ... So, you wrote about comparison about different types **OF** business? ((Teacher 1 reading a student's project writing)) Student: What? Teacher 1: About ...? Student: ((silent)) Teacher1: You need to add **'of'** business ... What else you need to edit here? Student: ((Silent))	Vocabulary
Teacher 1: Capitalise the title and then also you need to follow the right format. ((Teacher1 wrote capitalise the title and follow the right format))	Mechanics of Language & Task Achievement
((Teacher 1 Turning off the page)) So this is the percentage of plagiarism 30%. It is double. The last is 15%. .... OK.	Task Achievement

Table 14: Coding 'Focus of Oral Feedback'

The analysis revealed some contextual influences that impacted teachers' and stduents' practices for focus of feedback. This section starts with teachers' practices for focus of feedback and then it moves to student response to the focus of feedback.

4.2.1. Teacher Practices for Focus of Feedback

The analysis of this study revealed that that the focus of feedback was connected to two contextual influences: assessment and EAP writing pedagogy, as will be presented in the following sub-sections.

4.2.1.1. Assessment

The analysis revealed that assessment impacted teachers' practices for focus of feedback in terms of marking criteria. Both project writing and the final writing exam are evaluated under the same marking criteria, which are:

1.   grammar that covers the range of structures required for the task, and complexity and accuracy of grammar use;

2.   vocabulary that covers the range of vocabulary required for the task;

3.   mechanics of language that addresses hand-writing, spelling, punctuation, paragraph indentation and capitalization;

4.   organization that addresses the content of three main sections of any essay: introduction, body paragraphs and conclusion; and

5.   task achievement that concerns addressing the assigned topic, and meeting word limits and APA reference style.

The analysis showed a connection between these marking criteria and teachers' practices for focus of feedback. The three teachers covered most of the marking criteria in their feedback. This was demonstrated through the teachers' interviews, class observations and analysis of student writing. First, through analysis of students' writing, this attempted to explore the similarities between the three teachers' focus of feedback and the marking criteria. This analysis involved all written and oral feedback in the two classes; i.e. textbook-led classes and project classes. The results of this investigation are summarised in Table 15. The table shows that, in textbook-led writing and project writing, all teachers

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shaped their feedback based on the marking criteria, except for task achievement, which was omitted by Teachers 1 and 2 in textbook-led writing.

Marking Criteria	Focus of Feedback in Text-book Classes	Focus of Feedback in Project Classes
Task achievement	Teacher 3	Teachers 1, 2 and 3
Organisation	Teachers 1, 2 and 3	Teachers 1, 2 and 3
Grammar	Teachers 1, 2 and 3	Teachers 1, 2 and 3
Vocabulary	Teachers 1, 2 and 3	Teachers 1, 2 and 3
Mechanics of language	Teachers 1, 2 and 3	Teachers 1, 2 and 3

Table 15: Focus of Feedback and Marking Criteria by Type of Class

The second piece of evidence was found through the teachers' first and final interviews when they confirmed that they based their feedback on the marking criteria, as shown in the following excerpt, which is taken from Teacher 2's first interview.

> Teacher 2: My main feedback would be how can I help the students get a better grade in what they are doing? So, there will be an element of that in there. (Teacher 2's First Interview)

The third piece of evidence was provided by some observations conducted in Classes 1 and 3. Teachers 1 and 3 referred to the marking criteria while giving oral feedback to their students. For example, Teacher 1, in Observation 6, indirectly referred to some of the marking criteria seven times while he was giving face-to-face feedback to four

individual students on their first draft of project writing. For instance, the following excerpt shows a discussion about the need to capitalise the first letters of the title. Teacher 1 warned the students that capitalisation would be assessed.

> Teacher 1: Look, when you write the name, capitalise the first letter.
>
> G1S2: It is not necessary
>
> Teacher 1: It is. You need to capitalise letters. It is necessary. It is up to you at the end if you want to follow my feedback or not. I am just directing you but at the end, don't come to me and say why did I get less marks. (Class 1, Observation 6)

Similarly, in Observation 3 in a textbook-led class, Teacher 3 provided feedback on addressing the topic properly, which is one of the points mentioned in task achievement - a marking criterion. In fact, Teacher 3 explicitly stated that students would get only two marks if they did not address the writing question properly.

> Teacher 3: Some of the essays I already have from people, I am sorry to say, they did not answer the question. You only get two marks in the exam if you do not answer the writing question. Please, make sure you read the question carefully and you understand what you need to write. Because it is the biggest problem for people if they are not understanding the question. They may not understand the question or read quickly imagining they are into it, but they are not. So, it is very, very important. Let's look at the questions now. Let's look at them on page 158. (Class 3, Observation 3)

In addition to that, Teacher 3 was also observed to refer to some marking criteria (grammar, mechanics of language and vocabulary) indirectly when she was giving individual oral feedback to students' first draft of the project writing. For instance, Teacher 3 started each individual face-to-face feedback with an introduction, such as the one mentioned below, which indicates the points of discussion for raising marks.

> Teacher 3: You got several areas here which do not make sense. I could not understand some areas. I will go through with you and you need to do some more work on this in order to get a good mark. OK. Let's look through it. (Class 3, Observation 5)

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The final evidence was found in G3S5's and G3S6's first draft of project writing which had the marking criteria written on the cover pages of their papers, with expected marks (see below).

Figure 24: Expected Marks Given for Each Marking Criterion on G3S5's Project Writing

Thus, with all the above-mentioned evidence, the marking criteria were found to shape the three teachers' practices for focus of feedback. This connection was mostly found in the practices of Teachers 1 and 3. Although Teacher 2 shaped his feedback on the marking criteria, as shown in Table 15 presented earlier in this section, he was never found to notify his students about them. One explanation could be because he did not believe in the value of marks on students' response to feedback, which was expressed consistently in three of his interviews. The following excerpt, for instance, shows that Teacher 2 believed that students need to concentrate on writing practices rather than on revision for assessment.

> Teacher 2: ... The biggest challenge is motivation. There is a strong reluctance to actually write anything. So, once you get them to start writing, then you can start helping them improve what they... But they don't see language as something to acquire over time. They see it as knowledge to be reproduced in an exam, which unfortunately means they don't practise. They will revise it rather than practise it and that's the biggest challenge... (Teacher 2's First Interview)

Therefore, because Teacher 2 did not believe that assessment has a positive influence on student response to feedback, he was not observed

to refer to the marking criteria directly or indirectly in his feedback practices.

To conclude, the marking criteria shaped some of the three teachers' practices for the focus of feedback. Nevertheless, this influence was sometimes impacted by the teachers' beliefs and interpretations of the marking criteria and the distribution of marks of the EAP modules. These two influences will be presented in the following two sub-sections.

4.2.1.1.1. Teacher Beliefs and Interpretations of the Marking Criteria

The teachers' beliefs and interpretations of the marking criteria impacted their practices for the focus of feedback. The analysis revealed that teachers were not found to be conscientious in structuring their feedback on the marking criteria which they were not convinced about. This issue was found in Teachers 1's feedback. Teacher 1 did not give feedback on addressing the topic of the essay, which is one of the points in the task achievement criterion. This was because he thought it unfair to penalise students for writing off topic if their essay was well-written.

> Teacher 1: So, I think the criteria sometimes are not really fair for the students. Sometimes, I mean, the students write something, the criteria obliged to give them two or one, which is out of topic. ... It might be a very good essay but slightly unrelated. So, I think it is a matter of oppressing the students in this respect. (Teacher 1's Final Interview)

In other cases, teachers were not committed to follow the marking criteria in their feedback because they misinterpreted them. This was mainly found in Teacher 3's practices of feedback. Teacher 3 never gave feedback on the word limit, which is one of the areas stated in the task achievement criterion. Teacher 3 thought that this criterion was unfair as the students were already penalised for having more errors; i.e. the more they write, the more they will have errors in their writing.

> Teacher 3: ... and then the other part I disagree with … it says not less than 50% of the target word limit, which basically means they have to do 800 to 1000 words. So, if they did 400 words, you can give them 3, which seems to me … because if someone else writes 800 words, you gonna write more mistakes, the more words you write. Then why would you be penalised because you've written more? (Teacher 3's Final Interview)

The above excerpt indicates that Teacher 3 misinterpreted the criterion of word limit. She implies that students can get more marks by writing less, which suggests she did not understand the whole premise of marking. In fact, the analysis found two other cases of misinterpreting the marking criteria. First, Teacher 2 criticized the marking guide because it does not put much emphasis on grammar and spelling.

> Teacher 2: There aren't many marks for grammar and spelling. The spelling should be fine any way because they all have spell check. But they are not gonna lose many marks if the grammar is not perfect as long as you understand the meaning. (Teacher 2's Final Interview)

However, this was not accurate because both grammar and spelling are parts of the marking criteria, as stated earlier in this section. Based on the marking guide (see Appendix 16 for the marking guide), five marks are assigned for "Grammar", that covers the range of structures required for the task, and complexity and accuracy of grammar use, and five marks are assigned for "Mechanics of Language", that address hand-writing, spelling, punctuation and capitalization.

Another instance found of misinterpreting the marking criteria was when Teacher 3 criticised the simplicity of the marking guide. Teacher 3 thought that the marking guide too simplistic as it was based on simple 'Yes or No' questions.

> Teacher 3: The marking criteria are so ridiculous. The criteria we've got at the moment aren't very good… If you actually look at the criteria, 'have they got beginning, middle and end', five marks. 'Is it legible', yes five marks. (Teacher 3's Final Interview)

However, the marking guide is not that simplistic. The marking guide shows that each criterion considers some details. Under each criterion,

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more explanation is given to aid teachers in assigning marks from 0 to 5 to the assignments. For instance, Figure 25 taken from the marking guide shows how 'task achievement' should be assessed. It can be observed from this figure that the marking guide gives a detailed explanation about the procedure of marking 'task achievement', which shows the complexity of marking.

1. Assess for **Task Achievement** first. If the script meets the 3 criteria, continue to mark the script. If not enter 1, 2 or 0 on the mark sheet.

	5	4	3	2	1	0
TASK ACHIEVEMENT	Addresses assigned topic directly, coverage is comprehensive; no irrelevance.	Addresses assigned topic but some points may not be covered or some irrelevance may appear	Addresses assigned topic but contains irrelevant points and some relevant points are not dealt with.	Limited relation to the assigned topic; shows some attempt to address the issue but contains little relevant material.	Answer bears no or almost no relation to task.	No assessable sample i.e. nothing legible on the page
	Meets minimum word limits	Roughly meets minimum word limits	Not less than 50% of target word limit)	May be short.		
	Source material is referenced using APA conventions	Source material is referenced using APA conventions	Source material is referenced	Despite SafeAssign report the script gives cause for suspicion of plagiarism	Despite SafeAssign report the script gives cause for suspicion of plagiarism	
			No suggestion of plagiarism			

TASK ACHIEVEMENT: This is a 'gateway' criterion i.e. a criterion that establishes whether or not the script should be marked in full. The criterion includes the aspects formerly covered in Content but also includes other aspects of the treatment of the assignment, including text length and plagiarism. It does not include marks for originality of content as this is felt to be too subjective. It attempts to answer the question: has the student attempted to construct a text, in more or less their own words, that attempts to address the question?

With regard to irrelevancy; the distinction between 2 and 3 is quantitative: to score 3 a script may have irrelevant material but this must constitute less than 50% of the text. A text with more than 50% irrelevancy must score 2 or lower. The difference between 3 and 4 is qualitative. For 4 the script may contain irrelevant material or omit relevant points. For 3, the script will show both.

With regard to plagiarism: HETEE writing tasks are designed to facilitate integration of ideas drawn from a reading, and possibly a listening, text but only as a partial source. Tasks should never permit even the partial answering of a question simply through a regurgitation of reconstructed reading material. Marks are awarded for appropriate use of source material through quotation or paraphrase but under Task Achievement, the concern is only with inappropriate use i.e. sections of text simply copied without acknowledgement from the reading text or elsewhere and presented as the student's work.

It is recommended that the marker scan the script quickly with the reading text to hand and underline or block any sentences copied verbatim without acknowledgement from the reading or elsewhere. Note, the smallest unit to be considered as plagiarism is the sentence. If a student is able to manipulate words, lexical chunks or phrases encountered in the reading and use them more or less appropriately in their writing, this is to be considered – in most cases – as evidence of learning. To score 3, any such material must not exceed 10% of the total text. Where such material is identified it should simply be left unmarked i.e. not assessed for grammar, vocabulary etc.

Figure 25: The Procedures for Marking 'Task Achievement' in Student Writing Adopted from the Rating Scale for the EAP Module (Appendix 16)

The rating scale may be seen as an attempt to provide some consistency or standardisation for the process of assessment. However, based on the

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above-presented findings, it seems that this was not the case in the context of my study. When the three college leaders (EAP coordinator, HoED and PD) were asked how assessment is handled with the EAP teachers, they pointed out that all the teachers were given the marking guide and there was no verbal clarification about it because a detailed explanation was provided on the sheet. The HoED emphasised that the teachers had already been taught about assessment in their previous degree and it was not the college's responsibility to teach them how to mark, though she pointed out that some workshops from the British Council had been conducted in the college, addressing language teaching and assessment.

This all means that inconsistencies in the marking procedures in the college might exist, especially since teachers have different teaching experience and certificates, ranking from PhD to Bachelor degree in English teaching, as shown in the methodology chapter Section 3.3.2. In fact, Teacher 3 even stated that she and her colleagues ended up not following these criteria when assessing student writing.

> Teacher 3: In the writing, if we try to standardize, we end up not following it (marking guide) because it is just ridiculous. … But people say, 'no no, I'm not giving on that'. And so, we tend to throw it out and we have to agree among ourselves. (Teacher 3's Final Interview)

There is, though, a second marker for student project writing and the writing final exam, as declared by HoD and EAP coordinator; however, the two markers do not negotiate with each other. Each teacher gives a mark which will be calculated and divided into two.

4.2.1.1.2. Distribution of Marks

Another determiner for the influence of marking criteria on feedback found in the analysis was the distribution of marks. Based on the course specifications for the first-year EAP module, project writing carries the most weight in the course assessment. Project writing has 50% of the

total mark (see Figure 25 below): 20% for presentation of project writing and 30% for the report. On the other hand, the textbook-led writing is not assessed. However, there is a final exam that concerns writing one of the types of essay introduced in the textbook. Nevertheless, the final exam has 15% of the total marks and so project writing is much more important in terms of assessment.

Assessment

Continuous assessment: Project on a major-related topic

1 presentation	20%
1 report	30%
Total	50%

Final Exam

Language knowledge	5%
Reading	10%
Listening	10%
Speaking (paired-discussion)	10%
Writing	15%
Total	50%

Figure 26: Assessment in First-year EAP Module Adopted from the Course Specifications (Appendix 1)

This distribution of marks was found to impact the teachers' practices for focus of feedback. The analysis found that, because project writing has the largest portion of the total marks, the three teachers were found to be more dedicated to giving feedback on task achievement in project writing than in textbook-led writing. For instance, Table 16 summarises the coding references - derived from the Nvivo programme - for the three teachers' feedback on task achievement in all textbook-led writing and in the three groups' first draft of the project writing. From this table, it is noted that Teachers 1 and 2 did not even provide feedback on task

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achievement in the textbook-led writing, and Teacher 3 gave only a little feedback on this area in textbook-led writing in comparison to project writing.

Teachers	Task Achievement	
	Textbook-led Writing	1st Draft Project Writing
Teacher 1	0	12
Teacher 2	0	85
Teacher 3	2	19

Table 16: Coding References in Task Achievement by Writing Type

The table above implies that the distribution of marks played an important role in teachers' practices of feedback; e.g. the three teachers gave more feedback on task achievement in project writing than in textbook-led writing because it was rated for assessment.

4.2.1.2. EAP Writing Pedagogy

Another influence found in the analysis for focus of feedback is EAP writing pedagogy, which will be presented in this section. The analysis showed that the teachers' feedback was connected to 1) their beliefs about EAP writing pedagogy and 2) college policy about EAP writing pedagogy. The two connections will be presented in the following two sub-sections.

4.2.1.2.1. Teacher Beliefs about the Approach to Teaching EAP Writing

It was revealed that both Teachers 2 and 3 placed much emphasis on grammar and mechanics of language in textbook-led writing. Table 17 presents the number of coding references of the two teachers' focus of feedback in all Groups 2's and 3's textbook-led writing. This analysis addressed the written feedback only because the oral feedback that the two teachers gave was a discussion of the written feedback. Table 17 shows that Teachers 2 and 3 provided feedback on four areas of writing: grammar, mechanics of language, vocabulary and organisation of essay, plus task achievement for Teacher 3. However, the two teachers' feedback emphasis was greater on some areas of writing than others. For example, Teacher 2 gave greater emphasis to grammar (341), followed by mechanics of language (194), then vocabulary (19), and eventually organisation of essay (5).

Focus of Feedback	Teacher 2	Teacher 3
Grammar	341	299
Mechanics of Language	194	79
Vocabulary	19	40
Organisation of Essay	5	6
Task Achievement	0	2
Essay Rhetorical Conventions	0	0

Table 17: Frequency of Coding References for Focus of Feedback in Textbook-led Writing by Teachers 2 and 3

The emphasis on the above areas in feedback was due to the marking criteria, as already explained in Section 4.2.1.1. However, the analysis

attributed the degree of variation in emphasis in the two teachers' focus of feedback to their belief about EAP writing pedagogy. The analysis found a connection between the two teachers' major emphasis on grammar and mechanics of language in all textbook-led writing and their belief about EAP writing pedagogy. The evidence provided for this connection was based on the teachers' interviews and the textbook-led observations, as will be shown below.

First, Teacher 2, in three interviews, and Teacher 3, in four interviews, expressed their belief about the value of grammar teaching on writing development. The following two excerpts were taken from some of their interviews where they both stated that grammar is an integral part of teaching writing.

> Teacher 2: … I think that to be able to write, you need to have good understanding of grammar. It is a fundamental side of writing. This all about … communicative language teaching is more about producing a language rather than understanding what's in it. On the one hand, I think it has its uses. I am not a big fan of communicative language teaching because I don't think it gets the students to focus on the mechanical parts of the language. On the other hand, probably it is the only way to get them use the language in actual way through writing and speaking. (Teacher 2's Interview Following Observation 6)

> Teacher 3: ... Well, I did a lot of writing when I learned my languages. The speaking and the listening came later. We weren't doing the speaking and listening to start with, but we did a lot of basics to start with. But then you see lots of people in England. Lots of interesting languages with French, they found it boring. So, then they say 'let's try make it easier. Let's make it more interesting. We do some speaking. But then you got people who are speaking, you know, Pidgin English. You know, so you can say like 'me like chocolate' or 'me go town'. And people understand you, but it is not grammatically accurate. So, when you learn to say that wrongly for a long time, then you study it and say: Now, we gonna learn how to say, 'I am going to town' or 'I like chocolate.', then the damage is done. It is too late because they've already learned to say, 'me like chocolate'. So, I think that's wrong. That's why I think grammar is better first. (Teacher 3's Interview Following Observation3)

Another piece of evidence was the two teachers' opinions of the writing pedagogy instructed by the college. Teacher 2, in four of his interviews,

and Teacher 3, in three of her interviews, criticized the writing pedagogy instructed in the course textbook and project outline - a college guidance that contains instructions for teaching project writing. (The project outline is presented in Appendix 17.) Teacher 2, for instance, criticised the teaching focus given to the organisation of essays in the course textbook and project writing. He thought that students know about these areas and that they need to be taught grammar instead.

> Teacher 2: They all know what a conclusion would look like. They all know what a body paragraph would look like, introduction or what is in a topic sentence. There is no point in showing them how to do it over and over again. But the last time they studied grammar was in the foundation year, but it was only done for the half of the time. In fact, to be honest, I am not quite sure they studied much grammar at all. They've gone from learning grammar into writing a whole essay. There is a bit missing in the middle, some way called how to put sentences together. It is a big gap. (Teacher 2's Interview Following Observation 6)

Teacher 2 also used supplementary materials on grammar teaching in two textbook-led observations (See Appendix 18 for the supplementary materials used in Class 2 Observation 6). In fact, when Teacher 2 was asked about these materials, he stated that the grammar aspects in the course textbook are specific to a certain type of essay; i.e. the grammar aspects presented in the textbook concern the grammatical features related to specific types of essay, which he does not believe to be valuable to all types of writing.

> Teacher 2: I notice in the book, the language tends to be pretty specific. When you go to Marphy's book (the supplementary book that he used), the language is probably more of common use, which I think more appropriate for learning English anyway. Why learn specific words that hardly anyone will be speaking when they need to have a general knowledge of vocabulary and how to use it in a very general situation? (Teacher 2's Interview Following Observation 6)

Teachers 2 and 3 were in favour of grammar teaching and so the approach to teaching EAP writing instructed in the course textbook did not match their belief about EAP writing. In fact, based on their beliefs about EAP writing, the two teachers never gave feedback on essay rhetorical conventions (i.e. the grammatical features and the organisation

of specific essays) as instructed in the course textbook (see Table 17 above).

The third piece of evidence that could be provided for the two teachers' advocacy of grammar teaching in EAP writing is when they only emphasised grammar-related errors in the follow-up oral individual and in-class discussions, though they gave written feedback on other areas of writing, as shown in Table 17. In fact, it was noticed in these discussions that the two teachers spent much time explaining grammar to students even though the students had not asked for clarification. For example, the following excerpt, taken from one of the individual discussions conducted in Class 3, shows how Teacher 3 explains the rule of using present perfect and future tense, though the student did not ask about it.

> ((Teacher 3 is reading through a student's paper)) It says here "(?) did become an effect for human life. It makes a big relolusion." I think there is another (?) here. Do you know the present perfect?
>
> Student: 'has made'
>
> Teacher 3: That's right 'has made' … 'has made' because it is something which started in the past and still carries on being true until now. Yes? 'has made'…
>
> ((Teacher 3 continues reading through the paper)) "People would always want to save their memories." That's not the right tense there. Is it? the 'would'?
>
> Student: 'want'
>
> Teacher 3: What tense do you use there?
>
> Student: will
>
> Teacher 3: 'will', future, do you think that should be put there? 'People will always' Yes? Do you understand why? People will always want to do these things. 'Would' is if there is a condition. They would if something. You know if you have 'if clause'. (Class 3, Observation 5)

From the above-mentioned evidence, it is obvious that grammar teaching was given much emphasis in the two classes. Therefore, this could explain why they placed much emphasis on grammar in their feedback.

4.2.1.2.2.   College Policy for EAP Writing Pedagogy

The analysis revealed that the practices for 'focus of feedback' were sometimes shaped by the approach to teaching EAP writing instructed by the college in the course textbook and the project outline, as will be explained below.

The EAP Writing Pedagogy of the Course Textbook

As stated in the introduction chapter, the writing book used in the first-year EAP module is 'Effective Academic Writing' (Savage and Mayer, 2012). The course textbook includes writing processes that a learner goes through when constructing their essays. The writing processes in Unit 1 deal with the organisation of essays including paragraph structure, the topic sentence, and unity and coherence. Then, all the units afterwards cover four processes: process 1 is related to stimulating ideas, process 2 covers brainstorming and outlining, process 3 concerns developing ideas, and process 4 gives tasks on editing writing (see Appendix 19 for the content of the course textbook and Appendix 20 for overview of the book).

Furthermore, after Unit 1, students are introduced to different essay types: descriptive essays, narrative essays, compare-contrast essays, opinion essays, and cause-and effect essays. In each unit, students are introduced to essay rhetorical conventions that concern the structures and grammar focus specific to the essay introduced in each unit. For instance, in Unit 4, there is a focus on the organisation of comparison-contrast essays as well as on some language elements related to this type of essays, such as comparison and contrast connectors,

comparatives in compare-contrast essays and comparatives in sentences (see Appendices 19 and 20).

As presented in the section above, Teachers 2 and 3 did not provide feedback on essay organisation and essay rhetorical conventions introduced in the course textbook because these areas conflicted with their beliefs about EAP writing pedagogy. However, this was not the case with Teacher 1. Based on the analysis of focus of feedback in textbook-led writing, Teacher 1 gave a great deal of feedback on the essay organisation and essay rhetorical conventions. Table 18 shows the number of coding references of oral feedback across all observed textbook-led classes. It should be clarified that Teacher 1 never gave written feedback in textbook-led observations. It can be seen in Table 18 that Teacher 1's main emphasis was on the organisation of the essay (36) and essay rhetorical conventions (20).

Teacher 1's Focus of Feedback	Number of Coding References
Organisation of Essay	36
Essay Rhetorical Conventions	20
Grammar	4
Mechanics of Language	3
Vocabulary	1
Task Achievement	0

Table 18: Frequency of Coding References of Focus of Feedback by Teacher 1 in Textbook-led Writing

Based on textbook-led observations, Teacher 1 gave also feedback on processes. The feedback in three observed textbook-led classes covered the organisation of the essays: first class - introduction, second class - conclusion, third class - body paragraphs. (The three textbook-led

classes concerned different pieces of writing.) With regard to the essay rhetorical conventions, Teacher 1 covered the structures of the grammatical features related to different types of essay. The following excerpt from Observation 2 demonstrates Teacher 1's feedback on the structure of compare-and-contrast essays.

> Teacher 1: ((addressing the whole class)) Some of your writing has problems in identifying the arguments in your writing which is basically the main goal in compare and contrast essays. For example, when you point out any opinion in a cause and effect essay or compare and contrast essay between healthy food and junk food or fast food ... so, your plan is to prove that healthy food is better ... so, always try to find problems in the counter argument. But your argument that you are trying to prove should always be stronger than the counter argument. (Class 1, Observation 2)

The rhetorical conventions also addressed the grammatical features in the different essay types. For example, in Observation 1, Teacher 1 provided feedback on the use of 'facts and opinions' in opinion essays

> Teacher 1: There are also problems with grammar. As I told you, there are some rules in writing. Do not use personal pronouns. When you say, for example, 'I think', you can say that, but it is more advisable to say, 'the researcher thinks, the study shows, the research hypothesises, the article suggests'. OK. So, in this way, you avoid using personal pronouns. …The other problem with grammar is that when you are describing the culture in Oman and UK, you are basically dealing with facts, right? When you are talking about facts, which tense do you usually use? I think we talk about this.

> Student: present perfect

> Teacher 1: No. present simple (Class 1, Observation 1)

Thus, it is clear from the above evidence that Teacher 1 shaped his feedback based on the writing pedagogy instructed in the course textbook.

The connection between the writing pedagogy of the textbook and Teacher 1's practices for focus of feedback was supported by some evidence from textbook-led observations. In all the three textbook-led observations, Teacher 1 supplemented his feedback with relevant follow-

up tasks and activities from the textbook. For example, the following excerpt taken from one of Class 1 observations shows that, when Teacher 1 finished giving oral feedback on the organisation of comparison-contrast essays, he gave some practice on these areas through an exercise from the textbook.

> Teacher 1: ((addressing the whole class)) Some of your writing has problems in identifying the arguments in your writing which is basically the main goal in compare and contrast essay ... So, let's have some practice on this. Let's look at p.117 exercise 5. (Class 1, Observation 2)

The above results show that Teacher 1 provided feedback on the organisation of essays and essay rhetorical conventions because he followed the course textbook in his teaching as stated in his interviews and shown in his class observations. However, based on the textbook-led observations, Teachers 2 and 3 also followed the EAP writing pedagogy of the course textbook; however, as presented in the previous section, they never gave feedback on essay rhetorical conventions or much emphasis on the organisation of essays. As presented in Section 4.2.1.2.1, this was because the EAP writing pedagogy of the course textbook did not match their beliefs about EAP writing pedagogy. Therefore, the two teachers preferred basing their practices on their beliefs, especially since they were given flexibility in their feedback practices as pointed out by the college leaders. In fact, Teacher 1 might have also based his practices on his beliefs about EAP writing pedagogy. Based on his first interview, Teacher 1 thought that students need to master the different processes of writing and the rhetorical conventions of different types of essay. Therefore, his beliefs about EAP writing pedagogy matched the writing pedagogy of the course textbook.

EAP Writing Pedagogy of the Project Outline

Another influence of the college pedagogy on the teachers' feedback practices was found in project classes. Prior to student submission of the

first draft of project writing, the three teachers based their feedback on the lesson objectives of the project outline. (The project outline exists in Appendix 17.) The project outline places emphasis on the writing processes that a learner goes through, such as searching for topics, paraphrasing, summarising, using in-text-citations, outlining, drafting, editing and reviewing. Therefore, the three teachers were found to give feedback on these writing processes in different lessons. For example, in Observation 4, Teacher 1's individual discussion with students was mostly based on task achievement (see Table 19). This was because Observation 4 was conducted in week 4, a main objective of which was 'teaching students in-text citation and choosing research topics' (see Figure 27 below).

Teacher 1's Focus of Feedback	Number of Coding Referencing
Task Achievement	18
Organisation of Essay	2
Essay Rhetorical Conventions	6
Grammar	1
Mechanics of Language	0
Vocabulary	0

Table 19: Frequency of Coding References of Focus of Feedback in Individual Discussions, Class 1, Observation 4

4	22/2-26/2/2015	Teaching students in text citation and helping them choose their research topics. Topics' choices and confirmation of these chosen topics

Figure 27: Project Objectives in Week 4

It could be questioned why Teachers 2 and 3 were more committed to base their feedback on the project outline and less committed to base it on the objectives of the textbook. One reason, which was stated in Section 4.2.1.1.2, was the distribution of marks: project writing has 50% of the total mark and the textbook-led writing is not assessed. Another reason revealed from the analysis is that the areas emphasised in the course textbook, which are essay rhetorical conventions, are not part of the marking criteria for project writing and final writing exam. Teacher 3 declared that students in the final examination were asked to write an essay related to one of the types of essays that they studied in their course textbook; however, essay rhetorical conventions were not part of the marking criteria.

> Teacher 3: ... they are given two essays and the types of the essay they have to write are based on this book. But in actual fact, if they didn't write the opinion essay correctly, like they didn't put their opinion in paragraph one or they didn't reiterate in the final paragraph, they wouldn't lose marks. So, it is a bit ironic really ... (Teacher 3's Final Interview)

To clarify Teacher 3's complaint, Figure 28, which was taken from final examination for EAP module in 2015, demonstrates that the students were asked to choose one type of essay to write. However, as presented in Section 4.2.1.1, essay rhetorical conventions are not part of the marking criteria.

WRITING

Choose **ONE** of the essays: **A or B.** Write an essay of around **250 words.**

Essay A : How do you measure success? Write a **narrative essay** about a person, project or organization that you consider to be successful.

OR

Essay B : What can young people do to become successful in their careers ? Write a **descriptive essay**.

Remember to give reasons and examples to support your ideas.

Figure 28: Final Examination of EAP Writing, 2015

Thus, the lack of connection between marking criteria, course objectives and assessment tasks decreased the commitment of Teachers 2 and 3 to basing their feedback on the college instructions about EAP writing and led them to follow their own beliefs about EAP writing. In fact, as discussed earlier in this section, the teachers were, after all, given flexibility in their feedback practices.

4.2.2. Student Response to the Focus of Feedback

The next part of Section 4.2 is about student response to the focus of feedback. Section 4.2.1 shows that the teachers provided much feedback to some areas and less emphasis to others. Such emphases were found to impact students' response to the focus of feedback. The analysis found that students' responses to feedback were a result of three contextual influences: 1) student beliefs about EAP writing, 2) student understanding of academic conventions of EAP writing, and 3) student extrinsic motivation.

4.2.2.1. Student Beliefs about EAP Writing

From the students' interviews, it was found that all students from the three groups had a preference for feedback on grammar and mechanics of language only. In fact, when Group 3 were asked about the additional areas of writing that they wanted their teacher to focus on, they expressed their preferences for more focus on grammar and mechanics of language.

> Researcher: What other aspects of writing do you need her (their teacher) to focus on?
>
> G3S6: Nothing. We just want her to give more feedback on grammar.
>
> G3S1: We have lots of difficulties in our writing. However, I think that the most common errors students make are spelling and sentence structures. We usually face difficulty in structuring ideas in English.

G3S2: Besides grammar, I also feel we need more feedback on connectors. But, honestly, I feel that grammar and spelling are the most important things. (Group 3's Interview Following Observation 3)

The analysis connected these attitudes towards focus of feedback to students' beliefs, values and understandings of what constitutes good academic writing. The students believe that EAP writing should be learnt through mastering grammar and the mechanics of language. This was shown in three aspects: 1) students' beliefs about the approach to teaching EAP writing, 2) students' complaints about their teachers' feedback, and 3) students' search for feedback. The following sections demonstrate these three aspects.

Students' Beliefs about the Approach to Teaching EAP Writing

The first evidence was found in students' responses to questions raised in the student interviews that related to their beliefs about the best approach to teaching EAP writing. All students showed an orientation towards mechanics of language and placed a high premium on grammar. For example, in replying to what the important issues in writing are, Group 3 emphasised that grammar is the most essential aspect in learning writing (see excerpt below). Group 3 added that this was because they had learnt writing through grammar since school.

Researcher: Tell me, what are the most important areas you need to focus on when you learn academic writing?

G3S3: Grammar

G3S5: Grammar

Researcher: Why?

G3S1: Most of us came from General Education and not Basic.

Researcher: What is the difference between them?

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> G3S1: In the General Education, there is much concentration on grammar; while, in Basic Education, there is a focus on other issues like the organisation of the essay.
>
> G3S2: Yes. That's why we think grammar is important. (Group 3's First Interview)

Their beliefs about the best approach to teaching EAP writing was also shown in their response to the questions regarding their opinions about the writing pedagogy instructions in their course textbook and project outline. It was revealed that 13 students out of the 18 from the three groups criticised the EAP writing pedagogy of the textbook and project outline because they were based on teaching essay rhetorical conventions as well as research skills such as paraphrasing, summarising and referencing. For instance, it was revealed that four students from Group 1 did not think there was a need to introduce essay rhetorical conventions in the course textbook. This is because they did not think that these patterns had any long-term value to academic writing; i.e. for subsequent subject-domain studies.

> G1S2: Why should we be introduced to the rhetorical conventions of different types of essay? They are just making our writing complicated and this is more of an advanced level, I guess.
>
> G1S1: Who knows? We may need them in our subject-domain writing.
>
> G1S5: No, I don't think we will need them. (Group 1's Interview Following Observation 2)

Students' Complaints about their Teachers' Feedback

The second piece of evidence related to students' complaints about their teachers' feedback. It was revealed that students' complaints about their teachers' feedback mostly concerned grammar and mechanics of language in that they wanted more feedback on these areas. For instance, Group 1 were upset because Teacher 1 provided less feedback on grammar and mechanics of language (see below). The reason for this

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attitude was their expectation of the marking criteria. It should be clarified that 15 students out of the 18 from the three groups did not know the marking criteria, as will be presented in Section 4.2.2.3.. The students then assumed that the marking criteria would be more on grammar and mechanics of language, which reflects their understanding of the purpose of EAP writing.

> G1S1: The teacher is not correcting grammar. He just focuses on what comes in introduction, thesis statement, supporting sentences and conclusion.
>
> G1S5: I feel I've got problems with grammar because I wrote it myself, but he did not mention if I have grammatical problems. I intentionally raised my voice to get him to correct the structures or word order for me, but he gave no attention.
>
> G1S2: I remember he once said to a student 'You need to put 'ing' afterwards'
>
> G1S5: ((laughing)) Yeh, that was the only grammar error he ever corrected.
>
> Group1: ((laughing and nodding))
>
> Researcher: Do you think it is necessary to have feedback on grammar?
>
> F1S5: If they (teachers) do not mark us on grammar, that's fine.
>
> Researcher: What do you expect the marking criteria to be on?
>
> G1S6: Grammar
>
> G1S2: Grammar, spelling…
>
> G1G5: Capital letters, full stops, you know, things like these (Focus1's Interview Following Observation 6)

Likewise, Groups 2 and 3's complaints about their teachers' feedback were mostly confined to the level of grammar, mechanics of language and vocabulary. For example, the excerpt below shows that Group 3 complained that their teacher gave them feedback on simple issues that they already knew and that they wanted more higher-level feedback. However, they agreed that this higher-level feedback should be on grammar and mechanics of language.

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G3S5: The teacher always emphasises the points that are commonly known, like 'on the other hand'. These are really very simple. She has to focus on a more advanced level.

G3S3: In every lecture, she raises similar issues. She keeps repeating things. Only one new issue has been introduced which was about 'have been' but the rest were the same every time.

G3S2: I agree. We need newly introduced stuff.

Researcher: What other aspects of writing do you need her (their teacher) to focus on?

G3S6: Nothing. We just want her to give more feedback on grammar.

G3S1: We have lots of difficulties in our writing. However, I think that the most common errors students make are spelling and sentence structures. We usually face difficulty in structuring ideas in English.

G3S2: Besides grammar, I also feel we need more feedback on connectors. But, honestly, I feel that grammar and spelling are the most important things. (Group 3's Interview Following Observation 3)

The three groups never complained about their teachers' feedback that lacked a focus on essay organisation, task achievement or essay rhetorical conventions. On the contrary, the analysis showed that Group 1 were upset when feedback was provided on these areas. As indicated earlier, Group 1 did not think that these areas had long-term value; i.e. for their subject-domain writing.

Student Search for Feedback

The third piece of evidence for students' beliefs about EAP writing was shown in students' search feedback. Students were found to do selective search for feedback; i.e. they sought feedback on certain areas of writing only. This was found in Groups 1 and 2. First, from their two interviews after a project observation and their final interview, the analysis revealed that Group 1 most often consulted their teacher and external sources of feedback on grammar and mechanics of language. For example, the

following excerpt, which is taken from Group 1's interview after they had individual discussions with Teacher 1 in a project class, shows that Group 1 asked their teacher about sentence structures and mechanics of language.

> Researcher: So, what did you ask your teacher in your individual discussion?
>
> G1S2: I asked him how to say ((an Arabic sentence)) in English.
>
> G1S5: I asked him about the structures of my sentences because he rarely gives correction on them.
>
> G1S2: I asked him about how to put a reference for an Arabic magazine …
>
> G1S4: I did not ask him something particular. I got him to read my essay and proof-read it. I mean looking at the structures of my sentences and spelling. (Group 1's Interview Following Observation 6)

Another incidence for selective search for feedback in Class 1 was found in G1S2's two textbook-led writings. Based on her two pieces of writing, G1S2 was found to write some comments on her papers after Teacher 1's oral feedback (see a sample below). It could be seen from the sample below that the comments G1S2 wrote concerned grammar, though Teacher 1 gave corrections mostly on the organisation of essays and essay rhetorical conventions rather than grammar, as presented earlier in Section 4.2.1.2.2.

Moreover every woman is interested to ask her mother or anyone that tried this experience from her family. Most women in Oman stayed at home and do not do any excercise or sports but some of them in the last months of pregnancy they walk for long distances. Some women donot like to go their work or they prefaire working in short time in this period of their life. On the other hand the women in the UK care by about their babies and their healths They asking doctors about suitable sports and food for them. Most of women in the UK like to swimmings, practicing yoga and walking. In both country, women care about their babies's health by visiting hospital to examing and inoculating babies in various period.

Figure 29: Pencilled Corrections made on Grammar-related Errors in G1S2's Textbook-led Writing

Furthermore, selective search for feedback was found in Class 2. Based on one of the Group 2 interviews, when Teacher 2 asked his students about the areas of writing that they needed to have practice on during the semester, they suggested spelling and grammar (see an excerpt below). The excerpt below showed that students felt satisfied with having more practice on the areas they chose because they thought they developed their ability to write.

> G2S1: Our teacher asked us at the beginning of the semester about the writing areas we are weak at and want more practice on. We told him we want more practice on spelling and some aspects of grammar.

> G2S5: He is now giving us lots of feedback and practice on these areas.

G2S2: I feel my writing gets better now because I know now how to make grammatically correct sentences. (Group 2's Final Interview)

Thus, it is unsurprising to see students' preferences for feedback to be on grammar and mechanics of language as they believe that writing is best learnt through these aspects.

4.2.2.2. Student Understanding of Academic Conventions of EAP Writing

In some cases, student response to their teachers' practices of focus of feedback was impacted by their understanding of the academic conventions of EAP writing. This was shown in two cases: their understanding of research skills and their understanding of essay rhetorical conventions.

4.2.2.2.1. Research skills

As will be presented below in the following two sub-sections, the students from the three groups showed negative attitudes towards feedback on plagiarism and supporting evidence which were due to their understanding of research skills such as quoting, summarising, paraphrasing and referencing. The students' lack of understanding was not on how to quote, summarise or paraphrase, neither was it on the use of in-text citation. Rather, it was on the reasons for using referencing, particularly in relation to avoiding plagiarism and providing supporting evidence. These reasons will be presented below.

Avoiding Plagiarism

The analysis revealed that 11 students out of the 18 showed their concern about plagiarism and thought it unfair to be punished for translating or paraphrasing common ideas. This was shown in online

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discussions with two students from Group 3, the three groups' final interviews, and the three groups' interviews that followed a project observation when they had face-to-face feedback on their first draft of project writing. For instance, the following excerpt taken from one of these interviews shows students' concern about plagiarism.

> G3S2: It (plagiarising) is a common issue in all classes. Everyone is struggling with it.

> G3S5: It wasn't shown on the 'Safe Assign' (a software programme that detects plagiarised texts) as plagiarised texts but she (the teacher) keeps telling us it is copied. (Group 3's Interview Following Observation 5)

Such attitude towards feedback on plagiarism was due to a lack of understanding of the use of referencing to avoid plagiarism. In their first interview prior to observations, almost all students in the three groups defined referencing and its rationale accurately when asked about it. For example, one of its purposes they mentioned was to avoid plagiarism. However, the analysis found evidence of the students' superficial understanding of why referencing should be used. First, from the three groups' final interviews, and their interviews after they finished having face-to-face feedback on their first draft of project writing, it was revealed that 11 students out of the 18 from the three groups confirmed some translating, paraphrasing and summarising. However, these students did not think translating, paraphrasing or summarising should be regarded as plagiarism if they related to common ideas that belong to nobody. The following comment is one of the relevant arguments:

> G3S6: ... I don't really know why she (their teacher) doesn't believe they (their written texts) are our ideas. What is written in the internet is quite common to everyone and so I don't know why it has to be somebody else's ideas. (Group 3's Interview Following Observation 5)

In fact, some students from Group 3 acknowledged that they used to copy-and-paste from internet articles for their Arabic research when they were in school. They also stated that they had never been penalised for

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plagiarising and the first time they were taught about plagiarism was when they moved to college.

> Researcher: How much experience do you have in writing research?

> G3S5: This is the first time we're writing research.

> G3S1: No, we did write research in school.

> G3S6: But this is different from school. In school, we got ready-made projects from the internet.

> G3S1: Some students even bought ready-made research from libraries.

> Researcher: And were you not penalised for plagiarism?

> G3S1: No

> G3S6: Plagiarism is new to us. We did not know about it. (Group 3's Interview Following Observation 5)

Another piece of evidence was derived from the online discussion with two students, G3S2 and G3S4. These two students had comments in their project writing like 'does not make sense', 'not sentences', 'too long for one sentence'. The sample below is one example of these comments. These comments were given because the whole writing was grammatically incorrect and so the meaning was unclear. When the two students were asked about the ambiguity in their project writing via WhatsApp, and whether they had received any assistance with their writing, they admitted that they used Google Translate - a software programme developed by Google that instantly translates a word, phrase or web text from any language into English. However, both of them thought that translation was different from plagiarism because they used different words from the original texts, and so they thought there was no need for putting in-text citations for a translated text.

> G3S2: I did write it all myself. Well, to be honest I got some Arabic articles. Then I tried to summarise them in my own words with the help of Google Translate. But eventually, I wrote it all myself using my own words. I copied nothing from the internet (G3S2's Online Discussion)
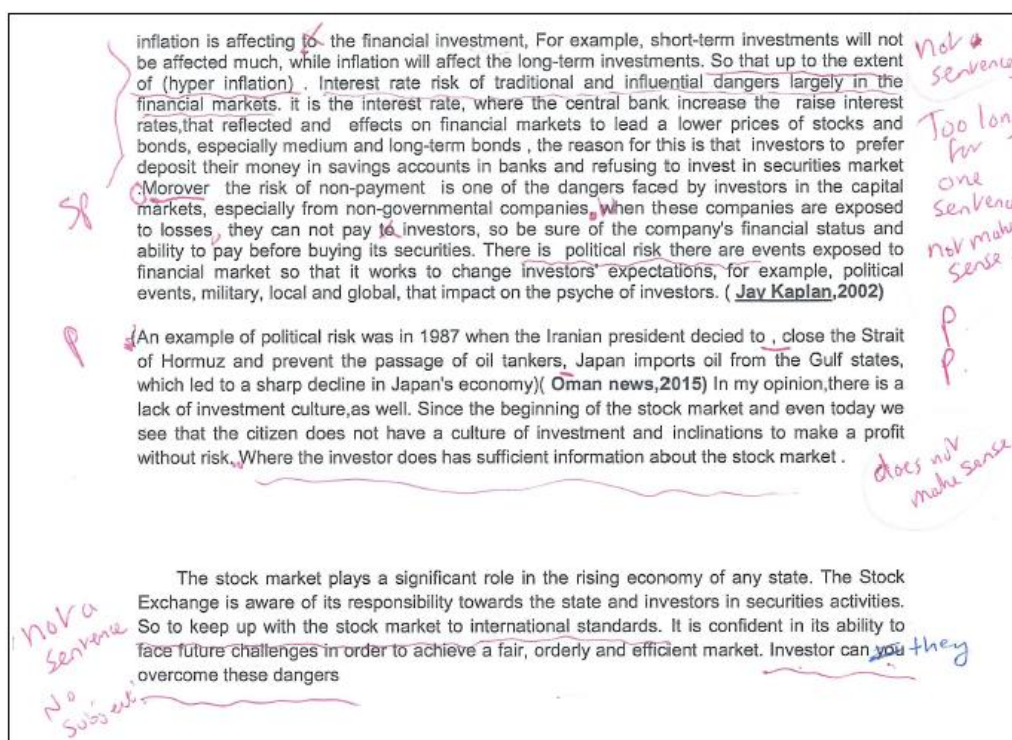
Figure 30: Translated Text, G3S2, Project Writing

Third, the face-to-face sessions that Teacher 1 had with students showed some instances of four students' lack of understanding of when translating, paraphrasing and summarising should be regarded as plagiarism. For instance, the following excerpt taken from one of these sessions shows that Teacher 1 accused a student of translating an Arabic article using 'Google Translate'. The student denied it but Teacher 1, whose first language was Arabic, checked the student's reference list online and he found that the student translated an Arabic text into English. The student argued that if she translated a text using different words from the original texts, then this should not be regarded as plagiarism.

> Teacher 1: I can't understand any single word of what you wrote here. Did you use Google Translate?
>
> Student: No teacher.
>
> Teacher 1: But your English is better than this. Are you sure?
>
> Student: Yes.

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Teacher 1: What resources did you use? Let me see your references

((Teacher 1 checked the links of references on the web and had a look at the articles))

Teacher 1: I am sure now that you translated it.

Student: But, I wrote it myself. Believe me. I used my own words

Teacher 1: Then you need to put a reference for it. (Class 1, Observation 5)

Therefore, the above evidence makes it clear that the student did not know how to avoid plagiarism because they thought that as long as they did not copy from original texts, this should not be regarded as plagiarism.

Based on the teachers' interviews and the individual discussions they had with their students in project classes, the three teachers thought that students plagiarised because they did not trust their own ability to write. The following excerpt, for instance, taken from one of the individual discussions, showed that Teacher 2 was trying to get a student to rewrite a plagiarised text (according to Teacher 2's follow-up interview) in her own words. He told the student that she should not be imitating others' writing and should trust her own ability to write.

Teacher 2: It is hard to work out what you mean there.

((the student explains in her own words))

Teacher 2: That sounds OK. It sounds better yes. So, the way you're speaking, write the same way. It means I can understand what you mean. OK. With writing, I don't want you to write just like what you see in the textbooks because I know you are not at that level. They were written by experts. We are not experts. We just write using the language we already know. OK, and maybe through this semester, we will go a little bit further. OK. So, I just want your own words. That's all I want. So, however you want to explain it, just use your words and I will do, in the first draft, I will help you improve. (Class 2, Observation 4)

Thus, Teacher 2 assumed that students plagiarised from external texts because they were attempting to imitate others' texts for their writing as they did not have confidence in their own writing ability. However, based on the results mentioned above in this section, this was not the basic

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reason, though it could possibly be one of the reasons. However, the main reason is that students did not know why they needed to put in-text citation for something they translated, paraphrase or summarised from external texts.

There is a college penalty for plagiarism in the task achievement criterion, as shown below. There is a college software called 'Safe Assign' that detects plagiarised work. Student marks are deducted if they plagiarise from texts. The policy below also shows that teachers are also authorised to deduct marks for suspicion of plagiarism, even though it is not shown in Safe Assign.

5	4	3	2	1
Addresses assigned topic directly; coverage is comprehensive; no irrelevance. Meets minimum word limits Source material is referenced using APA conventions	Addresses assigned topic but some points may not be covered or some irrelevance may appear Roughly meets minimum word limits Source material is referenced using APA conventions	Addresses assigned topic but contains irrelevant points and some relevant points are not dealt with. Not less than 50% of target word limit) Source material is referenced No suggestion of plagiarism	Limited relation to the assigned topic: shows some attempt to address the issue but contains little relevant material. May be short. Despite SafeAssign report the script gives cause for suspicion of plagiarism	Answer bears no or almost no relation to task. Despite SafeAssign report the script gives cause for suspicion of plagiarism

With regard to plagiarism: HETEE writing tasks are designed to facilitate integration of ideas drawn from a reading, and possibly a listening, text but only as a partial source. Tasks should never permit even the partial answering of a question simply through a regurgitation of reconstructed reading material. Marks are awarded for appropriate use of source material through quotation or paraphrase but under Task Achievement, the concern is only with inappropriate use i.e. sections of text simply copied without acknowledgement from the reading text or elsewhere and presented as the student's work.

Figure 31: Marks awarded related to Plagiarism, adopted from Rating Scale for EAP Module (Appendix 16)

Therefore, plagiarism is penalised in the college by the Safe Assign and teachers' suspicion of plagiarism. However, this penalisation did not seem to take its effect on student writing. As a matter of fact, it even made students anxious about something they did not find logical. As shown

earlier, students were worried about plagiarism and did not know how to avoid it. Therefore, there is a need to familiarise students with the issue of plagiarism in depth, placing emphasis on its rationale and its uses.

Using References to Support Arguments

Another area of students' lack of understanding of research skills is with regards to "providing supporting evidence" for their arguments. The analysis revealed some negative attitudes towards feedback on this area. Based on the face-to-face feedback that Class 1 had on their first draft of project writing and Group 1's two interviews following project observations, seven students from Class 1 (including four from Group 1) were dissatisfied with receiving feedback on providing evidence to support their arguments. The following excerpt taken from one of the face-to-face feedback sessions shows that Teacher 1 told G1S5 that she needed to provide supporting evidence for her claim, but the student was not convinced of the need to support her claims.
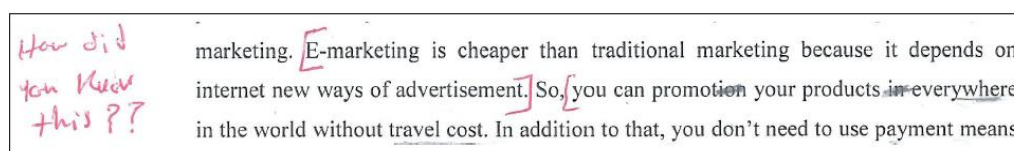
Figure 32: Feedback on Supporting Evidence, G1S5, Project Writing, 1st Draft

> Teacher 1: ((reading G1S5's project writing)) 'E-marketing is cheaper than traditional marketing because it depends on internet new ways of advertisement.'
>
> OK. How did you know this? ((Teacher 1 wrote 'How did you know this?' next to the sentence))
>
> G1S5: ((laughing)) not again please. I wrote the reason. Look here 'because it depends on internet new ways of advertisement.'
>
> Teacher 1: Who said this?
>
> G1S5: Me

Teacher 1: Then you need to prove it using a reference. You can't just generalise. You need to provide a survey for example.

G1S5: Oh! This is too much! I don't feel I am writing just a research. This is a book. This is the first time I ever experienced such feedback.

Teacher 1: But I taught you about referencing many times in class. Didn't I? ((feeling upset))

G1S5: Yes, but I wasn't expecting that everything needs references. (Class 1, Observation 6)

The analysis attributed these students' negative attitudinal response to this feedback their lack of understanding of why and how they should incorporate information from references to argue the points they attempted to make. This was based on three pieces of evidence, as presented below.

First, in the face-to-face feedback given to Class 1's first draft of project writing, Teacher 1 required all the four students who had face-to-face feedback with him to support some claims made in their essays with evidence from the findings of previous studies, questionnaires or interviews. However, the four students argued with him and thought there was no need for supporting evidence. For instance, the following individual discussion shows that the student thought that she could propose her own claim without the need for supporting evidence.

((After reading a student text)) Teacher1: How did you come up with these solutions?

Student: I put them

Teacher 1: Why should you suggest them? This is research and it has to be based on something.

Student: So, I need a reference.

Teacher 1: Of course, is this the first time you heard this from me?

Student: Yes, but not like this. These are suggested solutions.

Teacher 1: Suggested by whom?

Student: By me

Teacher 1: OK, if you want to give recommendations, you give them at the end.

Student: We don't have to give everything from references. We can give something from ourselves as well. Where can I get solutions from? Probably, there would no suggested solutions! ((laughing))

Teacher 1: You are doing research and you should come up with the best solutions. OK. These are the best solutions, based on what?

Student: I don't know.

Teacher 1: See?

Student: OK, I'll search but if I don't find any, what should I do? I think I will just say, 'I wrote it.'

Teacher 1: ((laughing)) alright! (Class1, observation 6)

The observation was supported by Teacher 1's two interviews following project observations when he explained that Arab students had a problem in constructing an argument. That is why he thought that students needed a lot of feedback in this area.

Teacher 1: The problem with Arab learners is they usually tend to write in a descriptive way. They only... For example, I choose a topic and I write about this topic, ok. 'How to become a good leader', for example. They just uhhh, you know, write about the thing. They just describe it. They aim for a description more than for an analysis. So, therefore, the main aim is to make them analyse, to make them think. They then construct their argument. (Teacher 1's Interview Following Observation 6)

Finally, Group 1's interview after Observation 6 and their final interview showed that five students were dissatisfied with the feedback on supporting evidence and thought they could provide their own opinions instead.

G1S5: I don't know where I should bring evidence for my arguments from. All my writing needs evidence and I don't feel it is necessary.

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G1S2: Can we use a questionnaire to support our claims?

G1S1: Yes, and interviews as well. (Group 1's Following Observation 6)

Hence, with the above three sources of evidence, it is clear that students did not understand the purpose of providing supporting evidence accurately.

The above-mentioned pieces of evidence demonstrate that students did not share an understanding of the purposes of referencing as their teachers in terms of avoiding plagiarism and giving supporting evidence. Therefore, there is a need to familiarise students with the rationale behind research skills such as paraphrasing, summarising and quoting. Research skills are introduced in the project outline over four weeks, starting from week 2, as shown in Figure 33 below. In these weeks, the students are taught how to cite using APA citation, how to paraphrase and summarise texts using their own words, and how to select from sources and write them in the APA style.

2	8/2-12/2/2015	Teaching students how to cite using APA citation Should be done within one class Use APA students worksheets Encouraging students to start thinking of their research topics You can hand them a list of topics prepared in advance. (allocate two classes)
3	15/2-19/2/2015	Teaching students how to paraphrase and summarize texts using their own words. Showing them the different ways of in text citation USE your own materials or APA students worksheets (allocate two classes)
4	22/2-26/2/2015	Teaching students in text citation and helping them choose their research topics. Topics' choices and confirmation of these chosen topics
5	1/3-5/3/2015	Selection of the sources and writing them in the APA style/ writing the summaries and the paraphrases of the needed information from these sources in the research booklet. **Preparing the outline of the research project**

Figure 33: Teaching Research Skills in Project Classes, Project Outline (Appendix 17)

However, based on the above-mentioned findings, it tended to be that students still did not master these skills. This could probably be because of the teachers' ways of teaching them, which this study did not cover, as it was based on only three project observations per teacher.

4.2.2.2.2.   **Essay Rhetorical** Conventions

As presented earlier in Section 4.2.2.1, Group 1 showed negative attitudes towards feedback on essay rhetorical conventions. The reason mentioned for such attitudes was that these patterns contradicted their beliefs about EAP writing, which were based on mastering grammar and the mechanics of language. Nevertheless, another reason this analysis

revealed for such attitudes was because of students' lack of understanding of these academic conventions. This was demonstrated by four pieces of evidence, which are presented in the following paragraphs.

First, after finishing peer-editing tasks in Observations 2 and 3, the study analysed Group 1's textbook-led writing (12 pieces of writing) that had their peers' corrections on them. The findings revealed that the peers' corrections were few and based on grammar and mechanics of language, though Teacher 1 asked students to provide feedback on essay rhetorical conventions. The following sample is one instance of such correction. The blue circles show the peer's correction.
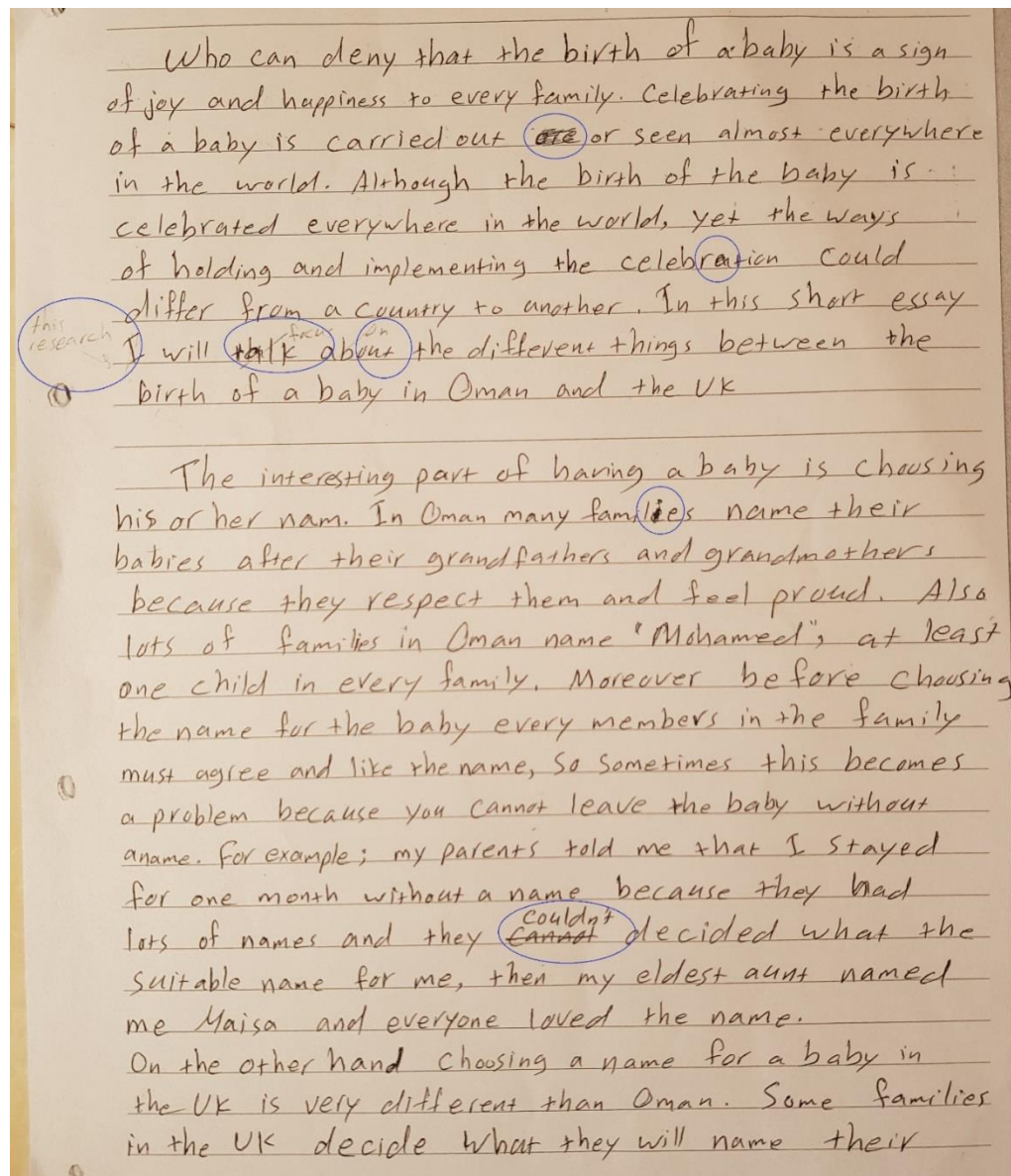
Figure 34: Peer Correction on G1S4's Textbook-led Writing

The follow-up interviews with Group 1 showed the reason behind students' superficial feedback on their peers' writing. In these interviews, students mentioned that they did not properly understand essay rhetorical conventions. For example, after Observation 3, three students from Group 1 admitted that they did not perform the peer editing task properly because it concerned the rhetorical conventions of cause-and-effect essays, which they had not yet understood.

Researcher: How did you do the peer editing?

G1S5: I told my peer that she has errors in capitalisation and she told me that she was writing quickly and forgot about it.

G1S6: Only for simple things.

G1S5: I think it is because that cause-and-effect essay is something still new for us and we are still getting familiar with its components. (Group 1's Interview Following Observation 3)

Students' lack of understanding of essay rhetorical conventions can be substantiated with three other pieces of evidence. First, in Observations 2 and 3, Class 1 was not found to participate in the in-class feedback because they did not know how to provide feedback on the rhetorical conventions specific to a certain essay that Teacher 1 had asked them to do. The following excerpt is an instance of students' failure to provide feedback on the rhetorical conventions of comparison-contrast essays. This excerpt is taken from Observation 2 when Teacher 1 was trying to get students to provide oral feedback to their peer's comparison-contrast essay. It seems from the excerpt below that Class 1 were unable to provide feedback on essay rhetorical conventions.

((After a student read her peer's writing about comparison-and-contrast essay aloud, Teacher 1 asked the class))

Teacher 1: Did you find anything wrong with her paper?

Student: In general, it is good. She gives explanation and supporting evidence for everything.

Teacher 1: OK. What else?

Student: ((Silence))

Teacher 1: Does she have other problems in her essay? ((addressing the whole class))

Class 1: ((Silence))

Teacher 1: Does she have problems with the organisation?

Class 1: ((Silence))

Teacher 1: How did she started her comparison? Is there something wrong with the thesis statement?

Class 1: ((Silence)) ... (Class 1 Observation 2)

Second, the follow-up interview with Teacher 1 showed his suspicion about students' knowledge of essay rhetorical conventions. For example, in his interview following Observation 2, Teacher 1 referred to the students' weak participation and thought it could be because of the difficulties they had with the structure of the conclusion for compare-contrast essays.

Teacher 1: I was expecting them to be more prepared actually. But I don't know why. It is always, I don't know. Maybe they find it very difficult to write a conclusion, a body paragraph of a compare-contrast essay. I don't know. There is something wrong. I mean their participation was very weak. (Teacher 1's Interview Following Observation 2)

Finally, students' lack of understanding of the rhetorical conventions of different types of essay was expressed by four students from Group 1 (G1S1, G1S3, G1S4, G1S5) after Observation 2. G1S5, for instance, stated that, when the teacher was explaining about writing the conclusion of comparison-and-contrast essays, she did not follow up with him because she had difficulty understanding the components of this type of essays. G1S1 and G1S4 thought the difficulty stemmed from the similarities in conclusions of different types of essay.

G1S5: The teacher should teach us the structures of different essays step by step. He must know that these structures are new for us and, so he must not expect us to know them from the first time.

G1S2: I don't agree with you. He always repeats and keeps repeating things.

G1S5: If I ask him to repeat, it would make no difference. What I mean is that he must be talking slowly bringing examples so that we can follow him. To be honest, I did not understand what should be included in the conclusion of a comparison-and-contrast essay.

G1S4: I think this is all because all conclusions are similar in different essays. There are fine differences between them.

G1S1: Yes, they are similar. (Group 1's Interview Following Observation 2)

Thus, students seemed to have difficulty understanding feedback provided on essay rhetorical conventions and so this could be a reason for their negative attitudes towards it.

4.2.2.3. Student Extrinsic Motivation

Another influence on students' response to focus of feedback found in the analysis was their extrinsic motivation. Extrinsic motivation occurs when students perceive feedback as a means to raise their level of achievement, particularly their marks (Weaver, 2006). As presented in Section 4.2.1.1.2, 50% of the marks in the module go for project writing and the other 50% for the final examination, with no marks for textbook-led writing. This percentage given to project writing made students extrinsically motivated to act on all feedback given to project writing. In addition, students utilised feedback given to textbook-led writing as a reference that could be needed in project writing and in the final writing examination. Such extrinsic motivation towards feedback will be presented below.

In their final interviews and their interviews following project observations, all students admitted that they responded to every single comment given on project writing even the comments they were not convinced about, or the comments that were against their beliefs, such as comments related to references. The following excerpt taken from one of these interviews shows the positive impact of the raising-marks orientation on student response to feedback.

Researcher: What did you do with your project feedback?

G3S5: We edited it.

Researcher: Every single error?

G3S4: everything

Researcher: even the points you were not convinced about as you stated earlier like references?

G3S6: yes

G3S1: This is because the project is marked. So, we can't ignore anything. (Group3's Final Interview)

In fact, as presented in Section 4.2.2.2.1, in project writing, students showed concerns about plagiarism and supporting sentences. They sought clarification and explanation about these issues from their teacher to know how to act on their feedback. These areas did not match the beliefs about EAP writing which they showed in Section 4.2.2.1. However, as project writing was assessed, these issues became their concern.

The students' extrinsic motivation was further shown in their desire to know the marking criteria. The students in the three groups thought that they needed the marking criteria to know their direction and keep them goal-oriented. They needed to know what areas to focus on in their teachers' feedback, and what to seek feedback on. They were upset because their teachers did not familiarise them with the marking criteria. Apart from three students from Group 3 (G3S1, G3S5, G3S6), all students from the three groups declared, in their last interview, that their teachers did not familiarise them with the marking criteria. The following excerpt, for instance, shows Group 3's desire to know the marking criteria. G3S5 said that their teacher wrote the marking criteria with expected marks on the first drafts only for those students who asked for them.

G3S1: We need to know the marking criteria so that we know what to focus on. How can we raise our marks if we do not have any goal?!

Researcher: Don't you know the marking criteria?

G3S1: No

G3S6: She gave them to us in the first draft. She gave us the first draft with the expected mark for each criterion.

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Based on the HoED and the EAP coordinator, the EAP teachers are supposed to familiarise their students with the course marking criteria. The three teachers refuted their students' claims and confirmed that they had given the marking criteria to students at the beginning of the semester. Teacher 1, for instance, stated that he uploaded the marking criteria in the Blackboard, a web-based server software used for communication between teachers and their students. Therefore, teachers might have given the students the marking criteria, but students might have forgotten them. In the case of Group 1, it could be an issue of student inexperience of using Blackboard, which will be discussed and presented in Section 4.4.3.2.

Students wanted to know the marking criteria to keep them goal-oriented. In fact, being unaware of the marking criteria affected their attitudinal response to some feedback given by their teachers. For example, the three groups were worried about feedback given on a plagiarism issue, as they were not sure how much plagiarism would be counted for assessment. This issue was mentioned twice by Group 1 and once by Groups 2 and 3. The following are some of the concerns.

G1S1: The teacher puts much focus on plagiarism ... We are really afraid about this issue especially that my topic relies too much on others' opinions.

G1S5: … I don't think this will be counted in the final mark. I don't think we will be evaluated on plagiarism.

G1S1: YES, it is. They (examiners) care too much about it in the final mark.

G1S2: It is very important and is going to be counted in assessment. Our previous teacher always warned us about copying.

G1S5: I don't know why we are not given the marking criteria. We need to know all of them so that we know how to edit our writing.

Furthermore, the students' extrinsic motivation was demonstrated in their response to the feedback given on textbook-led writing. Some students indicated that feedback given on textbook-led writing could be used to guide them in their project writing or final examination. This was because both the project writing and final exam required them to write one of the types of essay that they had studied in the course textbook. The excerpt below, from Group 1's interview, shows students' instrumental view of the feedback made for textbook-led writing. G1S4, for instance, stated that she made notes of the feedback given on writing done for textbook-led classes; however, the student's purpose was to keep the notes as a reference that could be needed before the examination.

G1S4: Feedback given to textbook led writing could be useful for the final exam.

G1S1: … the final exam is connected with the course book.

G1S2: Yes. feedback in textbook-led writing could be useful.

G1S4: I don't edit the work done for textbook, but I have a notebook that I keep for writing down the errors I made. I usually go back to this notebook and revise the errors before the final exam so that I won't make the same errors. (Group1's Final Interview)

In fact, students' instrumental view towards the feedback given to textbook-led writing made students ignore acting on it. Based on their final interview and their interviews following textbook-led observations, all students from the three groups, except two (G1S2 and G3S6), confirmed they rarely took specific action in response to feedback given to their textbook writing. This was because it was not rated for assessment. The students thought that their time should be spent on project writing because it was assessed. In fact, this different reaction to feedback given to textbook-led writing was expressed by Teacher 3 who noticed a considerable difference in student behavioural engagement to feedback made on textbook-led writing and project writing.

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There is, though, one case where students edited their textbook-led writing based on their teacher's feedback, which was found in Class 2. Teacher 2 asked his students to send him a second draft after they edited their first draft, based on the feedback he had given. The study analysed the corrections made on Group 2's second draft (one draft per student) and it was found that students edited most feedback given to their errors regardless of whether the correction was right or wrong (see Table 20, below). The analysis shows that the number of teacher-corrected errors (356) almost equalled the number of errors (346) edited by students.

Feedback and Correction	The Number Coding Referencing
Teacher-Corrected Errors	356
Student-Corrected Errors	346

Table 20: Corrections Made in Second Draft in Group 2's Textbook-led Writing

This indicates that students acted on their feedback when they had rewards for their revision, such as marks or teacher praise.

4.2.3. Section Summary

To conclude Section 4.2, 'focus of feedback' was found to be impacted by some contextual influences. Teachers, for instance, shaped their feedback based on assessment and EAP writing pedagogy. First, the three teachers were found to shape feedback based on college instructions for EAP writing or their beliefs about EAP writing. For example, Teacher 1 provided much feedback on essay rhetorical conventions because these areas were the main objective of the course textbook. Second, the teachers shaped their feedback on the marking criteria; i.e. they provided feedback on the areas that were in line with marking criteria. However, the teachers' interpretations and beliefs about the marking criteria and distribution of marks were found to lessen their

commitment to base their feedback on these criteria. For instance, teachers did not provide feedback on the marking criteria they were not convinced about. Likewise, the teachers did not shape their feedback to the marking criteria when the writing was not rated for assessment as in textbook-led writing.

In the same vein, students' response to their teachers' focus of feedback was also impacted by some contextual influences, which were: students' beliefs about EAP writing, their understanding of the conventions of academic writing and their extrinsic motivation. Students were found to be more receptive to feedback provided on areas of writing for which they had a preference, namely grammar and mechanics of language. These areas reflected their understanding of what constitutes good academic writing. Likewise, student engagement with feedback was weakened when they did not understand it. For example, they failed to provide peer feedback on essay rhetorical conventions because these did not understand these patterns. Finally, students' response to feedback was impacted by their extrinsic motivation. Students were found to act on all feedback given to project writing because it was rated for assessment.

4.3. Direct and Indirect Feedback

The second theme discussed in this chapter is direct and indirect feedback. The analysis follows Lee's (1997) definition of direct and indirect feedback. Direct feedback means teachers cross the error out and write the correct form above it, while in indirect feedback teachers indicate the location of the error or the nature of it using correction symbols, such as codes like 'SP', underlining, circles, or question marks (Lee, 1997). Figure 35 shows how written feedback was coded for direct and indirect feedback. The red circles represent the code of 'direct feedback', and the blue circles represent the code of 'indirect feedback'.

Figure 35: Coding Direct and Indirect Written Feedback, G3S2's Textbook-led Writing

For the analysis of oral feedback, the study followed a similar pattern: direct feedback was coded if teachers identified the error and corrected it themselves; while indirect feedback was coded when teachers made the students attempt to correct their own errors and assisted them with prompting and questioning. The following two excerpts taken from Observation 2 in Class 1 shows how oral feedback was coded. The first excerpt shows that Teacher 1 wanted students to provide feedback on their peer's writing themselves, while in the next excerpt, he wrote the conclusion himself.

Excerpt from Class 1, Observation 2	Codes
((After a student read her peer's writing about a comparison-and-contrast essay aloud, Teacher 1 asked the whole class)) Teacher 1: Did you find anything wrong with her paper? Student: In general, it is good. She gives explanation and supporting evidence for everything. Teacher 1: OK. What else?	Indirect Feedback
((After a student read her peer's writing about a comparison-and-contrast essay aloud, Teacher 1 provided his feedback)) Teacher 1: OK. She has a problem at the organisational level. She started well but she did not conclude the paragraphs well. I don't mean the conclusion for the whole article. I mean the conclusion for each paragraph, just a simple conclusion to end a paragraph ... ((Teacher 1 wrote a conclusion for the student's writing on the board.))	Direct Feedback

Table 21: Coding Direct and Indirect Oral Feedback

This section covers two parts: teacher practices for direct and indirect feedback, and student response to direct and indirect feedback.

4.3.1. Teacher Practices for Direct and Indirect Feedback

The analysis found that the teachers' practices for direct and indirect feedback differed depending on four contextual influences: 1) teacher beliefs about direct and indirect oral feedback, 2) teacher beliefs about direct and indirect written feedback, 3) student preferences for feedback practices, and 4) teacher beliefs about the sources of feedback. The following four sub-sections present these four influences in detail.

4.3.1.1. Teacher Beliefs about Direct and Indirect Oral Feedback

Regarding oral feedback, the analysis revealed that the three teachers were consistent in their practices of direct and indirect feedback in all the observations conducted in the field work. Table 22 represents the number of coding references of the three teachers' practices for direct and indirect feedback in the oral discussions conducted in all the observed textbook-led and project classes (three textbook-led observations and three project observations per teacher). It is obvious from this table that oral feedback was mostly given indirectly. For instance, the number of coding references for indirect feedback in textbook-led writing given by Teacher 2 is 14; while direct feedback is 1.

Teachers	Textbook-led Writing		Project Writing	
	Direct	Indirect	Direct	Indirect
Teacher 1	27	33	9	17
Teacher 2	1	14	3	19
Teacher 3	5	12	4	15

Table 22: Frequency of Coding References of Practices for Direct and Indirect Oral Feedback

The analysis connected the practices of indirect oral feedback to the teachers' beliefs. In their interview prior to observations and in their final

interview, all the teachers showed their preference for indirect oral feedback, as shown in the following excerpt, which is taken from Teacher 3's final interview.

> Teacher 3: ... I am trying to get them to think, to elicit from them what the mistakes are. So, I hope that will help them because I don't think it teaches them anything if I just give them all the answers because they're never gonna write that same thing again. You know, they have to internalize what the problems are. (Teacher 3's Final Interview)

In fact, Teacher 2 stated he felt satisfied because he found that the students' ability to figure out the errors got better in subsequent drafts.

> Teacher 2: Now, I find when I prompt them for the answer, most of the time, they are able to work out what it is (?) to do. ... I was really surprised that a lot of them with not too much prompting were able to figure out what the mistakes were, which is a good positive sign. I expected them to have some difficulties. With some prompting, without me telling them the answer, they were able to figure it out. I have to give them a few things to make the answer focus clearer. There is information they didn't know which they needed to know. So, I have to give more help in there. But most of them were able to work it out themselves. (Teacher 2's interview after observation 3)

Thus, Teachers 2 and 3 saw that indirect oral feedback had positive outcomes on his students' writing. Like Teachers 2 and 3, Teacher 1 also stated his beliefs about the value of indirect oral feedback in two of his interviews. For instance, in one interview, Teacher 1 stated that indirect feedback helps to reduce the negative impact of feedback on student self-esteem that prevents them from participating in class. Therefore, this could explain his practices for indirect feedback in project and textbook-led writing. However, it should be clarified that, in his textbook-led writing, there was not much difference in his practices for direct and indirect feedback; the table above shows that the difference between his direct and indirect feedback was only 6: 27 for direct and 33 for indirect. Nevertheless, this could be due to students' lack of knowledge of the rhetorical conventions of different types of essay. It has already been presented in Section 4.2.2.2.2 that students in Class 1 were not found to respond actively to in-class feedback because they did not know how to

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give feedback on essay rhetorical conventions. Four pieces of evidence were provided in Section 4.2.2.2.2 to demonstrate that Group 1's lack of response was associated with their lack of understanding of academic conventions. This could justify, then, why Teacher 1 resorted to direct feedback even though he believed in the value of indirect oral feedback.

4.3.1.2. Teacher Beliefs about Direct and Indirect Written Feedback

Regarding written feedback, the three teachers gave both direct and indirect feedback. It was revealed that the three teachers sometimes crossed out errors and wrote the correction above them. However, in other cases, they used correction symbols as a means to guide students to correcting their own mistakes, such as 'SP' for spelling (Lee, 1997). Table 23 shows some of the correction symbols used by the three teachers.

Teachers	Correction Symbols
Teacher 1	• 'st' for sentence structure • 'sp' for spelling
Teacher 2	• 'sp' for spelling • '^' for missing words • 'circles, underlines and arrows' for all types of errors

Teacher 3	• 'sp' for spelling
	• '^' for missing word
	• 'T' for problems in tense
	• 'WW' for wrong word
	• 'P' for punctuation errors
	• 'Wiggly and straight line' for unclear meaning
	• 'Subj' to indicate subject is missing
	• 'C' for capital letter

Table 23: Correction Symbols used by Teachers in Written Feedback

However, as will be presented below, only Teachers 1 and 2 were consistent in their practices of direct and indirect written feedback throughout all students' writing; while Teacher 3 was found to have inconsistent practices. This section presents the practices of Teachers 1 and 2; while the two sections that follow will present Teacher 3's practices.

It was revealed that both Teachers 1 and 2 were consistent in their practices of direct and indirect modes in all their written feedback, though they provided more direct than indirect feedback. This finding was revealed from the analysis of direct and indirect written feedback in all Group 1's and Group 2's pieces of work. The analysis involved 16 pieces of writing from Group 2, plus six project writings for each group. It should be remembered that Teacher 1 never gave written feedback on textbook-led writing. This analysis is summarised in Table 24. The table shows that Teacher 1 provided more direct feedback than indirect feedback: 161 direct feedback and 89 indirect feedback. Similarly, Teacher 2 provided more direct feedback. In fact, the difference between direct and indirect feedback in project writing is huge: 457 direct feedback and 76 indirect feedback.

Teachers	Textbook-led Writing		Project Writing	
	Direct	Indirect	Direct	Indirect
Teacher 1 (Group 1)	—	—	161	89
Teacher 2 (Group 2)	374	264	457	76

Table 24: Frequency of Coding References of Practices for Direct and Indirect Written Feedback

The analysis connected the above practices to the two teachers' disbelief about the value of indirect written feedback in terms of student understanding. This was derived from their follow-up interviews. For example, in four interviews, Teacher 2 consistently declared that indirect oral feedback gives a chance for checking student understanding and, accordingly, more feedback was provided on this basis; however, written feedback does not give this chance. The following excerpt is taken from one of his interviews in which he emphasised that written feedback has to be detailed or followed by oral discussion for the sake of student comprehension.

> Teacher 2: … But, I think if you just give written feedback, it will be very time consuming I think. (?) has to be reasonably detailed. So, I've not really done a lot of just written feedback. If I give written feedback, it usually has to be accompanied with a sort of verbal explanation, I think… oral feedback, you can give more information, more explanatory, more detailed and that tends to be done on a one-to-one basis. (Teacher 2's Interview Following Observation 2)

Table 24 also shows that there was a huge difference between direct and indirect written feedback in Group 2's textbook-led writing and their project writing. Referring to the table above, the calculation of Teacher 2's practices of feedback shows that, in textbook-led writing, the direct feedback exceeded the indirect feedback by 110 instances; while, in project writing, the direct feedback exceeded the indirect feedback by 381

instances. This means that Teacher 2 provided much more direct feedback in project writing than in textbook-led writing. Two plausible explanations were deduced from the analysis. First, such practices could be because project writing was rated for assessment, as explained in Section 4.2.1.1.2. Therefore, Teacher 2 might have wanted to make sure that students had a thorough understanding of feedback in the project writing to achieve the highest marks. Alternatively, it could be because, in textbook-led writing, Group 2 had a chance for a second draft, as was presented in Section 4.2.2.3, and so Teacher 2 had an alternative method to check student comprehension based on how students revised their feedback.

4.3.1.3. Student Preferences for Feedback Practices

As indicated in the previous section, Teacher 3's practices of direct and indirect written feedback were not consistent throughout all Group 3's textbook-led and project writing. This section presents Teacher 3's practices in textbook-led writing while the section that follows presents her practices in project writing.

The analysis of Group 3's samples of textbook-led writing (24 pieces of writing) revealed that Teacher 3 mainly provided direct written feedback on students' first pieces of writing; however, she gradually started using correction symbols in subsequent writing (see the correction symbols used by Teacher 3 in Table 23 at the beginning of this section). For example, Table 25 shows the number of coding references in G3S1's first and final pieces of writing. The table shows that G3S1 received a lot of direct feedback on her first writing while, in her final writing, she received more indirect feedback. For example, in her first draft, there are 48 instances of direct feedback and 25 of indirect feedback; while, for her final draft, there are just four instances of direct feedback and 20 of indirect feedback.

G3S1's Textbook-led Writing	Direct Feedback	Indirect Feedback
First Writing	48	25
Final Writing	4	20

Table 25: Frequency of Coding References of Teacher 3's Direct and Indirect Written Feedback in G3S1's Textbook-led Writing

Thus, Teacher 3 was not consistent in her practices of direct and indirect written feedback in textbook-led writing during the whole semester. The analysis connected Teacher 3's practices for direct feedback in students' initial writing to her disbelief in the value of indirect written feedback, which was expressed in two of her interviews. The following excerpt, taken from one of her interviews, clarifies that Teacher 3 did not think that students bother to work on indirect written feedback.

> Teacher 3: … It (indirect written feedback) requires the students to go back over and actually fill in the missing gaps, which I don't think a lot of students do, as I said before. They look at it and they look at the grade or whatever mark you put at the end of it and then it goes away. It is a bit of work they've done; they put it away. (Teacher 3's First Interview)

However, for the change in her practices towards the end of the semester, the analysis connected it to her students' preferences for indirect feedback. This was declared in two interviews conducted with Group 3. Group 3 declared that their teacher used to give them direct written feedback at the beginning of the semester; however, based on some students' requests, she changed her practices from direct to indirect feedback.

> G3S6: At the beginning of the semester, she used to give us direct feedback but then she changed her practices to indirect feedback based on some students' request.
>
> Group 3 ((nodded))

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Researcher: What do you mean?

G3S1: Some students asked her that they preferred to have indirect written feedback so that they could elicit the correction by themselves. (Group 3's Final Interview)

Therefore, Teacher 3 changed her practice from direct to indirect written feedback in textbook-led writing based on her students' preferences.

4.3.1.4.　Teacher Beliefs about Sources of Feedback

Similarly, for project writing, it was found that Teacher 3's practices of direct and indirect feedback were also not consistent. However, the inconsistencies were shown on individual pieces of writing rather than on first and final drafts of writing. Teacher 3 provided more direct written feedback to some writing projects and more indirect written feedback to others. For instance, Table 26 shows the number of coding references for direct and indirect feedback in G3S1's and G3S4's first draft of project writing. It can be seen from the table that there is a huge difference in the practices for direct and indirect feedback in the two pieces of work. G3S4 received more indirect feedback (19 for indirect feedback and nine for direct feedback) while G3S1 received more direct feedback (56 for direct feedback and 25 for indirect feedback).

Project Writing	Direct Feedback	Indirect Feedback
G3S1	56	25
G3S4	9	19

Table 26: Frequency of Coding References of Direct and Indirect Written Feedback in 1st Draft of Project Writing

Teacher 3 attributed her practices to her beliefs about sources of feedback. Teacher 3 did not believe that all students are able to provide

accurate feedback because they vary in their levels of writing proficiency. In two of her interviews following the project observations, Teacher 3 confirmed that she provided a mixture of direct and indirect feedback depending on students' level of writing proficiency; i.e. she gave more direct feedback to students at a lower level.

> Teacher 3: … Some of them (students) can't see the mistakes - even something very basic like 'had' instead of 'has'. They can't see it. So, it was a kind of mixture. I think because sometimes if a student is trying to say something and they don't know the constructions in English how to do it, then I have to tell them. They'll never be able to guess. (Teacher 3's Interview Following Observation 5)

Teacher 3's interviews were substantiated through analysis of Group 3's project writing which is summarised in Table 27 below. (It should be noted that the number of word account in project writing is 1000-1200.) The table shows that the pieces of writing with more errors had more direct written feedback. In other words, those students who received more corrections were given more direct feedback. For example, referring to G3S4 and G3S1 who were mentioned earlier, G3S4, who received more indirect feedback, had 28 corrected errors in total, while G3S1, who received more direct feedback, had 119 corrected errors. This means that Teacher 3 gave more direct feedback to the work that had more errors. Teacher 3 then attributed students' level of writing proficiency to the number of errors they had in their writing.

Project Writing	Direct	Indirect	Number of Corrected Errors
G3S1	56	25	119
G3S2	90	20	110
G3S3	11	30	41
G3S4	9	19	28

G3S5	60	21	81
G3S6	27	20	47

Table 27: Frequency of Coding References of Direct and Indirect Written Feedback in Group 3's Project Writing

It could be questioned why Teacher 3 did not base her written feedback on student preferences, as in the textbook-led writing. This could be because of the distribution of marks. As presented in Section 4.2.1.1.2, project writing carries the largest proportion of marks. Therefore, Teacher 3 might have wanted to ensure that her students revised her feedback correctly to gain high marks and so she wanted to make sure that low-level students understood her feedback.

4.3.2. Student Response to Direct and Indirect Feedback

The students' responses to direct and indirect feedback differed depending on: 1) their beliefs about direct and indirect oral feedback, 2) their understanding of correction symbols, and 3) the level of detail in written feedback.

4.3.2.1. Student Beliefs about Direct and Indirect Oral Feedback

In all their interviews following observations, all students felt satisfied with indirect oral feedback. They felt a sense of achievement when they attempted to figure out the correct answer by themselves.

> G2S1: I like the way he (their teacher) corrects our errors. I feel I learn a lot from it.
>
> Researcher: How?
>
> G2S1: He gets us to correct the errors by ourselves. So, he waits for us to discover the errors. Sometimes, he gives us clues to facilitate eliciting but, at the end, it is we who edit the errors.

Researcher: Why do you like this way of giving feedback?

G2S3: We learn how to edit our own writing.

G2S2: I think when we edit our errors, the correction remains more in our minds because we did it. If the teacher corrects errors for us, then we may not give them much attention. I mean we may not listen to what the teacher is saying. (Group 2's Interview Following Observation 1)

Hence, Group 2 thought that indirect oral feedback helped them in learning more and becoming more self-directed learners.

4.3.2.2. The Meaning of Correction Symbols

Referring to Table 23 in Section 4.3.1.2, the three teachers used different correction symbols in their written feedback. However, based on students' interviews following textbook-led observations and project observations, 10 students out of the 18 from the three groups complained about the difficulty of understanding the meaning of some correction symbols. Table 28 shows remarks taken from different interviews that highlighted the problems with the meaning of correction symbols that some students from the three groups had.

Groups	Complaints about Correction Symbols
Group 1	G1S6: He used a symbol, I think 'st' which I didn't understand, and the teacher had not explained what it means before.
	G1S4: Yes, that was 'st' and it was for sentence structure.
	G1S2: It was clear. There is no need to explain what it means. We can figure it out by ourselves.
	G1S4: But, it was true. That was the first time we saw that symbol. (Group 1's Interview Following Observation 5)
Group 2	G2S5: I don't like the arrows he used. My paper is full of arrows and I don't know exactly what they mean. I expect they mean that a word should come before another word or a sentence should come before

	that sentence. I don't know really. (Group 2's Interview Following Observation 4) G2S1: Sometimes, he underlined the error or circled it. In this case, we don't know what's wrong with the word. Does that mean we need to change the whole word? Or does it mean we need to spell it correctly? Or is the verb tense wrong? So, it is not clear at all. (Group 2's Interview Following Observation1)
Group 3	G3S1: I understand the meaning of the underlining but not all of them. The wavy lines probably refer to spelling mistakes, but I have no idea about the straight lines. (Group 3's Interview Following Observation 5)

Table 28: Students' Complaints about Correction Symbols

Nevertheless, the complaints about the above-mentioned symbols were minimal. They were merely raised once and only in the four above-mentioned interviews. The analysis attributed the reason for minimal complaints about symbols to the three teachers' efforts in explaining their meaning clearly to students. This was confirmed by two observations from Class 3, the follow-up interviews conducted with the three groups of students and the three teachers. For example, Teacher 3 was twice observed to clarify the meaning of the codes she used in her written feedback.

> Teacher 3: If I write this ((Teacher 3 wrote 'sp' on board)), it means a spelling problem. If I put this ((Teacher 3 wrote '^' on board)), missing word ... (Class 3, Observation 1)

All the teachers, in one of their interviews, referred to the issue of inconsistency in the use of correction symbols in the college. For instance, the following excerpt taken from one of Teacher 2's interview showed that Teacher 2 was quite vocal about this matter and thought that this should be the college's responsibility to make sure that teachers use consistent correction symbols with consistent meanings.

> Teacher 2: … You need to have an agreed sort of groups of symbols so that the students need to understand what you are writing, why you're writing it …So, that sort of thing needs be laid out right from the start and that would probably

need a college-wide thing; otherwise, when you start a new class, the students will have a new different type of annotation. (Teacher 2's First Interview)

Teacher 2 urged the need to use college-wide correction symbols. However, it should be clarified that the EAP coordinator uploaded some correction symbols on the 'Google Site' - a college website designed for communication with and between academic tutors in the college - for those teachers who were interested in using them (see Appendix 21 for the uploaded correction symbols). However, based on the teachers' interviews, they seemed to be unaware of these symbols. This could be as the EAP coordinator indicated that this website was rarely used by teachers. The EAP coordinator used the Google site to upload some college instructions regarding teaching and assessment but teachers rather tended to rely on hard copies. Therefore, the three teachers utilised their own symbols of correction, some of which were similar to the symbols uploaded by the EAP coordinator, such as 'sp', 'WW', 'P' and '^'; however, the others were not, such as 'st', 'C', 'subj', and wiggly lines.

In fact, the inconsistent use of correction symbols among teachers in the college was mentioned by Group 2, who indicated that different teachers used different meanings for the same correction symbols or different correction symbols for the same meaning.

4.3.2.3. The Level of Detail in Written Feedback

In other cases, the teachers wrote something next to the underlining but the level of detail they gave was low, according to Groups 1 and 2. Five students from Group 2 and one student from Group 1 complained about their written feedback given in the first draft of project writing because it contained one-word or two-word comments like 'rewrite', 'not clear' and 'not sentences', or some phrases such as 'does not make sense' and 'too long for one sentence'. They saw these comments as inadequate and needing more explanation. Table 29 shows some of the complaints about these comments with samples from students' texts.

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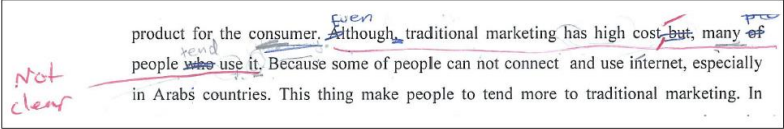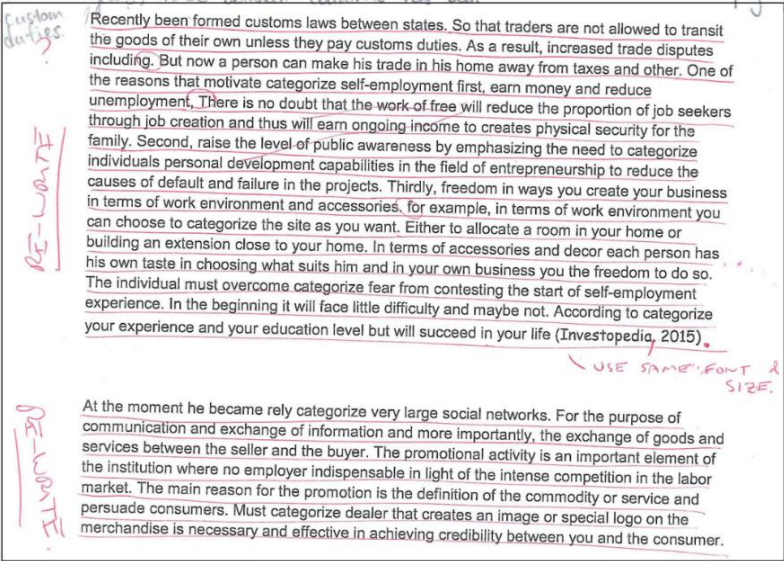
Groups	Complaints about Underlining
Group 1	G1S5: He (the teacher) underlined the whole sentence for me and wrote 'not clear'. I went to another teacher in the department and she told me instead of writing this, you need to write like this. That was a lot easier and clearer for me. I don't know why he is making things complicated. He should have told us what word we need to change or what exactly needed to be done to make the structure of the sentence correct. (Group 1's Interview Following Observation 5)
Group 2	G2S5: He (the teacher) wrote 'rewrite' for all my paragraphs. I did not like it. I was really demoralised by these comments. He should have told us what the mistake is exactly. I do not think the whole paragraph is wrong. G2S2: Me too, he wrote 'rewrite' for the whole paragraph. All the students in the class has 'rewrite' word on their paper. We felt that we did nothing during the whole semester. (Group 2's Final Interview)

Table 29: Complaints about the Level of Detail in Feedback in the First Draft of the Project Writing

Nevertheless, as shown in Figure 36, based on the project outline, the students were supposed to have face-to-face oral discussion about the written feedback given in their first draft. This means that students could obtain a more detailed explanation about their written feedback in follow-up oral discussions.

10	5/4-9/4/2015	The safe assign link is closed on 9/4/2015 Face to face feedback regarding the research project in the class with the students.

Figure 36: Face to Face Feedback for First Draft of Project Writing, Project Outline (Appendix 17)

However, as will be presented in Section 4.4.1.2.4, because of the deadline submission for project writing, some students from Class 1 did not have follow-up oral discussion and four students from Class 2 had only a superficial discussion on their written feedback. In fact, the analysis showed that the students from Group 3 did not share similar complaints, though they also had a similar type of written feedback on the first draft of their project, and this was because all students in the group had equal chances for oral discussion of their feedback, as will be presented in Section 4.4.1.2.4.

4.3.3. Section Summary

Section 4.3. has presented practices of direct and indirect feedback. These practices were shaped by a set of contextual influences. For teachers, the practices of direct and indirect feedback depended on their beliefs about the value of these practices in oral and written feedback, student preferences for feedback practices and teachers' beliefs about the sources of feedback. For instance, in oral feedback, teachers were found to provide more indirect than direct feedback because they believed that that indirect feedback helped students in developing their

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writing. However, in some cases, Teacher 3 had to vary her practices depending on their trust about the source of feedback and students' preferences for feedback practices.

With regards to students' response to their teachers' practices of direct and indirect feedback, it depended on their beliefs about direct and indirect oral feedback, the meaning of correction symbols, and the level of detail in feedback. All students felt satisfied to have indirect oral feedback because they felt a sense of achievement when they attempted to figure out the answers by themselves. On the other hand, they had difficulty dealing with written feedback that had correction symbols that they did not understand. Likewise, they expressed dissatisfaction with feedback with one-word or two-word comments, such as 're-write', because they saw these comments as inadequate in explanation.

4.4. Sources of Feedback

The 'sources of feedback' refer to the initiators and providers of feedback, such as teachers, peers, relatives, friends, textbooks, internet or students' own feedback (Lee, 1997). The results revealed that three feedback practices occurred in the three classes or existed in the college relating to the 'sources of feedback': teacher practices for self-directed tasks, student search for feedback, and college tasks for self-directed learning.

4.4.1. Teacher Practices for Self-directed Tasks

The class observations showed that the three teachers utilised different practices for self-directed tasks. Self-directed tasks, also called 'autonomy-supporting feedback', are types of feedback practices that make students think and work on their progress rather than just rely on their teachers' feedback; for example, through seeking feedback and consultation from peers or looking for guidance from textbooks and

internet (Busse, 2013, Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick, 2006). Table 30 shows that the self-directed tasks which were practised by the three participating teachers in my study were self-editing, peer-editing, group editing, teacher-student discussion, and in-class feedback (the teacher asking the whole class to give oral feedback on a piece of writing). Nevertheless, it could be seen from this table that teachers utilised different practices for self-directed tasks; for example, group-editing was only practised by Teacher 1. In addition to that, it could be noticed that the teachers' practices for self-directed tasks differed in textbook-led classes and project classes. Unlike textbook-led classes, the three teachers never practised group-editing, peer-editing or self-editing tasks in project classes.

Self-directed Tasks	Textbook-led Classes	Project Classes
In-class Feedback	Teachers 1, 2, 3	Teachers 1, 2, 3
Group Editing	Teacher 1	—
Peer Editing	Teachers 1, 2, 3	—
Self-editing	Teacher 3	—
Teacher-student Discussion	Teachers 2, 3	Teachers 1, 2, 3

Table 30: The Practices of Self-directed Tasks in Textbook-led and Project Classes

The following two sections present: 1) the reasons behind teachers' practices for self-directed tasks and 2) student responses to them.

4.4.1.1. The Reasons behind Teachers' Practices for Self-directed Tasks

As shown above in Table 30, there were differences in the practices for self-directed tasks among the three teachers, and between the textbook-led and project classes. The analysis connected the differences among teachers in textbook-led classes to their beliefs about the sources of feedback. However, the differences between the textbook-led and project classes were connected to the college instructions for EAP writing pedagogy and feedback practices. The following two sub-sections will present these two connections.

4.4.1.1.1. Teacher Beliefs about the Sources of Feedback

As shown in the table above, in textbook-led observations, the three teachers utilised different practices for self-directed tasks such as self-editing, peer-editing, group editing, teacher-student discussion, and in-class feedback. The analysis showed that these practices were due to teachers' beliefs about the sources of feedback. This connection was validated by teachers' interviews. For example, concerning in-class feedback and student-teacher discussions, all three teachers believed in the value of these tasks for writing development. For example, as shown in the excerpt below, Teacher 3 believed that individual discussion addresses students' individual questions.

> Teacher 3: ...It (individual discussion) is important if you are answering their specific individual questions. Everyone has written their essay in a different way. They all have individual issues with their writing ... They are familiar with it, more familiar with it than other students with work they have. So, addressing that means I am addressing their ability to write. So, it is more personal to them. (Teacher 3's Interview Following Observation 1)

Thus, Teacher 3 gave individual feedback because she thought it was more personal to her students. However, it should be remembered that Teacher 3 gave individual feedback only to certain students and this was because of time constraints, according to her.

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For peer editing tasks, the three teachers did not seem to see their value for student writing. Teacher 2 never gave these tasks and the reason was that he did not believe that these tasks worked well in Omani culture; students do not want to criticise their peers or, alternatively, they do not like to be criticised.

> Teacher 2: Peer evaluation should work in theory and sometimes, in some cultures, it works really well. I find it doesn't really seem to work very well in this culture. They're very reluctant to point out mistakes made by their friends. So, that doesn't work too well … They won't point out the mistakes of their friends. So, it is kind of difficult to do that kind of thing in this environment. Everyone is too nice to each other for that kind of thing to work. No one likes to say or point out 'Oh, you made a mistake here'. (Teacher 2's Interview Following Observation 2)

Teacher 3, also, did not believe in the value of these tasks for writing development. She acknowledged that she did a peer editing task only once and that was just for a trial. Likewise, Teacher 1 in his first interview showed inconsistent views towards the value of peer editing tasks which shows his suspicion about students' ability to provide accurate and comprehensive feedback to their peers. In fact, such suspicion was confirmed by his follow-up interviews following observations. When Teacher 1 was asked for the reason for the follow-up feedback he provided after peer editing tasks, he pointed out that he found his students were unable to provide accurate feedback to their peers' writing and, therefore, he had to do the feedback again through in-class feedback followed by his feedback.

> Teacher 1: Well, I asked them to read their peers' writing and then I was correcting them because sometimes I found that when they made a peer evaluation, they did not figure out the problems. So, I wanted to correct for them. (Teacher 1's Interview Following Observation 1)

In fact, this was also the reason that Teacher 2 gave when he was asked about the follow-up in-class feedback after group editing tasks. However, the reasoning that Teachers 1 and 2 gave might not be totally accurate. As presented earlier in this section, based on the textbook-led

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observations, Teacher 1 did not go around to check students' performance in peer editing tasks and Teacher 2 checked only those who sat in the front or side rows. Therefore, because the two teachers did not put much effort into these tasks, the students' failure in their peer editing could be due to the teachers' failure in handling these tasks rather than because of the students' inability to perform such tasks. In fact, the analysis did show that some students from Group 3 failed to perform a peer editing task because they ran out of time, which will be presented in Section 4.4.1.2. All in all, this all suggests that the Teachers 1 and 2's practices for peer-editing and group-editing were impacted by their suspicion about the value of peer feedback.

Similarly, the practices for self-editing tasks were also connected to teachers' beliefs about the students' ability to criticise their own writing. As they pointed out in their first and last interviews, Teachers 1 and 2 never practised self-editing tasks because they did not believe in the value of these tasks on student writing. The following excerpt, for instance, shows that Teacher 2 did not believe that students were able to figure out their own mistakes.

> Teacher 2: With self-evaluation, that depends whether they spot their own mistakes. I often don't spot my own mistakes. I have to get someone else to check it because you are too familiar with what you've written; whereas with someone else's mistakes, you are more likely to spot them. I don't think self-evaluation works too well in this environment. They don't see/they can't see their own mistakes. (Teacher 2's First Interview)

In the same vein, Teacher 3 acknowledged, in her first and last interviews, that she was suspicious of the value of self-editing tasks. Her interview following Observation 2 shows that Teacher 3 only did the self-editing task because it was necessary for her to cover the textbook tasks.

> Teacher 3: ... I tell you the truth, I just wanted to cover the book, so they have done that. It is not editing. It is not complicated. There is one paragraph at the end when they got to change the words, not many. (Teacher 3's Interview Following Observation 2)

4.4.1.1.2. College Instructions for EAP Writing Pedagogy and Feedback Practices

The teachers' practices for self-directed tasks in the project classes differed from textbook-led classes. Prior to the submission of the first draft of project writing, the project observations and teachers' interviews following project observations showed that all feedback was based on teacher-student oral discussion; i.e. the teachers moved around the whole class offering individual feedback to those students who had enquiries. There was no practice for self-, peer- or group-editing tasks as there was in the textbook-led classes. However, there were some practices for in-class feedback, though few, when teachers wanted to highlight some common errors students made in project writing.

Teacher-student discussion in the project classes could be attributed to the college instructions given for teaching project writing. Based on the student support stated in the project specifications, shown Figure 37 below, the project is based on negotiation between teachers and their students throughout a set of tasks the students go through.

Support

The project has been broken down for the students into a set of tasks (see Project Instructions, below). How these are done, and how much support is needed to help the students complete each of these, will be for negotiation between teachers and their students, under the overall supervision of coordinators. It is envisaged that some of this work will be done in class, especially the drafting of presentations and reports, but much may be done by the students out of class or through individual consultation.

Figure 37: Support for Students stated in Project Specifications (Appendix 23)

As discussed in the introduction chapter, based on the project specifications, students go through eight tasks (see Appendix 23 for full details):

1. choosing a research topic,
2. planning a work schedule,
3. gathering information to answer the research question,
4. organizing information,
5. planning a presentation,
6. delivering the presentation,
7. planning and drafting a report, and
8. submitting the report.

Each task is related to students' individual choices and abilities. In such a case, it is unsurprising that teacher-student discussion is more relevant in teaching project writing.

Furthermore, towards the end of the semester in week 10, the three teachers had to conduct oral teacher-student discussion regarding the first draft of project writing. The discussion is required by the project outline as shown in Figure 38.

10	5/4-9/4/2015	The safe assign link is closed on 9/4/2015 Face to face feedback regarding the research project in the class with the students.

Figure 38: Face to Face Feedback for First Draft of Project Writing, Project Outline (Appendix 17)

Therefore, the three teachers' practices for sources of feedback in project writing were determined by college instructions for teaching project writing and feedback practices.

4.4.1.2. Student Response to Self-directed Tasks

Students' response to self-directed tasks varied depending on: 1) their beliefs about the sources of feedback, 2) their evaluative knowledge, 3) student understanding of essay rhetorical conventions, and 4) time constraints.

4.4.1.2.1. Student Beliefs about the Sources of Feedback

The analysis found a connection between students' response to self-, peer- and group-editing tasks and their beliefs about them. In their interviews following observations, some students admitted they did not take these tasks seriously because they did not think that they provided reliable sources of feedback. For example, after Observation 4, Class 3 were asked about their performance on the peer editing task. Three students out of six acknowledged that they did not act on the task effectively because they thought it was useless as they would not expect the feedback provided by their peers to be trustworthy.

> Researcher: How did you do the peer editing task?
>
> G3S5: We did not take it seriously because we didn't think it is trustworthy. (Group 3's Interview Following Observation 4)

Thus, students might after all need to see evidence of the value of these tasks prior to performing them. In fact, further evidence for this connection will be provided in Section 4.4.2.1, which shows that students do not trust their own and peers' feedback because they do not think these sources of feedback are trustworthy in comparison to their teachers' feedback.

4.4.1.2.2. Student Evaluative Knowledge

Furthermore, the analysis revealed that students' response to self-directed tasks went negatively because they lacked evaluative

knowledge; i.e. student knowledge on how to evaluate a piece of work (Sadler, 2009). As was revealed in the analysis, students did not know how to evaluate their own or peers' writing. For example, regarding the peer-editing task that Teacher 3 conducted, four students from Group 3 pointed out that they did not perform well in the task because they did not know how to provide feedback.

> G3S5: … Although the teacher provided us with a set of questions to evaluate our peer's paper, I couldn't do it because I did not know how to answer the questions properly.
>
> G3S3: For me, I did not bother doing it. I tried at first, but I did not know how to do it and I am not even sure whether the few corrections I gave were wrong or right.
>
> Researcher: Is this your first time to do a peer-editing task?
>
> G3S4: YES (Group 3's Interview Following Observation 4)

Hence, Group 3 failed to perform the peer editing task effectively because they did not know how to handle it properly. Although Group 3 were given a set of questions to guide them in their evaluation in the peer-editing task (see Appendix 22 for the peer-editing sheet), they could not perform the task properly because it was new to them. Therefore, they needed supervision while performing it. Based on Observation 4, Teacher 3 did not go around the class to check how students were doing in their task.

In fact, even Groups 1 and 2 could have faced difficulty handling the peer or group editing tasks. As presented in Section 4.4.1.1.1, Teacher 1 did not supervise his students while performing peer editing tasks, while Teacher 2 only supervised certain students when conducting group editing tasks. Thus, they did not guide all their students in their tasks. This was especially significant seeing that these tasks were new to their students. In fact, Teacher 2 did not even ask their students to follow particular criteria to assess their peers' writing. Therefore, students might not have known what to give feedback on. Hence, students' failure in performing peer or group editing tasks could be because they were not trained to perform such tasks.

4.4.1.2.3. Student Understanding of Essay Rhetorical Conventions

The type of correction the students were asked to provide on writing texts was found to impact their response to feedback. This connection has already been presented in Section 4.2.2.2.2. To reiterate, it was found there was a lack of student participation in in-class feedback and peer editing tasks in Class 1. The students were silent and shared few and very superficial comments like capitalisation or spelling, though they were asked to give feedback on the rhetorical conventions of particular types of essay. As presented in Sections 4.2.2.2.2, the analysis attributed their lack of participation to their lack of knowledge on the academic conventions of different types of essay.

This suggests that the impact of self-directed tasks can be determined by the type of correction students are asked to do. If students are asked to provide feedback on the areas that are beyond their understanding, then it becomes unsurprising to find them unresponsive in their performance.

4.4.1.2.4. Time Constraint

Students' response to self-directed tasks was sometimes found to be impacted by time pressure. This was shown in two cases, as will be presented below. First, regarding the peer-editing task that was conducted in Class 3, Group 3 indicated they did not have enough time to finish it. It has already been presented in Section 4.4.1.2.2 that four students from Group 3 pointed out that they did not know how to perform the task. Five students from Group 3 also indicated that they needed more time to answer the questions listed in the peer-editing sheet (see Appendix 22 for the peer-editing sheet), especially since the task was new to them.

G3S6: For me, I like the task and I was doing it seriously, but I did not have enough time. It took time to read my peer's writing and understand it first before answering the questions.

G3S2: Yes, she asked us to do a detailed task within limited time.

G3S5: The task was new to us. It was the first time to do a peer editing task. So, I expect 20 minutes are not enough. Furthermore, we are asked to answer a set of questions with regard to our peer's writing, so we had first to read our peer's paper, try to find the errors in her writing and finally answer all the follow-up questions. So, I think this needs more time. (Group 3's Interview Following Observation 4)

Second, the constraint of time was also shown in student-teacher oral discussion in project writing. It has been presented in Section 4.4.1.1.2 that students had an opportunity for face-to-face feedback on their first draft of project writing in week 10 before their deadline for submission in week 12. However, such opportunity was found to provoke some students' attitudinal engagement with feedback because of time pressure. Two students from Group 1 expressed anger because they did not have face-to-face feedback as their teacher ran out of time. They mentioned that Teacher 1 gave some students oral feedback and others written feedback only. He spent his time first trying to give oral feedback to those students who did not receive written feedback and then he moved to answer the questions of those students who had written feedback. Group 1 declared that the teacher ran out of time in the lesson and so he did not have time for any more questions.

G1S1: He did not give oral feedback to all students. For me, I had only written feedback.

G1S2: Me too

Researcher: But you had follow-up oral discussion, right?

G1S1: He did not have time to give oral discussion to all students because he had first to finish the group who did not receive written feedback. At the end of the lesson, there was no time left for oral discussion. (Group1's Interview Following Observation 6)

Similarly, four students from Group 2 pointed out that they had superficial feedback in comparison to their peers. They explained that they had their feedback in week 11 instead of 10. In consequence, they were given superficial feedback compared to those students who had their feedback in week 10 because their teacher was running out of time and wanted to finish quickly before the presentations in week 12.

> G2S3: We were the last on the list. The teacher spent much time with the first students on the list in week 10. He almost spent half an hour with them discussing every single error in detail. Then, when it was our turn in week 11, he had to give us quick feedback so that he could cover all students. (Group 2's Interview Following Observation 6)

To clarify Group 2's complaints, the project outline specifies two-lecture turnarounds in week 10 for face-to-face feedback on students' first draft before assessment, as shown in Figure 39 below. The figure shows that, after face-to-face feedback in week 10, the project is assessed through the presentation in week 12 and final draft in week 13. However, based on Observation 5 in Class 2, Teacher 2 finished all face-to-face sessions in week 11, and so students who had their feedback in week 11 had only the weekend to prepare for their presentation and one week to act on their feedback for final submission.

10	5/4-9/4/2015	The safe assign link is closed on 9/4/2015 Face to face feedback regarding the research project in the class with the students.
11	12/4-16/4/2015	.
12	19/4-23/4/2015	**Presentation Week**
13	26/4-30/4/2015	**Final Draft**

Figure 39: Face-to-face Feedback and Submission for Project Writing, Project Outline

In fact, the four students from Group 2 felt under pressure to meet the deadline. They were given feedback in week 11, just two days before their presentation. They added that they had other submissions from other modules they needed to meet. They were annoyed because their peers who were the first on the list knew all about their correction and had more time to edit their writing.

> G2S6: We only have the weekend to edit our work before the presentation.

> G2S1: We have also exams we need to prepare for and other submissions from other modules.

> G2S3: The other girls already started editing their work from last week. So, they had much time to edit their writing before presentation.

> G2S1: These girls, who know exactly what to edit because the teacher spent much time with them explaining every single error in detail, have more time to edit their work than us! (Group 2's Interview Following Observation 4)

On the other hand, Group 3 expressed different reactions to the face-to-face sessions from Groups 1 and 2. They showed their satisfaction about these sessions and emphasised that they helped them answer their individual enquiries about their writing in detail. However, Group 3's different reaction to these sessions was a result of Teacher 3's effort to give equal times for oral discussion with all students in week 10, which was confirmed by Group 3 themselves.

Nevertheless, based on Observation 4 and Group 3's follow-up interview, Teacher 3 had to resort to two strategies to manage the deadlines. First, Teacher 3 conducted the face-to-face feedback sessions not only in project classes but also in textbook-led classes. In Observation 4, Teacher 3 got the class to perform some textbook-led tasks individually or in pairs and then she moved around giving individual feedback on project writing. Second, some face-to-face sessions were conducted in her office. In fact, this was pointed out in Observation 5 when she asked a student to come to her office to finish her individual discussion. She even asked me whether I wanted to observe some of the feedback she gave in her office.

((Individual Discussion with a Student))

Teacher 3: Alright. I have to go now becasue I've got another class. Sorry. Can we do it the next lesson? Or come to my office. I've got another class. I've to go now.

Student: Miss, where is your office?

Teacher 3: 107

Student: Are you free now?

Teacher 3: Now I'm teaching.

Student: Then, I will come on Sunday.

Teacher 3: On Sunday … yes or you can come after the lecture unless you have an exam. (Class 3, Observation 6)

Therefore, Teacher 3's practices for managing the face-to-face feedback led her to sacrifice her time to meet the deadline and cover all students.

4.4.2. Student Search for Feedback

The analysis showed that the students themselves searched for feedback. As will be presented in the following three sub-sections, it was found that all students from the three groups sought feedback from their teachers as well as from external sources such as their friends, relatives, internet or teachers from other departments. In addition, students sometimes sought feedback from their peers, but this was rare and only for superficial issues such as capitalisation or spelling. The analysis connected student search for feedback with three contextual influences: student beliefs about the role of their teacher, college instructions for teaching EAP writing, and distribution of marks in the EAP module.

4.4.2.1. Student Beliefs about the Role of the Teacher

In their interview prior to observations, all the students in the three groups convincingly acknowledged their significant role in their learning and believed that HE is about autonomous learning. However, this was not always reflected in their follow-up interviews. The study quoted three pieces of evidence which showed that some students over-relied on their teachers because they believed that teachers were paid to give feedback. The following lines present these pieces of evidence.

First, in their final interview when students in the three groups were asked whether they resorted to their peers to give them feedback or looked for guidance in textbooks, only four students out of the 18 said they sought peers' help and consulted textbooks and internet. The rest of the students regarded the teacher to be the most important, and even the only, source of feedback on their writing. In fact, these students also confirmed that, when they had difficulty understanding their feedback and wanted more clarification on it, they resorted to their teacher only. Thus, not all students acted independently in their work as they claimed in their first interview.

Second, in their interview following Observation 5, four students from Group 2 said that they were waiting for their turns to have face-to-face discussions with Teacher 2. They wanted to ask him about the ambiguity in the written feedback given on their project writing, and they were afraid there would not be enough time to edit their work before their presentation. When they were asked if they would seek help from their peers, their answer was "No" (see excerpt below). It is clear from the excerpt below that these students preferred waiting for their teacher than seeking help from their peers.

> Researcher: Did you seek your peers' help while you were waiting your turn?
>
> G2S2: No
>
> G2S4: No
>
> G2S3: I did ask my peer, but I was not convinced about her explanation.

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Finally, as presented in Section 4.3.2.3, two students from Group 1 and four from Group 2 complained that their teacher's feedback was not sufficiently explanatory, like the one that contained one-word or two-word comments, such as 'not clear'. The students felt furious about these comments and wanted to know specifically what should be edited rather than trying to figure out how to edit the errors by themselves. This shows that students did not want to make the effort to act on their feedback and adjust further action based on it.

The analysis connects this perception of students' beliefs about their teachers' role in feedback to 1) student learning experience, and 2) student beliefs about reliability of the sources of feedback. First, in their first interview, the three groups stated that back in school their teachers had given them direct feedback on their writing; i.e. teachers crossed the errors and wrote the correct answers for them. This means that they did not have to resort to others to seek feedback. Therefore, they got used to relying on their teachers.

G1S1: Learning in college is different from learning in school. Here, you are expected to do learning by yourself. I mean you need to look for information by yourself and process learning by yourself.

Researcher: And are you are doing that?

G1S1: ((laughing)) We are supposed to, but we are not! We like our teacher to do everything for us just like in school. Teachers in school just cross the error and write the correction above it.

G1S5: I like the school system. I don't believe that students know how to correct their own errors. (Group 1's First Interview)

Second, as presented in Section 4.4.1.2.1, one of the reasons the three groups mentioned for not performing well in self-directed tasks such peer editing and group editing was that they did not believe that their peers' feedback would be reliable. This could be a reason why students relied

extensively on their teachers. In fact, the analysis substantiated this reason with Group 2's interview following Observation 5 and the three groups' last interviews, when they acknowledged that they rarely resorted to their peers' feedback because they suspected the ability and knowledge of their peers' critiquing. For example, four students from Group 2 (G2S1, G2S2, G2S3, G2S5) confirmed that their peers did not have the knowledge to provide fruitful feedback. G2S2 attempted to get feedback from her peer but her peer failed to provide proper feedback. G2S5, also, contended that peer editing is a failure because students often refuse to criticize their peers' writing as they do not want to hurt their feelings.

> G2S2: I did resort to my peer to check the essay project for me, but she hardly gave me any comment and she told me 'I don't know if there are other errors in your writing and I'm not even sure of the comments I gave'.

> G2S1: I don't trust my peers' feedback because my peers might be at the same level as me or probably lower. The teacher is more knowledgeable and knows more of what is right and what is wrong.

> G2S5: I don't think we should trust my peers' feedback. I think if it is my peer's writing, then I may not criticize it truly. I would just overlook her mistakes. Nobody likes to be criticized even if it is done for their own benefit. (Group 2's Interview Following Observation 5)

In fact, these students stated that, because they did not think their peers would provide accurate views about their writing, the feedback they sought from them concerned superficial issues and then they double-checked it from another source of feedback.

> G2S1: We often ask our peers about how to translate a sentence from Arabic to English but, after my peers' suggestion, we verify it with 'Google Translate'.

> G2S3: If I don't understand anything about teacher's feedback, I will first ask my peer. Then, I see the teacher to check whether my peer's correction is accurate.

> G2S2: We may get feedback from our peers, but it is not so much reliable because we are close in level. I just resort to my peers for simple issues. For example, when I have an idea in Arabic and I want to translate it into English, I

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just get some help from my peer and then I work it by myself. (Group 2's
Interview Following Observation 5)

Some students did not even trust their own feedback. Two students from Group 1, four students from Group 2, and three students from Group 3 thought that self-editing tasks are pointless as they do not think students are able to provide feedback on their own writing.

4.4.2.2. College Instructions for Teaching EAP Writing

The above section showed that students relied heavily on their teachers and rarely sought feedback from their peers. Nevertheless, based on all students' interviews following project observations, as well as their final interviews, all students did seek external sources of feedback for their project writing - such as internet, friends, relatives and teachers from the same and other departments. This was because they trusted these sources of feedback more than their peers. In addition to student trust of the sources of feedback, there were two reasons why students sought feedback from external sources in the project writing: college instructions for teaching EAP writing and the distribution of marks in the EAP module. This section presents the first reason and the next section presents the second one.

Project writing gives students a chance to write outside the classroom. It is stated in the project outline that much of the work on project writing may be done outside of class (see Figure 40 below). This is because project writing goes through different processes, including searching for resources on the internet. This means that students outside the classroom had a chance to get different external sources of feedback, such as friends, relatives, internet or teachers from other departments.

Support

The project has been broken down for the students into a set of tasks (see Project Instructions, below). How these are done, and how much support is needed to help the students complete each of these, will be for negotiation between teachers and their students, under the overall supervision of coordinators. It is envisaged that some of this work will be done in class, especially the drafting of presentations and reports, but much may be done by the students out of class or through individual consultation.

Figure 40: Instructions for Teaching Project Writing, Project Specifications (Appendix 23)

On the other hand, based on all textbook-led observations conducted in the fieldwork, most textbook-led writing was conducted inside classrooms except in: 1) Class 1, when Teacher 1 asked students to finish writing the conclusion for their essay at home; and 2) Class 2, when Teacher 2 asked his students to edit their writing based on the feedback he gave and then send him the edited draft. This means that students in textbook-led classes had only their teacher and peers from whom to seek feedback.

4.4.2.3. Distribution of Marks in the EAP Module

As presented in Section 4.2.2.3, students showed extrinsic motivation towards the feedback provided in project writing. Extrinsic motivation occurs when students perceive feedback as judging their level of achievement (Weaver, 2006). This was because project writing carried 50% of the marks in the EAP module. As mentioned earlier, students' extrinsic motivation was shown in their desire to know the marking criteria so they could be goal-oriented. In addition, extrinsic motivation was also shown in their search for feedback, which will be presented in this section.

As presented in the section above, in project writing, students sought feedback from their teachers, peers, and external sources of feedback. This was because project writing could be written outside the classroom. In other words, students had more chances to seek feedback from people

such as their friends, relatives and teachers from the same or other departments. Another reason that students mentioned for their search for feedback in project writing was because of the distribution of marks. The students pointed out that they sought for all possible help to raise their marks in project writing. However, the analysis revealed that, in two cases, extrinsic motivation negatively impacted the students' search for feedback. First, when the students were asked if they got any assistance while they were writing their project, three students from Group 2 and two from Group 3 admitted they got others to write for them instead of giving them feedback on their written work. For example, the following excerpt shows that three students from Group 2 got a large part of their essay written or changed by their relatives.

> G2S6: For me, I did not write it all by myself.
>
> Researcher: Who helped you?
>
> G2S6: My brother and his wife.
>
> Researcher: How much did they help you?
>
> G2S6: Probably half of my work.
>
> G2S1: I wrote it myself but then my sister corrected and changed many things. Then, I showed it to another teacher who made changes as well.
>
> G2S4: I wrote it by myself but then my father corrected it for me. He changed half of what I wrote. (Group 1's Final Interview)

Second, when the students were asked if they got any assistance in clarifying the feedback they had from their teacher on their project writing, three students from Group 1 and two from Group 2 got family members or other teachers to act on their feedback for them instead of assisting them. For example, the following excerpt shows that G1S1 got her father to act on the feedback that Teacher 1 gave; while G1S5 went to another teacher in the department who edited her errors instead of helping her do it herself.

G1S5: He underlined the whole sentence for me and wrote 'not clear'. I went to another teacher in the department and she told me to write this sentence instead of that sentence ...

G1S1: My father is an English teacher. I asked him to help me acting on the feedback I'd got for my first draft.

Researcher: How did he help you?

G1S1: He corrected the underlines and codes for me - like that - he wrote the corrections above the errors. But, he explained the corrections to me.

G1S5: Me too, she (the teacher) corrected the errors for me but she explained how and why she did the correction in those ways. (Group 1's Final Interview)

When these students were asked for the reason why they relied excessively on external sources of feedback, they pointed out that this was because they wanted to ensure that they got a high mark in project writing. In fact, in her pursuit of marks, one student got her brother to rewrite the whole essay for her after she had her feedback. G2S3 admitted that she did not attempt to edit the feedback. She explained that she received her work full of underlinings and this made her feel demoralised and anxious about her marks, especially since she had to meet the deadline for submission. Therefore, she tore up her paper and got her brother to write another essay for her. She expressed it as follows.

G2S3: When I got my paper, I looked at it. I was shocked about the underlining all over my paper. So, I tore my paper. I went home, had my lunch and pretended that nothing had happened. Then, next morning, I got my brother to write a new essay for me.

Researcher: With a different topic?

G2S3: Similar to the previous essay.

Researcher: Did your teacher approve the new essay?

G2S3: I showed him the new essay in my individual oral session and he said it was fine. In fact, he said this is much better than the previous one.

Researcher: Why didn't you attempt to edit your paper?

> G2S3: I didn't think I would be able to act on all the underlines because first, I did not understand why I got all the comments, plus I had limited time to edit my paper for a final draft and so I was worried about my marks. (Group 2's Final Interview)

This means that her anxiety about marks, as well as her worries about time constraints, led her to react negatively to her feedback.

There is no college policy in assessment regarding penalties if students get others to write for them or do the editing of their work. However, there are instructions for teachers not to help students excessively in their project writing, as shown in Figure 41 below. This means that students may not be caught for getting others to write for them.

> Plagiarism is a perennial problem but the project actually presents us with an opportunity to address this issue and to help the students avoid it. It is important to realize that many students plagiarize, not because they are lazy, but because they simply cannot do what we ask of them with their own linguistic resources. In providing support to students it is essential for teachers to provide sufficient support to make plagiarism unnecessary. That said, it is also important for teachers to make students work at the margins of their competence. However, much support teachers provide, it must always be aimed at helping the students do for themselves, whatever needs to be done: it must never reach a point where teachers are doing the students' work for them.

Figure 41: Instructions for Plagiarism and Assisting Students in Project Writing, Project Specifications (Appendix 23)

Teachers 2 and 3 showed their concern about conducting the project writing in an unsupervised environment as they suspected that students might have others from outside to write for them. The excerpt below shows Teacher 3's concern about this issue.

> Teacher 3: … We have a project, which is like continuous assessment if you like but it is not a controlled… It is not set in a controlled environment. We can't be sure that the students, at the end of the project, that it's the students' own work. (Teacher 3's Interview Following Observation 4)

Hence supervision could be a way to deter students from getting others to do the work for them.

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4.4.3. The College Tasks for Self-directed Learning

The analysis shows that the college promotes self-directed learning - the type of learning whereby students are expected to self-regulate their performance and progress towards goals and seek help and consultation from their peers or look for guidance from textbooks to identify their weaknesses (Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick, 2006). The course textbook provides some tasks and activities included in the 'Online Writing Tutor' and 'Editing Your Writing' (see Appendices 20, 24, 25) that require students to seek feedback from different sources, such as from samples, peer and self. These tasks are designed to help students edit their writing. However, as will be presented below, students did not use them for three sorts of reasons: 1) learning context, 2) student experience in learning via technology, and 3) clarity of college instructions.

4.4.3.1. Learning Context in the CoAS

The course textbook contains an Online Writing Tutor, which is a website that includes guidance and activities for improving and editing academic writing, which is to be used by teachers and their students (see Appendix 24). The analysis found that this website holds two sorts of sources of feedback to train students to become self-directed learners: writing templates and tasks for self- and peer-editing. The Online Writing Tutor provides writing templates that give assistance and guidance for students to write their essays. The writing templates give detailed illustrations for different stages of writing processes, such as brainstorming and outlining, writing a first draft and finally peer-editing a first draft. In addition, the Online Writing Tutor provides opportunities for students to evaluate their own or peers' writing. It provides a self-editor's and a peer editor's sheet for each unit, containing a set of questions relevant to particular types of essay.

When students were asked about the 'Online Writing Tutor', it was found that none of them had used it or showed interest in using it. The analysis

connected this to the college learning context in terms of providing adequate internet and computer facilities and student experience in learning via technology. This section discusses the first reason and the section that follows discusses the second reason.

First, when asked the reasons for not utilising the tasks in the Online Writing Tutor, two students from Group 1 and two student from Group 2 declared that internet access in the college was weak and so it was hard to get access to the website. Furthermore, three students from Group 1 and four from Group 3 stated that not all computers on the laboratory were working. Therefore, students did not take advantage of this website.

> G3S3: I don't think learning via technology works in this college. The access to the internet is very weak and takes almost 15 to 20 minutes to download one article.

> G3S5: We were asked to search for online references for our project writing, but we couldn't do it in the college. I had to use my own internet at home.

> G3S4: In fact, even the computers in the lab are not working. I mean not all of them are working properly and they were also slow in processing.

> G3S1: And you find them occupied most of the time (Group 3's Final Interview).

Hence, the lack of access to internet and shortage of computer in the CoAS could be a reason for why students did not utilise Online Writing Tutor.

4.4.3.2. Student Previous Experience in Learning via Technology

Another reason for not utilising the 'Online Writing Tutor' that this study arrived at concerned the student learning experience via technology. It was found that some students from Group 1 were not open to learning via technology such as Blackboard or Google Drive, which are web-based server software programmes used by the college to facilitate online teaching and learning. This was revealed in three interviews. For instance, in Group 1's interview following Observation 3, four students

expressed their preference for hard copies instead of downloading soft copies from Blackboard. G1S5 declared that she had a problem opening the Blackboard. However, it is clear from the excerpt below that this was not the actual reason, rather it was because she preferred the old way, of using hard copies.

> G1S1: The conclusion is put as homework.
>
> Researcher: How are you going to edit the conclusion?
>
> G1S4: He is going to put it on Blackboard, as he always does.
>
> G1S5: I don't know why he keeps uploading things in Blackboard. I told him many times that the Blackboard is not opening with us.
>
> G1S1: But he told you if it is not opening with you, then you let him know so that he gives you hard copies.
>
> G1S2: I think it is better to have hard copies from the start.
>
> G1S5: Yes, not all the students have access to the internet.
>
> G1S3: The previous teachers never used Blackboard.
>
> G1S6: Yes, they gave us hard copies. (Group 3's Interview Following Observation 3)

Another piece of evidence is that, when some students referred to feedback communication via Google Drive, which is a software programme that allows saving and sharing of files, two individuals from Group 2 showed that they liked the face-to-face feedback more.

> G2S1: I think it is more interesting if he gives us feedback through 'Google Drive'.
>
> G2S5: No, it is too boring and time consuming. In the last semester, our teacher gave us individual face-to-face feedback. It was very accurate and helpful.
>
> G2S1: I don't agree with you. I feel it will be useful if we have our feedback through 'Google Drive' because you can see your mistakes and correct them at that time on the word document.

> G2S2: But you have your own lap top. So, you don't need to go to the computer labs as we do. (Group 2's Final Interview)

Thus, students need to change their beliefs about technology before utilising it. A training course could assist them to discover the advantages of learning via technology. In fact, some students from Group 1 declared that they needed to master the software programmes such as 'Google Drive' to benefit from them.

> G1S1: When we started studying academic writing in the college, the teacher gave us feedback through 'Google Drive' and, because it was the first time to use such a programme, we didn't know how to utilise the feedback or read it properly.
>
> Researcher: Does this mean you don't like feedback to be given through 'Google Drive'?
>
> G1S1: No, I think that was because we didn't know how to use it, and whenever I had feedback through 'Google Drive', I had to go to people who know how to use it to tell me what the feedback was about.
>
> G1S6: They (teachers) didn't show us much how to use it and they expected us to simply know how! According to what we had been shown, it seems to be very useful because it highlights different types of errors with different colours. (Group1's First Interview)

Thus, the students were not used to utilising computer programmes in their learning and this could be another reason why they did not use the Online Writing Tutor.

4.4.3.3. Clarity of College Instructions

Other tasks for self-directed learning in the book were found in the last section of each unit: Editing Your Writing. This section is for student use as declared by the first-year EAP coordinator. The section consists of seven exercises and guidelines for students that help them edit their own writing. Some of the exercises include self-editing and peer-editing tasks in which students are asked to assess their peers' or own writing against

a set of assessment criteria related to essay rhetorical conventions. In addition to that, this section also provides supplementary online guidelines and activities through Online Writing Tutor that gives students practice in their writing and opportunities to edit their work (see Appendix 25).

Nevertheless, when the three groups of students were asked about this section, it was found that none of them had used it. They thought that their teachers should cover the section as part of their teaching. In fact, this confusion was also found in Teacher 3's practices. As presented in Section 4.4.1.1.1, Teacher 3 utilised two self-directed tasks: a peer-editing task and a self-editing task. Both of these tasks were taken from 'Editing Your Writing' section. Thus, Teacher 3 might have thought that this section was meant to be covered by them. In fact, referring to the excerpt mentioned earlier in Section 4.4.1.1.1, Teacher 3 stated that she had to do the self-editing task because she was obliged to cover the book tasks. This means that there was a lack of clarity about this section. This could be because there is nothing in the college documents that illustrates the use of this section.

4.4.4. Section Summary

This section has presented the practices for sources of feedback. In this area of analysis, three practices were analysed: teacher practices, student practices and college practices. First, teachers gave self-directed tasks such as self-editing tasks, peer-editing tasks, group-editing tasks, in-class feedback and student-teacher feedback based on their beliefs about their value and also based on college instructions for EAP writing and feedback practices. Their students did not respond positively to some of the tasks given by their teachers because 1) they did not believe their peers could provide reliable feedback, 2) they did not know how to perform these tasks, 3) they had difficulty providing feedback on essay rhetorical conventions, and 4) they were restricted by time to accomplish these tasks.

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Second, students themselves sought feedback from different sources such as their teachers and peers as well as from external sources such as relatives, friends and teachers from the same department. In textbook-led writing, they were found to over-rely on their teacher. This was because they were used to having their teachers as the only source of feedback when they were in school. In addition, they contended that their teachers were the most reliable source of feedback. However, students did seek other sources of feedback in project writing. This was because project writing could be written outside the classroom and this gave them the chance to seek feedback from external sources that they trusted, such as their relatives and other teachers. In addition, students were keen to raise their marks in project writing and, therefore, they sought all possible help from external sources.

Finally, the college provided some tasks and activities for self-directed learning included in the: 'Online Writing Tutor' and 'Editing Your Writing'. The aim of these tasks is to encourage students to be self-directed learners and seek different sources of feedback, such as from their peers and online guidance. However, the students did not use either of them because they were unwilling to learn via technology, poor internet access and shortage of computers. For 'Editing Your Writing', students thought this section should be covered by their teachers.

4.5. Conclusion

This chapter has presented the study findings that are related to the CoAS context in Oman. The chapter emphasised the teachers' and students' practices of feedback on EAP writing. It mainly presented three practices of feedback: focus of feedback, direct and indirect feedback, and sources of feedback. It was revealed that these practices were context-dependent. In other words, the findings showed feedback practices were shaped by multiple contextual influences. These influences were related to teachers' and students' beliefs about feedback and EAP writing, students' previous experience of feedback practices

and their schematic knowledge of academic conventions of EAP writing, teaching and learning context, and college instructions and policies about feedback, assessment and writing practices.

In the next chapter, the findings of this study will be discussed in conjunction with the relevant literature. The focus will be on practical implications and the research's contributions to the field.

Chapter Five: Discussion

5.1. Introduction

As discussed in the literature chapter in Section 2.7, this research utilises the model proposed by Yiu (2009) with regards to the context of writing. Yiu conducted a case study to understand disciplinary writing in Hong Kong. He highlighted three levels of context: the local, the disciplinary and the institutional context. This model will be used to discuss the results found in the present study. In the present research, I utilise Yiu's model to illustrate how the three contexts create the culture of feedback in the Omani HEI. To reiterate, the current study aims to explore the culture of feedback, which is defined as a set of practices implicitly understood and shared in the Omani institution from the above-mentioned three levels of context.

As discussed in the literature chapter, the three levels of context address different practices. The local context concerns feedback interactions that occur between the teachers and their students or among students themselves. For disciplinary context, Yiu (2009) dealt with the requirements of the marketing discipline; however, my study deals with EAP writing and so it covers the demands made on student writing by EAP writing pedagogy instructed by the college or followed by teachers. The institutional context includes the college's support for feedback, including coaching to help use and interpret policies and feedback.

Based on the results of this study, each level of context concerns some contextual influences. As illustrated in Figure 42, the local contextual influences are: self-directed learning, practices in giving feedback, and teacher beliefs about feedback. The EAP context includes: college policy about EAP writing pedagogy, teacher beliefs about EAP writing pedagogy, student knowledge about academic conventions, and student beliefs about EAP writing. The institutional context includes: college assessment, and teaching and learning context. This model is similar to the one that is presented in Section 3.8.1 which was used to facilitate deductive analysis of the collected data. However, as parts of analysis were inductive, some influences were added in the model

which are: practices in giving feedback, and student beliefs about EAP writing. Furthermore, the EAP writing pedagogy is made more context-specific in that it is sub-divided into two influences which concern teacher beliefs and college policy.

Figure 42: Three Levels of Context in which Teachers and Students Undertook their Feedback Practices

Within this model, many studies have been conducted in the field of feedback, some of which were mentioned in the literature chapter, but they should be approached with caution (e.g. Lalande, 1982; Robb et al., 1986; Ferris and Roberts, 2001; Chandler, 2003). This is because these studies have limited their focus or placed greater emphasis on the first level of context only, the local context. For example, Chandler (2003) examined the impact of a second draft on student response to feedback. Nevertheless, as will be explained in the

subsequent sections, the feedback process does not fit with the simple model that the above-mentioned studies have adopted. Rather, it is surrounded by different contextual influences from the three above-mentioned contexts that shape the practices of teachers and students. Furthermore, unlike Yiu's model (2009), the results of this study showed that there are interplays between contexts. For instance, as will be discussed in Section 5.2.1, student self-directed learning was found to be impacted by student knowledge of the academic conventions of research skills and essay rhetorical conventions (Section 5.3.3) and teaching and learning context (Section 5.4.2).

In the subsequent three sections, the findings of this study are interpreted according to the above framework, focusing primarily on the main question of this research, which is: 'How is feedback on EAP writing interpreted, enacted and developed by participants in a HE college in Oman?' The theories and findings of previous research mentioned in the literature chapter will be also reiterated to support the discussion of the results

5.2. The Local Context

As explained in the introduction to this chapter, the local context concerns the feedback interactions that occurred between teachers and their students, or among students themselves. According to the results of my study, there are different contextual influences that impact teacher and student interaction in the feedback process, including the influences related to EAP and institutional contexts. However, this section discusses the influences found in the local context, which concerns the teachers' and students' practices and beliefs about feedback, independently from the EAP and institutional contexts. The contextual influences found in the local context were: self-directed learning, teacher practices in giving feedback and teacher beliefs about feedback.

5.2.1. Self-directed Learning

As discussed in the literature chapter in Section 2.4.5, one of the bases of feedback in HE is self-directed learning, which is a type of learning that expects students to move to Assessment for Learning (AfL), whereby they are supposed to self-regulate their performance, progress towards goals, seek help and consultation from their peers, and look for guidance from textbooks to identify their weaknesses (Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick, 2006). Nevertheless, the results of this study show that there was a lack of self-directed learning in the context of the institution in question. The students in the three groups were found to over-rely on their teacher and did not seek feedback from their peers. Outside the classroom, the students did search for external sources of feedback, from family members and friends; however, they over-relied on them in that they utilised them to do the writing rather than advising them. In other cases, they got the external sources to act on the feedback they had from their teachers rather than guiding them.

To clarify the above dilemma found in this institution, there is a need to discuss two contextual influences related to student lack of self-directed learning: 1) student attitudes towards sources of feedback, and 2) student experience with self-directed learning.

5.2.1.1. Student Attitudes towards Sources of Feedback

Student attitudes towards feedback were discussed in Ellis's (2010 cited in Han and Hyland, 2015) framework of student engagement with feedback. Ellis defines attitudinal response to feedback as learner affective responses to feedback such as anxiety and dislike. The results of my study showed that the majority of students held uncomfortable feelings towards their peers' feedback. The feeling emerged from their belief that their peers were unable to provide accurate feedback. Students did not even trust their own feedback; i.e. they did not think that they could identify their own errors.

Similar to Han and Hyland (2015), who found a relationship between student attitudinal and behavioural engagement in learners' uptake or revision of

feedback, the results of this study revealed that students' negative attitudes towards their own or peers' feedback led to negative behavioural actions towards self-directed learning. It was found that most of the students rarely sought feedback from their peers, or from themselves, and tended to over-rely on their teachers. The students regarded their teacher as the only reliable source of feedback and felt that their teacher's role was to make everything explicit and clear for them. This finding is supported by previous studies which found similar reactions from students (e.g. Mahfoodh and Pandian, 2011; Emenyeonu, 2012; Al-Bakri, 2015). Mahfoodh and Pandian, for instance, found that the students rarely sought feedback from their peers, friends or relatives because they did not find them trustworthy in comparison to their teacher's feedback.

The above discussion suggests that the students' negative behaviours towards self-directed learning was a result of their attitudinal engagement with the sources of feedback. Therefore, this implies a need to change student attitudes towards the different sources of feedback. Perhaps, one way to do that is, as Amrhein and Nassaji (2010) suggest, to open discussion with them in terms of the purpose and strategies of feedback to get them self-dependent. Hyland (2000) even suggests having full communication with students, including feedback strategies they believe in, the writing problems they have, and the approaches to writing and learning they prefer.

Another suggestion could be to raise their self-efficacy, which is a person's belief in his or her abilities (Mastan and Maarof, 2013). This is because, as discussed above, students did not trust their own feedback, which indicates low self-efficacy. Self-efficacy could be promoted through teacher feedback. It was revealed that some students from Groups 1 and 2 got others to act on the feedback they had had from their teacher. One of the reasons revealed for this was because they felt demoralised when they saw their paper full of negative comments. Therefore, their reaction might have been different if they had received some praise in their papers. In fact, as shown in Duijnhouwer et al.'s (2010) study, student beliefs about their abilities are not stable and can be changed by teacher feedback; i.e. teachers can enhance students' sense of

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self-dependency through their positive feedback. Raising student self-efficacy will be further discussed in Section 5.2.2.4.

5.2.1.2. Student Experience in Self-directed Learning

As shown in the results chapter, the lack of self-directed learning could also be because of students' limited experience in self-directed learning. In school, the students only received feedback from their teachers, who provided them with detailed direct feedback. Therefore, they were angry about feedback that consisted of one- or two-word comments, such as 'rewrite' and 'not clear', or feedback that contained correction symbols such as underlinings or codes. The students preferred to have direct feedback on their writing, in which the teacher crossed out the errors and wrote in the corrected form. Similar findings have been referred to in previous research which compared student school experiences of assessment and the university expectations about assessment (e.g. Higgins et al., 2002, Beaumont et al., 2008, Amrhein and Nassaji, 2010, Mahfoodh and Pandian, 2011). These studies found that students were used to being passive in their learning in school, where teachers did everything for them; however, the case was different for students in university where they were expected to do autonomous learning. Beaumont et al. (2008), for instance, found that his participating students struggled to cope in HE because they were not used to acting independently on their learning.

The above discussion suggests that students need to be moved forward to a new experience of learning; i.e. self-directed learning. Some previous studies found that some student-centred practices of feedback encourage self-directed learning, such as indirect feedback (Lalande, 1982), chances for revision (Chandler, 2003), and the use of external sources of feedback such as exemplars annotated with feedback (Handley and Wiliams, 2011). These practices were found to enhance student engagement with feedback and to have a positive impact on self-directed learning in the long run. The results of the current study support the above-mentioned findings, as shown in three cases. First, as indicated in the results, Teacher 2 spent time in individual oral discussion because he waited too long for students to elicit the answers by

themselves. Teacher 2 later, in one of his follow-up interviews, acknowledged that his strategy worked well as his students were better when eliciting answers in the subsequent drafts. Further evidence was found in Groups 1 and 2: when two students in Group 1 had no chance for oral discussion on their written feedback, and when four students from Group 2 had superficial discussion on their written feedback, they were forced to seek external sources of feedback; for example, G1S5 went to another teacher from the department. Finally, Group 2 were given chances for a second draft in textbook-led writing and this made them revise their own feedback to edit their second draft.

Nevertheless, the results reveal that, although there were some practices for self-directed tasks in the three classes, these practices might not have always promoted much self-directed work. For example, that chance for revision in textbook-led writing in Class 2 might not have encouraged much self-directed learning because the students had had group editing and in-class discussion on their written feedback prior to their revision. Hence, Teacher 2's practices for a second draft were mostly teacher-centred with limited effort from students. The students might not have had much cognitive engagement with the feedback - "how learners attend to the CF they receive" (Ellis, 2010, p.342 cited in Han and Hyland, 2015, p.32) - when they acted on the feedback provided on their first draft. In fact, similar findings were revealed in the Omani study conducted by Emenyeonu (2012). This study found that students were not encouraged to be self-directed learners because of the teachers' teaching methodology that was based on lecturing and excessive Teacher Talking Time (TTT) rather than providing students an opportunity to monitor their own work.

When the teachers were asked about the dominant practices in their feedback, they pointed out that the students were unable to arrive at the answers themselves. However, student inability to do self-directed learning should have been expected because the students were not used to doing autonomous work, as pointed out earlier in this section. If teachers do not encourage students' independent learning, and merely rely on their feedback because their students are unable to perform self-directed tasks, then it is hard to expect students to initiate self-directed learning. The evidence discussed earlier in this section,

about Teacher 2's indirect feedback, suggests that, to move to a new experience of learning, there is a need to spend more time and effort in closing the gap. Teacher 2 spent time trying to elicit answers from students, and positive outcomes were shown in subsequent drafts when he found that his students became better in spotting their own errors. Further evidence is provided by the previous studies that revealed that the positive impact of indirect feedback occurred only in the long run (e.g. Lalande, 1982).

Nevertheless, in other cases, student inability to do self-directed learning could be due to other reasons, as shown in the results chapter. For example, it could result from their lack of knowledge of academic conventions of EAP writing, such as essay rhetorical conventions and research skills, which will be discussed in Section 5.3.3. Alternatively, it could be a result of student lack of evaluative knowledge; i.e. students do not know to how to evaluate a piece of work (Sadler, 2009). As stated in the results chapter, some students did not perform well in the peer editing tasks because they did not know how to evaluate their peers' writing. Thus, providing opportunities for self-directed tasks may not be sufficient if students do not have evaluative knowledge.

Student ability to provide feedback adequately and consistently has been questioned by some educators (e.g. Truscott, 2007; Sadler, 2009; Hay and Mathers, 2012). These educators show that students need training to develop their ability to evaluate. Sadler (2009), for instance, states that students need to be trained in how to mark writing against a set of marking criteria in order to develop evaluative knowledge. The results of the present study show that Teacher 2 did not even ask his students to follow particular criteria to assess their peers' writing. Therefore, students were not trained to evaluate a piece of writing against criteria and this could explain the superficial feedback they provided on their peers' writing. Teacher 3 gave some questions to guide the peer editing task she conducted (see Appendix 22); however, as presented in the results chapter, she only gave one peer-editing task during the semester. Ferris (2003) emphasises that the benefits of peer feedback in L2 writing can only be obtained if it is systematically implemented.

Additionally, students might need supervision and assistance while they perform self-directed tasks. As presented in the previous chapter, Teachers 1 and 3 did not supervise students while performing peer editing tasks and Teacher 2 only supervised certain students when they were doing group editing. Therefore, students were left alone to do tasks of which they had no experience, according to them. Kathpalia and Hea (2010) emphasise the need for prior training and proper structuring for peer editing tasks. Ferris (2003), as well, recommends a set of systematic activities to be conducted by teachers in peer editing tasks in order to yield fruitful outcomes. Therefore, it is suggested it is inefficient to leave students unsupervised to perform new tasks on their own. Students, especially in their initial learning, need guidance and support to know how to act independently.

The above section discussed self-directed learning as one of main bases of feedback interaction in the local context; i.e. interaction between teachers and students or students with their peers. However, feedback interaction in the local context can also be impacted by teacher practices in giving feedback, which were found to influence student attitudinal, behavioural and cognitive engagement with feedback, as will be discussed below.

5.2.2. Practices of Giving Feedback

Some of the feedback interactions in the local context could be a result of practices in giving feedback. As discussed in the literature chapter, many studies in the field of feedback have examined the influence of practices of giving feedback on student responses to it. For example, Ferris and Roberts (2001) explored students' responses to their teachers' practices of direct and indirect feedback. Their findings showed that direct corrections resulted in the largest accuracy of outcomes in revisions, but that indirect correction was more effective in improving accuracy in subsequent drafts. My study revealed similar findings that may contribute to the large amount of research conducted in this area, which will be explained in the following four sub-section: drafts, direct and indirect written feedback, delayed feedback and negative feedback.

5.2.2.1. Drafts

As explained in Ellis's (2010, cited in Han ad Hyland., 2015) framework, one of the concerns of student behavioural engagement with feedback is revision; i.e. the editing of writing based on feedback. The results of my study show that student revision of feedback can be promoted by teacher practices of drafts. To explain, Teacher 2 gave students a chance for a second draft in textbook-led writing: he asked his students to edit their writing based on the feedback he gave and sent it to him for further feedback. Based on the analysis, most of the errors that were marked by feedback were edited in all the six pieces of textbook-led writing of Group 2: 346 out of 356 errors were corrected.

On the other hand, Groups 1 and 3, who had no chance for a second draft, did not bother to revise their textbook-led writing based on their teachers' feedback. The students in these two groups stated that they saw no point in acting on their feedback if they were not asked to do so or if they had no rewards for it. This was declared in their interviews and shown in some of their texts. Therefore, this suggests that revision is a means to get students to read their feedback and act on it. Such findings support those of Chandler (2003), that students who had not been asked to revise their work did not edit their corrections.

5.2.2.2. Direct and Indirect Written Feedback

The results showed some complaints from students about their teachers' indirect written feedback, i.e. when teachers indicate the location of the error or the nature of it such as through using correction symbols such as codes, underlining, circles, or question marks (Lee, 1997). As shown in the results chapter, the students in the three groups saw underlining with one-word or two-word comments, such as "rewrite" or "not clear", as inadequate in explanation because the comments did not clarify to them specifically what needed to be edited. Similar findings have already been revealed in three previous studies (Ferris, 1995, Lee, 1997, Weaver, 2006) which found that some written comments were ambiguous, cryptic, general, vague, or abstract to students. For example, Ferris (1995) revealed that the students in her studies found

symbols such as abbreviations, arrows, and circles confusing and difficult to understand.

Teacher 3 made an effort to base the explicitness of her feedback on the quality of writing: she gave more direct feedback to the paper that had more errors. Teacher 3 thought that students varied in their understanding of feedback and so she decided to make feedback easier for lower-level students by giving them more direct feedback. This direction of giving feedback was followed by some teachers investigated in previous research (Lee, 1997, 2009). Lee (2009), for instance, found that teachers had to give direct feedback because their students were unable to locate their errors.

However, such a solution might not always work. In the context of my study, the above-mentioned comments such as 'unclear' or 'rewrite' were given because the whole paragraph or sentence was ambiguous to teachers. Accordingly, teachers were unable to give more specific or detailed feedback. Therefore, the best solution might be to provide follow-up individual discussions. These discussions help to clarify what meaning is intended by students so that teachers could provide more accurate feedback. This suggestion has also been proposed by Higgins et al. (2001) and Nicol et al. (2011), who contend that negotiation between students and teachers is the best strategy to solve ambiguity in feedback.

However, as will be discussed in Section 5.4.2.1, individual discussion is time consuming and teachers may not be able to provide feedback to all students. Nevertheless, a better solution might be to limit individual discussion to errors that cause difficulties for students, such as the errors that affect meaning. This is also suggested by Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006), who believe that time could be saved by getting students to reflect on the teachers' feedback and ask only about the comments that they do not understand.

5.2.2.3. Delayed Feedback

The findings illustrated that delayed feedback is not encouraged when there is a deadline for submitting drafts. This is because delayed feedback can create

negative attitudinal engagement due to the deadline. As a reminder, attitudinal engagement refers to student feelings about feedback (Ellis, 2010 cited in Han and Hyland, 2015). This was shown in Group 2, who expressed their anxiety about feedback because it was delayed, so they did not have adequate time to prepare for their presentation. In addition to that, the students stated they had other submissions for other modules. Accordingly, they felt anxious to finish acting on the feedback given on their projects on time. This was the reason why some of them got others to act on feedback for them instead of helping them. Weaver (2006) has referred to the negative impact of delayed feedback on student engagement. Weaver found that students in his study were weakly engaged with their feedback because it was received so late that they had already completed their module.

Delayed feedback also distracted teachers on their feedback practices. As instructed by the project outline, teachers had to give face-to-face feedback on student project writing towards the end of the semester. The face-to-face feedback was supposed to be given in week 10, a week before presentation and two weeks before final submission. Therefore, the teachers struggled to manage this delayed feedback on time and cover all students. Teacher 1 ran out of time and was not able to cover all students, Teacher 2 gave superficial feedback to the students who were the last on the list in week 11 and Teacher 3 had to complete some face-to-face feedback sessions in her office and textbook-led classes.

Thus, delayed feedback had negative impacts on students' and teachers' practices of feedback. Based on the above-mentioned findings, the responsibility should largely be on the institution. In order to support teachers to provide immediate feedback and enable students to act on their feedback in due time, the institution needs to provide a facilitative environment. This could be through extending deadlines, and, as suggested by Al-Badwawi (2011), through improving coordination between departments in terms of module submissions. The role of the institution will be discussed in detail in Section 5.4.2.

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5.2.2.4. Negative Feedback

The findings of this study suggest that negative feedback creates negative attitudinal engagement. It was revealed that some students from Group 2 felt demoralised to see their papers full of red negative comments such as "rewrite", "unclear", and "not a sentence". The students had spent a lot of time on writing their project and so they expected good returns, like positive feedback. Like the findings of Higgins et al.'s (2001) study, this study found that the students felt their efforts were in vain and lost self-efficacy when they saw their papers full of red marks. They thought that they were not up to the level to write a good academic essay, especially seeing that they had difficulty understanding these comments, as discussed in Section 5.2.2.2.

Similar to Han and Hyland's (2015) findings, the current study found that students' attitudes towards their feedback impacted their behavioural response. For example, one common result emerging from the loss of self-efficacy was their over-reliance on external sources. The students got others, such as their relatives or other teachers from the department, to act on their feedback instead of assisting them. One student acknowledged that she tore up her paper before even reading her comments and she got her brother to write a new essay for her. As shown in the results, students had difficulty revising all the negative comments within the limited time, especially since they did not understand the comments. The influence of over-negative comments on students' feeling of demoralisation has been demonstrated in previous studies (e.g., Lea and Street, 1998; Carless, 2006). Carless believes that negative comments damage student confidence which makes them less receptive to feedback.

The above discussion suggests a need to have more considerate feedback comments. This has also been suggested by some researchers who recommend using mitigation strategies to soften the criticism in feedback, such as through:

- using hedging devices, questions forms and personal attribution (Hyland and Hyland, 2001); or
- avoiding comments in the form of imperatives (Lea and Street, 1998).

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In fact, the comments that students in my study had were in red and in the form of imperatives. Therefore, their reactions could have been different if the comments had been written in question form or by mitigated comments such as 'in my opinion...' because these comments show less authoritative feedback.

Another suggestion that could be provided is with regard to the teachers' sudden change in their practices of feedback. As stated in the results chapter, Group 2 expressed their dissatisfaction with the underlining and one- or two-word comments in the first draft of their project writing. Based on the results, prior to these comments, Teacher 2 had been used to either give detailed oral feedback or indirect written feedback followed by detailed oral discussion. Therefore, it was quite normal for Group 2 to be shocked when they were suddenly left to work on the indirect written feedback on their own. They thought that their teachers should have told them exactly what needed to be changed, as he used to before. This case of Group 2 suggests that a change in usual practices of giving feedback creates different attitudinal responses. Such findings support some educators' and researchers' suggestion that beliefs about self-efficacy are not stable because they can be influenced by other people's judgement of one's ability, like teacher feedback (Duijnhouwer et al., 2010).

It might be suggested, then, that teachers keep to their usual practices of feedback to sustain students' self-esteem. However, the above change was necessary. Group 2 needed more practice of indirect feedback to develop their self-directed learning, which was discussed in Section 5.2.1. However, the best solution then would be to introduce indirect written feedback gradually, starting from the beginning of the semester. As discussed in Section 5.2.1, students first of all need to change their belief about self-directed learning (Hyland, 2000) and then gain evaluative knowledge to become self-directed learners (Sadler, 2009).

To conclude Section 5.2.2, teacher feedback practices could enhance student response to feedback. For instance, students are committed to respond to their

feedback if there is a second draft to write. They become more engaged with feedback if they receive it earlier. They can have a better understanding of indirect written feedback if it is associated with individual oral discussion. Finally, they can sustain their self-efficacy and reinforce their engagement with feedback if they receive positive feedback.

5.2.3. Teacher Beliefs about Feedback

Teacher beliefs about feedback can be a main decision-maker in the practices of feedback. It has been presented in the results chapter that some practices of feedback were due to teacher beliefs about feedback, such as the practices for direct and indirect feedback and the practices for self-directed tasks such as peer-, self-, and group-editing tasks, in-class feedback and individual feedback. For example, all the teachers conducted in-class feedback in their classes because they thought it provided more insights about student writing; while Teachers 1 and 2 did not conduct a self-editing task because they thought their students were unable to correct their own errors. Therefore, these findings support the previous research that found matches between teachers' beliefs about feedback and their actual practices (e.g. Orrell, 2006; Mahfoodh and Pandian, 2011). Orrell, for instance, found that teachers provide a lot of summative feedback because they believed that students appreciate feedback that is directly related to passing the course.

However, my study has found that the investigation of feedback is more complex than getting participants to state their general beliefs about feedback. This was because the study found some mismatches between the beliefs that teachers expressed prior to their observations and their actual practices. For instance, Teacher 1 stated in his first interview that direct oral feedback reduces students' participation in discussion. However, he was found to provide greater direct feedback in his oral feedback in textbook-led writing. From the follow-up interviews, it emerged that Teacher 1 had to provide direct oral feedback because of his students' weak participation in discussion, which was due to their poor understanding of essay rhetorical conventions. Therefore, the follow-up interviews might be more accurate in exploring beliefs, which supports Pajares'

(1992) argument that suggests beliefs should be inferred from what people intend and do. This means it is more valid to investigate teacher beliefs through questioning their actual practices.

Alternatively, the above mismatches could be because of the issue of 'practices precede beliefs'; i.e. beliefs could be shaped after seeing the results of actual practices. This could be supported by Teacher 1's beliefs about EAP writing, which will be discussed in Section 5.3.2. In short, Teacher 1's beliefs about EAP writing pedagogy match college policy about teaching EAP writing. According to his biographical data, Teacher 1 had been teaching in the CoAS for four years and had taught the EAP course eight times in the college. Therefore, his beliefs could have been shaped by his practices. This reflects Guskey's (1986) argument that suggests teachers change their beliefs after they see the impacts of their practices on student outcomes. This means that it is not always necessary to have beliefs precede practices as in the cases mentioned in the introduction to this chapter. Therefore, it is necessary to investigate teachers' beliefs over a period of time because teacher beliefs might be shaped from seeing the outcomes of their practices.

In addition to that, beliefs might be better investigated through multiple instruments of data collection. This is because, based on the results, teachers' statements in follow-up interviews might be excuses for their practices. For example, it was found that Teachers 1 and 2 provided in-class feedback and their own feedback after peer and group editing tasks because they thought that their students were unable to provide accurate feedback. However, this reasoning might only be based on a primitive assumption because these teachers did not adequately supervise their students on these tasks. Therefore, investigating beliefs might also require a double-check through different methods of data collection, such as observations as in the case of Teachers 1 and 2. This suggestion supports some researchers' recommendation for future research (e.g. Lee, 2008, 2009; Mahfoodh and Pandian, 2011) which emphasises the need to validate teachers' reasoning about their feedback practices stated in interviews.

The above discussion also suggests that beliefs can be based on limited knowledge about feedback practices. Both Teachers 1 and 2 provided a primitive assumption about how their students would perform in their peer and group editing tasks. However, these tasks involve more work than leaving students to edit on their own. This area has been widely discussed in Section 5.2.1. To reiterate, students need first to change their perceptions about these tasks (Hyland, 2000; Amrhein and Nassaji, 2010). Furthermore, they need systematic training on them (Ferris, 2003; Kathpalia and Hea, 2010). Finally, they need evaluative knowledge to be able to criticise pieces of writing (Sadler, 2009). Therefore, the two teachers' primitive assumptions about their students' performance could have been impacted by their limited knowledge of how to conduct these tasks. This all suggests that beliefs and knowledge are connected. In fact, previous research provides further evidence for such a conclusion (Higgins, 2002; Lee, 2008; Beaumont et al., 2008). Lee, for instance, found that teachers' beliefs were influenced by their limited knowledge of feedback, which was based on colleague consultations and marking experience rather than on workplace training or courses. Therefore, the results of this study agree with the recommendation of previous researchers (Pajares, 1992; Phipps and Borg, 2009) who suggest the need to explore the reasons behind beliefs.

To conclude, this section suggests that beliefs are complex. There is a need to explore the relationship between practices and beliefs. This is because both can impact each other. There is also a need to explore the reasoning behind beliefs. Beliefs could be a result of participants' limited knowledge or a result of other contextual factors such as college policy about feedback and EAP writing.

5.3. The EAP Writing Context

The EAP writing context refers to the demands made on student writing by the EAP writing course, whether it concerns the demands of the college or the demands of the teachers. It has been discussed in the literature chapter that there are several approaches towards writing and each one has different perspectives on the nature of writing and the focus of teaching, which in turn

shape teacher practices in giving feedback. For example, the process approach to teaching writing impacts feedback in terms of the focus of feedback in that teachers concentrate on the cognitive processes that learners go through while writing (Kathpalia and Heah, 2010). Similarly, the analysis of my study shows that the writing pedagogy mainly impacted the focus of feedback. Additionally, the results of this study show that the EAP writing pedagogy was also found to influence student response to the academic conventions of EAP writing, such as their response to referencing and rhetorical conventions specific to different types of essay. Based on the results chapter, four contextual influences related to EAP writing impacted the practices of feedback: 1) college policy about EAP writing pedagogy, 2) teacher beliefs about EAP writing pedagogy, 3) student knowledge of academic conventions of EAP writing, and 4) student beliefs about EAP writing.

5.3.1. College Policy about EAP Writing Pedagogy

This section discusses, first, college instructions for EAP writing pedagogy in relation to the approaches to teaching EAP writing discussed in the literature chapter. Then, it discusses how the college policy impacted the teachers' practices for the focus of feedback.

The Writing Pedagogy Instructed in the Course Textbook

The course textbook follows the process and the rhetorical approaches to teaching EAP writing. First, the course textbook covers four writing processes: stimulating ideas, brainstorming and outlining, developing ideas, and editing writing. These instructions for teaching writing reflect the process approach to teaching EAP writing. As discussed in the literature chapter, the process approach concerns the different processes of writing such as brainstorming, outlining, planning, drafting, discussing, editing and proof reading (Hyland and Hyland, 2006).

Furthermore, the course textbook introduces different types of essay: descriptive, narrative, comparison-contrast, opinion, and cause-and effect essays. The book concentrates on the rhetorical focus as well as language and grammar focus specific to the types of essay introduced in the units of the book: each unit addresses one type of essay. For example, the language and grammar focus that concern opinion essays include quantity expressions, and connectors to show support and opposition. (The rhetorical focus and language and grammar focus of all essays may be found in Appendix 19.) This focus of teaching then reflects the rhetorical approach discussed in the literature chapter which gives emphasis to the norms and structures specific to a certain type of text (Hyland, 2009; Smith, 2014).

The Writing Pedagogy Instructed in the Project Outline

The project outline also follows the process approach to teaching EAP writing. It places emphasis on the writing processes that a learner goes through. These processes include searching for topics, paraphrasing and summarising from references, using in-text-citations, outlining, drafting, editing and reviewing.

The Influence of College Policy about Writing Pedagogy on Feedback

The college instructions for teaching EAP writing were found to influence the three teachers' focus of feedback. For example, regarding the rhetorical approach to teaching writing instructed in the course textbook, Teacher 1 was found to give feedback on rhetorical conventions specific to the type of essay the students were writing about. For instance, in Observation 2, he was found to emphasise the grammatical features and structures of comparison-and-contrast essays. Therefore, Teacher 1's feedback was shaped by the EAP writing pedagogy instructed in the course textbook. Such findings support previous scholars and researchers who argue that feedback practices are influenced by the writing pedagogy that teachers follow (e.g. Zamel, 1985; Kathpalia and Heah, 2010).

Another influence of the writing instructions given in the course textbook is with regard to the process approach; each unit in the book emphasises five processes of writing, which are: stimulating ideas, brainstorming, outlining, developing ideas, and editing writing. The influence of the process approach was clear in Teacher 1's focus of feedback. Teacher 1's main emphasis in his feedback was on the organisation of the essay. This was because Teacher 1 gave feedback on processes as observed in his three textbook-led observations: first class, introduction; second class, conclusion; third class, body paragraphs. It should be clarified that different writing texts were written in these three observations. This finding then supports the scholarly research which suggests that the main emphasis of feedback in the process approach is on how to handle the cognitive processes of writing (Zamel, 1985; Kathpalia and Heah, 2010).

However, Teacher 1 was not observed to give feedback on the other processes of writing instructed in the textbook, such as brainstorming and editing writing; neither Teacher 2 nor Teacher 3 was found to give feedback on the processes of writing, though they covered these processes in their teaching. This issue could be a matter of the limitations in data collection. This study did not observe all textbook-led classes and, accordingly, it was hard to conclude in the analysis that the three teachers did not base their feedback on the process approach instructed in the textbook.

Nevertheless, the three teachers were observed to be conscientious in structuring their feedback on the writing processes instructed in the project outline, such as referencing, outlining, drafting and giving face-to-face feedback. These findings then support Kathpalia and Heah (2010), who advocate the influence of the process approach on the practices of giving feedback. On the other hand, my study findings findings contradict Zamel's study (1985), which suggests that handling writing through its processes diverts teachers from focusing enough on mechanical accuracy and the surface features of language. As was found in the analysis, Teachers 2 and 3 were still providing feedback on grammar and mechanics of language. In fact, these areas were given greater emphasis in their feedback than were other areas of

writing. However, such a contradiction could be interpreted as coming from a different influence, which is the two teachers' beliefs about EAP writing, as will be discussed below.

5.3.2. Teacher Beliefs about EAP Writing Pedagogy

Teachers 2 and 3 taught writing based on the course textbook that follows the process and the rhetorical approaches. However, they were not found to provide feedback on the writing processes or on the rhetorical conventions of different types of essay. This finding then contradicts previous research (e.g. Zamel, 1985; Kathpalia and Heah, 2010) which emphasised the influence of writing pedagogy on teacher practices in giving feedback. Nevertheless, the results show that the EAP writing pedagogy still had an influence on the two teachers' focus of feedback. However, the influence was based on their belief about EAP writing pedagogy rather than on the writing pedagogy that they followed; this will be outlined in this section.

The two teachers provided much feedback on grammar and mechanics of language in textbook-led writing because they believed that writing was best taught through mastering these items, which reflects the view of the product approach to teaching writing. The product approach focuses on mastering fixed patterns, norms and structures that are applicable in any type of text (Jordan, 1997). This connection between the product approach and the feedback emphasis on grammar and mechanics of language was also demonstrated in Zamel's (1985) study. Zamel found that, because the teachers followed the product approach, they were found to over-emphasize the surface features of writing such as linguistic structures, vocabulary, organization and cohesive devises. However, the results of my study revealed that it was not the EAP writing pedagogy that the two teachers followed which impacted their focus of feedback. Rather, it was their belief about EAP writing pedagogy. This then supports Beach and Bredwell (1984), who state that teachers' attitudes toward writing influence their evaluation of student writing.

The above discussion shows that the power of teacher beliefs can make teachers resistant to college policies. Teachers 2 and 3 preferred to base their feedback on their beliefs about EAP writing rather than on college instructions to teach EAP writing. This finding had been demonstrated in previous research-based studies about feedback (e.g. Lee 1997, 2009; Orrell, 2006). For example, Lee (2009) concluded that practices of feedback are linked to teachers' philosophy of teaching and writing; therefore, they might become resistant to any institutional change in their feedback practice that contradicts their personal beliefs. In fact, even Teacher 1 might have provided feedback on the organisation of the essay and essay rhetorical conventions based on his beliefs about writing pedagogy. This is because it was found that his beliefs about the EAP writing pedagogy matched the college guidelines for writing pedagogy. Alternatively, the college might have shaped his beliefs. As discussed in Section 5.2.3, Teacher 1 had taught the EAP course eight times in CoAS and so he might have unconsciously changed his beliefs during this period. Such changes reflect the view of Guskey (1986), who suggests that teachers change their beliefs after they change their practices.

Nevertheless, in the context of my study, basing the focus of feedback on teacher beliefs and preferences might be problematic. This is because the college guidelines aim to achieve certain objectives to enable students be part of the discourse communities in their subsequent subject-domain studies. It has been discussed in the literature chapter that EAP writing courses aim to prepare students to cope with the writing requirements of academic courses in HE (Bruce, 2011). One of the objectives of the EAP course in the CoAS is to introduce the organisation of the essay and the rhetorical conventions of different types of essay because students need to implement them in their subject-domain studies. This suggests a need to ensure teachers' commitment to follow the college pedagogy, not only in their teaching but also in their focus of feedback, to make students aware of the importance of their course objectives, which will be further discussed in Section 5.3.4.

Perhaps one way of ensuring standardisation in the focus of feedback among teachers is to change their beliefs about the EAP writing pedagogy or their

beliefs about the focus of feedback in particular. Changing teacher beliefs about teaching and feedback has been discussed in the literature review. Some researchers (e.g. Orrell, 2006; Lee, 2009, 2008) have made recommendations for teacher professional development to enhance teaching and feedback practices. These researchers contend that teachers' beliefs about feedback shape their practices and, in order to develop their practices, there is a need to change their beliefs.

However, changing teacher beliefs might be challenging. It was presented in the results chapter that Teachers 2 and 3 frequently criticized the writing pedagogy instructed in the course textbook and project outline. The two teachers emphasised that the course objectives should mainly emphasise grammar teaching rather than the rhetorical conventions specific to a particular type of essay or to the organisation of essays in general. Therefore, they were not found to base their feedback on the course objectives. This suggests that teacher beliefs might be resistant to change. In fact, Orrell's (2006), who advocated teacher professional development through changing teachers' beliefs, concluded that practices of feedback are ultimately determined by teachers' beliefs even though they are also influenced by the institutional system.

Nevertheless, some researchers (Lee, 1997; Ellis, 2009a) have made different suggestions to facilitate changes in teacher beliefs, some of which might work well in the context of my study. For example, Lee (1997) suggests that one of the factors that facilitates change in feedback practices is the feasibility of change; i.e. teachers need to make sure that any change yields better results. This implication is pertinent in the context of this study. This is because the results showed that Teachers 2 and 3 did not have a clear vision about the long-term value of the approaches to teaching writing introduced in the course textbook and the project outline. For example, Teacher 2 thought grammar and mechanics of language were of wider use than the specific language related to particular types of essays introduced in the textbook.

To make the feasibility of change even clearer, teachers should be encouraged to conduct classroom research to evaluate the influence of their feedback

practices on students' response to the feedback. As discussed in the results chapter, some students from Groups 2 and 3 complained about their teachers' feedback because it covered simple grammatical areas that they already knew, and they felt they needed a higher level of feedback. Therefore, if Teachers 2 and 3 had known their students' attitudes towards their feedback, their practices might have changed, and they might have considered the areas of focus related to the college instructions for teaching EAP writing.

Alternatively, two other solutions might be suggested based on the results of this study. First, as presented in the results chapter, the teachers had to teach writing based on the instructions given in the course book or project outline because they were obliged to, but they did not provide feedback on the rhetorical conventions specific to different types of essay introduced in the book because they were given flexibility in their feedback practices. This suggests that, to ensure standardisation in teacher practices in giving feedback, there might be a need to make policy instructions about them, as in the case of the EAP writing pedagogy.

Second, another suggestion that could be offered based on the results of the study is to make a strong link between assessment and course objectives. Teachers 2 and 3 declared that the rhetorical conventions related to different types of essay were taught in the curriculum but were not part of the assessment criteria and so they did not have to provide feedback on them. This suggests a need for coordination between assessment criteria and course objectives. This suggestion is supported by Orrell's (2006) model of the teaching and learning process. Orrell sees that all processes of teaching, assessment, learning and feedback should be consistent with each other to provide a supportive environment for feedback practices. This suggestion will be further discussed in Section 5.4.1.

All in all, this discussion suggests it is essential to explore teacher beliefs about EAP writing when exploring the influence of the EAP context on teacher practices in giving feedback. This is because the college guidelines for EAP writing may not necessarily ensure standardisation in teacher practices in giving feedback.

5.3.3. Student Knowledge of Academic Conventions

Academic conventions refer to the forms, rules or norms required by EAP writing. In the context of my study, the academic conventions mostly address the rhetorical conventions of different types of essays, and research skills such as in-text citation, paraphrasing, summarising and quoting. It has been presented in the results chapter that students were given feedback on these academic conventions in their textbook-led writing and project writing. However, it was revealed that students' response to these conventions was not positive in terms of cognitive and attitudinal engagement. This section discusses the students' cognitive engagement with academic conventions while their attitudinal engagement will be discussed in the section that follows.

Student response to feedback that addresses academic conventions has been studied by some researchers (e.g. Lea and Street, 1998; Carless, 2006). For example, Lea and Street discussed the academic conventions of different disciplines. They found that the learning context is complex because students have to cope with new disciplinary knowledge and the switch between subjects. The findings of my study were further evidence for this argument. The students were found to have difficulty with understanding feedback associated with the academic conventions of EAP writing. As presented in the results chapter, some students did not understand feedback provided on referencing and essay rhetorical conventions. For example, students did not understand why they needed supporting evidence for their arguments if they could provide their own reasoning. This finding was also revealed in Al-Badwawi's (2011) study, which reported that students had difficulty incorporating information from references to argue their point of view because they did not understand the reason for requiring the use of references.

Because students did not understand the rationale behind some of the academic conventions of EAP writing, there was sometimes miscommunication between them and their teachers. One example is with regard to plagiarism. The teachers thought that students intentionally translated texts because they lacked confidence in their ability to write. The students thought that their

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teachers' comments were unfair because they did not think translation was a case of plagiarism. As indicated in the results chapter, students did not think that there was a need to put in-text citations for the general ideas they translated, summarised or paraphrased from internet texts. They also thought that, as long as they used their own words, translation was not a problem. This all means that miscommunication occurred because students did not know when, why and how to reference.

Miscommunication in feedback was discussed in Weaver's (2006) study. However, Weaver referred to student misinterpretation of teacher feedback rather than to teacher misinterpretation. He explained that comments like 'evidence of some wider reading shown' might be interpreted by students as a confirmation of their having carried out wider reading, though the teacher's intention was that they need to read more on the subject. On the other hand, in my study, miscommunication was found to occur because the teachers misinterpreted students' intentions as they thought students held similar understandings of academic conventions to theirs. The above paragraph demonstrated this case. Therefore, as agreed with Higgins (2001), feedback as communication is inherently problematic. That is to say, both teachers and their students can misinterpret each other's intentions if there is a lack of shared language between them.

Based on the above-mentioned findings, teachers need to provide accurate and comprehensible feedback in order not to leave their students feeling demoralised by 'unfair' feedback and make sure students share a similar understanding of the academic conventions. Student understanding of feedback was discussed widely in the literature chapter in terms of discourse, which is the language in which feedback comments are encoded (Higgins et al., 2001). It was emphasized that students need to understand the meaning of implicit feedback messages to get the most benefit from them (Lea and Street, 1998; Higgins et al., 2002; Sadler, 2009). This, then, leads to the suggestion to simplify the language of feedback to make it more comprehensible to students, which was also recommended by Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006).

However, simplifying the language of feedback may not be the perfect solution in the context of my study. Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006) and other researchers, such as Lee (1997) and Ferris (1995), found that the difficulty in understanding feedback was a matter of variation in student background and command of grammar, structures and vocabulary. However, in my study, the difficulty with feedback was not associated with students' knowledge of linguistic grammar or vocabulary but with their knowledge of academic conventions of EAP writing which covered research skills and essay rhetorical conventions. These teaching items could not have been ignored or even simplified because they were mandated by the course textbook and project outline. Therefore, students need to have a proper understanding of what constitute academic conventions to be part of the academic community and successfully access the discourse of this community.

The college introduces research skills over four weeks, and the rhetorical conventions of different types of essay in all units of the book; however, students still had difficulty mastering them. This could have been because the exposure to these academic conventions was still not adequate. Alternatively, it could be because these conventions had not been introduced properly by teachers, which this study has not fully investigated due to the limited observations. There were only six observations conducted per class: three project observations and three textbook-led observations.

Nevertheless, the results of this study suggest that students need training in utilising these academic conventions properly. For example, with regard to referencing, all students defined plagiarism accurately but, from follow-up interviews, it emerged that their understanding was at a superficial level because they did not know why, when and how to implement references accurately. These findings are in line with the study of Newell-Jones et al. (2005), which revealed that student inability to reference correctly was a matter of inadequate understanding of the process of using referencing, rather than with definitions of terms or conventions of source usage. Therefore, as Newell-Jones et al. suggested, students might benefit from interactive teaching or

teaching materials that focus on the process of using sources, rather than from teaching that focuses solely on definition of terms.

More supporting evidence for Omani students' need for practical training on research skills was provided by Al-Badwawi (2011) and Al Issaei (2012), whose studies were conducted in CoAS, as my study. Based on Al-Badwawi's PhD study, she found that students were provided with written instructions about the use of in-text referencing and the bibliography page; however, they were not practically trained in incorporating them. Al-Badwawi also reported difficulties her students faced with text-management skills that concerned paraphrasing and summarising from references, and this was because they had not been trained in developing these skills. Similarly, Al Issaei's (2012) study emphasised the need for giving students sufficient research-based activities to practise the skills of paraphrasing, summarising and referencing. Al Issaei stated that these skills are only introduced in project classes, and the course book does not address them at all. Therefore, the students might have needed more training and practice in research skills.

Alternatively, mastering academic conventions might be an issue of time. Students might need time to internalise research skills or essay rhetorical conventions. A simple introduction of these conventions in the Foundation Year might have been better. Al-Badwawi (2011) referred to this issue in her study when she indicated that there was a big gap in learning between Foundation Year and First Year in the CoAS in Oman; i.e. there was no smooth transition between the two stages of learning. She found that the requirements for writing tasks in the two years were totally different in that the students moved from writing simple paragraphs in the Foundation Year to writing different types of essays using research skills such as referencing in the First Year.

Finally, students might need to change their writing habits. The students were introduced to new teaching staff, so they have to accept new learning experiences and adapt to them. The students admitted that they used to copy and paste their research from the internet at school and their teachers would say nothing about it. This finding is supported by previous studies which found that one of the reasons for plagiarism is students' previous learning experience

which was based on memorising and imitation, and limited research (Gu and Brooks, 2008). Therefore, there is a need to react to students used to the new learning situation where they have to use research skills in their writing.

One way to move students to a new learning experience is to change their beliefs about EAP writing; i.e. make them appreciate the newly introduced academic conventions, which will be discussed below.

5.3.4. Student Beliefs about EAP Writing

Many studies have explored students' preferences and beliefs about feedback (e.g. Carless, 2006; Amrhein and Nassaji, 2010); however, none of them investigated the influence of students' beliefs about EAP writing on their response to feedback. Hyland (2010), in his overview of seven papers that investigated feedback in L2 writing, found that previous studies on feedback ignored student beliefs about writing. My study explored students' beliefs about EAP writing and found them responsible for students' response to feedback in some cases. This influence will be discussed in this section.

The analysis found that the students' learning experiences of EAP writing pedagogy shaped their preferences for focus of feedback. As stated by some students from Group 3, the majority of students in the CoAS came from General Education in school in which writing was mastered through acquiring grammar and mechanics of language, which reflects the product approach discussed in Section 5.3.1. Based on this experience of EAP writing, students were found to have preferences for feedback on grammar and the mechanics of language, such as spelling, punctuation and capitalisation. In fact, this preference was found to be the reason why Group 1 felt upset about their teacher's feedback which lacked grammar. Such findings are consistent with those of Hyland and Hyland (2006), who declare that it is quite normal for L2 writers to prefer feedback on grammar errors, especially if students come from a culture where teachers tend to be directive.

Therefore, this study supports Hyland's (2010) review, which emphasises that students' beliefs about EAP writing should be taken into consideration when investigating feedback, as these beliefs could be an essential influence on their response to feedback. In fact, students' beliefs about EAP writing explained their attitudes towards the academic conventions of the EAP module. As explained in the results chapter, some students were upset at having feedback on referencing and essay rhetorical conventions, not only because they did not understand them, but also because they did not believe in the value of these conventions for their subsequent studies. This was because they believed in the value of the product approach only. Therefore, their previous experience about EAP writing pedagogy created negative attitudes towards newly introduced academic conventions.

Student preference for the product approach also influenced their search for feedback. The results revealed that that most students sought feedback on the areas they felt positive about, namely grammar and mechanics of language. Therefore, they did not seek clarification on the academic conventions related to referencing and essay rhetorical conventions, except in their first draft when they sought feedback on referencing to earn marks, as will be discussed in Section 5.4.1. Indeed, further evidence for this case is provided by previous studies which demonstrated the influence of student attitudinal engagement with feedback on their behaviour towards feedback (e.g. Lea and Street, 1998; Carless, 2006; Mahfoodh and Pandian, 2011).

However, students need to accept their teachers' feedback related to referencing or essay rhetorical conventions, as these academic conventions are related to their course objectives. As discussed in Section 5.3.2, the EAP writing courses aim to prepare students for the writing requirements of academic courses in HE (Bruce, 2011) and the above-mentioned conventions are part of the requirements of the current EAP course in the CoAS. Therefore, this suggests that the students' beliefs about EAP writing are limited and need to change. This supports some studies (e.g. Diab, 2005; Amrhein and Nassaji, 2010) which concluded that student preferences for certain practices are not necessarily an indication of how to give effective feedback. The study of

Amrhein and Nassaji, for instance, showed that students had a preference for correcting all types of errors because they were not able to discriminate between less and more important errors or to know which errors interfered most with communicating ideas.

5.4. The Institutional Context

It was explained in the introduction to this chapter that the institutional context concerns the college's support for feedback, including teacher and student workload, deadlines, facilities, support in using and interpreting policies, and the linkage between teaching objectives, marking criteria and assessment tasks. This context has been referred to as a 'culture of feedback', a term used in a study of organizations outside education by London and Smither (2002). They define the 'culture of feedback' as "organization's support for feedback, including non-threatening behaviourally-focused feedback, coaching to help interpret and use feedback and a strong link between performance improvement and valued outcomes" (p.2). However, as emphasised earlier, in the introduction chapter, this study takes a broader definition of the culture of feedback: a set of practices implicitly understood and shared in the context. Based on the findings of this study, the culture of feedback covers three levels of context: local, EAP writing, and institutional. The local and the EAP writing contexts have been discussed in the previous two sections. This section deals with the institutional context, which includes two areas: assessment, and teaching and learning context.

5.4.1. The College Assessment

Assessment has been used and associated with 'the washback effect' in language assessment. As discussed in the literature chapter, several definitions exist in the literature for "washback". However, this study takes the narrower view which concerns the influence of assessment on teachers' and students' actions and behaviours (e.g. Messick, 1996, Elshawa et al., 2016). The college assessment is expected to direct teachers and students in their feedback

practices and ensure standardisation in practices. However, the results of this study suggest that the impact of assessment on feedback practices is determined by four contextual influences: 1) coordination between marking guide, assessment tasks and course objectives; 2) distribution of marks, 3) teacher assessment literacy, and 4) student familiarity with marking criteria. These influences will be discussed in the following sub-sections.

5.4.1.1. Coordination between the Marking Guide, Assessment Tasks and Course Objectives

It was mentioned in the literature chapter that feedback should meet the assessment objectives set by the institution (Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick, 2006; McGarrell and Verbeem, 2007). The results of my study have shown that the teachers did provide feedback in line with the marking criteria even though the criteria did not reflect their beliefs. For example, the three teachers were found to provide greater feedback on task achievement (a marking criterion) in project writing, though this area did not fit their beliefs about EAP writing. This finding is supported by previous studies (e.g. Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick, 2006; Lee, 2008, 2009) which found that the influence of assessment was so powerful that it restrained teachers from practising feedback based on their own preferences and beliefs. For example, Lee (2008) found that teachers had to put a strong emphasis on accuracy because it was the major focus of the examination. The teachers in her study showed that they felt disempowered to act on their beliefs because they did not want to be blamed for less than exemplary exam results. This all suggests that the marking criteria are means to standardise teachers' practices of feedback in the college.

Nevertheless, the marking criteria have to be coordinated with the course objectives and assessment tasks to ensure a high degree of standardisation in feedback practices. The course objectives of the current EAP course are based on teaching the rhetorical conventions of different types of essay, and the assessment tasks for project writing and final examination require students to select one type of essay that they studied in their course textbook. However, essay rhetorical conventions are not part of the assessment criteria. Therefore,

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neither Teacher 2 nor Teacher 3 provided feedback on these patterns. It has already been discussed, in Section 5.3.2, that this was because these areas conflict with the two teachers' beliefs about EAP writing pedagogy; Teachers 2 and 3 believed in the product approach to teaching writing that places emphasis on mastering grammar and mechanics of language (Zamel, 1985). However, another reason given by the two teachers was that essay rhetorical conventions were not part of the assessment criteria. Therefore, when the course objectives and assessment tasks were out of kilter with the marking criteria, their influence on feedback was reduced.

The above findings propose the need to adjust the course objectives, the marking criteria and the assessment tasks to be consistent with each other. For example, the points assessed should match the assessment tasks, as in essay rhetorical conventions. Similarly, the course objectives should be part of the assessment objectives. This is supported by Orrell (2006) and Hughes (1989), who stress the need to provide a supportive environment to help teachers adapt their teaching to feedback and assessment practices. For example, the model presented in Orrell's PhD dissertation, discussed in the literature chapter, suggests that all processes of teaching, learning, assessment and feedback should be consistent with each other. Orrell believes that even the classroom conditions should be mindful of these processes. With this consistency, the possibility of standardisation in the teachers' practices in giving feedback should increase.

5.4.1.2. Distribution of Marks in the EAP Module

As presented in the results chapter, half of the total marks in the EAP module go to project writing, half to the writing examination, with no marks for textbook-led writing. This distribution of marks was found to influence standardisation in teacher practices of feedback and student behavioural response to feedback, as will be discussed below.

5.4.1.2.1.   Standardization in Teacher Practices of Feedback

As discussed in Sections 5.3.1 and 5.4.1.1, the lack of standardisation in the practices of giving feedback in the college was a result of different interpretations of EAP writing and a lack of coordination between marking criteria, course objectives and assessment tasks. However, as will be discussed below, another cause of the lack of standardisation was the distribution of marks.

As found in the results chapter, teachers were more committed to basing their feedback on the marking criteria in project writing than in textbook-led writing. For example, in project writing, the three teachers were found to provide a lot of feedback on task achievement which is one of the marking criteria; while in textbook-led writing, Teachers 1 and 2 never gave feedback on this area and Teacher 3 only gave a little. The explanation found for this was the distribution of marks; project writing had 50% of the total marks while the textbook-led writing was not rated for assessment. Thus, the difference in mark weightings of textbook-led writing and project writing could be a reason for the lack of standardisation in the teachers' practices in giving feedback on these two types of writing. McGarrell and Verbeem (2007) and Orrell (2006) note that the institution should ensure consistency in the processes of teaching, learning, assessment and feedback practices. However, my study also proposes that consistency in the feedback practices could be strengthened if all types of writing are rated for assessment.

5.4.1.2.2.   Student Behavioural Engagement with Practical Writing and Writing Rated for Assessment

The distribution of marks was also found to impact student behavioural engagement with feedback. As a reminder, behavioural engagement refers to student uptake or revision of feedback (Ellis, 2010, cited in Han and Hyland, 2015). As mentioned above, project writing carried 50% of the total marks of the EAP course. This percentage was found to promote student behavioural engagement with feedback given to project writing. The findings showed that students took feedback provided on project writing more actively, in that they

attended to every comment their teacher gave, including the comments they were not convinced about. Such findings support many studies (e.g. Higgins et al., 2002; Carless, 2006; Weaver, 2006) which found that students became more engaged with feedback when it was set in the context of marking criteria. However, unlike the findings of my study, these previous studies were based on interviews and questionnaires and therefore they did not give evidence for actual student responses. My study used observations and analysis of students' writing to validate students' claims and so it substantiated the results with stronger evidence.

However, marks may also have negative impacts on student response to feedback. As shown in the results chapter, because the project was highly rated for assessment, students were found to rely excessively on external sources of feedback. For example, they got others to re-write their project for them or to act on feedback given on their project. One student from Group 2 even tore her paper when she saw it full of red comments and got her brother to write a new essay for her. The student did not think that she could possibly get a high mark with all those comments on her paper and therefore she resorted to a person whose writing ability she trusted. This reflects the arguments of previous educators, such as Gibbs and Simpson (2005) and Carless (2006), who contend that assessment can negatively impact student self-efficacy. They believe that assessment can reduce student learning and engagement with feedback.

Another negative impact of marks that my study found is student ignorance of feedback given to practical writing that is not rated for assessment, as in the case of textbook-led writing. As mentioned in the results chapter, the students rarely took specific action in response to feedback given to their textbook-led writing. This was due to the difference in assessment weighting between project writing and textbook-led writing: 50% for project writing and no marks to textbook-led writing. Therefore, when the writing was not assessed, feedback became less valuable to students. This is supported by Hay and Mathers (2012), who argue that extrinsic motivation (i.e. motivation by marks) diverts

students away from formative feedback towards the summative feedback that helps them obtain a passing grade.

While some students may have considered the feedback given on practical writing, this would have been less careful than for writing rated for assessment. The students of this study acknowledged that they might use feedback given on their textbook-led writing as a reference that would be needed for project writing or as a reference for the final examination. This was because both project writing and the final examination cover one type of essay introduced in the course textbook. However, such consideration was not shown in their actual practices. As mentioned above, students were found to ignore feedback provided on textbook-led writing.

As a solution to the negative impact of assessment, there is a need to make the long-term goals explicit in the course textbook or the course specifications. Students' commitment to feedback was not shown in the textbook-led writing, not only because it was not rated for assessment but also because they did not believe in the long-term value of their course. The students did not see how the essay rhetorical conventions introduced in the course textbook would be beneficial for their subsequent studies. Therefore, it might be valuable to clearly set out the long-term goals for students. In fact, based on the findings of some studies (e.g. Higgins, 2002; Carless, 2006), students do not have one single type of motivation; e.g. merely for raising grades. Rather, they have a combination of two motives: raising grades and improving learning. Therefore, there is a need to promote the two motives and not merely assessment.

5.4.1.3.   Teacher Assessment Literacy

Manning (2013) found that EAP teachers lacked understanding of the complexity of assessment development and interpretation. This was because the respondents did not have a clear framework or training in assessment practices and had never consulted the assessment literature. Rather, they developed their knowledge of assessment practices on the job. However, unlike Manning's study, based on the bibliographical data of the participants of my

study, mentioned in the method and methodology chapter in Section 3.3.2, the three teachers had different certificates and experience in teaching and assessment. Furthermore, the HoED indicated that EAP teachers in the college had chances for attending assessment workshops presented by the British Council. Therefore, the college leaders (the EAP coordinator, the HoED and PD) presumed that the EAP teachers implemented the assessment guidelines accurately.

However, such experience and knowledge were not always shown in the three teachers' interpretation of the assessment criteria. The results showed some cases when the three teachers did not implement the marking criteria in their feedback because they misinterpreted them. For example, Teacher 3 never provided feedback on the word limit criterion because she thought that this criterion was unfair. She explained that students would eventually get more marks if they wrote less because they would have fewer errors. This indicates that she did not fully understand the premise of the marking guide. Thus, because of misinterpretation of marking criteria, it is unsurprising to find different practices for the focus of feedback in the three classes. In fact, this was confirmed by Teacher 3, who acknowledged that she and her colleagues ended up not following the marking criteria and agreed on other marking criteria among themselves.

Accordingly, there is a need to train teachers in how to implement marking criteria properly. Schmitt and Hamp-Lyons (2015) point out that assessment literacy is essential to all EAP teachers because they are all involved in marking and rating student work in some way. Therefore, they believe that EAP teachers should take courses that help them to administer and interpret assessment. The college did not offer training and courses on assessment literacy. As indicated by the college leaders, the marking criteria were handed to teachers at the first meeting but there was no verbal explanation or training in how to apply them. Nevertheless, there is detailed information about each criterion in the written marking guide. However, the written documents were not found to guarantee the effective implementation of the marking guide by all teachers, as shown in the results chapter. This all suggests that training courses on assessment are

a necessity to ensure effective and standardised practices of assessment and feedback in the college.

5.4.1.4. Student Familiarity with Marking Criteria

The majority of students in this study did not know the marking criteria. Based on the interviews with college leaders, EAP teachers are expected to familiarise their students with the course marking criteria. However, the students' and the teachers' interviews gave conflicting reports about this issue: the teachers confirmed they did familiarise students with the marking criteria but 15 of the 18 students from the three groups disagreed with them. For instance, Teacher 1 insisted that he uploaded the marking criteria on to the Blackboard, but his students denied it.

Students need explicit access to the marking criteria. It could be possible that students did not know the marking criteria because they had forgotten them. For Group 1, in particular, this could be an issue of their knowledge of using technology which has been demonstrated in the findings of this study. Teacher 1 uploaded the marking criteria in the Blackboard, but the students might have not known how to download them from the Blackboard. Perhaps, then, it would be better if the marking criteria were explicitly stated in the course specifications so that students would be able to access them easily. Alternatively, the students need training in using technology.

Students need to be familiarised with the marking criteria to enhance their engagement with their teachers' feedback. Students themselves declared that the marking criteria would keep them goal-oriented. In fact, they were worried about plagiarism and emphasised that they needed to know whether it was rated for assessment. These findings are supported by some scholars who propose familiarising students with the marking criteria to make them goal-oriented and, therefore, more engaged with feedback (e.g. Higgins et al., 2002; Weaver, 2006). Weaver, for instance, found that students were less engaged with their feedback when it was not set in the context of assessment criteria.

The results of this research support the above-mentioned studies in that they show that students become less engaged with feedback if they are unfamiliar with the marking criteria. For instance, as revealed in the analysis, the students' engagement with feedback was selective. Their engagement with feedback went more to the areas they expected to be marked on. The expected areas were grammar and mechanics of language, which reflects their beliefs about EAP writing as discussed in Section 5.3.4. Therefore, if students knew the marking criteria, they might have given equal attention to all areas addressed in the feedback.

5.4.2. Teaching and Learning Context in the College

Some scholars (e.g. Coffin et al., 2005; Amrhein and Nassaji, 2010) have referred to structural constraints, such as the class size and the multiple demands of academic life, that go against dialogic, detailed and timely feedback. They suggest a need to provide a supportive teaching and learning context that enables teachers and students to practise their feedback effectively. Similarly, the results of this study reveal that there were constraints against some feedback practices, namely: 1) deadline for submission, 2) clarity of college instructions, and 3) college facilities.

5.4.2.1. Deadline for Submission

Dialogic feedback was found to be restricted by the deadline for project submission. Based on the data analysis, the three teachers managed to handle dialogic feedback in project writing until week 10 when they had to give face-to-face feedback a week before student presentation and two weeks before final submission for project writing. The deadline led to undesirable outcomes. For instance, some students from Class 1 did not have face-to-face feedback because their teacher ran out of time. Furthermore, some students from Class 3 had their oral discussion in Teacher 3's office or in textbook-led classes because their teacher did not have time to finish them all in project classes. Finally, four students from Group 2 had superficial feedback discussion

compared to their peers because they were last on the list and so their teacher was under pressure to finish them all on time. In fact, the students who were the last on the list had their feedback in week 11, which made them anxious to finish acting on their feedback before the deadline. As discussed in Section 5.2.2.3, some students from Group 2 had to resort to their relatives to act on their feedback because they were worried about submitting their work on time.

To manage the issue of deadlines and in particular time load, the study agreed with the Quality Assurance Agency's (QAA) Code of Practice on Assessment of Students (2000 cited in Weaver, 2006) which reported that it is the institution's responsibility to make sure that all processes of teaching, marking and giving feedback work together to facilitate learning. There is a need to reset the project outline to fit the teachers' practices. For example, there is a need to set more than a week for face-to-face sessions so that teachers are able to provide students with equal opportunities for face-to-face feedback on time. Deadline for submission should be extended so that students are able to act on feedback given in these sessions before the deadline. This would enable students to ask about any ambiguity related to the feedback given in individual discussion and therefore to act properly on their feedback. There is also a need to coordinate with other departments in terms of the submission dates for coursework. Group 2 felt under pressure because they had other submissions for different courses. This finding agrees with that of Al-Badwawi's study (2011), whose participating students complained that there was a lack of coordination between the departments and this was because all assessed coursework was due in the last few weeks before the final examination.

Alternatively, the face-to-face sessions might need to be supported with certain strategies to save time. The previous literature on feedback has proposed some suggestions for time management in giving feedback. For example, Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006) suggest having students reflect on the teachers' feedback and ask only about the comments that they do not understand; and Kathpalia and Heah (2010) recommend getting teachers to recognise their students' rhetorical and grammatical problems and then make these the focus of their feedback. Additionally, there might be a need to remove the face-to-face

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sessions from the project outline because students had already received feedback at the different stages of their writing. Teacher 3 emphasised that project writing allows them to give feedback in stages as they go through the writing processes of brainstorming, outlining, drafting, referencing and reviewing. This means that students might not have needed additional feedback.

> Teacher 3: … What I can do is to do that with the project; when they are doing the project, the sooner they start writing it, I can give more feedback, more help. (Teacher 3's Interview Following Observation 1)

As Zamel (1985) points out, treating student writing as a series of processes that continue over time gives a chance to give feedback in stages. In addition, the process writing encouraged students to seek other sources, such as friends and relatives, especially when they took their writing with them outside the class. This means that teacher effort and time could be saved. This supports Nicol et al (2011) and Kathpalia and Heah (2010), who point out that going through different stages may not necessarily increase teacher effort as they may get the students to do peer feedback at the intermediate stages.

5.4.2.2. Clarity of College Instructions

As discussed in Section 5.2.1, it was found that the students lacked self-directed learning in that they relied heavily on their teachers or utilised external sources of feedback to do the work for them instead of assisting them. One of the reasons found for their over-reliance on their teacher or external sources of feedback was their previous learning experience where their teacher had done everything for them. Some previous literature suggests that, in order to train students in the new learning experience of self-directed learning, the objectives of the first-year curriculum should be to train students to be self-regulating learners (Beaumont et al., 2008). This suggestion is literally implemented in the curriculum. The institution did provide opportunities for students to become self-directed learners through "Online Writing Tutor" and "Editing Your Writing". However, as will be discussed below, students did not utilise these tasks. Two contextual influences revealed in the analysis explain why students did not

utilise these sources: 1) lack of clarity of college instructions, and 2) lack of college facilities. This section has discussed the first contextual influence, while the second one will be discussed in the section that follows.

The students did not use the 'Editing Your Writing' section because there was a lack of instructions about how to use it. As stated by the first-year EAP coordinator, this section was designed to train students how to edit their own writing, through activities such as self-editing and peer-editing. However, the students thought that their teachers should cover this section as part of their teaching. This was because neither their teachers nor the college leaders had informed them about this section. Therefore, students just ignored it.

Nevertheless, the teachers themselves might not have been informed about the teaching of this section by the college leaders. It was found that Teacher 3 was confused about this section and thought it was supposed to be covered by teachers. As presented in the results chapter, Teacher 3 utilised two tasks from this section and she commented that she was obliged to cover the tasks in this section. Therefore, this might mean that teachers, also, had not received clear instructions about this section.

This confusion could be a result of lack of written instructions. None of the college policy documents, such as textbook or course description, refers to the implementation of this section. Therefore, this suggests a need to make some clarification on writing policy clearly. It is also the role of the EAP coordinator to make sure that teachers are aware of teaching this section. As discussed in the methodology chapter in Section 3.3.2, one of the responsibilities of the EAP coordinator is to supervise the EAP teachers in their teaching.

5.4.2.3. College Facilities

Another restriction to student practices of feedback could be the college facilities. There is an Online Writing Tutor which is a website that includes writing templates and sheets for self- and peer-editing tasks. As discussed in the literature, a writing template is a useful source of feedback as it engages

students with their writing (Handley and Wiliams, 2011). The Editor's sheets could also be a means to train students how to evaluate a piece of writing against a set of marking criteria, which is believed to be an effective method of developing student evaluative knowledge (Sadler, 2009). However, the students did not utilise this website. The results found that the limited access to computer and internet, as well as the lack of student training in utilising technology and in evaluating pieces of writing, minimised the use of this website.

First, one of the reasons that deterred students from utilising Online Writing Tutor was the low level of access to the internet and computers. The students pointed out that the internet in the college was too slow to access the activities in the website. In addition, they declared that not all computers in the lab were working. In fact, internet access and shortage of computers was mentioned in the Omani study conducted in the CoAS by Al-Bawawi (2011). Al-Badwawi found that there was a limited number of computers in these colleges' labs and that the internet was slow. Therefore, if students' claim about internet access and computer shortage is accurate, there is a need to find solutions for these problems.

Students also need training and support in utilising technology. As stated in the results chapter, the students' statements about the shortage of internet facilities and computers might only be excuses. This was because the students were found to be reluctant to use technology as they were not used to learning via technology. Therefore, this suggests the need to provide training courses for students to familiarise them with learning through technology and to enable them to use the online programmes. In fact, this suggestion was proposed by students themselves who thought that learning via technology could be useful if they knew how to use online programmes properly.

In addition to that, there is a need to train students in how to evaluate pieces of writing to get them to utilise the self-directed tasks included in the 'Online Writing Tutor' and 'Edit Your Writing' properly. As discussed in Section 5.2.1.2, students lacked evaluative knowledge, as was evident in the superficial feedback they provided to their peers' writing. This was because they were not

being supervised or trained to evaluate a piece of writing. Previous researchers have emphasised the need to develop students' ability to evaluate (e.g. Sadler, 2009; Hay and Mathers, 2012). Therefore, some training sessions on how to evaluate a piece of writing prior to performing tasks in the 'Online Writing Tutor' and 'Editing Your Writing' might help. Furthermore, the peer- and self-editor sheets should be followed by teacher-sheets to follow up students in their performance on these tasks.

5.5. Conclusion

In this chapter, the teachers' and students' practices of feedback have been discussed in the light of the particular contextual influences found in the college. The theories and findings of previous research have been reiterated to support the discussion of results. The chapter has attempted to discuss the complexities associated with the practices of giving feedback and student response to it using a model which was proposed to depict the influence of contextual influences on feedback. The model addresses three levels of context by which the practices of feedback were shaped: the local context, the EAP writing context, and the institutional context.

Some of the feedback practices of teachers and students were shaped by the local context that concerns the feedback interactions occurring between teacher and students or among students themselves. The results show that the interactions in the local context were impacted by three contextual influences: self-directed learning, practices in giving feedback, and teacher beliefs about feedback.

Other practices of feedback were shaped by the EAP writing context, which covered the demands made on student EAP writing. This context was found to impact teachers' practices of focus of feedback; the teachers gave feedback based on the EAP writing approach they followed or believed in. Some of students' responses to feedback were also a result of the EAP writing context. For example, students struggled to understand feedback that concerned certain academic writing conventions such as essay rhetorical conventions and

research skills. In other cases, they were not open to new academic conventions that were discordant with their beliefs about EAP writing.

Finally, the institutional context was also influential in understanding the practices of feedback. This is because some of the uses and interpretations of feedback were shaped by the assessment and teaching context, including deadline for submission, clarity of college instructions and college facilities.

In the next chapter, some practical implications of the findings and concluding remarks will be presented.

Chapter Six: Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1. Introduction

This final chapter draws together the conclusions of the research findings and gives recommendations based on these conclusions. It consists of four sections. The first one summarises the study and its key findings. The second section presents the limitations of the study and some thoughts for possible future research. Section three highlights the research's contribution to the field of feedback on EAP writing in HEI. The last section addresses the practical implications for teachers and college leaders, particularly those who are in charge of designing and selecting the materials and curriculum of the EAP course.

6.2. A Brief Overview of the Study and its Findings

This study was conducted to investigate feedback on EAP writing in an Omani HEI. One particular point of interest was exploring the contextual influences that shape first-year students' responses to feedback and their teachers' practices of feedback on EAP writing. The study addressed college policy about feedback and EAP writing, and teachers' and students' beliefs and practices about feedback and EAP.

To address the abovementioned issues, this study deployed a qualitative research design to explore feedback in detail in a natural setting. Three teachers and three student focus groups were selected from volunteers. The study utilised multiple sources of data collection to gain comprehensive and detailed accounts of the issues. For example, to get an overall picture of the college policy on feedback and EAP writing, the study analysed relevant written documents and then interviewed college leaders to get more insights about them. Then, the study interviewed teachers and students to get their beliefs about feedback and EAP writing. To get an actual picture of the feedback practices of teachers and students, the study utilised six observations per teacher, followed by interviews with teachers and students where they reflected

on their own practices. Finally, the study analysed students' marked writing and their second drafts to see how teachers practised written feedback and how students responded to it.

The main findings of this research addressed three practices of feedback: focus of feedback, direct and indirect feedback, and sources of feedback, which will be summarised below.

Focus of Feedback

The focus of feedback was found to be shaped by a set of contextual influences. For teachers' practices, it was found to be shaped by two contextual influences: EAP writing pedagogy and assessment. First, it was revealed that the teachers' feedback was sometimes based on college instructions for EAP writing, and, in other cases, it was based on teachers' beliefs about EAP writing. For instance, Teacher 1 provided much feedback on the academic conventions of EAP writing introduced in the course textbook and on the project outline, such as essay rhetorical conventions, plagiarism, and providing supporting evidence. On the other hand, both Teachers 2 and 3 gave greater feedback on grammar and the mechanics of language that form the basis of the product approach to teaching EAP writing that they believed in.

Second, assessment was also found to influence the teachers' focus of feedback. It was revealed that the three teachers shaped their feedback based on the course marking criteria. That is to say, the points they addressed in their feedback matched the marking criteria. However, the teachers' commitment to construct their feedback based on the marking criteria was affected by their interpretation of these criteria and the distribution of marks. Some teachers did not provide feedback on some criteria because they were not convinced about them. Furthermore, it was revealed that teachers' commitment to basing their feedback on the marking criteria was emphasised more in the writing that was highly rated for assessment than the writing that was not.

Students' response to the focus of feedback was found to be affected by three contextual influences: their understanding of the academic conventions of EAP writing, their beliefs about EAP writing, and their extrinsic motivation. For example, it was found that students had difficulty understanding feedback related to some academic writing conventions such as essay rhetorical conventions and research skills. Furthermore, they showed negative attitudes towards these newly introduced academic conventions. This was because these conventions contradicted their previous experience of learning EAP writing; students were used to learning writing through mastering grammar and the mechanics of language. Their attitudes towards these conventions were found to stimulate their behaviour towards feedback. For instance, they were found to do selective consultations about their writing, seeking feedback on the points they had preferences for, which were grammar and the mechanics of language.

Finally, students' response to feedback was determined by their extrinsic motivation, i.e., when students perceive feedback as a means to raise their marks (Weaver, 2006). Students were found to act on all feedback given to project writing, even the comments they were not convinced about or that were against their beliefs about EAP writing. This was because project writing was highly rated for assessment in the EAP module, with 50% of the total mark. In the same vein, they utilised the feedback given on textbook-led writing as a reference that could be needed in the project writing and the final exam. The textbook-led writing was not rated for assessment, but it covered the types of essays required in the project writing and the final exam.

Direct and Indirect Feedback

The practices for direct and indirect feedback varied depending on whether it was oral or written feedback. Teacher practices for oral feedback were mostly given indirectly due to teachers' beliefs about the value of indirect feedback on students' writing development, except in one case when the students had difficulty understanding the rhetorical conventions of different types of essays.

However, for written feedback, the practices for direct feedback exceeded indirect feedback. This was because the teachers sought the students' comprehension; i.e., they were concerned that indirect feedback might not be comprehensible since it does not provide a chance to check students' understanding. Finally, there were also some inconsistent practices for direct and indirect feedback depending on students' preferences and level of writing.

Students' responses to direct and indirect feedback also differed in oral and in written feedback. In oral feedback, all students felt satisfied to have indirect feedback because they felt a sense of achievement when they attempted to figure out the correct answers by themselves. However, they did not appreciate indirect written feedback because they had difficulty understanding it, such as difficulty in understanding the meaning of the correction symbols. Furthermore, they complained about feedback that contained underlines with one-word or two-word comments, such as 'rewrite', 'not clear', and 'not sentences' because they saw these comments as inadequate and needing more explanation.

Sources of Feedback

The results revealed that three practices of feedback occurred in the three classes or existed in the college relating to the 'sources of feedback': teacher practices for self-directed tasks, students' search for feedback, and the college tasks for self-directed learning.

First, the study analysed teachers' and students' practices for self-directed tasks conducted inside the classroom, such as self, peer, and group editing; in-class feedback; and student-teacher discussion. It was found that these practices were based on teachers' beliefs about their value for student learning. For example, they all provided in-class feedback because they believed that these tasks provide different insights concerning students' writing. However, students on their part did not respond positively to these autonomy-supporting tasks. For example, they did not bother acting properly on peer-editing tasks because 1) they did not believe they were a reliable source of feedback, 2) they

did not know how to perform them, and 3) they had difficulty providing feedback on academic conventions related to essay rhetorical conventions.

Second, the findings revealed that students themselves sought some feedback from different sources, such as their teachers, friends, relatives, and teachers from different departments. However, they were over-reliant on these sources of feedback in that they got others to write for them or act on their feedback. Their over-reliance was due to two reasons. First, when they were in school, students were used to over-rely on their teacher, who did everything for them. Second, they were anxious about their assessment and wanted to raise their marks by any means.

Finally, the analysis showed that the college provides some tasks for self-directed learning; however, none of the students utilised them. The college tasks included in 'Online Writing Tutor' and 'Editing Your Writing' offer guidance and activities for improving and editing academic writing, such as writing templates and self- and peer-editing sheets. The students did not use the 'Online Writing Tutor' because of the low internet speed, the shortage of computers in the college laboratories, and their lack of experience in learning via technology. For 'Editing Your Writing', the students thought this section should be covered by their teachers and, accordingly they did not use it.

6.3. Limitations of the Study and Further Research Directions

This study has some limitations which need to be acknowledged and that could be addressed by researchers in future research.

1. The students' final writing exam was not explored. It would have been valuable to see how students wrote their essays with regards to essay rhetorical patterns or how teachers marked the final exam based on the marking criteria.

2. The study conducted three textbook-led and three project observations per teacher. The analysis revealed that the number of observations was not adequate in some cases. For example, the observations did not fully

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cover whether the three teachers provided feedback on the processes instructed in the course textbook. Moreover, the number of project observations was also inadequate to explore how research skills were taught.

3. My study did not explore the suitability of the course demands in relation to the language level of students. However, this issue was identified indirectly to be a contributing factor in some practices of direct and indirect feedback.

The limitations listed above can provide insights for designing future research studies or caution when collecting data. For example, it is recommended that future research studies analyse students' final writing examinations to check how they are marked and how the students utilised the feedback given on their writing during the whole semester. Furthermore, it is recommended increasing the number of observations so that comprehensive data are obtained. In my study, the number of observations had to be limited based on the teachers' agreement and my timetable. Future research studies could use more than one researcher for the purpose of replicating the current study. Teachers and students could also be given incentives for their participation so that they willingly increase the number of observations and accept collaborating with the researcher(s).

With regard to the student language level, this issue should be greatly expanded in the study and investigated in depth. As will be clarified below, the study might have been enhanced if the issue of student language level had been explored in the analysis, in the contextual description of research setting, in interviews with both teachers and students and, in the literature review.

The analysis could be enhanced if the student language level were to be considered as a plausible contextual influence. One issue that could have a better analysis is *student knowledge of research skills.* The results showed that students encountered difficulties with the research skills of summarising, paraphrasing, and quoting in that they did not know how to reference properly, e.g., they did not know how to support their arguments and they plagiarised from texts. The analysis linked this issue to a lack of training on how to develop

research skills. However, another possible influence could be students' language level. Referring to Section 1.2.2 in the introduction chapter, the participating students were studying the EAP module, which is designed for students with an IELTS equivalence of 4.5. A look at the band descriptor for IELTS 4.5 writing (see Appendix 29) clearly shows that students at this level have a limited vocabulary repertoire and know a limited range of sentence structures. These are two key knowledge areas for students who are required to use research skills. Indeed, in the context of my study, the issue of language proficiency is perceived by the assessment developers to be an issue that affects the success of the project for both teachers and students. Based on the Project Specification (see Appendix 23), the following statement can be found in the section covering plagiarism: "It is important to realize that many students plagiarize, not because they are lazy, but because they simply cannot do what we ask of them with their own linguistic resources." This could be supported by Al-Badwawi (2011), who conducted her PhD study in the CoAS in Oman on first-year students' experience of EAP writing. She revealed that students had difficulty in paraphrasing and summarising from other documents because of their low language level. This clearly indicates that the language competence issues could be identified as a contributing factor in the practices of feedback.

Indeed, information about the students' language level was needed when analysing the issue of direct and indirect feedback. As discussed in the methodology chapter in Section 3.8, during the analysis, the teachers were requested to send the overall grades of their students (see Appendix 26). This was because students' level was indirectly identified as an influence on teachers' practices of direct feedback (see Section 4.3.1). This highlights the need to obtain further information regarding the contextual description of the research setting; in particular, this should address the description of the participating students. Based on the sampling procedures, the study followed the random sampling in the selection of students, i.e., the participants are chosen based on their willingness to participate. Therefore, obtaining information about the students' level of language was not the focus of this research. However, as demonstrated above, such information is needed to enhance the outcomes of the study. Researchers might also need to obtain

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information about students' writing proficiency in particular. The selected students might vary in their level of writing proficiency, as the IELTS score addresses four skills of language (speaking, listening, reading and writing) altogether rather than writing in particular. Thus, future researchers can explore the students' level of writing proficiency through a pre-test, which could be set with the help of their teachers.

Further information about students' language level could be also obtained through interviews. This issue of students' language level could be explored in depth if it were to be addressed as a probe in interviews with both teachers and students. The interview questions (see Appendices 2 to 8) focus on the five contextual influences listed in the literature review (the EAP writing, context for teaching and learning, assessment, beliefs of teachers and students, and self-directed learning), which were set as parameters for all aspects of the research. However, as indicated above, the level of language proficiency is an important issue in the study when discussing feedback on the project or writing on the course as a whole. Therefore, future research can include questions about students' level of language proficiency in relation to feedback practices. The questions can be formulated in relation to previous research that has explored the impact of learners' linguistic ability on feedback practices. The interviews following observations can include questions about how the teachers practised feedback on writing and whether they took their students' level of language into consideration. The students can be asked if they encounter difficulties related to their linguistic abilities when responding to their feedback. Some of these areas were identified indirectly while interviewing participants, such as the case of direct and indirect feedback. Therefore, the study could be enhanced if this issue were to be addressed directly in interviews and in more depth.

Finally, this study could also be enhanced if the student level of language were to be considered in the literature review in depth. The literature review places emphasis on the five contextual influences listed above, which were selected because they were relevant to the rationale and the objectives of the study. However, as emphasised, the language proficiency is an issue that should not be ignored when discussing feedback practices on academic writing, and so it

should also be considered as an organiser for the literature review and for the subsequent analysis of data. For example, the literature review could include the issues of direct and indirect feedback and students' understanding of academic conventions in relation to the language levels of the student participants in a language course. These issues have been discussed superficially in the literature review (Sections 2.3 and 2.4.1.2). For example, referring to Section 2.3 in the literature review, Storch and Wigglesworth (2010) found that learners' ability to make use of direct and indirect feedback was a function of their developing proficiency. Such areas, then, need to be expanded and supported with relevant research findings.

6.4. Contribution to Knowledge

Whilst acknowledging the limitations of the study in Section 6.3., the study makes several contributions to research in understanding the process of feedback on EAP writing. First, the results revealed in this study are valuable to Omani HEIs, particularly CoAS because, as indicated at the end of the literature chapter, there has been almost no attempt to explore how feedback is interpreted, developed, and enacted in an Omani HEI. I explained that most of the relevant studies conducted in Oman have dealt with the beliefs of participants about feedback and ignored their actual practices and the influence of college policies on feedback practices. The study then is valuable to teachers, students, and college leaders in the CoAS, who utilise different types of feedback practices with HE students and who are engaged with coordinating the teaching of EAP writing courses. Furthermore, this study also contributes knowledge to the existing literature on feedback. Although the issue of feedback has been widely investigated in the field of L2 writing, as discussed in the literature chapter, this study offers some further insights into this issue, which may contribute to the larger picture presented by previous research. In this, the feedback process is socially constructed and constrained by the needs, demands, and expectations of the teachers, students, and college leaders. As will be discussed below, there are six significant contributions that could be added to this field of study. These contributions might be of benefit to linguistic researchers, EAP teachers, students, and policy makers who are in charge of designing college programmes.

The current findings did not support the over-simplistic view of feedback that has been adopted by some previous research (e.g., Lalande, 1982; Robb et al., 1986; Ferris Roberts, 2001) whereby a message (feedback) is transferred from a sender (teacher) to a receiver (student) through a medium (e.g., written comments). Rather, they support a more complex perspective of the feedback process, which takes into consideration a multitude of contextual influences that shape teachers' and students' practices of feedback. For instance, students' engagement with feedback was found to be selective due to influences such as assessment, beliefs about EAP writing, and sources of feedback. Students, for example, tended to ignore feedback provided on practical writing, such as

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textbook-led writing, but paid significant attention to feedback provided on writing rated for assessment, as in project writing. Moreover, the selective response was evident in students' behavioural engagement with the focus of feedback. Students were found to seek consultation for their writing only regarding the areas they felt were necessary for developing their EAP writing, which were grammar and the mechanics of language. Finally, they were also selective in choosing the sources of feedback. Students regarded their teacher to be the only reliable source of feedback, and accordingly, they avoided seeking help from their peers or looking for guidance from textbooks. The results then propose a new perspective by arguing that the feedback process is context-dependent and thus suggesting a more situated view of feedback practices.

However, the social construction of feedback practices should not be viewed from separate contextual influences, but from an integrated approach. The context of my study suggests there were different interrelated sources of feedback and guidance in first-year EAP writing. The production of a piece of writing was found to be shaped by college policies for feedback and teaching activities, and by the understandings and beliefs of individual teachers and students about what constitutes good writing. Therefore, this study proposes it is essential to consider the three groups (i.e., policy makers, teachers, and students) altogether in terms of how their practices and beliefs converge. In other words, it is important to identify and evaluate the practices of the three groups and consider how they understand and negotiate with each other. This was clearly evident in the three groups' practices of self-directed learning, presented in Section 4.4 in the results chapter. Exploring teacher practices for self-directed tasks, students' search for feedback, and college tasks for self-directed learning was essential in understanding the issue of student self-directed learning in the CoAS. The comprehensive investigation of the three groups' practices helped to evaluate how the three groups complemented each other and provided a better understanding of how mismatches in expectations occurred. Thus, despite the many studies that have explored the three groups separately, such as the studies that explored the impact of teachers' and students' beliefs on their practices (e.g., Orrell, 2006; Mahfoodh and Pandian,

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2011), this study is unique in studying all three in an interrelated way in an Omani context.

Furthermore, the feedback practices should also be investigated from three levels of context: local, EAP writing, and institution. The results revealed the three levels were sometimes connected with each other. For example, it was revealed that the teachers' practices for indirect feedback were sometimes affected by students' knowledge of the academic conventions of EAP writing. Teacher 1 had to provide greater direct oral feedback because his students did not know how to provide feedback on essay rhetorical conventions. Another relevant example is that teachers were more conscientious in structuring their feedback on the academic conventions of the EAP course when they were connected with the marking criteria. The essay rhetorical conventions introduced in the course textbook were not rated for assessment, so Teachers 2 and 3 did not provide feedback on them. Therefore, the present study suggests that the three levels of context are linked in the practices of feedback, which was not emphasised in some existing literature, which examined feedback practices merely from the local level of context (e.g., Lalande, 1982; Robb et al., 1986; Ferris and Roberts, 2001).

In addition, regarding participants' beliefs about feedback, this study argues that it is important to explore the reasons behind them. Students' and teachers' beliefs about feedback on EAP writing and the origins of such beliefs could both be parallel reasons for feedback practices. One relevant instance from the results of the study is students' beliefs about EAP writing. It was found that students tended to believe more in the value of the product approach to their writing development, which is based on the textual manipulation of fixed linguistic forms and structures to produce new writing (Paltridge, 2004). Therefore, they tended to respond more effectively to feedback provided on the mechanics of language and grammar rather than on other aspects of writing, such as essay rhetorical conventions. However, to understand this issue in depth, it is also equally important to know that the origin of their beliefs was their previous learning experience in school, which was based mainly on the product approach, as demonstrated in the results chapter. Therefore, both aspects - the

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students' beliefs about EAP writing and the origins of these beliefs - were significant in understanding their response to feedback. Thus, this research then necessitates the investigation of both beliefs and their origins, which have not been considered in the previous research (e.g., Maclellan, 2001; Carless, 2006; Beaumont et al., 2008; Amrhein and Nassaji, 2010).

The study also signifies the impact of beliefs and practices of EAP writing combined. The results of the current study, for instance, showed that teachers do not necessarily base their feedback on the approach to teaching writing that they follow as has been demonstrated in previous research (e.g., Zamel, 1985). Rather, they sometimes base their feedback on their beliefs in the EAP writing pedagogy even though they follow a different approach from the one they believe in. In fact, this could explain one conflict found between the results of my study and those of Zamel's study (1985). Zamel found that teaching writing as a process diverts teachers from giving much feedback on mechanical accuracy and the surface features of language. However, my results showed that Teachers 2 and 3 taught project writing as a process, but they still provided greater feedback on grammar and the mechanics of language. This was because the two teachers believed in the product approach, which is based on the manipulation of linguistic forms and structures. Thus, this research is unique because it advances our understanding of the impact of EAP writing on feedback practices and offers more accurate recommendations for feedback practices.

Finally, the present research proposes that it is crucial to include multiple methods of data collection to complement each other in understanding the practices of feedback. It has been mentioned in Section 2.6.3 that most studies on feedback have relied on interviews and surveys to explore feedback practices (e.g., Maclellan, 2001; Higgins et al., 2002; Diab, 2005; Weaver, 2006; Carless, 2006; Beaumont et al., 2008; Lee, 2008; Amrhein and Nassaji, 2010; Al-Badwawi, 2011; Al Issaei, 2012; Emenyeonu, 2012). However, the results of my study suggest that investigating feedback merely through interviews or questionnaires can lead to superficial data that do not give an accurate picture of feedback practices in the institution. As an example, Teachers 1 and 2 stated

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in their follow-up interviews that they supplemented the peer-and group-editing tasks with their feedback because students were unable to do these tasks on their own. However, based on class observations, it emerged that such reasoning indicates their limited knowledge about performing peer editing tasks. This was because these teachers did not adequately supervise their students on these tasks, and therefore, it is difficult to understand how they made their judgement. As discussed in the literature chapter, to conduct self-directed tasks, teachers need first to change students' perceptions about these tasks (Hyland, 2000; Amrhein and Nassaji, 2010). Moreover, they need to provide systematic training and supervision while conducting these tasks (Ferris, 2003; Kathpalia and Heah, 2017). Besides, they need to persuade their students to evaluate pieces of writing practically against the marking criteria so that they develop their evaluative knowledge (Sadler, 2009). Thus, the multiple methods of data collection helped to double-check what was said in interviews and to articulate the conditions in which the efficiency of feedback practices is likely to be affective.

To conclude, this study emphasises that feedback is a complex process. It does not take the simplistic view that 'feedback practices lead to revision' or 'beliefs about feedback lead to actual practices', as was discussed in the literature chapter. Rather, it is a process that needs to be understood from multiple dimensions, using different methods of data collection and giving consideration to the practices and beliefs of three groups: students, teachers, and college leaders.

6.5. Implications for Feedback Practices

As shown in the discussion chapter, some changes need to be made to social practices as well as to functional aspects of feedback, such as changes to the assignment deadline, the EAP writing pedagogy, the assessment tasks, the practices for self-directed learning, the language of feedback, and the students' and teachers' beliefs. There is a need to make changes on how these practices are handled in the institution in order to enhance the outcomes of feedback. For example, with regard to assessment, the changes should concern the following:

- supporting teachers in their assessment literacy

- familiarising students with marking criteria, and

- making a strong coordination between course objectives, assessment tasks and marking criteria.

In the introduction chapter, it was stated that change management is the basis for development in any institution. Change management concerns helping employees receive the coaching, training, leadership, and awareness that they need to achieve the required goals (Fullan, 2002, 2008; Hayes, 2014). Fullan (2008) outlined some suggestions to guide and monitor development in institutions, such as showing respect to teachers' and students' work, hiring employees who have potential and then continuing developing their skills and knowledge, and providing ongoing and clear access to seeing the outcomes of teachers' and students' efforts to ensure continuous success. Similarly, Lee (2011) referred to some factors that may facilitate or inhibit development in teachers' feedback practices: teacher training; support from the school principals and parents; feasibility of change (i.e., teachers need to make sure that this change yields better results), and practical constraints such as the size of classes, the workloads, and teaching schedules. Likewise, this study attempts to provide some recommendations for change management in the institution addressing mainly the needed changes outlined in the discussion chapter.

Based on the results of this study, making changes in the feedback practices involves all stakeholders (i.e., policy makers, teachers, and students). At the end of the literature chapter, it was stated that this study aims to explore feedback from a hierarchical approach: institution's, teachers' and students' practices and beliefs. The study did not assume that one hierarchy replaces or supersedes another; rather, it sees that all the hierarchies may complement each other. The results of this study support this view and propose that the three groups should work collaboratively to enhance the quality of feedback given on students' EAP writing. In fact, previous scholars, such as Black and Willian (1998) and Nicol and Macfarlane (2004), have stated that AfL should involve

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the active and collaborative construction of meaning. Black and Wiliam, for instance, believed that feedback should not be the responsibility only of teachers. Rather, the college policy makers and students should also collaborate to enhance the quality of feedback. Lea and Street (1998) also contended that meaning is contested between three different parties: the institution, the teachers, and students. Thus, my study gives importance not only to the role of the institution but also to teachers' and students' practices. The implications offered in this study, then, are for students, teachers, and college leaders, particularly those in charge of designing and selecting the materials and curriculum of the EAP course.

The following sub-sections offer five key aspects of change management giving an analysis of the changes that need to be made in the practices of feedback, and how they should be addressed. The analysis mainly concerns the context of this study: practices of feedback in the CoAS in Oman. Nevertheless, these implications might also be applicable to other colleges in Oman, in other Arab countries, and in other countries that share contexts similar to the CoAS in Oman.

6.5.1. Showing the Value of Teachers' and Students' Efforts

One of the changes that need to be made in the context of my study is to replace the unsupportive teaching and learning environment with a more positive context. Fullan (2008) emphasised that employers need to show respect for employees' efforts in order to promote them to work effectively. However, this study found that the environment in the college did not provide much encouragement and promotion for students and teachers to work. First, based on the class observations and the analysis of student texts, most of the teachers' comments were negative, focusing mainly on the drawbacks of student writing and ignoring the positive aspects of it. Similarly, teachers did not receive any promotion or any compliments for their practices from college leaders. This all suggests that there was a lack of any encouraging environment in the institution that might motivate both students and their teachers to enhance their feedback practices.

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Negative feedback in particular was found to affect students' self-efficacy and created negative behavioural responses to feedback. This was revealed in Group 2, who lost their confidence in their ability to write when they saw their project writing full of negative comments. One student, for instance, destroyed her paper and got her brother to rewrite her essay from the start. The student did not think she could possibly deal with all the comments in her paper especially since she did not understand them. There is a need, then, to give more positive feedback on students' writing to maintain their self-efficacy.

Furthermore, the negative comments should be dealt with carefully. In previous literature, there have been various suggestions to reduce the negative impact of criticism. For example, Hyland and Hyland (2001) suggested the use of the mitigation strategies to soften criticism and thus keep student motivation and self-confidence at a sustainable level. The strategies they proposed are 1) hedging devices, such as the use of modal verbs and imprecise quantifiers; 2) questions forms, such as 'Does it need more supporting statements?'; and 3) personal attribution, such as 'I find it difficult to see the connections between the paragraphs'. Similarly, Lea and Street (1998) suggested avoiding comments in imperative forms and using mitigated comments instead, such as 'in my opinion ...', as such comments show respect for the student's work. In the context of my study in particular, it was shown that most of the comments that students received were in the form of imperatives, such as 'rewrite'. Thus, students might have needed less authoritative feedback to react more positively to negative feedback, such as, 'In my opinion/I think you need to rewrite this paragraph to make it more comprehensible'.

Teachers also need to have compliments and encouragement for their efforts in their practices of feedback and EAP writing. As shown in the results, teachers were given total flexibility in their feedback practices except in the face-to-face sessions conducted in project writing. However, teachers might feel more enthusiastic about enhancing their practices when others such as their leaders show an interest in their efforts in improving students' writing and value their achievement. One possible way of doing that in the context of my study might be to activate 'Google Site' –a website designed for communication with and

between academic tutors in the CoAS. Based on the results of this study, this internet tool was deployed only for downloading some instructions for teaching writing though this was also rare. The tool could possibly be used to show off teachers' efforts in their practices. The EAP coordinator can frequently open blogs for discussion about teaching EAP writing and giving feedback so that teachers actively share their ideas based on their experience. Teachers might be also promoted to conduct research about giving feedback and receive credit for such research from the college leaders. Furthermore, more workshops should be conducted in the college to increase opportunities for sharing ideas. Certificates of attendance and presentation can motivate teachers to participate in these workshops and thus learn and share new ideas about giving feedback.

6.5.2. Minimising Structural Constraints

In the context of my study, some structural problems were found to be barriers to students' and teachers' practices of feedback. For instance, one problem found was the lack of access to computers and the internet, which students stated as one reason for not utilising the 'Online Writing Tutor' set up by the college. In fact, this problem was also mentioned in the PhD study of AL Bawawi (2011), which was conducted in the same college as my study, CoAS. Therefore, if the college leaders want to provide online resources for students, then there is a need to make sure that all students have access to computers and the internet, or otherwise, there would be no guarantee that students would be able to utilise them.

In addition to the above structural constraints, another problem found was about managing face-to-face sessions. The college gave teachers instructions to provide face-to-face feedback sessions on students' project writing. However, the policy makers did not consider certain structural problems associated with these sessions, such as the number of students, deadline for submission, and other work submissions from other modules. For example, because of the deadline, teachers struggled to provide these sessions to all students on time. Teacher 1, for instance, provided face-to-face feedback to some students, and the rest were given only written feedback, Teacher 2 ran out of time and had to

give only superficial discussions to those students who were the last on the list, and Teacher 3 had to finish these sessions in her office hours and textbook-led classes. Students also suffered from problems with deadlines as they had to act on their feedback in the short time remaining before the deadline. Furthermore, students had submissions from other modules, and this meant they were worried about submitting their work on time.

Therefore, changes need to be made in the timing of the face-to-face feedback sessions or deadlines so that students and teachers have ample time to finish their work and so there are no clashes with the deadline for submission for other projects. Alternatively, the face-to-face sessions could be set at intervals by distributing them across different lessons throughout the semester to avoid accumulating individual sessions in one lesson. In addition, to save time, these sessions could be limited to students' inquiries about ambiguities they have with their written feedback.

6.5.3. Communicating College Policy and Guidance

There was a lack of effective communication about the college policy and guidance in the CoAS. This was revealed in three areas. The first one was with regard to the marking criteria. The majority of students (15 out of the 18 from the three groups) did not know the marking criteria. According to the EAP coordinator, it is the teacher's responsibility to familiarise students with the marking criteria for their project writing. However, there was conflict between teachers' and students' declarations. Students pointed out that their teachers never told them about the marking criteria, while the teachers denied this and confirmed that they had familiarised their students with the criteria since the beginning of the semester.

Another miscommunication was with regard to the 'Editing Your Writing' section, which exists at the end of each unit in the course textbook. The EAP coordinator stated that this section was designed for students to enhance their self-directed learning. However, the students did not utilise it because they thought that this section was supposed to be taught by the teachers. Obviously,

this should be their teacher's responsibility to clearly inform their students about this section. However, the teachers might themselves have never been informed about teaching this section. This is because, as shown in the results, Teacher 3 utilised two tasks from this section and commented in one of her interviews that she had to conduct these tasks because she was obliged to cover all the activities in the course textbook.

Finally, the EAP coordinator had uploaded a list of correction symbols onto the Google Site (see Appendix 21), but the three teachers were unaware of them. This was because they used different types of symbols. In fact, the teachers expressed concern in their interviews regarding the inconsistent uses of correction symbols among different teachers. Teacher 2, for instance, emphasised that there should be standardised correction symbols and that it is the institution's responsibility to enforce college-wide correction codes.

The three abovementioned problems suggest there is a need to enhance the communication of instructions in the college. The college had attempted to reinforce communication in the college; however, the results showed that the college's attempts were a failure. For instance, the college used the Google Site, mentioned in Section 6.4.1, which is designed for communication with and between academic tutors in the college. However, as said earlier, this website was rarely used by teachers. So, it is necessary, first, to get teachers involved actively in this website prior to uploading any college instructions on it.

In addition, the college utilised a website called 'Blackboard' to facilitate communication between teachers and their students; however, the subject teachers were not observed to use the website except for Teacher 1, who used it twice - for uploading a conclusion of an essay and for uploading the marking criteria. Therefore, there is a need to activate the use of this website among teachers and students. Furthermore, students need training in using such websites. The results showed that the students were not knowledgeable about using internet tools, which could be another obstacle to communication between teachers and their students. This, in fact, could be the reason why Group 1 declared that their teachers never told them about the marking criteria as Teacher 1 uploaded them in the blackboard.

Alternatively, to reinforce communication between teachers and college leaders or teachers and their students, clear written instructions must be given in the college documents. For example, the marking criteria and the correction symbols could be included in the course description or project outline. The teaching of 'Editing Your Writing' could be clarified in the course description. The teaching of this section might be also included in the course textbook itself. According to the EAP coordinator, some changes were made in the course textbook based on some teachers' suggestions. In fact, the names of the teachers from CoAS who shared their views and opinions are listed at the back of the book (see Appendix 28). Therefore, college teachers and the EAP coordinator can send their suggestions for amendments to the publisher of the textbook, 'Effective Academic Writing' (Savage and Mayer, 2012), in Oxford.

6.5.4. Building the Competency of Teachers and Students

The results suggest that there is a need to increase teachers' and students' competency; i.e., participants' skills and knowledge (Fullan, 2008). The competency should be developed in three areas: teacher assessment literacy, student assessment capability, and student knowledge about the academic conventions of EAP writing. The following three sub-sections offer an analysis of these areas and indicate the changes that need to be made.

6.5.4.1. Assessment Literacy

Based on the results, some teachers lacked assessment literacy (e.g., they misunderstood some of the marking criteria), and this negatively affected their feedback practices. For instance, Teacher 3 never provided feedback on the word limit, which is one of the areas stated in the task achievement criterion. This was because she thought that it unfair to penalise students for something that they had already been penalised for. She believed that the more students write, the more they will have errors in their writing and accordingly she thought there was no need to penalise them for exceeding the word count. This means that she did not understand the whole premise of the marking criteria.

Thus, teachers need to develop their assessment literacy to enhance their practices. As shown in the methodology chapter in Section 3.3.2., the three participating teachers had different teaching certificates and levels of experience. Teachers might or might not have taken courses on assessment before and if they have, they might not have experience of assessing pieces of writing. Fullan (2008) declared it is not enough to hire employees who have potential; rather, there is a need to further develop their competencies. In this case, the policy makers might need to provide workshops or courses in assessment for teachers. Perhaps these workshops need to be obligatory to ensure the effective application of the marking criteria. The importance of assessment literacy has been commented on by a group of scholars (Higgins et al., 2002; Manning, 2013; Schmitt and Hamp-Lyons, 2015). Schmitt and Hamp-Lyons, for instance, believed that all EAP teachers should take courses that help them to administer and interpret assessment.

6.5.4.2. Student Assessment Capability

In the introduction chapter, it was discussed that students' complaints about college policy could be associated with the suitability of the course demands to their prior experience of feedback practices and their understanding of academic conventions of EAP writing. The results of this study support such speculation and give evidence for it. This was shown in two cases: 1) students' assessment capability and their knowledge of the academic conventions of EAP writing. The first case will be discussed in this section while the other case will be discussed in the section that follows.

There is a need to develop students' assessment capability in the context of my study. Students did not know how to evaluate a piece of work. This was shown in the superficial feedback they provided in the self-directed tasks (e.g., in-class feedback and self-, peer- and group-editing tasks) that they performed in their writing classes. Group 3, for instance, declared that they did not know how to conduct the peer-editing task that their teachers asked them to do. They pointed out that the task was new to them; therefore, it was difficult for them to evaluate their peers' writing. The findings of this study, then, suggest that to get students

to conduct self-directed tasks properly, there is a need first to develop their assessment capability.

Perhaps one strategy to develop students' assessment capability is to provide the self-directed tasks consistently. Ferris (2003) emphasised that the benefits of these tasks emerge when they are constantly and systematically implemented. This was evident in Teacher 2's feedback practices. According to Teacher 2, the results of such tasks do not emerge immediately; it takes time to enable students to evaluate a piece of writing. Teacher 2 spent time trying to elicit answers from students, and after several attempts, the students; ability to spot their own errors improved. In fact, some previous research (e.g., Lalande, 1982) has provided further evidence of the long-term benefits of these tasks.

Furthermore, students need supervision and training in performing self-directed tasks in order to develop their assessment capability. Kathpalia and Hea (2010) emphasised the need for prior training and proper structuring for peer editing tasks. However, the results of this study show that the three teachers did not make much effort in structuring the self-directed tasks. For instance, Teachers 1 and 3 did not go through the class to check their students' performance of self-directed tasks, and Teacher 2 supervised only those students who were sitting in the front and side rows. Teacher 2 also did not ask his students to follow any particular criteria when they assessed their peers' writing while Teacher 3 did not give the students ample time to answer all questions given in a peer-editing task. This all indicates that teachers need to plan these tasks properly in advance, supervise students while they are performing self-directed tasks, and train students in utilising them properly through getting them to compare and evaluate their own or their peers' writing against the marking criteria.

The marking criteria in particular should be a means to orient students in achieving their goals and thus a means to develop their assessment capability. Some scholars, such as Hattie and Timperley (2007) and Maclellan (2001), have emphasised that to help students accomplish their tasks, feedback has to be set in the context of the marking criteria so that students know 'where they are going'. However, as discussed in Section 6.4.3, the majority of students

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were not familiar with the marking criteria of the EAP module. Therefore, there is a need first to familiarise students with the marking criteria to keep them goal-oriented.

6.5.4.3. Students' Knowledge of EAP Writing Conventions

Based on the findings of this study, the students struggled to cope with the teaching objectives of the EAP writing. The objectives concern the following:

1. teaching students how to undertake a small-scale piece of secondary research (i.e., it involves reviewing other people's work)

2. enabling students to write from sentence level to different types of researched essays with the emphasis on the specific rhetorical conventions of each type of essay.

The analysis showed that the students had difficulty conducting research using the research skills of summarising, paraphrasing, and quoting. They had difficulty understanding why and when to reference. For instance, they did not seem to know the reason for using in-text citations for something they had summarised, paraphrased or translated. This was because they thought that since they had written the texts in their own words, this should not be counted as plagiarism. In addition, the students also had difficulty differentiating between different rhetorical conventions of different types of essay. They stated that due to the fine differences in the patterns of different essays, they were unable to master them.

Students in this study were not prepared regarding the use of the academic conventions of their EAP writing module, namely, the research skills and rhetorical conventions of different types of essay. As presented in the introduction chapter, at the Foundation Year (FY), there is an English placement test which sorts students into four levels: A, B, C, and D. Students have to pass these levels before going into their Year 1. These levels cover courses which aim to develop students' English proficiency level to help them cope with First Year requirements. However, based on the results of this study, there is still a

big gap between the objectives of academic writing courses of the FY and Year 1; the students move from writing simple paragraphs in the FY to writing different types of essay using research skills such as referencing in Year 1. In such a case, the college should ensure a smooth transition between the two stages of learning. For example, it could be better to have at least a simple introduction to these academic conventions earlier in the FY. This would allow students to internalise these conventions gradually. In other words, they would be more prepared for these requirements when they join their EAP courses.

In addition, it is not enough to give oral or written instructions about the use of academic conventions in writing. Rather, students need to be practically trained on incorporating them. As shown in the results, students did not have problems with the definitions of terms, but with implementation of them in their writing. The students, for instance, defined the word 'plagiarism' accurately; however, in their actual writing practices, they did not implement it correctly. Therefore, students would benefit more from interactive teaching that focuses on the processes of newly introduced academic conventions. Teachers should organise some relevant tasks and activities throughout the semester to help students utilise the academic conventions appropriately. With regard to research skills, the course textbook does not address them at all. Therefore, it could be more beneficial if these skills were integrated in the textbook tasks and activities.

6.5.5. Transparency

Another change that needs to be made in the institution is transparency so that both teachers and students have a clear display of the outcomes of their efforts and continuous access to practice. Transparency is particularly needed in the long-term objectives of the EAP course and in the coordination between course objectives, assessment tasks, and marking criteria.

6.5.5.1. Long-term Objectives of the EAP Course

Students in the three groups and Teachers 2 and 3 did not believe in the values of the course textbook's objectives. The textbook-led writing concentrates on teaching different types of essay, placing emphasis on their rhetorical conventions. However, the two teachers and the students declared in many of their interviews that they did not see the value of such conventions for the development of EAP writing. Teacher 2, for instance, thought that grammar and the mechanics of language are more of common use than essay rhetorical conventions that are to be used for specific types of essay only.

Such attitudes towards these conventions led to negative engagement with the feedback associated with essay rhetorical conventions. For students, Group 1 who received feedback on essay rhetorical conventions on their textbook-led writing, showed a negative emotional engagement with their feedback. They were upset because their teacher rarely provided them with feedback on grammar and the mechanics of language, as they had been used to in their previous learning. In fact, such attitudes also affected their search for feedback. All three groups were found to seek feedback on grammar and the mechanics of language rather than on essay rhetorical conventions.

Teachers 2 and 3 as well did not provide any feedback on essay rhetorical conventions, which are the main objective of the textbook-led writing. Rather, their feedback mainly concerned grammar and the mechanics of language. This was based on their beliefs about EAP writing. The two teachers thought that writing is best taught through grammar and the mechanics of language, which forms the basis of the product approach to teaching EAP writing. In fact, teachers in the CoAS were not obliged to provide feedback on certain conventions, as they were given flexibility in their practices. Therefore, it was unsurprising to see teachers giving feedback on their preferences.

Teachers' and students' negative attitudes towards essay rhetorical conventions were a result of a lack of clarity about their values for EAP writing. The reason for introducing essay rhetorical conventions is because these academic conventions are expected to have long-term benefits on students' subject-domain essays. In other words, the students will be required to use

essay rhetorical conventions when they write their subject-domain essays. Therefore, the benefits are far from immediately clear to students and teachers. In fact, the results showed that some teachers and students had seen evidence of the lack of value of these conventions. For example, Teacher 3 invigilated some subject-domain courses and saw that their exam papers were based on simple paragraphs which did not require the use of essay rhetorical conventions. Some students (4 out of 18) were also studying subject-domain modules alongside their EAP course and had seen no implementation of these conventions in their writing. For this reason, students and teachers might need to see clear evidence about the long-term benefits of the course objectives.

Perhaps the most effective way to get teachers and students to see real-evidence of the long-term benefits of their course would be to arrange some meetings between 1) teachers of EAP courses and subject-discipline teachers, and 2) the students who study EAP courses and final-year students who are studying subject-discipline modules. The essay rhetorical conventions might not be implemented in the first years of a student's degree but rather in their final years. Therefore, students might need to meet students from the final years. These meetings ought to clarify the benefits of these conventions for the subject-domain modules; otherwise, there is a need to modify the EAP course objectives. In other words, there is a need to make a match between the teaching approaches of the EAP course and the students' subject-domain courses.

6.5.5.2. Coordination between Course Objectives, Assessment Tasks, and Marking Criteria

Transparency should be also achieved through making a strong link between course objectives, assessment tasks, and marking criteria. Another reason why Teachers 2 and 3 did not provide feedback on the rhetorical conventions was because the patterns were not part of the marking criteria. The essay rhetorical conventions are introduced in the textbook and are required in project writing and the final writing exam; however, they are not part of the marking criteria.

Therefore, Teachers 2 and 3 stated that they did not see the point of providing feedback on essay rhetorical conventions.

This indicates that there is a need to adjust the course objectives, the marking criteria, and the assessment tasks so they are consistent with each other. In the context of my study, the essay rhetorical conventions should be part of the assessment criteria so that they match the objectives of the course and the assessment task. This in turn would help teachers see the results of their effort more clearly. In fact, even students need to see this link to react positively to essay rhetorical conventions; however, it should be remembered that they need to know the marking criteria first of all. This recommendation of making a link between assessment and the course objectives has also been suggested by previous researchers, such as Orrell (2006) and Hughes (1989), who have emphasized the need to make all processes of teaching, learning, assessment, and feedback practices consistent with each other.

The above changes and recommendations were revealed through investigating the culture of feedback in this college by examining the beliefs and practices of the participating teachers, students, and college leaders. However, there could be other changes that need to be made which my study was unable to capture due to the limited number of participants and observations. Thus, there is a need to frequently evaluate and examine the culture of feedback in the college. One possible way is that teachers should often hold discussions with their students regarding students' preferences about feedback and the rationale of teachers' practices of feedback. There is also a need to have active student and teacher voices when making policy guidelines. For example, the institution should give them a questionnaire or a survey to evaluate the college policies and instructions, and to suggest what amendments need to be made. It could even be more positive if the college were to make these amendments transparent so that both teachers and students would react seriously to these forms.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: The Course Description of the EAP Module

ENGLISH 1111

Overview

This course is designed for students with IELTS equivalence of 4.5

This course build upon the General English and Study Skills work carried out in the Foundation Programme to introduce students to academic modes of listening, speaking, reading and writing.

The course is allocated 10 hours per week and it is expected that one class teacher will deliver the 120-hour course to one class of 15-20 students.

Course objectives

The course has the following specific objectives:

To enable students to participate in class discussions

To enable students to participate in lectures through strategic listening

To enable students to read and reflect on short academic texts using appropriate strategies

To enable students to compose short essays

To introduce students to 75-100 items on the Coxhead Academic Word List

Learning outcomes

In the following specifications of learning outcomes, it is assumed that learners will be able to use the core grammar and vocabulary presented in the Foundation Programme. So these items are not included in the specifications below which relate solely to the coverage expected in ENGL 1111. Those items shown in blue are not, currently, supported in any of the course books in use and will need to be supported through teacher initiative. At the end of the course, students should be able to:

In lectures/presentations:

Note down the most important words and ideas in a lecture

Assess the comprehensiveness of lecture notes

Use an informal outline to take notes

Use symbols to represent words when taking notes

Identify lecture language that signals the topic and big picture

Identify lecture language that signals a transition

Retell main points of a lecture using notes

Give an 8-minute presentation

In small-group discussion:

Show interest during a discussion

Enter a discussion about the ideas in a lecture

Contribute ideas during a discussion

Express interest and ask for elaboration during a discussion

Interrupt and ask for clarification during a discussion

When reading shorter academic texts:

Preview texts

Identify main ideas

Scan for specific information

Identify examples

Identify definitions

Use 75-100 words on the Coxhead Academic Word List

Recognize noun, verb, adjective and adverb forms of AWL words

Use a monolingual dictionary to look up unfamiliar words, check pronunciation using phonemic symbols

Recognise a direct quotation

Recognise a paraphrase of another writer's ideas

When writing shorter academic essays

Use a standard thesis + support paragraph structure

Display an awareness of the importance of unity and coherence in a paragraph

Display an awareness of the structure of the short (3-4 paragraph) essay

Go through a simple planning-drafting-editing writing process

Use mind-maps and other brainstorming techniques

Show awareness of the structure of descriptive writing as a rhetorical mode

Show awareness of the structure of narrative writing as a rhetorical mode

Use both simple and compound sentences

Use conjunctions and punctuation to avoid 'run-on' sentences

Use adjectives in descriptive writing

Use prepositional phrases in descriptive and narrative writing

Use sequence markers in narrative writing

Use subordinating conjunctions (e.g. before, after, when, while) in narrative writing

Use Present Simple and Present Continuous in descriptive writing

Use basic APA referencing conventions.

Show some understanding of what plagiarism is and why and how it is to be avoided.

Integrate a source into a text through direct quotation or paraphrase

Other:

Carry out a simple piece of observational research

Present the results in chart form

Carry out an online search for information

Teaching and Learning Methods

English 1111 is designed to follow the syllabus of the first half of each of *Effective Academic Writing 2, Lecture Ready 1* and *Inside Reading 1*. These books meet the majority of the LOs specified above. However, it is important that teachers do not simply deliver the textbooks but use them imaginatively, and where necessary use supplementary materials, to help students achieve the LOs. In many cases a tightly structured process that goes beyond the structure of the textbook may be needed. For example, at the end of Unit 1 of *Lecture Ready* it is suggested that students carry out a simple piece of research in their college. It is likely that this would entail a number of stages, with each of which students might require support.

Students should be encouraged to set language learning goals which guide their independent learning. They should also be encouraged to review the reading, listening and writing materials independently and to make use of any self-access material available.

Additional homework should be assigned. This could take the form of small writing tasks, such as a diary, "vocabulary sheets" where the student must submit ten or so new words learned, their meanings, their different forms and a sentence to show they know the meaning and sentence fill sheets—x number of words are given and they must choose the correct word for a gap in a sentence. Preferably, the words given would be in a different form than is needed to fill the gap. In addition, there should be some focus on grammar activities.

Student workload

In-class tuition: 10 hours per week

Independent study (vocabulary, grammar, writing, speaking, pronunciation and spelling): 3.5 hours per week

Assessment

Continuous assessment: Project on a major-related topic

1 presentation	20%
1 report	30%
Total	50%

Final Exam

Language knowledge	5%
Reading	10%
Listening	10%
Speaking (paired-discussion)	10%
Writing	15%
Total	50%

Appendix 2: HoED's Interview

Demographic Data

1. How long have you been the HoED here?
2. Can you tell me about your role in supervising EAP writing?
3. Have you taught EAP writing yourself? If so, for how long?

EAP writing

1. Is there any college policy on academic writing practice? If so, tell me your opinions of it and how do you monitor it?
2. What does the project outline suggest about the way to teach writing? What do you think of this approach in terms of developing academic writing?
3. Who selected the current EAP writing textbook? Why was the current EAP textbook chosen? What approach to writing does the book follow and what do you think of this approach in terms of developing academic writing?
4. What do you do if the teachers or students do not like the book?
5. What do you think of the essay topics students are asked to do in their project writing? Who decides them and on what basis?
6. If the teachers or students do not like the topics, what do you do about it?
7. Tell me about the criteria that are set for the essay evaluation. Who decided them and how was it done? What do you think of them?
8. Are the students supposed to be familiar with these criteria? Why/why not?
9. What do you do if the teachers or the students do not like the criteria for evaluation?

Practices in Giving Feedback

1. Does the college have any feedback practice policy? If so, what do you think of it and how do you monitor it?

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2. Does the college run any training courses for teachers about giving feed-back? Why/why not?

3. Does the college provide guidelines or suggestions about feedback practice? If so, what do you think of them in terms of developing EAP writing? And do you think they are enough?

4. Do you usually discuss giving feedback with the teachers? If so, how do you communicate with them and how often? And what do you usually discuss?

Student Response to Feedback

1. Is there any college policy that instructs students to respond to their feedback in certain ways? If so, what is it and how do you monitor it?

2. Have you ever got feedback from teachers or students about how students respond to their feedback? If so, what feedback have you got? And what particular difficulties have students encountered in using feedback on EAP writing?

3. Does the college intervene when there is a complaint about student response to feedback? If so, how?

Appendix 3: Teacher First Interview

Demographic Data

1. How many years of teaching experience do you have in Oman and outside Oman?
2. What is your teaching qualification?
3. When did you first teach academic writing?
4. How many EAP courses have you taught in the college and other institutions?
5. Have you taught an EAP course in another Arab country?

EAP writing

1. What is the goal of teaching EAP writing to ESL learners?
2. How should academic writing be taught? What aspects of writing should be focused on when teaching academic writing?
3. What do you think is the teacher's role in teaching EAP writing?
4. What difficulties do you think your students have in their academic writing? And what aspects of writing do they have problems with?

Practices in Giving Feedback

1. What is the purpose of giving feedback?
2. What do you think of written and oral feedback?
3. What do you think the feedback strategies should be with both oral and written?
4. When giving feedback to students' writing, what areas do you think feed-back should cover? Why?
5. What do you think of peer, group or self-evaluation?
6. Tell me about the timing of feedback. When should feedback be given? Why?

7. What do you think of feedback on a new piece of writing and on subsequent drafts?

8. When students make a mistake, do you think that teachers should correct it directly for students or let them correct it first? Do you think this is helpful? Why?

9. In case of indirect written feedback, what do you think of the use of correction symbols?

10. Do you usually follow a systematic approach when giving feedback? If not, is there any influence that would make you practise feedback differently?

Student Response to Feedback

1. What happens after students receive their teacher's feedback? What do you usually ask them to do?

2. How do you expect students to edit their writing based on your feedback?

3. From your experience, when students receive their feedback, what do you notice they do about it? Can you give me an example?

4. What sort of difficulties do you think students have when responding to feedback?

5. What do you think of students searching for external sources of feedback?

6. Do you think students resort to assistance to help them respond to their feedback? If so, what kind of assistance is available and what do you think of it? And what kind of help do you think they usually seek?

7. Do you think students respond to all the comments given by teachers? Why/why not?

8. Do you think there are some influences that make students respond differently to feedback? If so, what are they?

Appendix 4: Focus group, First Interview

Demographic data

1. How many years have been learning English?
2. When did you first learn about academic writing?
3. How many courses have you taken in academic writing in the college and in school?

EAP writing

1. What is the goal of learning EAP writing?
2. Do you think writing in English is different from writing in your native language? How?
3. What approach should be followed to teach academic writing?
4. What do you think is the teacher's role in teaching EAP writing?
5. What difficulties do you have in your academic writing? And what aspects of writing do you have problems with?
6. What do you think the Omani students' needs and challenges are to improve their writing?

Practices in Giving Feedback

1. How should students' progress and difficulties in writing be managed?
2. What is the purpose of giving feedback?
3. What do you think of written and oral feedback?
4. When students make an error in their writing, how should written and oral feedback be given?
5. What do you think of peer, group or self-evaluation?
6. Tell me about the timing of feedback. When should feedback be given? Why?
7. What do you think the focus of feedback should be on?
8. What do you think of feedback on a new piece of writing and on subsequent drafts?

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9. What do you think of the use of a "correction code" in written feedback?

Student Response to Feedback

1. When students receive their feedback, what should they do about it?
2. From your experience, when you receive feedback, what do you do about it? Can you give me an example?
3. Are there any influences that make you respond to feedback differently?
4. Do you usually resort to some assistance to help you respond to your feedback? If so, what kinds of assistance are available and what do you think of them?
5. Do you respond to all the comments given by teachers? If not, what are the aspects of feedback you tend to ignore and why?
6. What aspects of feedback do you usually have difficulty with?
7. When you have difficulty in understanding your feedback, what do you do about it?

Appendix 5: Teacher Interview Following A Class Observation

1. What were your teaching expectations about today's lesson? What did you want to improve in students' writing?

2. What do you think students learnt about EAP writing from today's lesson?

3. How did you teach EAP writing today? What approach did you use and what aspects of writing did you focus on? What do you think of this method or focus?

4. Did you give any feedback today?

If the teacher gave feedback:

5. Did you give feedback on a new piece of writing or on subsequent drafts? What do you think of it?

6. What did the feedback tell the students?

7. How did you give your feedback?

8. **(In case of written feedback)** What were your impressions about students' writing? How long did it take you to give feedback on every piece of writing? Did you have difficulties or face ambiguities while giving written feedback? If so, how did you deal with these ambiguities?

9. How did you see the way you gave feedback worked with your students?

10. Did you give feedback on everything? Why/why not?

11. Do you think all students understood all your comments?

12. Do you expect all students to act on the feedback given on their writing today? How do you expect them to do this?

13. **(In case of where students had already responded to the feedback)** Did all students act on your feedback? How did they act on it? Did they ignore any errors and, if so, what do you think was the reason for that? and did you or will you do anything about it? Will students receive incentives for their action on feedback?

14. If you repeated the lesson today, how could your feedback be better?

Appendix 6: Students Interview Following A Class Observation

1. What were your learning expectations about today's lesson?

2. How do you describe today's lesson? How did your teacher teach writing today? What do you think of it?

3. What did you learn about EAP writing from today's lesson?

4. Did you get any feedback from the lesson today?

   (In case of getting feedback)

5. Did you get feedback on a new piece of writing or on subsequent drafts?

6. How did you receive your feedback?

7. What did the feedback tell you?

8. Tell me how you found the teacher's feedback (oral/written)?

9. Did your teacher comment on everything? If not, what were the issues that your teacher focused on when giving feedback and what do you think about them?

10. Did you understand all your teacher's comments? If not, what are the aspects in your feedback you did not understand and why? What did you do in reaction to that?

11. **(In case of writing in the class)** Did you seek help from (peer group/ dictionary) while you were writing? What do you think about this source of help?

12. Will you act on the feedback on your writing today? How will you do this? What will you do if you have difficulties while acting on your feedback?

13. **(In case where they had already responded to the feedback)** How did you act on your feedback? Did you act on all the comments given on your writing? Why/why not? Did you have difficulties while acting on your feedback and if so what did you do about them?

14. Is there anything else you felt you would like your teacher to do for you today? If so, what is it and why?

Appendix 7: Teacher Final Interview

EAP writing

1.   What was the goal of teaching academic writing to the college students?

2.   What approach to teaching writing did you follow in textbook-led classes and project classes and why did you follow this approach?

3.   What was your role in teaching EAP writing?

4.   What difficulties did your students have in their academic writing?

5.   What were your students' needs and challenges to improve their writing?

EAP Writing and College Policy

1.   Tell me about the book used for academic writing. What do you think about the approach that the course textbook follows in teaching EAP writing? What do you think about the topics for academic writing in the textbook?

2.   Tell me about the project outline. What do you think about the approach that the project follows in teaching EAP writing? What do you think about the topics for academic writing in the project outline?

3.   Tell me about the criteria for academic writing evaluation. What do you think about them? Are there any amendments you think need to be made?

4.   Did you familiarise students with the marking criteria of the project writing and final writing exam? Why/why not?

Practices in Giving Feedback

1.   Did you give feedback to your students' writing over the whole semester? If so, what was the purpose of giving feedback?

2.   Did you give written and oral feedback? Why?

3.   How did you give oral or written feedback?

4. When giving feedback to students' writing, what areas of writing did you focus on? Why?

5. Did you give peer, group or self-evaluation tasks? How did the tasks go and what do you think about them?

6. Tell me about the timing of feedback. When did you give feedback? Why?

7. Did you give feedback on a new piece of writing and on subsequent drafts? What do you think about it?

8. In case of written feedback, did you use correction symbols? What do you think about them?

9. Did you usually follow a systematic approach when giving feedback? If not, was there any influence that made you practise feedback differently?

Practice in Giving Feedback and College Policy

1. Was there any college policy for practices in giving feedback? If so, what do you think about it?

2. What do you think about the face-to-face feedback sessions instructed in the project outline at the end of this semester?

3. What do you think about the self-editing and peer-editing tasks instructed in the course textbook?

4. What do you think of following the course marking criteria when giving feedback?

Student Response to Feedback

1. When students received their feedback, did you usually ask them to act on it? If so, how did you make sure they did act on it?

(In case where students had acted on their feedback)

2. How did your students edit their writing based on your feedback? Did they revise all the comments you gave on their writing?

3. Do you think your students resorted to some assistance to help them respond to their feedback? If so, what kinds of assistance do you expect them to get and what do you think of these?

4.   Were there any influences that made your students respond differently to feedback? If so, what were they?

5.   Tell me about the difficulties students had when responding to feedback. Did students ask you to clarify some of your feedback? If so, what sort of questions did they ask you?

Appendix 8: Focus group, Final Interview

EAP Writing and College Policy/Assistance

1. Tell me about the book used for academic writing. What do you think about it in terms of developing academic writing?

2. What about the project outline? What do you think about its approach in teaching EAP writing?

3. Tell me about the topics for academic writing in the course textbook and project writing. What do you think about them?

4. Tell me about the criteria for academic writing evaluation. What do you think about them?

5. Tell me about the 'Online Writing Tutor'? What was its purpose? What do you think about it?

6. Tell me about the last section in your textbook 'Edit Your Writing'? What was its purpose? What do you think about it?

Practices in Giving Feedback

1. Were you given feedback on your academic writing over the whole semester? If yes, what was the purpose of giving feedback?

2. How did your teacher give you feedback and what do you think about the way feedback was given?

3. Were you given oral or written feedback? What do you think about it?

4. What do you think about the feedback strategies used in oral and written?

5. Were you given peer, group or self-evaluation? If so, what do you think about them?

6. Tell me about the timing of feedback. When was your feedback usually given? What do you think about it?

7. Did your teacher give you feedback on everything? If not, what were the areas he gave feedback on and what do you think about them?

8. Were you given feedback on a new piece of writing and on subsequent drafts? What do you think about this?

9. Did your teacher use correction symbols in written feedback? What do you think about this?

Student Response to Feedback

1. When you received your feedback in textbook-led writing, what did you do about it?

2. When you received your feedback in project writing, what did you do about it?

3. Did you have any difficulty with your feedback? If so, what kind of difficulty did you have?

4. Did you resort to some assistance to help you respond to your feedback? If so, who did you resort to and what kinds of assistance did you have?

5. Did you get any assistance while writing? If so, who did you resort to and what kinds of assistance did you have?

6. Did you respond to all the comments given by teachers? Why/why not?

7. Were there any influences that made you respond differently to feedback? If so, what were they?

Appendix 9: Observation Scheme

Date		Time	
Observation session No.		Lesson topic	
Lesson focus		Class	

1. Practice of feedback

1.1.   Timing of feedback

………
………

1.2.   Task revision/new piece of writing

………
………

1.3.   Focus of feedback

………
………

1.4.   Direct and indirect feedback

………
………

1.5.   Sources of feedback

………
………

2. Students' response to feedback

2.1.   Students' participation in tasks

………
………

2.2.   Students seek for clarification from teacher

………
………

2.3.   Students seek for clarification from peers

………
………

Other comments

……
………

Appendix 10: Ethical Approval from University of Nottingham

2014/31 /MO

School of Education – Research Ethics Approval Form

The University of Nottingham

Name   Kothar Al Harrasi
Main Supervisor   Jane Medwell
Course of Study   PhD
Title of Research Project: Practice and Response of Feedback on EAP (English for Academic Purpose) Writing in Omani Context
Is this a resubmission? Yes   **Date statement of research ethics received by PGR Office:** 20/01/15

Research Ethics Coordinator Comments:

Thank you for addressing the comments and concerns we raised in November. Please ensure that the information letters and forms contain the email of the research ethics office, and that you remove the name of Professor John Morgan. You refer to 2 supervisors but have named one only. Is this intentional?

I consider this research to be above minimum risk ☐

Final responsibility for ethical conduct of your research rests with you and your supervisor. The Codes of Practice setting out these responsibilities have been published by the British Educational Research Association (BERA) and the University Research Ethics Committee. http://www.educationstudentintranet/researchethics/index.aspx http://www.bera.ac.uk/publications/Ethical%20Guidelines If you have any concerns during the conduct of your research then you should consult those Codes of Practice and refer again to the School of Education's Research Ethics Committee. Independently of the Ethics Committee procedures, supervisors also have responsibilities for the risk assessment of projects as detailed in the safety pages of the University web site. Ethics Committee approval does not alter, replace, or remove those responsibilities, nor does it certify that they have been met.

Outcome:

Approved ⊠X   Revise and Resubmit ☐

Signed: *Mary Oliver*   Name: Dr Mary Oliver   Date: 20/01/2015
(Research Ethics Coordinator)

Appendix 11: Official Access to the Institution

Dear Director General of the Colleges of Applied Sciences,

My name is Kothar AL Harrasi, a PhD student at the University of Nottingham in United Kingdom. I am doing a research entitled:

"Practice and Response of Feedback on EAP (English for Academic Purpose) Writing in Omani Context".

My study seeks to gain information about the practices and responses of feedback on academic writing in one of the Applied Linguistics Colleges through the beliefs and practices of the policy makers, teachers and students.

I aim to collect data through interviewing the HoD, the EAP Writing Coordinator, teachers and students, observing three classes, and analyzing the EAP textbook, students' writing drafts and course description. These instruments of the research are designed to generate data including observation field notes, interview transcripts, and video recordings. The interviews and the observations will be videotaped to help me complete what I miss in my field notes.

The data generated from these tools may be used as a part of the research findings which will be published in my PhD thesis. All participants will be invited to participate, and I should seek their voluntary participation through getting them signing a consent form. They also will be assured that all data will be anonymous and that they can withdraw from the study at any point. No staff member or student will be identifiable in the final report.

In the first instance, I am seeking consent form yourself as the main contact for the research. Please, read through the following considerations for consent and tick the boxes of agreement, followed by signing the bottom of the form.

If you would like to ask anything or would have further information or check what is happening, please do not hesitate to contact:

Kothar AL Harrasi: ttxka16@nottinham.ac.uk

University Supervisor: Dr.Jane Medwell ttzjam@exmail.nottingham.ac.uk

Consent Form

☐ I have read the Participant Information Sheet and the nature and purpose of th
research project.

☐ I understand the purpose of the research project and participants' involvement i
it.

☐ I understand that participants may withdraw from the research project at an
stage and that this will not affect their status now or in the future.

☐ I understand that while information gained during the study may be published i
a PhD thesis, participants will not be identified and their personal results w
remain confidential.

☐ I understand that participants will be audiotaped / videotaped during the intervie
and observation.

☐ I understand that data will be stored on Kothar's office computer as well as he
personal laptop. All the data will be accessed only by the researcher and he
supervisors.

☐ I understand that I may contact the researcher or supervisor if I require furthe
information about the research, and that I may contact the Research Ethic
Coordinator of the School of Education, University of Nottingham, if I wish t
make a complaint relating to my involvement in the research.

Signed …………………………………………………

Print name ………………………………

Date ………………………………

Appendix 12: Information and Consent for the Research (Students)

Dear students,

My name is Kothar AL Harrasi, a PhD student at the University of Nottingham in United Kingdom. I am seeking your participation in my research entitled:

"Practice and Response of Feedback on EAP (English for Academic Purpose) Writing in Omani Context".

I am particularly interested in the beliefs and practices of the principal participants in feedback- that is policy makers, teachers and students. I would like to study materials which offer guidance about feedback, the way feedback is given, what students do and think about feedback and what the teachers and leaders in the College think about feedback.

To do this, I would like to do an hour-long focus group interview at the beginning of the semester, five classroom observations and 30 minutes focus group interview after each class observation.

The focus groups and observations will be recorded, with your permission, and transcribed. The transcribed data will be analyzed and may be used as a part of the research findings which will be published in my PhD thesis.

The data will be stored on my office password- protected computer for a period of seven years and then securely destroyed. The data will be confidential and anonymous. You will not be identifiable in the report and your personal data will not be kept on my computer. All the data will be accessed only by me and my two supervisors. You can withdraw from the study at any point and this will not affect your status now or in the future.

If you would like to participate, read through the following considerations for con-sent and tick the boxes of agreement, followed by signing the bottom of the form.

If you would like to ask anything or would have further information or check what is happening, please do not hesitate to contact:

Kothar AL Harrasi: ttxka16@nottinham.ac.uk

Consent Form for Students

☐ I have read the Participant Information Sheet and the nature and purpose of th research project has been explained to me. I understand and agree to take part.

☐ I understand the purpose of the research project and my involvement in it.

☐ I understand that I may withdraw from the research project at any stage and that thi will not affect my status now or in the future.

☐ I understand that while information gained during the study may be published in a Phl thesis, I will not be identified, and my personal data will remain confidential.

☐ I understand that I will be audiotaped / videotaped during the interview, think aloud an observation.

☐ I understand that data will be stored on Kothar's office computer as well as her person laptop. All the data will be accessed only by the researcher and her supervisors.

☐ I understand that I may contact the researcher or supervisor if I require furthe information about the research, and that I may contact the Research Ethics Coordinatc of the School of Education, University of Nottingham, if I wish to make a complair relating to my involvement in the research.
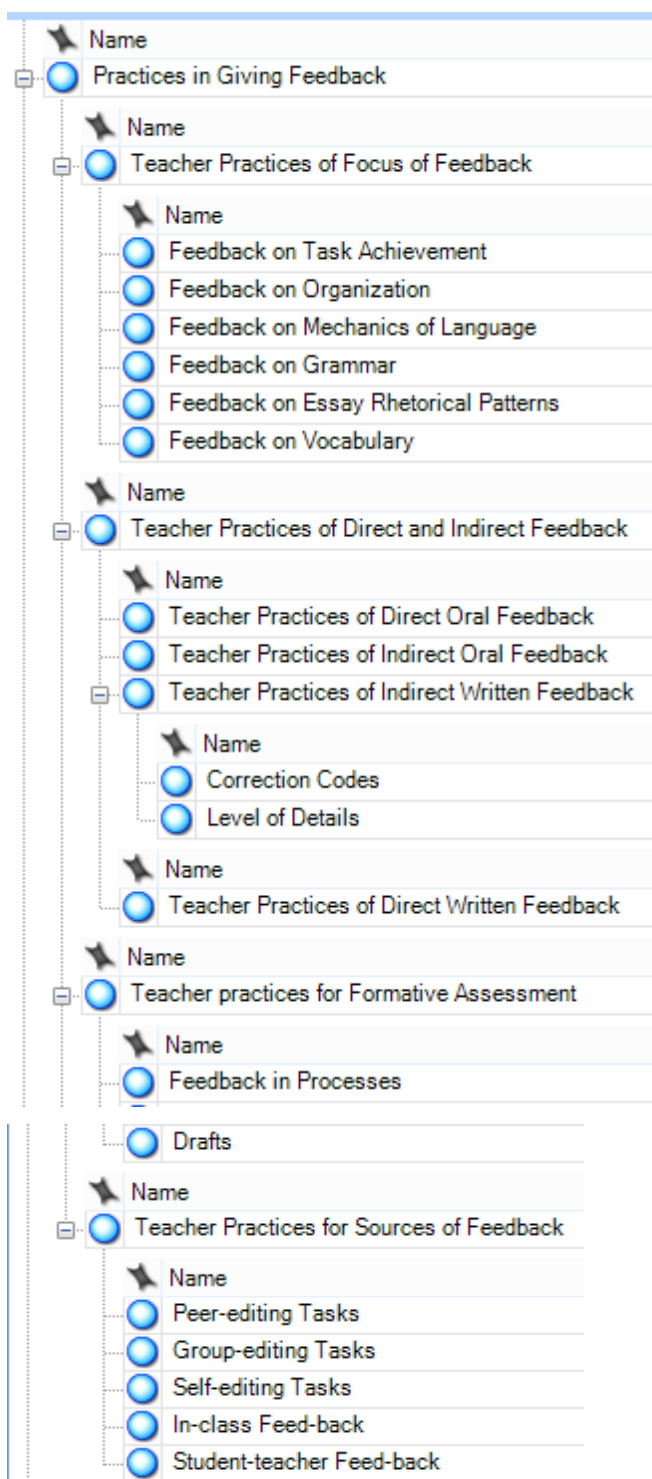
Signed……………………………………… (research participant)

Print name …………………………………

Date …………………………………

Appendix 13: Coding and Thematic Coding

Research Questions	Codes, Themes, Sub-Themes
Question 1: College Policy	

Question 2: Teacher Practices in Giving Feedback	

- Name
- Practices in Giving Feedback
  - Name
  - Teacher Practices of Focus of Feedback
    - Name
    - Feedback on Task Achievement
    - Feedback on Organization
    - Feedback on Mechanics of Language
    - Feedback on Grammar
    - Feedback on Essay Rhetorical Patterns
    - Feedback on Vocabulary
  - Name
  - Teacher Practices of Direct and Indirect Feedback
    - Name
    - Teacher Practices of Direct Oral Feedback
    - Teacher Practices of Indirect Oral Feedback
    - Teacher Practices of Indirect Written Feedback
      - Name
      - Correction Codes
      - Level of Details
    - Name
    - Teacher Practices of Direct Written Feedback
  - Name
  - Teacher practices for Formative Assessment
    - Name
    - Feedback in Processes
    - Drafts
  - Name
  - Teacher Practices for Sources of Feedback
    - Name
    - Peer-editing Tasks
    - Group-editing Tasks
    - Self-editing Tasks
    - In-class Feed-back
    - Student-teacher Feed-back

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Question 2: Student Response to Feedback	

Question 2: Teacher Practices of EAP	

Writing Pedagogy	
Question 3: Teacher Beliefs about Feedback and EAP Writing	Teacher Beliefs about Feedback and EAP Writing 　Name 　Teacher Beliefs about Summative and Formative Feedback 　　Name 　　Teacher Beliefs about the Marking Criteria of the EAP Mo 　　Teacher Beliefs about Summative Feedback 　　Teacher Beliefs about Marking Criteria 　　Teacher Beliefs about Drafts 　Name 　Teacher beliefs about Sources of Feedback 　　Name 　　Teacher Beliefs about the College Self-directed Tasks 　　　Name 　　　Online Writing Tutor 　　　Edit Your Writing Section 　　　Face-to-face Sessions 　　Name 　　Teacher Beliefs about Self-directed Tasks 　　　Name 　　　Self-Editing Tasks 　　　Peer-editing Tasks 　　　In-class feedback 　　　Group-editing Tasks 　　Name 　　Teacher Beliefs about External Sources of Feedback

Name

⊟ ◯ Teacher Beliefs about Direct and IndirectFeedback

   Name

   ◯ Indirect Oral Feedback
   ◯ Direct Oral Feedback
   ◯ Indirect written feedback
   ◯ Direct Written Feedback

Name

⊟ ◯ Teacher Belief about the EAP Writing

   Name

   ◯ Teacher Beliefs about the Purpose of EAP Writing
   ◯ Teacher Beliefs about the Approach to Teaching EAP Writ
   ⊟ ◯ Teacher Beliefs about College Policy for EAP Writing Ped

      Name

      ◯ The EAP Writing Pedagoy of the Course Textbook
      ◯ The EAP Writing Pedagogy of the Project Writing

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Question 3: Students Beliefs about Feedback and EAP Writing	

	Name ▽
	 ○ Student Beliefs about Feedback via Technology
	 ⊟ ○ Student Beliefs about Direct and Indirect Feedback
	      Name ▽
	      ○ Student Beliefs about Indirect Written Feedback
	      ○ Student Beliefs about Indirect Oral Feedback
	      ○ Student Beliefs about Direct Written Feedback
	      ○ Student Beliefs about Direct Oral Feedback
	 Name ▽
	 ⊟ ○ Student Belief about EAP Writing
	      Name ▽
	      ○ Student Beliefs about the Purpose of EAP Writing
	      ○ Student Beliefs about EAP Writing Pedagogy
	      ⊟ ○ Student Beliefs about College Policy for EAP Writing Peda
	          Name ▽
	          ○ The EAP Writing Pedagoy of the Course Textbook
	          ○ The EAP Writing Pedagogy of the Project Writing

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Appendix 14: Relationship Nodes (Connection Strategies)

Appendix 15: Final Coding Scheme

Final Coding Scheme

- Name
- **Focus of Feedback**
  - Name
  - **Teacher Practices of Focus of Feedback**
    - Name
    - College Marking Criteria
    - Teacher Beliefs about College Marking Criteria
    - Distribution of Marks in EAP Module
    - Teacher Beliefs about Summative and Formative Assessment
    - Teacher Beliefs about EAP Writing pedagogy
    - Teacher Beliefs about the College EAP Writing Pedagoy
    - College Policy for EAP Writing pedagogy
  - Name
  - **Student Response to the Focus of Feedback**
    - Name
    - Student Beliefs about EAP Writing
    - Student Understanding of Academic Conventions of EAP Writing
    - Student Beliefs about Summative and Formative Feedback
- **Direct and Indirect Feedback**
  - Name
  - **Teacher Practices of Direct and Indirect Feedback**
    - Name
    - Teacher Beliefs about Direct and Indirect Oral Feedback
    - Teacher Beliefs about Direct and Indirect Written Feedback
    - Teacher Beliefs about Sources of Feedback

- Name
  - Name
  - Student Response to Direct and Indirect Feedback
    - Name
    - Student Beliefs about Direct and Indirect Feedback
    - Student Understanding of Indirect Written Feedback
- Sources of Feedback
  - Name
  - Student Search for Sources of Feedback
    - Name
    - College Policy for EAP Writing Pedagogy
    - Student Beliefs about the Teacher Role
    - Student Beliefs of Sources of Feedback
    - College Policy for Assessment
      - Name
      - Deadline
      - Distribution of Marks
  - Name
  - College Tasks for Self-directed Learning
    - Name
    - Student Beliefs about Learning via Technology
    - Student Beliefs about Self-directed Tasks
    - Student Beliefs about the College Learning Context
    - Student Beliefs about Clarity of College Instruction
  - Name
  - Teacher Practices for Self-directed Tasks
    - Name
    - Teacher Beliefs about Sources of Feedback
    - Student Response to Self-directed Tasks
      - Name
      - Student Beliefs about Sources of Feedback
      - Student Understanding of Academic Conventions of EAP Writing
      - Student Evaluative Knowledge
      - Teacher Practices of Timing of Feedback
    - Name
    - College Policy for EAP Writing Pedagogy

Appendix 16: Rating Scale for EAP Module

Year 1: Report rating scale and procedure

1. Assess for **Task Achievement** first. If the script meets the 3 criteria, continue to mark the script. If not enter 1, 2 or 0 on the mark sheet.

TASK ACHIEVEMENT	5	4	3	2	1	0
	Addresses assigned topic directly; coverage is comprehensive; no irrelevance.	Addresses assigned topic but some points may not be covered or some irrelevance may appear	Addresses assigned topic but contains irrelevant points and some relevant points are not dealt with.	Limited relation to the assigned topic: shows some attempt to address the issue but contains little relevant material.	Answer bears no or almost no relation to task.	No assessable sample i.e. nothing legible on the page
	Meets minimum word limits	Roughly meets minimum word limits	Not less than 50% of target word limit)	May be short.		
	Source material is referenced using APA conventions	Source material is referenced using APA conventions	Source material is referenced			
			No suggestion of plagiarism	Despite SafeAssign report the script gives cause for suspicion of plagiarism	Despite SafeAssign report the script gives cause for suspicion of plagiarism	

TASK ACHIEVEMENT: This is a 'gateway' criterion i.e. a criterion that establishes whether or not the script should be marked in full. The criterion includes the aspects formerly covered in Content but also includes other aspects of the treatment of the assignment, including text length and plagiarism. It does not include marks for originality of content as this is felt to be too subjective. It attempts to answer the question: has the student attempted to construct a text, in more or less their own words, that attempts to address the question?

With regard to irrelevancy: the distinction between 2 and 3 is quantitative: to score 3 a script may have irrelevant material but this must constitute less than 50% of the text. A text with more than 50% irrelevancy must score 2 or lower. The difference between 3 and 4 is qualitative. For 4 the script may contain irrelevant material or omit relevant points. For 3, the script will show both.

With regard to plagiarism: HETEE writing tasks are designed to facilitate integration of ideas drawn from a reading, and possibly a listening, text but only as a partial source. Tasks should never permit even the partial answering of a question simply through a regurgitation of reconstructed reading material. Marks are awarded for appropriate use of source material through quotation or paraphrase but under Task Achievement, the concern is only with inappropriate use i.e. sections of text simply copied without acknowledgement from the reading text or elsewhere and presented as the student's work.

It is recommended that the marker scan the script quickly with the reading text to hand and underline or block any sentences copied verbatim without acknowledgement from the reading or elsewhere. Note, the smallest unit to be considered as plagiarism is the sentence. If a student is able to manipulate words, lexical chunks or phrases encountered in the reading and use them more or less appropriately in their writing, this is to be considered – in most cases – as evidence of learning. To score 3, any such material must not exceed 10% of the total text. Where such material is identified it should simply be left unmarked i.e. not assessed for grammar, vocabulary etc.

VOCABULARY	GRAMMAR	ORGANISATION
Shows range of vocabulary required for the task – choice of vocabulary is accurate and fairly precise. Register is appropriate	Shows range of structures required for the task. Basic and complex structures largely error free. Errors do not interfere with expression of meaning. Meaning is not obscured	Functional, complete introduction and conclusion, clearly prefiguring/summing up body. Overall drift of ideas clear and development is linear. Appropriate use of cohesive devices
Shows nearly the range of vocabulary required for the task – required though some general words may be used or some circumlocution may be necessary. Register generally appropriate	Shows range of structures required for the task. Systematic errors in complex structures, basic structures largely error free. Errors in complex and basic structures. Meaning is not obscured	Functional if limited introduction and / or conclusion. Overall drift of ideas clear but development may meander or backtrack a little. Appropriate use of cohesive devices
Some misuse of vocabulary may appear. Lapses in register appear	Lacks the full range of structures to tackle the task – meaning not obscured but may cause simplification of ideas	Limited/ineffective introduction and/or conclusion. Reader can work out overall drift of ideas but development is not linear. Some appropriate use of cohesive devices
Significant lacks in vocabulary either limit the answer to very simple ideas or cause overall comprehension difficulties. Lapses in register. Misuse of vocabulary	Lacks range for task – affects expression of meaning. Major problems in basic constructions. Meaning confused or obscured in places	Barely recognizable introduction and/or conclusion. Overall drift of ideas unclear – reader forced to conjecture
Lacks in vocabulary mean little or no attempt can be made at an answer	Major problems in basic constructions. Meaning obscured in many places – reader may struggle with overall sense	Little apparent organization of ideas
Almost no lexical resource	Almost no control of grammar at all	Baffling

PUNCTUATION / SPELLING AND MECHANICS					
Few spelling errors. Punctuation may be simple but is correct. Capitalization accurate. Paragraphs indented	Occasional errors in spelling, punctuation, paragraph marking or capitalization but meaning not obscured	Errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and paragraphing	Errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraph marking or paragraphing	Dominated by errors	Illegible or very difficult
Handwriting legible	Handwriting legible	Handwriting legible	Handwriting illegible in parts	Handwriting frequently illegible	

ORGANISATION: This criterion covers the organisation of text above the level of the sentence, so at paragraph and text level. It assesses structure i.e. division into functional sections (introduction – body – conclusion), functionality i.e. the extent to which the sections perform their jobs and linearity i.e. the extent to which the ideas flow in – to Western readers - a logical manner.

GRAMMAR: This criterion covers range, complexity and accuracy of grammar use. 'Range' refers to whether or not the text displays the structures actually necessary to carry out the task in. For example a task that required a writer to describe a sequence of events in a linear way (first A , then B, then C) would require use of the Past Simple and perhaps the Past Continuous. A more complex task would be to describe a sequence of events in a non-linear way (i.e. first B, then back to A and then forward again to C) and this would require use of the Past Perfect, as well as the other two tenses. 'Complexity' is related to range. In this rating scale the common – though contentious - distinction between 'simple' and 'complex' grammar is used. Simple structures would include one clause sentences, or *co-ordinated* two clause sentences (e.g. He lives in Muscat but he works in Nizwa), noun phrases with no more than three components (e.g. determiner-adjective-noun), single verb verb phrases, adverbs rather than adverbial phrases, Past Simple for narrative, Present Simple for description. Complex structures would include *subordinated* clause sentences, multi-item noun and verb phrases, multi-item adverbial phrases, conditional structures, Past Perfect in narrative, Present Perfect on the narrative/descriptive boundary, modal verb phrases.

VOCABULARY: This criterion also covers range in relation to the task but also considers three common consequences of a lack of range: the use of circumlocution, the simplification of ideas through the use of general words, misuse of words. It also considers register, by which is meant a choice of words appropriate to the type of text and the context of use. In an exam we expect standard academic English and should penalise colloquiality.

MECHANICS: This covers hand-writing, spelling, punctuation and capitalization.

Appendix 17: Project Outline

Wk no.	Date	Research Project and Project Presentation	Notes
1	1/2-5/2/2015		Drop and Add week
2	8/2-12/2/2015	Teaching students how to cite using APA citation Should be done within one class Use APA students worksheets Encouraging students to start thinking of their research topics You can hand them a list of topics prepared in advance. (allocate two classes)	
3	15/2-19/2/2015	Teaching students how to paraphrase and summarize texts using their own words. Showing them the different ways of in text citation USE your own materials or APA students worksheets (allocate two classes)	**ENGL1222 Final Topics**
4	22/2-26/2/2015	Teaching students in text citation and helping them choose their research topics. Topics' choices and confirmation of these chosen topics	(ENGL 1111Final Topics)
5	1/3-5/3/2015	Selection of the sources and writing them in the APA style/ writing the summaries and the paraphrases of the needed information from these sources in the research booklet. **Preparing the outline of the research project**	5% process essay marks are due
6	8/3-12/3/2015	To start writing introduction Body paragraphs	
7	15/3-19/3/2015	Conclusion and typing their research project using the right format	
8	22/3-26/3/2015	**Finalizing their research project**. Teachers should create the safe assign link	**Last Day for withdraw with a grad of W is 26/3/2015.**
9	29/3-2/4/2015	**First Draft: Written report** Students research project is to be uploaded to the safe assign link Preparing students for the project presentation. Explaining to them the oral presentation criteria, the right format of the power point presentation and the academic outline	*Presentation Preparation* *Deadline for Project(First Draft) Submission*

Wk no.	Date	Research Project and Project Presentation	Notes
10	5/4-9/4/2015	The safe assign link is closed on 9/4/2015 Face to face feedback regarding the research project in the class with the students.	Penalty for not submitting first draft: • Lose 5% marks • No feedback given
11	12/4-16/4/2015	.	
12	19/4-23/4/2015	**Presentation Week**	
13	26/4-30/4/2015	**Final Draft**	**Project Presentation Overflow**
14	3/5-7/5/2015	**Revision week** **Mock Exam**	**Face-to-face Feedback** **Classes end 7/5/2015**
15	10/5-14/5/2015		Israa & Mearaj
16	17/5-21/5/2015	***Final Speaking Exam** **Tentative timing**	
17	24/5-28/5/2015	**Final Exams Start**	
18	31/5-4/6/2015	**2nd week of Final Exams**	

Unit 25

When I do / When I've done   When and if

A Study this example:

> Will you phone me tomorrow?

> Yes, I'll phone you when I get home from work.

'I'll phone you when I get home' is a sentence with two parts:

> the main part: 'I'll phone you'
> and   the when-part: 'when I get home'

The time in the sentence is future ('tomorrow'), but we use a *present* tense (I get) in the when-part of the sentence.

We do *not* use will in the when-part of the sentence.

Some more examples:

- We'll go out when it stops raining. (*not* when it will stop)
- When you are in London again, come and see us. (*not* When you will be)
- (*said to a child*) What do you want to be when you grow up? (*not* will grow)

The same thing happens after while / before / after / as soon as / until or till:

- I'm going to read a lot while I'm on holiday. (*not* while I will be)
- I'll probably go back home on Sunday. Before I go, I'd like to visit the museum.
- Wait here until (*or* till) I come back.

B You can also use the present perfect (have done) after when / after / until / as soon as:

- Can I borrow that book when you've finished with it?
- Don't say anything while Ian is here. Wait until he has gone.

If you use the present perfect, one thing must be complete *before* the other (so the two things do *not* happen together):

- When I've phoned Kate, we can have dinner.
  (= First I'll phone Kate and *after that* we can have dinner.)

Do not use the present perfect if the two things happen together:

- When I phone Kate, I'll ask her about the party. (*not* When I've phoned)

It is often possible to use either the present simple or the present perfect:

- I'll come as soon as I finish.   *or*   I'll come as soon as I've finished.
- You'll feel better after you have   *or*   You'll feel better after you've had
  something to eat   something to eat.

C After if, we normally use the present simple (if I do / if I see etc.) for the future:

- It's raining hard. We'll get wet if we go out. (*not* if we will go)
- I'll be angry if it happens again. (*not* if it will happen)
- Hurry up! If we don't hurry, we'll be late.

D Compare when and if:

We use when for things which are *sure* to happen:

- I'm going shopping later. (for sure)   When I go shopping, I'll buy some food.

We use if (*not* when) for things that will *possibly* happen:

- I might go shopping later. (it's possible) If I go shopping, I'll buy some food.
- If it is raining this evening, I won't go out. (*not* When it is raining)
- Don't worry if I'm late tonight. (*not* when I'm late)
- If they don't come soon, I'm not going to wait. (*not* When they don't come)

Appendix 19: Content of the Course Textbook

Unit	Academic Focus	Rhetorical Focus	Language and Grammar Focus
1 Paragraph to Short Essay page 1	**Writing**		• Paragraph structure • The topic sentence • Unity and coherence • The paragraph and short essay • Short essay organization	• Simple and compound sentences • Run-on sentences • Dependent clauses
2 Descriptive Essays page 27	**Culinary Arts and Nutrition**	• Descriptive organization	• Prepositional phrases in descriptive writing • Details in sentences • Similes and simile structure • Adjectives in descriptive writing
3 Narrative Essays page 53	**Psychology**	• Narrative organization	• Sequence in narrative essays • Subordinating conjunctions • Details in essays • The past continuous in narrative essays • Past time clauses • Simultaneous activities
4 Comparison-Contrast Essays page 79	**Travel and Tourism**	• Comparison-contrast organization	• Comparison and contrast connectors • Comparatives in comparison-contrast essays • Comparatives in sentences

Unit	Academic Focus	Rhetorical Focus	Language and Grammar Focus
5 Opinion Essays page 103	**Technology**	• Opinion organization • Facts and opinions • Counter-argument and refutation	• Quantity expressions in opinion essays • Connectors to show support and opposition
6 Cause-and-Effect Essays page 129	**Education and Economics**	• Cause-and-effect organization • Clustering information	• Phrasal verbs • The future with will • Will with so that • Future possibilities with if clauses

APPENDICES

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Appendix 20: Overview of the Course Textbook

Overview

Effective Academic Writing, Second Edition delivers practice that will improve your students' writing.

- NEW! The new **Introductory Level** provides students with the support and instruction they need for writing success in the lowest-level writing courses.
- NEW! **More content-area related assignments** with more academic vocabulary and readings prepare students for the challenges of the academic classroom.

Writing Process Step 1 | Stimulating Ideas

Writing Process Step 2 | Brainstorming and Outlining

Writing Process Step 3 | Developing Your Ideas

Writing Process Step 4 | Editing Your Writing

Each unit introduces an academic content theme and writing task and guides students through the **Writing Process**.

Rhetorical Focus

Narrative Organization
A **narrative** is a story. It has an introduction that engages the reader's interest, details about the main event or action in the story, and a conclusion that describes the outcome.

Introduction
- The hook gets the reader's attention.
- The middle sentences introduce an event (the action of the story) by providing background information about the people, the place, and the time.
- The thesis statement prepares the reader for the action that follows.

Body Paragraphs
- The body paragraphs describe what happened in the story.
- They include details that bring the story to life.
- They often use time order to explain the event.

Conclusion
- A conclusion describes the outcome of the event.
- Narrative essays often end with a comment about the event's importance in the writer's life.

Concise and effective language and grammar presentations develop students' understanding and improve their accuracy.

Language and Grammar Focus

Using the Past Continuous in Narrative Essays
In a narrative, you often need to describe actions in progress or to describe background actions.

To form the **past continuous**, use *was/were* and the base form of the verb + *-ing*.

Use the past continuous to talk about activities that were in progress at a specific time in the past. The activities began before the specific time and may also have continued after that time.

At three o'clock we **were walking** home from school. My friend was **riding** his bicycle.

Also use the past continuous to describe background actions.

The sun **was going** down, and the children **were** still **playing** on the grass.

We don't usually use stative verbs (*be, know, own, mean, seem, understand, love, believe,* etc.) in the past continuous. We use the simple past instead.

I **didn't know** John then.

✗ I wasn't knowing John then. (INCORRECT)

Each unit addresses a particular rhetorical mode and provides **user-friendly guidance** to help students master the form.

Timed Writing | Preparing for Academic Success

Timed writing prepares students for exams and high-stakes tests.

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Appendix 21: Correction Symbols Recommended by the EAP Coordinator

Comprehensive List of Correction Codes

Symbol	Kind of Error	Example
T	tense – wrong tense, use a different tense	Where <u>do</u> he do research yesterday?
wf	word **form** – right word, but change the word form	I think <u>successful</u> is important.
ww	wrong word – use a different word	My essay is very <u>tall</u>.
–	word or phrase is unnecessary	I like to go to <u>in</u> the library.
sp	spelling mistake	My <u>conlusion</u> is good.
P	punctuation error	My college is in <u>ibri</u>.
wo	word order – the words in this sentence are in the wrong order	She <u>everyday</u> goes to her lectures.
sv	subject and verb don't agree	He <u>don't</u> speak to his professor.
s/p	singular/plural	I know many <u>person</u>.
∧	word or words missing	I <u>need study</u> tonight.
⌣	join word	My personal <u>in sights</u> ...
nc	This sentence is not complete. Make it a complete sentence.	We study IT to be <u>....</u>
A	article (a/an/the) is missing	Oman is in <u>Gulf</u>.
Prep	incorrect preposition	<u>In</u> the other hand, ...
/	separate word	It is <u>asuccessful</u> course
gr	miscellaneous grammar errors e.g. un/countable nouns, pronouns, nouns	He studies IT and <u>her</u> lecturers are good.
ss	sentence structure e.g. no verb, two verbs with no connecters	She <u>thinks successful</u> is very important.
R	register is inappropriate. Informal vs. Formal	Microsoft is <u>gonna</u> sell shares.
IN	indentation: Each paragraph must start with an indentation	On the other hand, there are several reasons ....
?	Meaning is unclear. Write in another way to make the meaning clearer.	Oman is nice, it has barks and good times.
Rep	repetition	
OT	Off Topic	
Good	You have something good here: a good word, idea, detail, etc.	

Appendix 22: Peer Editor's Sheet used by Teacher 3

Effective Academic Writing 2 | Peer Editor's Worksheet
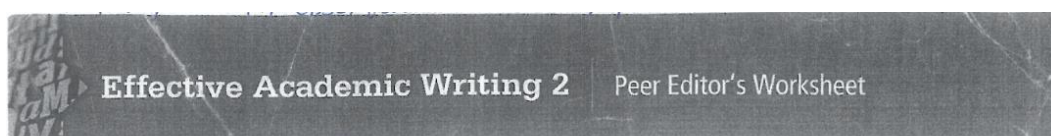
Unit 6: Cause-and-Effect Essays
Writing Task

Page 146
Peer Editing a First Draft

Date: _____

Writer: _____

Peer Editor: _____

Title: _____

1. What is your favorite part of the essay?

_____

_____

_____

2. What effect does the writer introduce in the background information?

_____

_____

_____

3. What causes does the writer present in the thesis statement?

_____

_____

_____

Appendix 23: Project Specifications

Project Specifications

Overview

The project requires each student to undertake a small-scale piece of secondary research, and to report this research through an oral presentation and a written report. Secondary research involves reviewing other people's work i.e. by reading what they have said about a topic. For example, a student might be interested in Twitter and how/why people use it. He/she could investigate this through reading sources on the world-wide web.

The project affords each student the chance to work on a topic of their choice, related to their major, and to produce spoken and written outputs that they can plan, draft and revise over time with the support of both their class-mates and their teacher. The project requires students to draw on their subject knowledge, their research skills and their reading, writing, listening and speaking skills to produce the two outputs, a presentation and a report, that will be assessed. There is a considerable degree of freedom in the design of the project and neither teachers nor students should see the outputs as related, narrowly or specifically, to the input covered in the core textbooks for the ENGL 1111/1222 course. Students may opt to write a report in one of the rhetorical modes covered in the course but they must be free to attempt others if they wish. The project should thus be seen as an integrative task that both requires and affords students the opportunity, to draw on all of their skills.

The project also provides a developmental spiral that will run from the end of Foundation (ENGL 6002) to the end of the English Programme (ENGL 2222-55). In ENGL 6002, students attempt a project very similar to this one but in a fairly rudimentary form. In Years 1 and 2, students are expected to carry out more sophisticated versions of the project and to attempt longer and more challenging outputs.

Finally, the project also replaces the various quiz regimes that the English Dept has run, with varying degrees of success over the years. There is thus no need for teachers and coordinators to invest time in writing quizzes and we avoid the security and scheduling difficulties associated with running common assessments across six colleges.

Topics

The topic chosen for the project should be related to the student's major but it must not be a topic that the student has already researched and written about for assessment in any of their major courses. Coordinators will need to liaise with major faculty to ensure this.

The topic must also contain a question, and one specific enough to be researched within the six-week period likely to be available. Students will tend to begin with a general topic but they must move beyond that to identify a **question** (or questions) that they can answer within the time-frame.

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Assessed outputs

There are two assessed outputs:

- An 8-10-minute presentation to be assessed using the existing Eng. Dept. presentation assessment criteria, scored out of 100. This presentation may be best delivered during Week 9 of the semester, but each college may make their own decisions about precise scheduling. This will count for 20% of the total marks for the ENGL 1111/1222 assessment.
- A written report of 800-1000 words, to be assessed using the existing writing assessment criteria for Year 1, scored out of 25. This report will be due by the end of Week 14, i.e. the 18th May 2011. This will count for 30% of the total marks for the ENGL 1111/1222 assessment.

Support

The project has been broken down for the students into a set of tasks (see Project Instructions, below). How these are done, and how much support is needed to help the students complete each of these, will be for negotiation between teachers and their students, under the overall supervision of coordinators. It is envisaged that some of this work will be done in class, especially the drafting of presentations and reports, but much may be done by the students out of class or through individual consultation.

Plagiarism is a perennial problem but the project actually presents us with an opportunity to address this issue and to help the students avoid it. It is important to realize that many students plagiarize, not because they are lazy, but because they simply cannot do what we ask of them with their own linguistic resources. In providing support to students it is essential for teachers to provide sufficient support to make plagiarism unnecessary. That said, it is also important for teachers to make students work at the margins of their competence. However much support teachers provide, it must always be aimed at helping the students do for themselves, whatever needs to be done: it must never reach a point where teachers are doing the students' work for them.

ENGL 1111/1222 Project

Instructions for students

As 50% of your assessment for ENGL 1111, you must complete a project, on a topic related to your major. We will assess you on two things:

- An 8-10-minute presentation to be delivered early in the second half of the semester. You may, if you wish, do a multi-medium or PowerPoint presentation but you will be assessed on what you say and how you say it, not what is written on your PowerPoint slides. The presentation will be assessed using the English Department's presentation assessment criteria, which are scored out of 100 and are available from your teacher. This will count for 20% of the total marks for the ENGL 1111/1222 assessment.
- A written report, of 800-1000 words, due by the end of Week 14. The report will be assessed using the English Department's assessment criteria for Year 1 writing, scored out of 25 and available from your teacher. This will count for 30% of the total marks for the ENGL 1111/1222 assessment.

Both the presentation and the report must be your own work and must not be a copy of work that you have already done in your major studies. Your teacher will support you with the project and you will do a number of activities in class to help you complete each of the tasks below.

Task 1: Choose a research topic.

- This must be a **specific question**, not a general topic.
- The question must be **researchable** over a six-week period, and one you can attempt to cover satisfactorily in a 10-minute presentation and a 1000-word report. There is no point taking a vague and general question that you cannot hope to answer.
- The question should relate to your major studies but it **must not** be something that you have already researched and answered as part of the assessment for one of your courses.
- The question will involve **secondary** research i.e. something you research through the internet or the LRC.

Your teacher will advise you how to go about choosing this question.

Task 2: Plan a work schedule.

- You will need to decide what you need to get done, and how and when you are going to do it.

You should show this plan to your teacher.

Task 3: Gather information to answer your question.

- Identify sources to read in the LRC or the Internet.
- Read and make notes on the sources.
- Think about what you have read and decide what your opinions are.

You should show your teacher the sources you plan to use and your notes.

Task 4: Organize your information.

- Review all the information you have found (and the data you have collected, if any) and decide what you want to say. Remember, the markers are interested in hearing and reading what you think about a topic not just your report of what other people say about your topic.

You should discuss with your teacher – and with one of your major teachers as well if you can – what you want to say about your topic.

Task 5: Plan your presentation

- Plan the presentation in three main stages: introduction, main body, conclusion
- List and sequence the points you want to make in the main body.
- Introduce the topic in your introduction.
- Sum up your conclusions in the conclusion.
- Practice delivering the presentation. Do this on your own at first and then rehearse it in front of a small audience. This is the best way of becoming fluent and the only way in which you can try things out and learn what changes need to be made.
- Make sure that you include a list of references that you have referred to in the presentation.

You should discuss your presentation with your teacher but you should not practice or rehearse it in front of him/her.

Task 6: Deliver the presentation

This will be done in front of your classmates and will involve delivery of your information plus a short period for answering questions. Your teacher will give you feedback on your presentation as well as assessing it and your classmates may also be able to offer useful advice.

Task 7: Plan and draft your report

- Use the feedback on your presentation to make any necessary changes to it.
- Write your presentation up as a report with an introduction, main body and conclusion.
- Check that you have not copied from any of your sources without proper citation or use of quotation marks.
- Write a references list using APA conventions.
- Submit a draft to your teacher for feedback.
- Use the feedback to write a second draft.
- Proofread it

Task 8: Submit your report

- Put your report through SafeAssign.
- Hand it in with the SafeAssign report. (No report will be accepted without such a report.)

Appendix 24: Online Writing Tutor

EFFECTIVE
Academic Writing
Online

Your online access code is (peel off here)

It's easy to start!

- Go to www.effectiveacademicwriting.com to register.
- Enter your access code. Don't share your code with anyone else. Only one person can use the code.
- The online content can be used for 12 months from the date you start work.
- For help, contact customer service: eltsupport@oup.com.

For the Student

- *Online Writing Tutor* helps students retain and apply their writing skills.
- Extensive **Online Grammar Practice** and **grammar term glossary** support students in using grammar structures appropriately and fluently in their writing.
- Comprehensive **Peer Editor's Checklists** support collaborative learning.
- **Printable Outline Templates** support the writing process.

For the Teacher

- **IELTS-style, TOEFL-style, and TOEIC-style online writing tests** can be customized and printed.
- **Online test rubrics and student book answer keys** make grading easy.
- **Online Grammar Practice** is automatically graded and entered into the online grade book.
- The **online management system** allows you to manage your classes. View, print, or export all class and student reports.
- Please contact your sales representative for a **Teacher Access Code**.

Appendix 25: Editing Your Writing

Step 3 **WRITING:** 40 minutes

Use your brainstorming notes and outline to write your essay on a separate piece of paper.

Step 4 **EDITING:** 10 minutes

When you have finished your essay, check it for mistakes using the checklist below.

GO ONLINE

Editor's Checklist

Put a check (✓) as appropriate.

○ 1. Does the introduction include a hook and a thesis statement?

○ 2. Do the body paragraphs contain enough descriptive details? Do the details support the topic sentence of each body paragraph?

○ 3. Does the conclusion state a final opinion?

○ 4. Is the purpose of the essay clear?

○ 5. Did you use prepositional phrases to show location and time?

○ 6. Did you use similes to support your descriptions?

○ 7. Did you use the correct form and order of adjectives?

Go to the Web to print out a peer editor's worksheet.

Test-Taking Tip

When you finish your essay, read each paragraph sentence by sentence. Make sure every sentence is related to the topic sentence and to the sentence that came before it.

Now that you have written a first draft, it is time to edit. Editing involves making changes to your writing to improve it and to correct mistakes.

Language and Grammar Focus

Using Adjectives in Descriptive Writing

Adjectives are words that describe nouns: people, places, and things. Adjectives appear in different positions in the sentence.

Adjectives usually come after an article and before a noun.

> We sat in the **roasting** sun.

Adjectives can also occur after some stative verbs such as *appear, be, become, feel, look,* or *seem.*

> I was **hungry**.
> He became **thoughtful**.

Use *and* to separate two adjectives that follow a verb.

> He was **sick** and **tired**.

Separate more than two adjectives with commas and the word *and*.

> We were **excited**, **nervous**, and **anxious**.

Exercise 1 Identifying adjectives

Read the following sentences. Circle the adjectives and underline the nouns they describe.

1. The beach was quiet and still.
2. Many crabs were walking slowly on the white sand.
3. The traps looked like round cages.
4. There were some small, fragrant fish in the trap.
5. The fishy smell made the crabs hungry.
6. I smelled the strong smell of the dark, oily fish.
7. The meat was white, pinkish, and tender.
8. It tasted sweet.

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Appendix 26: Students' Grades in the EAP Module

GROUPS	GRADES	
GROUP 1	**G1S1**	**75.1**
	G1S2	**69.9**
	G1S3	**62.9**
	G1S4	**86.9**
	G1S5	**76.9**
	G1S6	**72.0**
GROUP 2	**G2S1**	**78.7**
	G2S2	**64.2**
	G2S3	**69.5**
	G2S4	**70.7**
	G2S5	**68.7**
	G2S6	**69.6**
GROUP 3	**G3S1**	**83.0**
	G3S2	**78.3**
	G3S3	**75.0**
	G3S4	**79.2**
	G3S5	**76.0**
	G3S6	**87.8**

Appendix 27: Coding Videos and the PDF Documents in NVivo
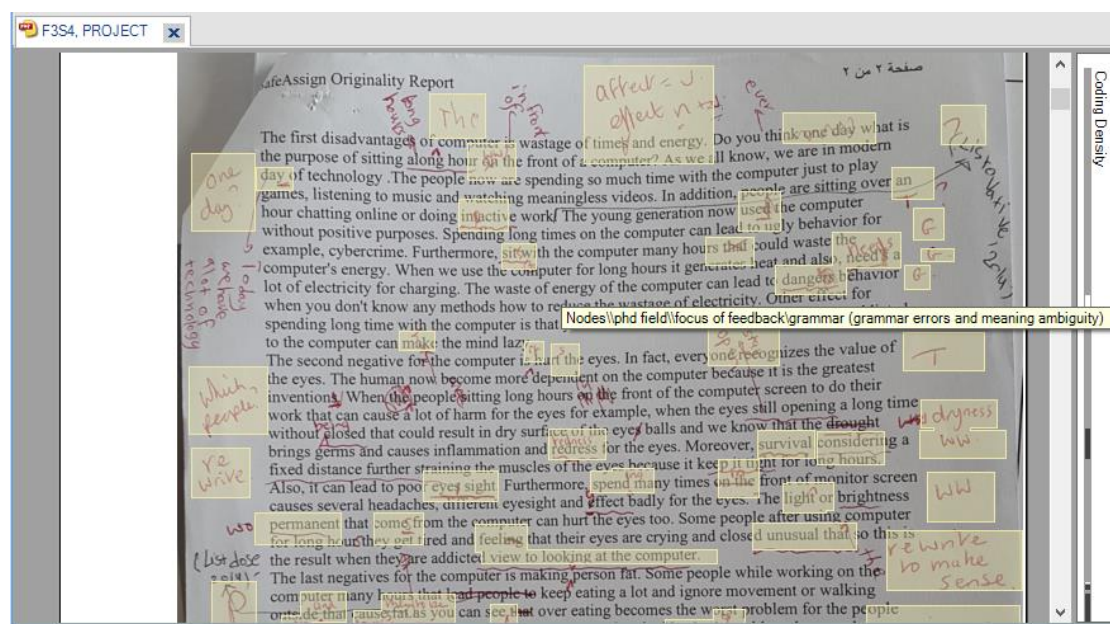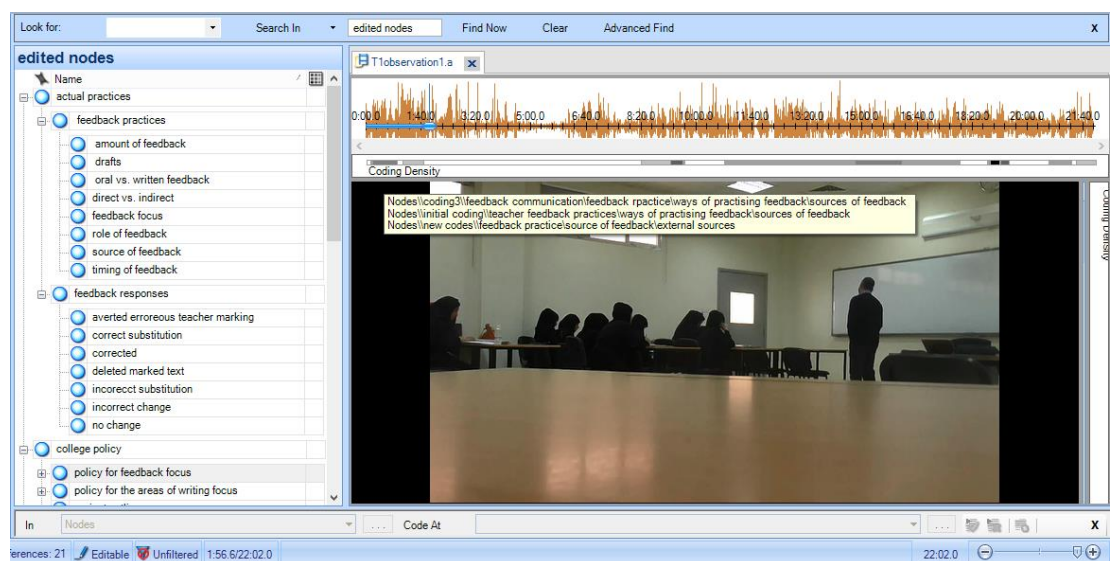
Appendix 28: Teachers from CoAS who Participated in the Development of the 'Effective Academic Writing' Textbook

Reviewers

We would like to acknowledge the following individuals for their input during the development of the series:

Chris Alexis, College of Applied Sciences, Sur, Oman

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Shu-Hui Yu, Ling Tung University, Taichung

Appendix 29: IELTS TASK 2 Writing Band Descriptors (Public Version)

IELTS TASK 2 Writing band descriptors (public version)

Band	Task Achievement	Coherence and Cohesion	Lexical Resource	Grammatical Range and Accuracy
9	▪ fully addresses all parts of the task ▪ presents a fully developed position in answer to the question with relevant, fully extended and well supported ideas	▪ uses cohesion in such a way that it attracts no attention ▪ skilfully manages paragraphing	▪ uses a wide range of vocabulary with very natural and sophisticated control of lexical features; rare minor errors occur only as 'slips'	▪ uses a wide range of structures with full flexibility and accuracy; rare minor errors occur only as 'slips'
8	▪ sufficiently addresses all parts of the task ▪ presents a well-developed response to the question with relevant, extended and supported ideas	▪ sequences information and ideas logically ▪ manages all aspects of cohesion well ▪ uses paragraphing sufficiently and appropriately	▪ uses a wide range of vocabulary fluently and flexibly to convey precise meanings ▪ skilfully uses uncommon lexical items but there may be occasional inaccuracies in word choice and collocation ▪ produces rare errors in spelling and/or word formation	▪ uses a wide range of structures ▪ the majority of sentences are error-free ▪ makes only very occasional errors or inappropriacies
7	▪ addresses all parts of the task ▪ presents a clear position throughout the response ▪ presents, extends and supports main ideas, but there may be a tendency to overgeneralise and/or supporting ideas may lack focus	▪ logically organises information and ideas; there is clear progression throughout ▪ uses a range of cohesive devices appropriately although there may be some under-/over-use ▪ presents a clear central topic within each paragraph	▪ uses a sufficient range of vocabulary to allow some flexibility and precision ▪ uses less common lexical items with some awareness of style and collocation ▪ may produce occasional errors in word choice, spelling and/or word formation	▪ uses a variety of complex structures ▪ produces frequent error-free sentences ▪ has good control of grammar and punctuation but may make a few errors
6	▪ addresses all parts of the task although some parts may be more fully covered than others ▪ presents a relevant position although the conclusions may become unclear or repetitive ▪ presents relevant main ideas but some may be inadequately developed/unclear	▪ arranges information and ideas coherently and there is a clear overall progression ▪ uses cohesive devices effectively, but cohesion within and/or between sentences may be faulty or mechanical ▪ may not always use referencing clearly or appropriately ▪ uses paragraphing, but not always logically	▪ uses an adequate range of vocabulary for the task ▪ attempts to use less common vocabulary but with some inaccuracy ▪ makes some errors in spelling and/or word formation, but they do not impede communication	▪ uses a mix of simple and complex sentence forms ▪ makes some errors in grammar and punctuation but they rarely reduce communication

Band	Task Response	Coherence and Cohesion	Lexical Resource	Grammatical Range and Accuracy
5	- addresses the task only partially; the format may be inappropriate in places - expresses a position but the development is not always clear and there may be no conclusions drawn - presents some main ideas but these are limited and not sufficiently developed; there may be irrelevant detail	- presents information with some organisation but there may be a lack of overall progression - makes inadequate, inaccurate or over use of cohesive devices - may be repetitive because of lack of referencing and substitution - may not write in paragraphs, or paragraphing may be inadequate	- uses a limited range of vocabulary, but this is minimally adequate for the task - may make noticeable errors in spelling and/or word formation that may cause some difficulty for the reader	- uses only a limited range of structures - attempts complex sentences but these tend to be less accurate than simple sentences - may make frequent grammatical errors and punctuation may be faulty; errors can cause some difficulty for the reader
4	- responds to the task only in a minimal way or the answer is tangential; the format may be inappropriate - presents a position but this is unclear - presents some main ideas but these are difficult to identify and may be repetitive, irrelevant or not well supported	- presents information and ideas but these are not arranged coherently and there is no clear progression in the response - uses some basic cohesive devices but these may be inaccurate or repetitive - may not write in paragraphs or their use may be confusing	- uses only basic vocabulary which may be used repetitively or which may be inappropriate for the task - has limited control of word formation and/or spelling; errors may cause strain for the reader	- uses only a very limited range of structures with only rare use of subordinate clauses - some structures are accurate but errors predominate, and punctuation is often faulty
3	- does not adequately address any part of the task - does not express a clear position - presents few ideas, which are largely undeveloped or irrelevant	- does not organise ideas logically - may use a very limited range of cohesive devices, and those used may not indicate a logical relationship between ideas	- uses only a very limited range of words and expressions with very limited control of word formation and/or spelling - errors may severely distort the message	attempts sentence forms but errors in grammar and punctuation predominate and distort the meaning
2	- barely responds to the task - does not express a position - may attempt to present one or two ideas but there is no development	has very little control of organisational features	uses an extremely limited range of vocabulary; essentially no control of word formation and/or spelling	cannot use sentence forms except in memorised phrases
1	answer is completely unrelated to the task	fails to communicate any message	can only use a few isolated words	cannot use sentence forms at all
0	- does not attend - does not attempt the task in any way - writes a totally memorised response			

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