Needs Assessment: Do We Need It? A Case Study in an EFL Writing Class in Vietnam

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Abstract

Needs assessment focuses on "the learning needs of students, and then, once they are identified, needs are translated into learning objectives" (Brown, 2011, p. 269). Assessment of students' needs will help teachers to develop teaching materials, learning activities, tests, assessment tools more effectively in their EFL classrooms. Thus, recognizing students' needs provides a strong foundation for good practice in EFL classrooms. This paper dealt with the use of needs assessment in an EFL writing class at a high school. Qualitative approach was employed in the study involving twenty-nine eleven graders. The research collected data from the researcher's observation, students' learning logs, the needs assessment forms and student writing. The data analyses found a wide range of positive impacts of needs assessment. Students' perceptions of needs assessment and some problems arising during the implementation were also revealed. Pedagogical implications for orchestrating the learning in EFL classrooms were accordingly offered in the paper. It is, indubitably, important enough to warrant further investigation into needs assessment in EFL contexts.

Keywords: needs assessment, high school, EFL students

Introduction

Needs assessment has come to the fore with teachers, educators and researchers haling value for student learning since learner-centredness gained prominence as a more effective approach in English Language Teaching (ELT). The increasing importance attached to needs assessment in ELT is due to the demand for better language teaching programs (Breen, 2001; Nation & Macalister, 2010; Richards, 2001; Watanabe, 2006). In other words, not a language teaching program should be designed without a thorough needs assessment. A reliable and valid needs assessment provides the output which becomes the input to syllabus design and materials development. Moreover, as a prominent role is accorded to English language learners in the learner-centred approach, needs assessment accordingly should be conducted by the learners themselves. In so doing, the learners become more active and self-reliant. Despite the significance and impact of needs assessment in L2 classroom teaching and learning, researchers (Priyanka, Asyiah, & Febriani, 2017) have long recognised the lack of formal discussions and empirical research on needs assessment. This concern has fueled the researcher's interest in investigating the implementation of needs assessment in the Vietnamese context. This paper explores the outcomes of the implementation, the students' reactions, and the problems they encountered. It is a five-fold study consisting of literature review, method, main findings and discussion, implications, and conclusion.

Literature review

The prominence of needs assessment in ELT

As learner-centred learning has gained ground in the nineteenth century, needs assessment has drawn special attention in the field of ELT. *Needs assessment* is used interchangeably with the phrase *needs analysis*. Needs assessment refers to "the process of determining the needs for which a learner or group of learners requires a language and arranging the needs according to priorities. Needs assessment makes use of both subjective and objective information" (Richards & Schmidt, 2010, p. 389). This definition is theoretically significant on two counts. First, it describes the relationship between the systematic collection and analysis of necessary information and effective English language learning. Second, it implies possible needs analysts: teachers, students, administrators and parents. In a similar vein, Nation and Macalister (2010) stated that needs assessment "makes sure that the course will contain relevant and useful things to learn" (p. 24) and that both teachers and students can conduct, analyse and benefit from needs assessment. Following Richards and Schmidt, Nation and Macalister, Brown argued that needs assessment should be "identified" and "translated into learning objectives", which creates opportunities for "curriculum development" (as cited in Brown, 2016, p. 183).

The increasing importance attached to needs assessment highlights innovations in the learner-centred approach, or, generally speaking, in Second Language Acquisition (SLA). In addition, the emergence of the concept of learner-centred throws into question the involvement of learners in analysing and using needs assessment results. There have been different analysts in needs assessment; traditionally teachers are who plan, gather, analyse, interpret and use the information. One of the most recent

innovations is the needs assessment as learning with the emphasis on how needs are identified, analysed and used by learners, rather than solely by teachers. Learners' active involvement in needs assessment via the process of cooperating with the teacher is advocated by researchers (Brown, 2016; Cheng & Fox, 2017; Long, 2005).

Impacts of needs assessment in EFL education

There has been an extant body of literature dedicated to the impacts of needs assessment in EFL education (Alayafi & Gunduz, 2017; Bosher & Smalkoski, 2002; Brown, 1995; Brown, 2016; Cheng & Fox, 2017; Graves, 2000; Long, 2005). There has been evidence that needs assessment helps not only to create effective course design but also to make teaching more relevant to learners' needs and interests, enhance their motivation and involvement in learning. Studies have also alluded to the impacts of needs assessment on learners' autonomy and self-regulation. Furthermore, Cheng and Fox (2017) acknowledged that by recognising learners' needs, "elicited through needs assessment, we encourage the development of their personal sense of responsibility for learning, improved goal-setting and increased awareness of the role of self-assessment" (p. 147). These positive impacts on both the teacher's teaching techniques and the learner's learning strategies suggest the cooperative implementation of needs assessment in EFL education.

Guidelines for needs assessment

There has been any amount of research into the principles, steps and frameworks for needs assessment (Long, 2005; Richards, 2001; Tzotzou, 2014). The very first step in conducting needs assessment is to determine the rationale for gathering information about the learner's needs. Needs assessment, according to Richards (2001), "may take time prior to, during, or after a language programme" (p. 54). Specifically, when needs assessment is aimed at finding out what language skills learners need so as to achieve something, then needs assessment is better to be conducted at the beginning of a course. When needs assessment is purposefully carried out in order to review a curriculum, syllabus and classroom activities, it should be done during or after a language programme. A similar view has been set forth by Cheng and Fox (2017), who explained that the purpose of needs assessment during learning is to identify "gaps or discrepancies between a student's current level of performance and the intended level of performance" (p. 147). The two researchers affirmed that needs assessment results would help teachers to identify learners' strengths and address their weaknesses in order to work on developing learners' skills and proficiency to reach the desired learning outcomes.

Another important point which is worth considering is to decide to focus on the learner's situation needs or language needs or both for needs assessment (Al-Hamlan & Baniabdelrahman, 2015, Brown, 1995; Nunan, 2013). Particularly, Brown (1995) emphasised that situation needs refer to "information of the program's human aspects, that is, the physical, social, and psychological contexts in which learning takes place"; whereas, language needs mean "the target linguistic behaviours that the learners must ultimately acquire" (p. 40). Implied in these studies is that the learner-centred approach demands that needs assessment focus on both the learner's situation needs and language needs. Moreover, "needs are not fixed; they evolve over the days and

weeks of our interaction with our students" (Cheng & Fox, 2017, p. 150); thus, it is recommended that needs assessment should be done during learning to allow the teacher to take stock. Therefore, a learner-centred approach to needs assessment during learning which is planned by the teacher and completed by the learner is more conducive to learning in contexts where needs assessment centres on the learner's learning process and their inner factors.

In the present study, given the students' unfamiliarity with needs assessment and their enthusiasm for exploring their actual needs, a learner-centred approach to needs assessment was adopted. Focusing on both the learners' learning process and individual differences, the study defines *needs* as what the students need to learn, how they feel about learning, how much effort they can muster and how much ability they possess for learning. Through the implementation of needs assessment, there was close cooperation between the teacher and the students. More specifically, the teacher played the role of a coach or facilitator who guided the process and discussed with the students on their problems, whereas the students took an active role in analysing, interpreting and internalising their needs to improve learning.

Method

The current study aims to investigate the impacts of needs assessment on students in the Vietnamese contexts. In this light, there are hence three guiding research questions that keep the study on the right track:
1.   What are the impacts of needs assessment on the students' learning?
2.   What are the students' reactions to needs assessment?
3.   What are the problems the students encounter during the implementation of needs assessment?

Subjects

The study comprised 29 eleventh graders in their first semester of the 2019-2020 academic year at a high school. The students, who were 14 males and 15 females, were enrolling in an intensive English programme. They had to attend eight periods of English per week, including two for reading, two for listening-speaking, two for writing and the last two for consolidation. Vietnamese is the native language of the subjects and English is their compulsory foreign language. Their English levels ranged from pre-intermediate to intermediate (B1 in the CEFR). The students appeared to be at the same age and to have the same educational background. There were nonetheless 'high-able' students and 'low-able' ones. In other words, they differed in their intellectual, physical and emotional development. Besides, the students wanted to improve their English writing as they did not receive much formal instruction on writing since their secondary school years. For these reasons, research on this group of students is believed to provide some insights into the potential of needs assessment at the high school level in the Vietnamese context.

Data collection

The present paper is a small-scale study employing a qualitative approach to investigate the implementation of needs assessment in an EFL writing class. The four

instruments utilised were the researcher's direct observation of the implementation of needs assessment in the classroom and their reactions towards it, the needs assessment forms, the students' learning logs, and the students' written work. The main tools were the researcher's observation, the needs assessment forms and the students' learning logs. The students' writing pieces were used for further triangulation of data.

The forms were designed and administered during the course, comprising 42 closed-response items and 9 open-ended questions for the students to fill in anonymously. The reasons for the use of both closed- and open-ended questions were that they were cost- and time-effective to design and that they allowed the students to freely express their opinions and attitudes. The needs assessment forms in the current study focused on five types of questions: problems, priorities, abilities, attitudes and solutions (Brown, 1995). Specifically, they aimed at identifying the problems the students were facing in their writing; prioritising topics, linguistics elements and so on for their writing, determining the students' writing ability; uncovering the students' feelings and attitudes toward their writing; and eliciting solutions for their writing. As mentioned earlier, needs assessment results should be completed and internalised by the students, the needs assessment forms in this study thus required the students to identify their own problems, to rate their own abilities, to judge their motivation, and so on. This kind of needs assessment is referred to as "self-rating" (Brown, 1995, p. 50) or "self-assessment" (Cheng & Fox, 2017, p. 147) of needs. This "means of making it theirs" (Cheng & Fox, 2017, p. 147) is "useful for obtaining practical insights into the self-image of individuals" (Brown, 1995, p. 50).

The students' learning logs were written by the students during the course. They were asked to write about their experience of the implementation of needs assessment, their improvements in writing, and their encountered difficulties. More specifically, there were three simple questions to enable the students to reflect on their experience, including "What is helping my learning most?" "What do I really like so far?" and "What's still fuzzy?" (Cheng & Fox, 2017, p. 150). Learning logs were used as "solicited narratives" (Duff & Anderson, 2015, p. 115) together with the researcher's direct observation, but they would offer more insight from the students' perspectives.

Last but not least, the researcher employed students' pieces of writing during the course. During twelve weeks, the students had to learn three writing units (in the textbook Smart Time, Grade 11, Special Edition, Express Publishing and Vietnam Education Publishing House by Virginia Evans & Jenny Dooley, 2017), covering the following topics: a description of a scene, an email about a person's experience, a blog entry. For each topic, the students were asked to write a first draft and then revised paper. Students' written work was all collected and analysed as it would provide rich information on students' improvements in writing (Duff & Anderson, 2015) and help to triangulate the data. There were two scorers to mark the students' papers: the researcher and another teacher who was not in charge of the class in order to ensure reliability and validity. The final mark of each student's paper was the average of the two examiners' score.

Data analysis

This paper employed a qualitative approach. Thematic analysis was then used to analyse qualitative data. The researcher's direct observation was analysed to obtain useful information from the teacher's viewpoints. The students' responses in the forms and learning logs were transcribed and translated into English, then grouped according to main themes. Only will notable comments be cited. Data from the students' pieces of writing helped to shed some more light on how needs assessment worked in the study.

Main findings and discussion

The impacts of needs assessment

The analyses of the researcher's observation, the needs assessment forms, the students' learning logs and writing pieces unearthed a number of positive impacts of needs assessment on the students' writing and learning progress, their motivation and the course.

The students' writing and learning progress
As discussed above, the more the students know about their needs, the more effective they will be in regulating and supporting their learning. Having the opportunity to identify, study and internalise their needs, the students were motivated to maximise their effort to meet their needs. Their reflections in learning logs and responses in the needs assessment forms revealed a wide range of improvements in learning, including enriched linguistic features, enhanced organisation skills, improved transferable skills, increased responsibility and confidence, and better relationships.

Stepping back from myself and identifying my learning needs, I learnt some new learning strategies and transferable skills in order to further facilitate my writing development. Needs assessment was worth it, I reckon. (S13)

There were enlightening and thought-provoking learning hours and we have better relationships with our friends and the teacher. (S24)

Concerning the students' improvements in writing, the analyses of their papers showed some signs of enhancement. The students' comments in their learning logs, their writing excerpts suggested that they improved their writing skills in a short period, particularly in terms of grammar, vocabulary and content. As for organisation and conventions, the increased opportunities to self-rate their needs, strengths and weaknesses also made some positive impacts on the students' writing development. Given that the students identified, analysed their needs, strengths and weaknesses, and searched for learning strategies during the completion of their writing tasks, it was understandable that their writing skills were gradually sharpened.

Needs assessment could confirm my needs, wants and areas of strength and pinpoint areas needing further work in my English writing. I then knew what actions to take to improve my writing skills. For instance, I learnt that I was not good at organising

ideas, so I decided to invest more time reading and analysing how ideas were presented in articles, newspapers, and then practising writing my paragraphs. (S11)

Needs assessment could spur the students to identify the kind of information that was the most helpful to know in order to improve their writing skills in particular and enhance their English learning in general. (OE).

Similarly, the analyses of the students' papers indicated some positive changes in their writing skills. Over three different writing topics, the students learnt valuable lessons for their writing. For the sake of simplicity, only striking improvements in the students' writing will be summarised in a table (see Appendix B).

Student motivation
Data collected from the researcher's observation, the students' learning logs and the needs assessment forms also pointed out that the students' responsibility for learning and motivation were boosted. The students invested their time and effort in figuring out the best learning strategies for themselves after assessing their needs.

I started to step back from my own needs and identify my strengths and weakness. I then also began to analyse my learning styles and choose the best learning strategies which suited my needs and interests (S6).

I think needs assessment was a process that allowed us to identify and examine our needs and wants, our beliefs about learning, and that provided us direction for making our own decisions in learning more effectively (S10).

Not only was the students' responsibility developed, but their motivation was also increased thanks to needs assessment. Needs assessment enabled the students to recognise the gaps or discrepancies between their needs (or desired learning outcomes) and their current level of performance so that they could drive themselves more seriously to bridge those gaps.

I believe that needs assessment gave us the opportunity to participate in the selection of our learning. The process was a way of increasing the meaningfulness of our learning. I felt more motivated to set goals and put more effort into achieving my goals (S19).

By identifying their needs and wants, addressing their specific concerns and issues, which were all elicited through needs assessment, the students were encouraged and motivated to take more control of their learning by searching for various ways of learning such as discussing with peers and self-monitoring the learning progress in a dairy (OE).

The course
It was disclosed from the researcher's observation and the students' learning logs that analysing needs of the students helped to identify the learning activities and experiences which shaped and supported their learning. Most students voiced their satisfaction with the learning activities which were adapted to suit their needs analysed in the forms. One opined that:

I reckon that needs assessment provided support and flexibility for the teacher's teaching and our learning. The chosen and adapted activities were exhilarating and relevant to our needs. We were having a more friendly, supportive and constructive learning environment. These will serve us well in our future endeavours. (S15)

The researcher's direct observation also documented that needs assessment helped to prioritise the learning activities, to design those classroom activities that fed into the students' intrinsic drives. and to orchestrate the teaching and learning more effectively.
Having the students reflect on their learning needs was a useful first step towards shaping my teaching to meet the students' and support their learning. The classroom activities were made to be consonant with the students' needs as much as possible during the study. The course was relevant, motivating and useful. (OE)

The students' reactions to needs assessment

Data collated from the researcher's direct observation, the students' learning logs and the needs assessment forms revealed the students' overall acceptance and satisfaction of the implementation of needs assessment. Most of them evinced their satisfaction over being given the chance to further understand their needs and take more control of their learning. This new learner-centred approach, which was opposed to the teacher-centred way of teaching in Vietnam, enabled the students to take more initiative and maximise benefit within a language programme. The students' involvement in needs assessment helped the teacher to design learning activities and experiences that had the greatest potential of supporting their learning, which as a result creating a more friendly and comfortable atmosphere in class as well as establishing a better rapport between the teacher and students.

The opportunity to self-assess our learning needs sparked a more luminous snapshot of our learning and helped to crystallise our accomplishments. We also had the chance to take more responsibility for learning and develop better relationships with our peers and the teacher. (S16)

We were given the right to voice our opinions, our needs so that we could further understand our wants, strengths and weaknesses. We felt like we had more responsibility and freedom to communicate with each other and the teacher about what to learn and how to learn in order to satisfy our needs and achieve the intended learning outcomes. (S4)

Twenty-three out of twenty-nine students also expressed their willingness to participate in needs assessment in the next courses.

Evaluating our needs can be an enlightening thing and part of meaningful learning, encouraging the development of our personal sense of responsibility for learning. The class atmosphere can be made more cooperative and comfortable. (S28)

A few students, nevertheless, believed that needs assessment was complex and confusing. They thought that the teacher should decide all the activities.

Well, the process of needs assessment was tiring to me. The teacher should know our needs from our first discussions and should not let us go through those complicated tasks in the class. (S7)

In addition, it is not surprising to find that most of the students appreciated the facilitating role of the teacher and recognised the importance of their active participation in needs assessment. One student stated: "The teacher gave us instruction and support during our needs assessment. We were also encouraged to take control of and fend for our learning" (S3). Some passive students took the view that the teacher should be the only judge who made decisions pertinent to the language content and form. They were still influenced by the thought that students should passively wait for and dependently act upon their teachers' instruction. A few of the students ignored needs assessment and did not take it seriously as they should.

Some passive and reticent students had thought that the teacher should decide everything for them and they should only follow her instruction. (OE)

Overall, the students welcomed the implementation of needs assessment in the following courses and even in other subjects of study. They voiced their satisfaction with needs assessment and of its impacts on their learning. However, the students also reported that there should be more guidance and support from the teacher during needs assessment so that they would feel ready and comfortable to take more control over their learning decisions. In brief, the students' attitudes towards needs assessment can be explained by one student's response in her learning log:
By doing needs assessment, we not only improved our writing skills but also built up close contact with our classmates and the teacher, which made it much easier to communicate with them, consequently it turned out to be easier for us to improve our English learning. (S26)

The problems the students encountered during needs assessment

Data gleaned from the researcher's direct observation and the students' learning logs implied that the first thing that caused difficulties was the students' unfamiliarity with needs assessment. Some students got used to being told and spoon-fed by their teachers due to their prior learning experience at secondary school. Their passiveness and timidity indeed put them at a disadvantage. One student admitted that:
The new way of teaching and learning made us at first often confused as we had never done needs assessment before. As a result, we could not give full answers to some questions and the class atmosphere was less comfortable. (S25)

The students told me at first that they didn't know how to evaluate themselves and their needs and were often at a loss. (OE)

The second problem the students faced were their use of English in writing learning logs. Some students reported that they were having difficulty in formulating ideas in English, which made them felt obliged to resort to L1 while noting down thoughts. Moreover, a few students neglected to write their learning logs at first as they thought this act of self-reflection was unnecessary.

I am not good at writing English, so I switched to Vietnamese at times. When I was asked to write a log in English, I felt a bit nervous and confused. I even had thought it was a redundant task. Only when the teacher explained that this was a self-reflection, I felt more confident and comfortable. (S1)

Last but not least, some students still found it hard to identify and analyse their needs due to their first time discovering themselves. This was affected by the Asian culture that one seldom had the chance to see through himself or herself. As mentioned, at secondary school in Vietnam, these students had had little chance to express themselves. One student said that "I confess myself passive and reserved. I felt bewildered by being asked to self-assess my learning needs. I think it was a good way for us to develop language skills and transferable skills, but I still need more time to get ready with it" (S18). This suggests that teachers need to talk with their students, provide them with more training and support so that needs assessment can be used to its fullest.

In conclusion, the analyses of the collated data from the researcher's direct observation, the students' learning logs and written work, and the needs assessment forms disclosed quite a few impacts of needs assessment on the students' writing skills and transferable skills. The finding was corroborated with that of Brown (1995), Brown (2016), Cheng and Fox (2017), Graves (2000). The findings from different sources of data also pointed out most students' positive reactions towards needs assessment. The students' acceptance and satisfaction of the implementation of needs assessment were found consistent with that of Priyanka, Asyiah and Febriani (2017), Tzotzou (2014). Nonetheless, a few students felt ambivalent about needs assessment and encountered several challenges during the process. It seemed that the students' unfamiliarity with needs assessment, their low language proficiency and passiveness had caused those difficulties to them. This finding was supported by researchers Al-Hamlan and Baniabdelrahman (2015), Richards (2001) and Nunan (2013). In the present study, the students were required to self-rate and self-reflect on their needs in order to become more involved in decisions concerning the learning activities and experiences in the course. Needs assessment, however, was not completely facilitated as the implementation was rather new to the students. Although there were some guidance and support extended to them, it was not sufficient to assist the students, particularly low-able ones in becoming more ready and comfortable to recognise their needs in a perceptive and meaningful manner. Only if these problems have been solved would the positive impacts of needs assessment be maximised.

Implications

It is important to note that the implementation of needs assessment requires a clear rationale and good preparation. Teachers should help students realise the benefits of needs assessment in syllabus design and materials development in general and in language development in particular. Identifying the kind of information about students which would be the most helpful to know is also the teachers' onus. Based on such information teachers will be able to design the tools to measure their students' needs. Once students have recognised the great value of needs assessment and come to understand that needs assessment is a cyclical and continuous process in which the

output of it will be the input in curriculum development, they will feel at ease and ready to embark on this application.

Training and support are critical to the successful implementation of needs assessment. Being cognizant of needs assessment is an important step toward a reliable and valid needs assessment. Training helps students to become accustomed to the process of needs assessment and to feel more confident and comfortable with it. Support from teachers helps to cater to students' individual differences and create opportunities for further understanding of their needs, strengths and weaknesses. Better still, student-teacher dialogues can be added for teachers and students discuss where the students are, where they need and want to go to, and how to get there. Students need to learn and will surely learn essential skills during needs assessment such as critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Lastly, teachers and students should be patient and serious with needs assessment as needs are not fixed and evolve over days and weeks. As discussed, needs assessment is a cyclical and continuous process, it may be better to conduct needs assessment many times in a language programme to allow us to take stock in order to make full use of needs assessment. Quite a few challenges may arise during needs assessment, both teachers and students have to actively equip themselves with teaching methodologies and learning strategies respectively in order that they will become clever and flexible to overcome those obstacles.

Conclusion

The present study has yielded some useful information about the implementation of needs assessment in a Vietnamese context in which teacher-centredness and grammar-translation methods have long gained momentum and students are generally thought to be passive and uncommunicative. This paper also disclosed a number of impacts of needs assessment on the students' writing skills and transferable skills and their certain satisfaction of the approach. Still, needs assessment was quite new to the students, they found several challenges. Much time and effort are thus needed for better implementation of needs assessment. Needs assessment has come to the fore with researchers hailing value for student learning as student-centredness has burgeoned in the past years. Further empirical investigation is clearly warranted so as to find ways of taking full use of needs assessment in the English language classroom.

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Needs assessment form

This form aims at finding out how English writing is important to you. The collected information will be helpful for planning our English writing lessons in more a way you like and need. Please do not put your name on the form. All your information will be strictly confidential.

Before we start, please remember to:
- read the questions with <u>attention</u>
- answer carefully <u>all</u> the questions
- give <u>true</u> answers for you

Please indicate how true the following statements are to you by **circling** *the number best suits your situation for each statement in* **Section A, C and D**.

1. *Not true at all*
2. *Somewhat true*
3. *Fairly true.*
4. *True.*
5. *Completely true.*

A.   Learners' difficulties/problems

When I write …

Statement	Rating scale				
I have difficulty in English grammar.	1	2	3	4	5
I have difficulty in using collocations.	1	2	3	4	5
I have difficulty in choosing examples/information.	1	2	3	4	5
I have difficulty in grouping ideas.	1	2	3	4	5
I have difficulty in sequencing ideas.	1	2	3	4	5
I have difficulty in using transitions.	1	2	3	4	5
I have difficulty in choosing the right tone/style.	1	2	3	4	5
I have difficulty in conventions. (e.g. spelling, capitalisation, punctuation, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
Other problems I have been having with my English writing:					

B.   Learners' priorities

Please **rank** *the following from 1 to 6 according to their importance to your English writing. (1 is the most influential and 6 the least influential.)*

B1. Aspects of writing

£ Grammar
£ Vocabulary
£ Ideas/Content
£ Organisation
£ Conventions
£ Other (please specify):

………………………………………………………………….

B2. Genres of writing

£ Descriptive
£ Narrative
£ Persuasive
£ Argumentative
£ Expository
£ Other (please specify):

………………………………………………………………….

C.   Learners' abilities

Statement	Rating scale				
I am good at learning English grammar.	1	2	3	4	5
I am good at learning collocations.	1	2	3	4	5
I am good at selecting examples/information.	1	2	3	4	5
I am good at grouping ideas.	1	2	3	4	5
I am good at sequencing ideas.	1	2	3	4	5
I am good at using transitions.	1	2	3	4	5
I am good at using the right tone/style.	1	2	3	4	5
I am good at learning conventions. (e.g. spelling, capitalisation, punctuation, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
Other elements of writing I am good at:					

D.   Learners' attitudes

D1. Learners' attitudes towards English writing

Statement	Rating scale				
I believe writing is important for my current study.	1	2	3	4	5
I believe writing is important for my future study.	1	2	3	4	5
I believe writing is important for my future career.	1	2	3	4	5
I believe writing is important for my travelling.	1	2	3	4	5
I believe writing is important for me to communicate with foreigners.	1	2	3	4	5
I believe writing is important for me to achieve international certificates. (e.g. IELTS, TOEFL, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
I like writing because the process of writing is interesting and creative.	1	2	3	4	5
I like writing because the process of writing helps me develop transferable skills. (e.g. critical thinking, problem-solving, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
Other reasons for which I learn writing:					

D2. Learners' attitudes towards ways of learning writing

Statement	Rating scale				
I believe that I learn writing better and more efficiently by studying grammar rules.	1	2	3	4	5
I believe that I learn writing better and more efficiently by expanding my vocabulary.	1	2	3	4	5
I believe that I learn writing better and more efficiently by outlining ideas.	1	2	3	4	5
I believe that I learn writing better and more efficiently by reading and analysing model texts.	1	2	3	4	5
I believe that I learn writing better and more efficiently by doing small tasks/exercises.	1	2	3	4	5
I believe that I learn writing better and more efficiently by playing games.	1	2	3	4	5
I believe that I learn writing better and more efficiently by discussing with my peers (e.g.	1	2	3	4	5

having my peers to assess my papers).					
I believe that I learn writing better and more efficiently by working on my own (e.g. self-assessing my papers).	1	2	3	4	5
Other ways I can learn writing:					

E.   Learners' solutions

Please refer to Section A about your problems in writing and write the solutions in detail

What actions I take to overcome my problems in .... are

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What actions I take to overcome my problems in .... are

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What actions I take to overcome my problems in .... are

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THANK YOU!

APPENDIX B

Students' major improvements in writing

Aspects of writing	First drafts	Revised papers	Students
Grammar	A best friend is the one without *who* you don't even want to imagine your life.	A best friend is the one without *whom* you don't even want to imagine your life.	S9
	A best friend is someone who is always there to help you in distress, who *cry* with you when you cry, laughs with you when you *laughs*.	A best friend is someone who is always there to help you in distress, who *cries* with you when you cry and laughs with you when you *laugh*.	S12
Vocabulary	Also, it is *heterogeneous* city, which is advantage for us, we could learn about different countries and cultures.	Also, it is *multicultural* city, which is advantage for us, we could learn about different countries and cultures.	S5
	Because of hackers community now it's very easy to decipher someone's chat or email messages. As we know data is *transferred* in the form of packets, hackers sniff that packets and easy	Because of hackers community now it's very easy to decipher someone's chat or email messages. As we know data is *transmitted* in the form of packets, hackers sniff that packets and easy reconstruct.	S20

	reconstruct.		
Ideas/ Content	Furthermore, there are many fast food restaurants so we could find job as part time.	Furthermore, there are many fast food restaurants so we could find job as part time. *For example, most of the students in Danang working as part time in fast food restaurants.*	S27
	Anytime you visit or stay in a new country it can be challenging, even if you think you have it fully researched. You will be faced with a new language, customs, food, dress style etc this can be frustrating.	Anytime you visit or stay in a new country it can be challenging, even if you think you have it fully researched. You will be faced with a new language, customs, food, dress style etc this can be frustrating. *For example, communication problems such as not being understood, food, attitude, and customs, these things may start to irritate you.*	S14
Organisation	Internet is the best source of variety of information. Now even students of colleges and universities mainly depend on it to complete not only their assignments but also to keep themselves up-to-date. There is no better source of research other than internet. *Internet shopping is becoming popular because of virtual shops where you can buy anything you want and need without going out of home.* Online games, chatting, surfing, music, movies, dramas and TV shows are becoming most common sources of entertainment. Games are available free of cost, chat rooms are available to discuss on any topic, entertainment websites are accessible, online movies and other	Internet is the best source of variety of information. Now even students of colleges and universities mainly depend on it to complete not only their assignments but also to keep themselves up-to-date. There is no better source of research other than internet. Online games, chatting, surfing, music, movies, dramas and TV shows are becoming most common sources of entertainment. Games are available free of cost, chat rooms are available to discuss on any topic, entertainment websites are accessible, online movies and other TV shows are also easily accessible just because of internet. *In addition, internet shopping is becoming popular because of virtual shops where you can buy anything you want and need without going out of home.*	S3

	TV shows are also easily accessible just because of internet.		
	Living and studying abroad can broaden your perspective on life. You will make lots of new friends and have loads of great stories for all your friends at home.	Living and studying abroad can broaden your perspective on life. *Besides*, you will make lots of new friends and have loads of great stories for all your friends at home.	S22
Conventions	A best friend is *some one* you are comfortable with.	A best friend is *someone* you are comfortable with.	S17
	Hanoi has many companies and factories, *therefore* we could get job related to our field which we are studying in.	Hanoi has many companies and factories*; therefore,* we could get job related to our field which we are studying in.	S8