

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF ARMENIA

College of Humanities and Social Sciences

**The Impact of Teacher Feedback vs. Student Self-assessment Using Rubrics on EFL
Learners' Writing Enhancement**

**A thesis submitted in
partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
Master of Arts in Teaching English as a Foreign Language**

By

Susanna Hovsepyan

Catherine Buon, PhD, Adviser

Melissa Brown, Reader

Alexan Simonyan, PhD, Statistics Consultant

Yerevan, Armenia

2013

We hereby approve that this thesis/paper

By

Susanna Hovsepyan

Entitled

**The Impact of Teacher Feedback vs. Student Self-assessment using Rubrics on EFL
learners' Writing Enhancement**

Be accepted in partial fulfillment for the requirements of the degree

Master of Arts in Teaching English as a Foreign Language

Committee on the MA Thesis

.....

Catherine Buon, PhD, Adviser

.....

Melissa Brown, Reader

.....

Catherine Buon, PhD

Associate Dean, CHSS

Yerevan, Armenia

2013

DEDICATION

To my family

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my profound gratitude to the Associate Dean of College of Humanities and Social Sciences and my thesis supervisor Dr. Catherine Buon for her ample encouragement, criticism and useful feedback all the way through to the completion of my thesis.

I owe my deepest gratitude to my thesis reader Melissa Brown for her insightful feedback, as well as for the time and energy she devoted to me until the final stage of my thesis completion.

I also wish to thank Dr. Simonyan for his great help and valuable advice on the statistical part of my research.

Special thanks are due to all the other professors as well, Rubina Gasparyan, Lilianna Edilyan, Dr. Irshat Madyarov, Dr. Hossein Farhady, Dr. Robert Agajeenian and Dr. Lyle Bachman for their unsurpassed contributions in my education.

Last but not least, I would like to thank my family for their love, encouragement and understanding without which I would have never been able to accomplish my studies.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables	viii
Abstract.....	ix
Chapter One: Introduction	1
1.1. Significance of the Study	3
1.2 Research Questions.....	4
1.3. The Structure of the Thesis.....	5
Chapter Two: Literature Review	6
2.1. Assessment.....	6
2.2. Types of assessment: Summative assessment vs. formative assessment.....	7
2.3. Formative assessment.....	7
2.4 Types of formative assessment.....	9
2.5 Teacher written feedback.....	9
2.6 Self-assessment.....	11
2.7 Rubric-referenced self-assessment.....	13
2.7.1 Positive impact of rubric-referenced self assessment.....	14
2.7.2 Negative impact of rubric-referenced self-assessment.....	15
2.7.3 Validity of rubric-referenced self-assessment; Suggestions to increase validity.....	16
Chapter Three: Methodology.....	20
3.1. Research Design.....	20
3.2. Setting and Participants	21
3.3. Operational Definitions of the Terms.....	22
3.4. Treatment.....	24

3.5. Instrumentation.....	25
3.5.1. Tests.....	25
3.5.2 Questionnaire.....	26
3.6. Data Collection Procedures.....	27
3.6.1 Questionnaire	27
3.6.2 Semi-structure interview.....	27
3.7. Data Analysis.....	29
Chapter 4: Results	30
4.1 Inter-rater Reliability Analysis.	30
4.2. Analysis of the Quantitative and Qualitative Data	32
4.2.1 Pre and Post Tests’ Analysis	33
4.3 Analysis of the Questionnaires... ..	36
4.3.1 Analysis of the Pre test Questionnaire	36
4.3.2 Analysis of the Post-test Questionnaires.....	38
Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion	42
5.1. Discussion and Findings.....	42
5.1.1 Pre and post-treatment test data analysis results and discussions.....	43
5.1.2 Questionnaire analysis results and discussions.....	43
5.1.3 Interview analysis and discussions.....	45
5.2. Delimitations of the Study.....	45
5.3. Limitations of the Study.....	46
5.4. Pedagogical implications of the study.....	46
5.5. Implications for further research.....	47

References	49
Appendices	56
Appendix A.....	56
Appendix B	57
Appendix C.....	58
Appendix D.....	61
Appendix E.....	62
Appendix F.....	64
Appendix G.....	65

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 Reliability analysis of the piloted pre and post-treatment tests	26
Table 2 Inter-rater reliability analysis of the pre-treatment tests of the Experimental and Comparison groups.....	30
Table 3 Inter-rater reliability analysis of the post-treatment tests of the Experimental and Comparison groups.....	31
Table 4 Mann-Whitney U Test results of pre-treatment tests of experimental and comparison groups.....	33
Table 5 Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test for pre and post-treatment test results of Comparison Group.....	34
Table 6 Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test for pre and post-treatment test results of Experimental Group.....	35
Table 7 Mann-Whitney U Test results of the post-treatment tests of the experimental and comparison groups.....	36
Table 8 Questionnaire filled in before the treatment (out of 26).....	37
Table 9 Questionnaire for the comparison group students (12 students).....	38
Table 10 Questionnaire for the experimental group students (14 students).....	39

ABSTRACT

This paper presents a small scale exploratory study on the impact of teacher feedback vs. student self-assessment using rubrics on EFL learners' writing enhancement conducted in the Experimental English Classes (EEC), organized by the Center for Research in Applied Linguistics (CRAL) at the American University of Armenia (AUA). The purpose of this study is three-fold. First, it aims at investigating the relationship between students' self-assessment through rubrics and writing enhancement. Second, it tries to reveal students' personal attitudes towards rubrics as a self-assessment tool to enhance writing skills, as well as towards teacher's feedback and students' self-assessment. Third, it reveals the effectiveness of teacher's feedback vs. student's self-assessment on student's written output. The study is experimental. For the answers to the issues under investigation qualitative and quantitative research methods were implemented. The quantitative data taken from a seven-week English course through pre and post-treatment tests with instruction between them showed that both teacher feedback and student self-assessment had improved students' writing at the end of the treatment. However, there was not a statistically significant difference between the performance of those who received teacher feedback and those who assessed their writings themselves. The qualitative data showed that students' attitudes are quite positive in terms of rubrics, student self-assessment and teacher feedback.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Different types of assessment have long been used by educators to assess learners' knowledge to understand where learners are and what they need for further improvement. Assessment is ongoing feedback that helps learners to improve their learning (Gardner, 1991; Goodrich, 1997), as well as an information-gathering activity to understand the learners' knowledge level and their abilities (McNamara, 2004).

Formative assessment, a part of instructional process that provides the information needed to adjust teaching and learning while they are happening, is a part of assessment widely used in the field of language teaching. Through formative assessment educators monitor and update classroom instruction, identify the gaps and flaws of the materials used for teaching purposes allowing them to make needed modifications to make the materials adequate to a possible extent (Roskos & Neuman, 2012). Also, formative assessment provides information about the gaps in students' performance (Sadler, 1989). This information allows policy-makers to make certain modifications, or to take measures towards the improvement of students' performance. There are different types of formative assessment such as portfolios, observations, peer-assessment, teacher feedback, students' self-assessment and others. This study addresses teacher feedback and students' self-assessment.

Teacher written feedback is an integral part of formative assessment. Its use has been reported to be effective through years (Goldstein, 2004; Miao, Badger & Zhen, 2006; Yang, Badger & Yu, 2006), and is considered as a fundamental part of a writing course (Ferris, 2002; Chandler, 2003). Self-assessment has recently gained much

importance in the learning process and a myriad of research has shown that self-assessment is a reliable tool for improving skills in different subject areas. It has been used in mathematics, language learning, history, and other disciplines. Many scholars have signified the importance of self-assessment as a tool to enhance students' independence and autonomy while learning a subject. It also arouses students' responsibility towards their own learning, as well as boosts their critical thinking. It is important that students realize their potential, what they know, what they can or cannot do. If they reach the level of acknowledging the gaps, that is, their weaknesses, they will consciously embark on improving them. Self-assessment will help empower students to monitor their own learning (Dickinson, 1987; Srimavin, & Daraswang, 2003) and obtain life-long learning skills.

As a way of alternative assessment, self-assessment, namely rubric-referenced self-assessment, has widely been used in EFL settings, and recently has gained more importance and attention. Researchers have done a lot of experiments to assess the value of self-assessment. Based on the research, teachers implement self-assessment tool in everyday classroom use. Some of them have given up the idea over time reasoning that students become less interested in producing high quality work and usually end up writing vacuous essays provided they meet the requirements set up in the rubrics. Meanwhile others argue that rubric-referenced self-assessment is a powerful tool which helps students take responsibility over their own learning (Andrade, 2006), and creates an environment where teachers' role as the only assessors is de-emphasized (Wyngaard and Gehrke, 1996). Knight (2009) believes that students become more motivated when they are aware of their learning objectives, and their progress toward those learning objectives.

1.1 Significance of the Study

Assessment is the ways instructors gather data about their teaching and their students' learning (Hanna & Dettmer, 2004). It is an indicator of the extent to which the established objectives are met by the students. Generally assessment has been a central area in language teaching. Traditionally it has been the teachers' responsibility to assess student's work via summative and formative assessment. However, what concerns the rubric-referenced self-assessment, opinions vary from some scholars' denying its effectiveness to others' supporting its extensive use. The opponents of the use of rubrics for self-assessment argue that it discourages students from creative thinking, whereas the advocates strongly believe that its implementation in the classroom has shown tremendous success, increased interest and student involvement. Thus, the increasing interest to self-assessment and the popularity and extensive use of rubrics in classroom settings by teachers as an educational tool to teach students to assess their own works, as well as the controversial attitudes risen in the result of practicing this in the classroom, made it worth examining the matter in an Armenian EFL setting.

1.2 Research Questions

The primary purpose of this study is to find out the effectiveness of teacher written feedback versus students' self-assessment of their essays using rubrics in the improvement of the students' essay writing skills. This study also tries to find how the use of rubrics as a tool to promote writing skills is perceived by students, as well as the students' personal attitudes towards rubric use as a self-assessment tool that promotes writing skills.

The research questions addressed in this study are as follows:

- *What is the relationship between the students' use of rubric as a self-assessment tool and their writing improvement in the Armenian EFL classroom?*
- *What is the relationship between the teacher's written feedback and the students' writing improvement?*
- *What are the students' attitudes towards their self-assessment based on rubrics versus teacher's written feedback?*

1.3 The Structure of the Thesis

Apart from the first chapter this thesis includes four more chapters. Below the brief introductions of the chapters are presented:

Chapter Two: This chapter presents the related literature review to create solid background for the research questions and hypothesis. Thus, it provides the definitions of the research variables, as well as introduces the research questions and the hypothesis.

Chapter Three: This chapter presents the methodology of the research: research design, participants, setting, materials, procedure of the experiment and employed instrumentation.

Chapter Four: This chapter describes data analysis, clarifies the final results of the current research, i.e. provides answers to the proposed research questions.

Chapter Five: This chapter presents the summary of the findings from the data collection, the answers to the proposed research questions, with the delimitations and limitations of the study and the recommendations for further research coming next.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Assessment

Many teachers have used assessment to stimulate learning and teaching. In order to get higher grades and scores many students exert a lot of efforts and learn more. From this point of view assessment was believed to trigger learning. In general, assessment is ongoing feedback that helps learners to improve their learning (Goodrich, 1997; Aebersold and Field, 1997). Assessment is defined as “any method used to better understand the current knowledge that a student possesses” (Dietel, Herman and Knuth, 1991, p.1), or “the tools, techniques, and procedures for collecting and interpreting information about what learners can and cannot do” (Nunan 1999, p. 85). It is a process which tells the students’ potentials and their needs bringing these needs into teachers’ consideration while making instructional plans (Sommer, 1989).

According to McNamara (2004), assessment is an information-gathering activity to understand the learners’ knowledge level and their abilities. This information is then defined, analyzed, interpreted and used to increase students’ learning and development (Erwin, 1991). Kizlik (2010) refers to assessment as an umbrella term for all methods of testing and assessment.

Scholars distinguish two types of assessment: summative assessment and formative assessment. These two types of assessment are used to gather information about students’ knowledge level and their abilities, but the ways the information is gathered are quite distinct for summative and formative assessment.

2.2 Types of assessment: Summative assessment vs. formative assessment

Teachers can build in many opportunities to assess how students are learning and then use this information to make beneficial changes in instruction. This diagnostic use of assessment which provides feedback to teachers and students over the course of instruction is called formative assessment. With formative assessment, students are evaluated during the work process and the focus is on improving the process. Thus, formative assessment is process-oriented and is designed to provide information needed to adjust teaching and learning while they are still occurring.

In contrast to formative assessment, summative assessment generally takes place after a period of instruction and implies making a judgment about the learning that has occurred. It is product-oriented and is designed to provide information about the amount of learning that has occurred at a particular point. Summative assessment helps to evaluate effectiveness of programs, school improvement goals, alignment of curriculum, or student placement in specific programs (Black, Harrison, Lee, Marshall, & Wiliam, 2003).

2.3 Formative assessment

The primary function of formative assessment, which is generally referred to as “assessment for learning”, is to provide students with information about their performance (Churches, 2011). Formative assessment is a “gap minder” (Roskos & Neuman, 2012), as it displays the gap between where the students are and where they need to go to achieve certain objectives, that is, students can identify their gaps and work towards improving them. Moreover, formative assessment helps the teacher to be alert

and sensitive to these gaps to act accordingly. It also shapes some characteristics so important for learners: they become self-regulated learners, who can recognize their goals and monitor and evaluate their learning process to achieve the goals (Nicole and Macfarlane-Dick, 2006).

Formative assessment is an assessment conducted during the instructional process. According to Ferris (2008) formative assessment can be written support embedded by teachers, peers or the students themselves on a piece of writing intended to improve the next piece of writing. It frequently checks students' skills and allows instructors to be aware of the learning needs to make corresponding adjustments in the instruction (Office of Economic Cooperation and Development, 2005). It implies judgments about the quality of students' performance and immediate use of these judgments (Sadler, 1989).

Wealth of research evidence shows that formative assessment is a key component in classroom work and "its development can raise standards of achievements" (Black & William, 1998). Formative assessment can be a powerful weapon and can have an ameliorative impact on students' learning if communicated in the right way, that is, if each student is given relevant feedback aimed to better their own performance, formative assessment will occur. Thus, formative assessment is ongoing, developmental and progressive (Churches, 2011) from which both teachers and students can benefit.

2.4 Types of formative assessment

To assess students' performance formatively, teachers implement different instructional strategies such as teacher feedback, observations, conferences between the instructor and students, self-assessment, peer-assessment, student record keeping, in-class activities, homework exercises and others. The focus of this study is the teacher written feedback and student self-assessment using rubrics on students' writing enhancement.

2.5 Teacher written feedback

Assessment is an ongoing feedback that helps learners to improve their learning (Goodrich, 1997; White, 1994). Thus, Feedback is a key component of assessment and the heart of formative assessment. It activates students' further actions towards the improvement. The higher the quality of feedback is, the better output the writer will produce (Churches, 2011). To provide higher quality feedback, instructors should be careful about the language of their comments to help students avoid a number of difficulties that they may face while using feedback information. Higgins, Hartley, and Skelton (2002) point out three problems that may cause problems among students when they use feedback information:

- their increased workload through modularisation
- the quality of the feedback
- the language of the feedback

The investigations of the quality of feedback on students' writing suggest that there are discrepancies of understanding the writing requirements between the teachers and students, and very often teacher's feedback creates confusion among students (

Walker 2009), whereby it becomes unhelpful and unusable for the students (Walker 2009; Weaver 2006), as sometimes it is

- too general and vague
- lacked guidance
- focused on the negative
- is unrelated to the assessment criteria (Weaver 2006, 387-8)

Teacher feedback has been documented in second language writing as being effective (Goldstein, 2004; Miao, Badger & Zhen, 2006), and as having influenced writing instruction positively. Ferris and Hedgcock (1998) claim that giving students grammar feedback is critical in students' motivation as learners, because they become inspired and thus ready to move forward producing something different after revision (Freeman and Lewis, 1998). If not given the feedback, a facilitator in developing L2 grammar writing (Ferris, 2002 & 1995), students become unaware of their mistakes, and thus they feel confused and de-motivated (Hyland, 2003). Studies carried out by Ferris (2002 & 1995) also showed positive relationship between teachers' sufficient comments and students' writing improvement in terms of grammar mistakes.

Black & William (1998) believe that teacher feedback is essential for students' self-assessment, too. They identify three elements included in the feedback

- recognition of the desired goal
 - evidence about present position
 - some understanding of a way to close the gap between the two mentioned above
- (Black, et. al., 1998)

Learners should be aware of this gap so that they can take measures for improvement. Black (et. al.,1998) suggest that teacher's feedback is more effective when it is addressed to each student with guidance about their weaknesses and strengths.

2.6 Self-assessment

John Upshur (1975, cited in Heilenman, 1990) was one of the pioneers to provide a rationale for the use of self-assessment in the measurement of second language abilities. He states that tests can reveal only part of the students' language competencies, and the implementation of other kinds of assessment in classroom is of crucial importance. Self-assessment is a kind of alternative assessment which has significant pedagogic value (Mrudula, 2002) as a measure to assess second language competencies. The term self-assessment can also be found in metacognition literature to refer to the judgments an individual makes on the basis of self-knowledge (Bransford, Brown & Cocking, 1999)

Klenowski (1995) defines self-assessment as "the evaluation or judgment of 'the worth of one's performance and the identifications of one's strengths and weaknesses with a view to improving one's learning outcomes" (p. 146). Srimavin, & Daraswang (2003) assert that self-assessment is a tool that learners use to evaluate their knowledge and performance level, and monitor their own learning accordingly. Through self-assessment students tend to train themselves to evaluate their own productions which, in turn promotes learners' autonomy (Oskarsson, 1989). According to Hunt, Gow, and Barnes (1989), self-evaluation and self-assessment are key components that lead students to take over their own learning process, a process by which the student learns about

himself, what he likes or dislikes, and how he tends to react to certain situations (Dikel, 2005).

The positive effects of self-assessment have been reported by different scholars in different subject areas. Hillocks (1986) found improvement in secondary students' writing quality when asked to self-assess their writings. Similar treatments were carried out by Arter, Spandel, Culham, and Pollan (1994) which showed positive relationship between self-assessment and writing improvement. Andrade and Boulay (2003) also found high positive achievements in favour of treatment groups. Though there is positive impact of self-assessment on writing improvement, and many teachers believe that effective self-assessment is more cost-effective and students learn more when they feel responsible of the assessment of their learning outcomes, Ross (2006) observe that there are still many teachers who think that the use of self-assessment is time consuming and not good for classroom implementation.

To make self-assessment more appealing and more effective, teachers should actively get engaged in constructing knowledge in their students how to assess their learning (Chen, 2008), as well as providing students with opportunities to assess their own abilities thus making their learning more effective (Oskarsson, 1989). Harris (1997) believes that these opportunities are a fundamental element that helps students to focus on their own learning. In this case students become self-confident, are encouraged and motivated, show greater effort and increased self-awareness of their learning strengths and weaknesses (Blue, 1994). Ross (2006) argues that for self-assessment to occur it is necessary that students and instructors negotiate about the self-assessment criteria, make discussions on evidence of criteria items in the writing for judgments and improve grades

through self-assessment. Black & Wiliam (1998) claim that when students have clear understanding of the targets their learning is supposed to attain, they tend to assess themselves and their peers as well honestly and are mostly tough in their judgments towards their peers in general and towards their selves in particular. When the students do not clearly picture their objectives they show no commitment to learning and their learning therefore becomes arbitrary. So, for self-assessment to function purposefully and productively they recommend that students be trained in self-assessment to purposefully work to achieve their goals.

To sum up, self-assessment is seen as one of the pillars of learner autonomy as it emphasizes learning, the process rather than the results or the product. It is an inevitable part of formative assessment and is very important as it reduces teachers' workload, increases engagement and better understanding, reinforces collaborative work adding a new powerful dimension to the learning process (Churches, 2011).

2.7 Rubric-referenced self-assessment

Scholars distinguish portfolios, checklists, rubrics, etc, as tools used for self-assessment. As the core subject of this research paper is the impact of rubric-referenced self-assessment on students' writing improvement, it is important to go on with the definitions of rubrics and the advantages and disadvantages of its use for students' self-assessment.

In education rubric is used very frequently. There have been many definitions of rubrics such as rubric may mean a "set of categories, criteria for assessment, and the gradients for presenting and evaluating learning" (Cooper and Gargan, 2009). Wiggins

defines rubric as “one of the basic tools in the assessor's kit. . . telling us what elements matter most” (1998, p. 153). Another explanation by Guskey is that rubrics “are specific guidelines that can be used to describe students' work in reading, writing, mathematics, and other content areas” (1994, p. 25). According to Schmoker a rubric “simply means a rule or guide . . . by which students' performance or product is judged. It nails down the criteria, making them available to schools, teachers, parents, and students and providing clear direction and focus” (2006, pp. 70-71).

Overall, A rubric is an assessment tool, listed criteria with gradations of quality for each criterion (Goodrich 1997) and encompasses the description of the desirable qualities which are usually more informative, allowing students produce a higher quality output (Andrade, 2000). It is a standard and a written statement that describes how the standard can be achieved and includes the information a student will need to consider obtaining a certain grade for a certain level of performance.

2.7.1 Positive impact of rubric-referenced self assessment

The use of rubrics to assess students’ language output has its advantages. Rubrics are tools that help educators make it easy and quick to assess students’ work. They help teachers to be more careful and critical about the needs of students and the material taught. They are also a kind of justification for teachers before the students, parents and others of the grades they assign the papers (Andrade, 2000). Due to rubrics students and parents become aware of the teacher’s expectations, that is, the students are to be graded based on what level of a teacher’s expectations is met. Finally, rubrics help teachers to

construct tests and assignments to assess students' progress, and open opportunities for reflection, feedback, and continued learning (Cooper and Gargan, 2009).

The essence of rubrics, as Andrade (2006) mentions, aims to promote student learning, to boost achievement thus helping students to become self-regulated learners, and as Wyngaard and Gehrke (1996) observe to de-center teachers' role in assessing students' writing. This helps students to become autonomous learners and to monitor their writing improvement.

2.7.2 Negative impact of rubric-referenced self-assessment

However useful rubrics are, they are not devoid of pitfalls. One of their shortcomings is their subjectivity. Another disadvantage is the burden they create for the teachers and the students. And last but not least, they reduce creativity: students avoid using new ideas and approaches beyond the spectrum of rubrics, fearing that they will be penalized by low scores (Cooper and Gargan, 2009). This entails the loss of students' interest in the learning process as well: they become discouraged to perform real pieces of writing (Wilson, 2007). Moreover, students become reluctant to take risks or think deeply, and as a result produce something superficial only to meet the required premises (Kohn, 2006).

Kohn assumes that using rubrics emphasizes conventions rather than content and believes that rubrics promote standardization and turn teachers into "grading machines" or just let them assume that whatever they do they are "exact and objective" (2006, p. 1). Andrade (2006) argues that the trouble with the use of rubrics does really exist only if looked upon them as a mere grading-tool. He claims that it is just a distortion or an

oversimplification of the underlying meanings of the classroom application of rubrics. The problem with the use of rubrics for self-assessment also stems from the fact that its function is poorly understood. This is the reason that some educators think rubrics are difficult, not practical and even not necessary.

2.7.3 Validity of rubric-referenced self-assessment; Suggestions to increase validity

Some scholars question the validity of student self-assessment and maintain the belief that students tend to overestimate their work especially if it refers to their grade in a course (Boud & Falchikov, 1989), or they may lack cognitive skills to understand their abilities and hence unable to make appropriate judgments (Ross, 2006). White (1994) believes that students lack to revise their writings, simply because they are not taught how to evaluate their own writings. They may find peer and self-assessment delusional when introduced for the first time, but through time students get accustomed to using rubric and realize its significant value (Falchikov, 1986).

Thus, to increase the validity of rubric-referenced self-assessment students shouldn't be given the rubric and asked to assess their works or merely score their own papers. The validity of student assessment is higher when students are taught to assess their work toward a certain criteria (Ross et al., 1999; Sung et al, 2005). Andrade (2005) observed that even co-created rubrics with the students aroused confusion among them; they seemed not sure what to do with it. When students are taught how to use rubric in self-assessing their writings, they are not confused about the criteria set in the rubric. On the contrary, they analyze trying to find evidence in their work that will meet the requirements set in the rubric which in turn may increase their critical thinking. When

students give feedback to their own writings themselves, they are able to take control over their own learning, and, consequently, make learning objectives easy to achieve (Bangert-Drowns, Kulik, Kulik, & Morgan, 1991; Butler & Winne, 1995).

In addition, when their understanding level of the rubric is higher, students become more motivated and are more accurate in their judgments of their written production (Rolheiser, 1986). For instance, Ross (et. al, 1999) carried out research and found that students trained how to self-assess their work outperformed the control samples' performance in narrative writing. In their experiment Wyngaard and Gehrke (1996) asked students to write essays and then peer-review their writings. After taking their peers' feedback, students were invited to evaluate their essays according to the rubric. At the end the authors found that the use of rubric for self-assessment helped students to critically assess their works and become better and independent editors.

There is also another concern about the effectiveness of the use of rubrics for self-assessment: students follow the format rather than the content. Andrade (2006) believes that rubrics will emphasize content rather than convention if teachers include sophisticated criteria in their rubrics such as “voice and tone, considering other points of view, raising questions, taking risks, and making connections”. He claims that rubrics also engage students to think about the value of their production, that's why he signifies the importance to invite students to co-create rubrics with the teacher, and use it for further feedback. Ross (1999) too believes that teachers and students should create a rubric for together and then apply the rubric by assessing different samples. When students are involved in co-creating rubrics with the teacher, they view rubrics as guiding tools rather than “rigid requirements” which help them to become autonomous readers,

take control over their writing and become less dependent on the teacher (Spandel, 2006, p. 2). It is also essential to give students feedback on their self-assessments and develop strategies to address the needs for improvements (Ross, 1999). This will encourage students and diminish teachers' monopoly as judges of quality (Andrade, 2006).

To sum up, rubrics are considered a valuable, objective and justifiable method of assessing students' performance by some scholars, yet their valued qualities are looked upon with skepticism and criticized by others. Whether rubrics are good, bad or ugly are simply a matter of how they are created and how they are used (Andrade, 2005). Rubrics that are thoughtfully and carefully written, or are created for instructional purposes can serve a useful instructional tool and facilitate peer-assessment and self-assessment (Andrade, 2005; Spandel, 2006). Spandel (2006) asserts that formulaic rubrics created to score, say, a written piece can have a negative impact, whereas instructionally useful rubrics can be of great importance, as it will enable writers to think reflectively and find ways to better their writings. She defines three components included in a writing guide: one of them is the criteria written on the paper, another is the examples for students how to put criteria in action, and the other is the reader whose function is to interpret the writing.

Guiding by the results of the afore-mentioned studies and having different scholars' viewpoints as a support, this research aims to find the answers to the following research questions:

1. *What is the relationship between the students' use of rubric as a self-assessment tool and their writing improvement?*

2. *What is the relationship between the teacher's written feedback and the students' writing improvement?*
3. *What are the students' attitudes towards their self-assessment based on rubrics versus teacher's written feedback?*

The literature review shows that many linguists and experts in the field of language assessment have controversial opinions whether self-assessment and the use of rubrics in assessing students' writing can influence students' writings positively or not, directs to go with non-directional hypothesis:

There is no relationship between the use of rubrics to self-assess writings and writing enhancement of EFL students.

From literature review it has also become apparent that teacher feedback has positive impact on students' writing enhancement. Therefore, directional hypothesis is formulated:

There is positive relationship between teacher feedback and EFL learners' writing improvements.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

This section gives a thorough insight into the research design, the setting, the target participants; the materials, the instruments used for data collection and data analysis, and employed research procedures as well.

3.1 Research design

The primary purpose of this study was to find out whether or to what extent teacher feedback and students' self-assessment of their own essays using rubrics will influence their writing improvement. This study also tried to find out how rubrics use as a tool to enhance writing skills was perceived by students, as well as the students' personal attitudes towards teacher's written feedback and rubric use as a self-assessment tool that promotes writing skills.

The research questions addressed in this study were as follows:

- *What is the relationship between the students' use of rubric as a self-assessment tool and their writing improvement?*
- *What is the relationship between the teacher's written feedback and the students' writing improvement?*
- *What are the students' attitudes towards their self-assessment based on rubrics versus teacher's written feedback?*

The following non-directional hypothesis was formulated for this study:

There is no relationship between the use of rubrics to self-assess writings and writing enhancement of EFL students.

3.2 Setting and Participants

The research was conducted in the Experimental English Classes (EEC), organized by the Center for Research in Applied Linguistics (CRAL) at the American University of Armenia (AUA). The participants were 26 Armenian EFL students from EEC with pre-intermediate language proficiency level. The age of the participants ranged from 13 to 16. Two students of the sample population took a placement test to be considered eligible to take the pre-intermediate level course; the rest were students who had previously completed the elementary course successfully and now attended pre-intermediate course. The participants were native Armenian speakers for whom English was a foreign language. The duration of the classes was seven weeks. The classes met three days a week with two-hour sessions. All the participants used the same textbook, covered the same number of units, attended the same number of classes, and spent the same amount of time on each class. The classes were conducted in English. The researcher of the study was not the teacher of the course. It is worth mentioning that the two teachers involved in teaching the two groups were not the same.

The current study was experimental which allows to avoid most problems concerning with internal and external validity. In order for an experiment to be considered truly experimental three basic characteristics should be present:

- a control group (or groups)
- the students are randomly selected and assigned to the groups
- a pre-test is administered to capture the initial differences between the groups (Hatch & Farhady, 1981, p. 19)

Thus, the participants of the afore-mentioned two groups (A, B) were divided into two groups: experimental and comparison. The total number of students in both groups was 29, 26 of whom participated in the research project. To control the teacher factor, the enrolled students were randomly selected to form an experimental group and a comparison group. As a result, in both groups (A and B) there were students from both experimental and comparison groups. Each of them had the same number of students, though there was inconsistency in the number of males and females allocated in experimental and comparison groups.

The textbook used in groups A and B, hence, in experimental and comparison groups, was “English in Mind 3” Cox & Hill, 2007, with a workbook. Extra materials were also used in both groups along with the textbook and the workbook. However, these materials were not identical and were selected by each teacher separately.

3.3 Operational Definitions of the Terms

- **Assessment:** Assessment is one of the components of evaluation which deals with “the tools, techniques, and procedures for collecting and interpreting information about what learners can and cannot do” (Nunan 1999, p. 85) as well as “the process of defining, analyzing, interpreting, and using information to increase students’ learning and development” (Erwin, 1991, p.15).
- **Formative assessment:** is a written support embedded by teachers, peers or the students themselves on a piece of writing intended to improve the next piece of writing (Ferris, 2008). It frequently checks students’ skills and allows instructors to be aware of the learning needs to make corresponding adjustments in the

instruction (Office of Economic Cooperation and Development, 2005). It implies judgments about the quality of students' performance and immediate use of these judgments (Sadler, 1989). It is a "gap minder" (Roskos & Neuman, 2012), as it displays the gap between where the students are and where they need to go to achieve certain objectives.

- **Teacher feedback:** presents feedback as "any procedures used to inform a learner whether an instructional response is right or wrong" (Kepner, 1991)
- **Self-assessment:** Dickinson (1987) and Srimavin, & Daraswang (2003) assert that self-assessment is a tool that learners use to evaluate their knowledge and performance level, and monitor their own learning accordingly. Through self-assessment students tend to train themselves to evaluate their own productions, which, in turn, promotes learners' autonomy (Oskarsson, 1989).
- **Rubric:** (1998) is that it is "one of the basic tools in the assessor's kit. . . telling us what elements matter most" (Wiggins, 1998, p. 153). Rubrics "are specific guidelines that can be used to describe students' work in reading, writing, mathematics, and other content areas" (Guskey, 1994, p. 25). According to Schmoker a rubric "simply means a rule or guide. . . by which students' performance or product is judged. It nails down the criteria, making them available to schools, teachers, parents, and students and providing clear direction and focus" (2006, pp. 70-71).

3.4 Treatment

The students in experimental and control groups were assigned to write four essays, one essay per week, during the treatment (see Appendix G). They were also informed that the tasks, the four essays, would be assigned as homework, and would be taken into account at the end of the course completion as a bonus. This was done to encourage students to do their best. Before the students wrote their first essay, they took a thirty-minute instruction from the researcher: they were given the rubric according to which they were told they would be graded, and a sample essay to follow the format while writing their essays. The researcher called their attention to the criteria in the rubric and the corresponding evidence in the essay. Thus, the students were shown how to write an essay using the rubrics. After the first essay the comparison group received teacher's feedback, whereas, the experimental group students gave feedback on their own output based on the rubrics. They were also asked to color-code the evidence for the criteria in the rubrics. The researcher handed back the essays so that the students could use the comments to further improve the gaps. As far as the experimental group was concerned, they were encouraged by the researcher with expressions such as "well done", "good", "keep on working this way", etc., so that the students were not discouraged by what might have seemed like indifference towards them. So, the students in the experimental group were aware that their essays and feedback were supervised. This procedure continued for three weeks during which the students wrote three other essays (an essay per week).

3.5 Instrumentation

The following instruments were applied for the data collection:

- pre and post-treatment tests applied in the experiment
- pre and post-treatment attitudinal questionnaires
- a semi-structured interview with students

3.5.1 Tests

The pre-treatment test was given to both groups on the same day at the beginning of the second week. The researcher and the teachers supervised the test, which lasted thirty minutes, creating equal conditions for both groups (A and B). The post-treatment test was given at the end of the sixth week as the last week is usually devoted to the students' course finals and preparation for presentations. The pre and post-treatment test topics were taken from IELTS and iBT writing sections and followed the iBT format. Persuasive type of essay was chosen both for the pre and post-treatment tests and for the treatment tasks. The essay topics were not covered by the students previously. The reason behind this was to create equal conditions for the new students and those who had already attended EEC courses. The pre and post-treatment tests were not identical yet they were equivalent, that is, they were similar in difficulty. Before administering the pre and post-treatment tests the researcher piloted them to other five students to check the reliability of the pre and post-treatment tests.

Table 1 *Reliability analysis of the piloted pre and post-treatment tests*

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.932	2

Table 1 shows that there is higher consistency reliability between the pre and post-treatment tests. Cronbach's Alpha is 0.932, which is higher than the cut point of 0.7 for reliability. This means that the tests were similar in difficulty.

3.5.2 Questionnaire

The questionnaires designed for the study included pre and post-treatment attitudinal questionnaires. There were two questionnaires: one to be administered before the treatment, and another to be filled in after the post-treatment test. The questionnaires encompassed closed-ended and open-ended items to collect both qualitative and quantitative data. Taking into consideration the students' proficiency level, the statements were both in the target and native languages to avoid misunderstandings.

3.6 Data Collection Procedures

3.6.1 Questionnaire

The questionnaire was conducted at AUA. It was piloted to 5 students. This was done to make sure the statements were clear and well-formulated to identify and improve the weak points of the questionnaires. Several statements and words turned out to be unclear to the students. In respect to this the statements were translated into native language to avoid the respondents' misunderstanding the questions. The questionnaires were anonymous so that the participants could feel free to express their attitudes towards the self-assessment using rubrics and its impact on their writing improvement, as well as their opinion towards teacher's feedback based on the criteria in the rubrics and how it had improved their writing skills.

3.6.2 Semi-structured interview

The semi-structured interview was conducted to find more details on students' attitudes. The questions were taken from the questionnaire, but were expanded on by the researcher to get a clearer picture of the students' attitudes.

3.6.3 Pre and Post-treatment Tests

The participants were informed about the study in the second week of their classes. Before agreeing to participate, they were introduced to the goals and the procedures of the research.

The two groups were given a pre-treatment writing test in the second week. The pre-treatment test aimed to establish the initial differences between the groups before the

treatment. The essays for the pre and post-treatment tests were checked by two teachers one of whom was the researcher. As the essays were checked by different teachers, inter-rater reliability was calculated.

After the pre-treatment test both groups were given the same rubrics according to which they were told their further writings were going to be assessed. From the literature review it had become apparent that even co-created rubrics (teachers and students) generate confusion among students. Thus, the students in both groups were given a model of a good essay and got a forty-minute instruction from the researcher on how to use rubrics when they wrote their essays.

The students in the comparison group wrote the treatment essays and were given feedback by the researcher. The students in the experimental group wrote the treatment essays and were asked to self-assess their essays using the rubric. At the end of the experiment the students in both groups were given a post-treatment writing test. The post-treatment test papers were checked by the same raters who had graded the pre-treatment test writings. Then the results obtained from the pre- and post-treatment tests of the comparison and experimental groups were measured (comparison between groups to either reject or accept the hypothesis), as well as comparison was drawn within each group, pre and post-treatment tests for each group separately. This way the effect size was measured to see what the effect of rubric-referenced self-assessment on the students' writing improvement was.

3.7 Data Analysis

To analyze the data, both qualitative and quantitative data analysis was employed. The former was obtained via questionnaires and semi-structured interviews and gave the researcher an overview of students' attitudes towards the role of self-assessment using rubrics in the development of their writing skills, as well as the role of teacher feedback in students' writing enhancement. The latter, that is, the quantitative data, was obtained from pre and post-treatment test results. The comparison of the pre and post-treatment test results reported whether there were any significant differences between students' self-assessment through rubrics and the improvement of their writing skills versus teacher feedback and the improvement of their writing skills. The pre and post-treatment test results were analyzed through the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS software, version 16).

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

The data collected enabled to reveal whether or to what extent the use of rubrics by the students to assess their own writings was effective to promote students' writing efficacy, as well as students' attitudes towards teacher feedback and self-assessment and the role rubrics might have played.

4.1 Inter-rater Reliability Analysis

The target issue of this study was to investigate the impact of the teacher feedback versus students' self-assessment using certain criteria on students' writing enhancement. For this purpose students in both comparison and experimental groups took pre and post-treatment tests, which were then rated by the researcher and a co-rater with an MA TEFL degree. Statistical analysis was conducted using the reliability test, the purpose of which was to establish the inter-rater reliability, that is, to identify how consistent the grades given by both raters were.

Table 2 *Inter-rater reliability analysis of the pre-treatment tests of the Experimental and Comparison groups.*

Case Processing Summary		N	%
Cases	Valid	26	100.0
	Excluded ^a	0	.0
	Total	26	100.0

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.934	2

Table 2 shows the reliability statistics of pre-treatment test scores of experimental and comparison groups. In the table the figure of 0.934 under Cronbach's alpha is greater than 0.7 which is the cut point for the reliability. The statistics shows that the Cronbach's alpha for the pre-treatment tests of experimental and comparison groups equals to 0.934, which allows us to conclude that there is a high internal consistency reliability between the two raters.

Table 3 Inter-rater reliability analysis of the post-treatment tests of the Experimental and Comparison groups.

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	26	100.0
	Excluded ^a	0	.0
	Total	26	100.0

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.893	2

Table 3 shows the reliability statistics of post-treatment test scores of experimental and comparison groups. As it can be seen from **Table 3** the Cronbach's

alpha for the post-treatment test scores of the experimental and comparison is 0.893 which is also higher than the cut point of 0.7. Thus, the inter-rater reliability of post-treatment tests is high.

As **Table 2** and **Table 3** show high inter-rater reliability between the writing pre and post-treatment test score ratings, the mean of pre and post-treatment test scores was computed for further analysis.

4.2 Analysis of the Quantitative and Qualitative Data

The quantitative data was derived from pre and post-treatment writing tests and attitudinal questionnaire. For the pre and post-treatment tests Mann-Whitney and Wilcoxon Tests were applied to compare the scores of the tests of experimental and comparison groups. It is typically a moment of greatest excitement for most researchers and students when they find their results are significant. One way that one can assess the importance of one's finding is to calculate the effect size (also known as strengths of association). SPSS does not provide an effect size statistic, but the value of z that is reported in the output can be used to calculate an approximate value of the effect size r :

$r = z / \text{square root of } N$, where N = total number of cases.

The quantitative part of the questionnaire was analyzed via frequency analyses where the numbers were converted into percentages. The qualitative part of the questionnaire, namely the open-ended questions, was interpreted qualitatively.

4.2.1 Pre and Post-treatment Tests Analysis

To answer the first research question as to which of the two types of formative assessment is more useful for students' writing improvement, the following analysis was carried out: Mann-Whitney U Test was applied for between group comparisons; Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test was used for within group comparisons, and Effect Size was calculated for both Wilcoxon and Mann-Whitney U Tests.

Mann-Whitney U Test was applied to find out whether there were any significant differences between the results of the pre-treatment tests of the experimental and comparison groups, as well as those of post-treatment tests.

Table 4 Mann-Whitney U Test results of pre-treatment tests of experimental and comparison groups.

	premean
Mann-Whitney U	78.500
Wilcoxon W	156.500
Z	-0.290
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.772
Exact Sig. [2*(1-tailed Sig.)]	0.781 ^a

Table 4 shows that the Z value for the writing performance is -0.290. The observed significance level is 0.772 which is greater than the critical probability level of 0.05. This means that there was no statistically significant difference between the two groups before the treatment. The effect size is 0.057, which is considered a very small size (small effect size = 0.1).

To identify whether there was any statistically significant differences within the groups before and after the treatment, non-parametric Wilcoxon Signed Ranks test was employed.

Table 5 *Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test for pre and post-treatment test results of Comparison Group*

	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
postmean – premean Negative Ranks	1 ^a	1.00	1.00
Positive Ranks	9 ^b	6.00	54.00
Ties	2 ^c		
Total	12		

Test Statistics

	postmean – premean
Z	-2.712 ^a
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.007

Table 5 shows the results obtained from the pre and post-treatment test scores of the comparison group. **Z** value equals to -2.712, and the asymptotic significance level **p** is 0.007, which is much lower than the critical **p** value of 0.05. This means that there is statistically a significant difference between the pre-treatment test and post-treatment test results in favor of the post-treatment test. Here the value of the effect size **r** is equal to 0.55. This is considered a large effect size using Cohen (1988) criteria of 0.1 = small effect, 0.3 = medium effect, and 0.5 = large effect.

A comparison was drawn between the pre and post-treatment test results of experimental group to identify any differences in the improvement of experimental group students' writing performance at the end of the treatment.

Table 6 *Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test for pre and post-treatment test results of Experimental Group*

		N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
postmean – premean	Negative Ranks	1 ^a	1.00	1.00
	Positive Ranks	10 ^b	6.50	65.00
	Ties	3 ^c		
	Total	14		

Test Statistics

	postmean – premean
Z	-2.875 ^a
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.004

As it can be seen from the table above, **Z** value is -2.875 with asymptotic significance of .004, which, in its turn, shows a statistically significant difference between the pre and post-treatment tests of the experimental group. There are 10 positive ranks in favor of the post-treatment test versus 1 negative rank which indicates that the students considerably improved their writing skills at the end of the treatment. Here the value of the effect size **r** is equal to 0.54. This is considered a large effect size using Cohen (1988) criteria of 0.1 = small effect, 0.3 = medium effect, and 0.5 = large effect.

To see whether the two groups performed differently at the end of the treatment, Mann-Whitney U Test was applied to calculate and compare the mean scores of the post tests of comparison and experimental groups.

Table 7 Mann-Whitney U Test results of the post-treatment tests of the experimental and comparison groups.

	Postmean
Mann-Whitney U	70.500
Wilcoxon W	148.500
Z	-0.700
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.484
Exact Sig. [2*(1-tailed Sig.)]	0.494 ^a

The results depicted in **Table 7** indicate that the Z value for the writing performance after the post-treatment test is -0.700. The observed **p** value (0.484) is not less than the critical alpha level of 0.05, which means that there were no statistically significant differences between the writing performance of the experimental and comparison groups after the treatment. The observed effect size is 0.14, which is considered a small effect size.

4.3 Analysis of the Questionnaires

4.3.1 Analysis of the pre-test Questionnaire

The questionnaire administered before the treatment aimed to find out if the students had ever applied the tools they were going to use during the experiment, as well as their attitudes towards them.

Table 8 *Questionnaire filled in before the treatment (out of 26)*

1. Have you ever heard the word ‘ rubric ’?	Yes	No 100%
2. Have you ever used rubrics in classroom to assess your performance?	Yes	No 100%
3. Do you know on what criteria your writings are assessed?	Yes 65%	No 35%
4. On what criteria are your writings assessed? Please, check from the list. a) organization b) use of different grammatical structures c) correct use of tenses d) use of a wide range of vocabulary e) phrasal expressions f) number of words g) others (please specify) _____	a)54% b) 65% c) 88% d) 85% e) 22% f) 38% g) 0%	
5. Does your teacher tell you about the criteria according to which your papers are graded, or do you just assume that your teacher grades you according to your above-checked criteria? a) My teacher informs me about the criteria before the writing verbally. b) My teacher informs me about the criteria before the writing in a written form. c) I know about the criteria when I get my graded paper because my teacher usually explains why I get this or that grade. d) I know about the criteria only when I ask my teacher about it. e) I just assume that my writings are graded according to the criteria I checked from the list.	a) 42% b) 0% c) 35% d) 4% e) 27%	

6. Would you like to be informed about the criteria according to which your writings are assessed?	Yes 85%	No 15%
--	------------	-----------

As it can be seen from the table, none of the respondents had ever heard the word "rubric", and, consequently, never used it in the classroom to assess their writings. Most of the students seemed to be aware of the criteria they were usually assessed against and expressed their preferences to be informed of them every time.

4.3.2 Analysis of the post-treatment test Questionnaire

The questionnaire piloted to the participants after the post-treatment test aimed to find out the target sample's attitudes towards the implemented tool, namely rubric, and the types of formative assessment applied in this study: teacher feedback and student self-assessment. To make the analysis of the questionnaire much easier and clearer the results of the questionnaire are presented separately for the comparison and experimental groups.

Table 9 *Questionnaire for the comparison group students (12 students)*

	Yes	No	Not answered
1. Did you follow the rubric when you wrote your essays?	91.5%	8.5%	
2. Did following the rubric help you to improve your writing?	91.5%		8.5%
3 Was it difficult for you to follow the rubric when you wrote the essays?		100%	
4. Would you like your teacher to give you the rubric to follow when you write your essays?	83%	16.6%	

5. Did you read the teacher's comments before writing the next essay?	100%		
6. Did you follow the teacher's comments while writing the next essay?	100%		
7. Did the teacher's comments help you improve your writing?	100%		
	Teacher's comments	Following the rubric	Both
8. Which is more helpful to improve writing essays?	41.6%		58.3%

Table 10 *Questionnaire for the experimental group students (14 students)*

	Yes	No	Not Answered
1. Did you follow the rubric when you wrote your essays?	100%		
2. Did following the rubric help you to improve your writing?	100%		
3 Was it difficult for you to follow the rubric when you wrote the essays?		100%	
4. Would you like your teacher to give you the rubric to follow when you write your essays?	85.7%	14.3%	
5. Did you use the rubric when you assessed your essays?	100%		
6. Was it difficult to assess your essays using the rubric?		100%	

7. Did assessing your essays help you improve your writing?	100%		
8. Did you follow your comments while writing your next essay?	85.7%	14.3%	
9. Did you like assessing your essays?	78.6%	21.4%	
	My comments on my essays	Following the rubric	Both
8. Which is more helpful to improve writing essays?	21.4%	21.4%	57.2%

As can be seen from the analysis of both questionnaires the majority of the comparison group students and all the students in the experimental group used the rubrics as a guide while writing essays. They also shared the opinion that following the rubric was a good means of improving writing. All the participants unanimously stated that they had no difficulty following the criteria set in the rubric at all. On average 85% of the sample population would like their teacher to give them the rubric to follow before writing their essays. All the students in the comparison group showed that they had consistently read the teacher's comments, followed these comments in their next piece of writing, and all of them agreed that teacher's comments were really useful for their writing enhancement. 41.5% believed that the improvement in their writing was due to only teacher's feedback. A little more than half of the comparison group students attributed their writing improvement to both the use of rubric and teacher's feedback. It is worth mentioning that none of them ever thought that their writing improvement occurred due to the use of rubrics only.

The data obtained from the questionnaire for the experimental group shows that all the students ticked 'yes' for the question 'Did assessing your own essays help you improve your writing?' About 86% stated that they did follow their own comments while writing their next essay. Most of the students, around 79%, enjoyed assessing their own writings. In response to whether the use of rubric or self-assessment did contribute to improve their writings, 57% believed that both were equally important, 21.4% thought their writing improvement occurred due to the use of the rubric, while another 21.4% believed that it did due to self-assessment.

Besides the closed-ended questions the students were asked some open-ended questions. All the students in both groups thought that the use of the rubric was beneficial for their writing improvement, because they became aware of the teacher's expectations and, thus, were more attentive and concentrated. The students in the comparison group felt that teacher's feedback was important as well because it helped them to reduce the number of mistakes in their next piece of writing. The experimental group students agreed that self-assessment was also very useful as they were forced to read their essays several times and find evidence of criteria in their writings. Overall, comments on the role of the use of rubric as a self-assessment tool in writing enhancement were positive. The students expressed positive attitudes towards teacher feedback and self-assessment as well.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1. Discussion of Findings

This study investigated the influence of the students' self-assessment based on criteria set in the rubrics on their writing improvement. It also tried to find out what impact the teacher's feedback had on students' writing. Finally it collected and provided data on students' attitudes and perceptions of student self-assessment and use of rubrics in writing essays. Apart from these, this research answered several other questions as well. Should only teachers or students, too, use rubrics for assessment? Will the use of rubrics for self-assessment increase students' awareness of their strengths and weaknesses thus making them autonomous learners? This chapter presents a discussion of the findings of the study and gives the answers to the research questions as well. Further, it discusses the limitations and delimitations of the study and provides suggestions for further research.

The research questions addressed in this study were as follows:

- *What is the relationship between the students' use of rubric as a self-assessment tool and their writing improvement?*
- *What is the relationship between the teacher's written feedback and the students' writing improvement?*
- *What are the students' attitudes towards their self-assessment based on rubrics versus teacher's written feedback?*

5.1.1 Pre and post-treatment test data analysis results and discussions

The findings of this research showed that there was a significant difference between the pre and post-treatment tests in favor of the post-treatment test. This suggests that student self-assessment guided by the rubric does in fact have positive impact on students' writing improvement. Also, descriptive analysis showed significant difference between the means of the pre and post-treatment test results, which implies that students in the experimental group did indeed improve their essay writing. The findings also showed that students in the comparison group improved their writing as there was a significant difference between the means of pre and post-treatment test results in favor of the post-treatment test. This interprets that students in the comparison group who got the teacher's feedback also gained improvement in essay writing. In conclusion, both groups improved their writing skills.

5.1.2 Questionnaire analysis results and discussions

The questionnaire-based-on data showed that students in comparison and experimental groups liked the idea of being informed of the criteria on which they were going to be assessed. Almost all of them, and especially those in the experimental group (100%) followed the rubric while writing essays, and believed that rubrics were a helpful tool for writing improvement. Moreover, the experimental group students responded that they really enjoyed assessing their own writings. A little more than half of the comparison group students thought that both teacher's feedback and the rubric together contributed to their writing, whereas, a little less than half of them thought that their writing improvement was due to only teacher's feedback. The majority of the

experimental group students were sure that both self-assessment and the rubric helped them to make improvements in their writings, whereas some of the rest tended to believe that only the rubric was responsible for their writing improvement and the others thought that it was due to self-assessment only. The research also showed that students did not report any difficulty using the rubric.

Apart from closed-ended questions the questionnaire included open-ended questions as well. The comparison group students believed that teacher's feedback helped them to avoid further mistakes of the same type. The students in the experimental group felt that self-assessment was very useful because they became very attentive and sensitive to their mistakes, because they looked at the rubric and tried to find evidence in their writing thus being aware of their weaknesses. However, they still thought that they needed teacher's feedback on their assessment to make sure that their assessment is right. Both the comparison and experimental group students' attitudes towards the use of the rubric were quite positive. Most of them (6 students from the comparison and 10 students from the experimental group) thought that following the rubric helped them to write essays more effectively, that is, to organize their ideas and separate paragraphs, or include examples to support their point of view to make the essays more understandable, interesting for the reader and easy to follow. Others thought that it helped to concentrate, focus their attention on the criteria, be alert to the rules and produce a good piece of writing. They thought that following the rubrics gave them an opportunity to assess themselves, understand mistakes and improve their writing. The rest even went further saying that following the rubric became a habit which would be helpful in the future too.

As it can be seen both groups were unanimously positive in their attitudes to the use of rubrics in writing essays and assessing their writings.

5.1.3 Interview analysis and discussions

From semi-structured interviews it became clear that students in the experimental group had some difficulties assessing their writings and following the rubric, but through time they felt more comfortable and more convenient. That was a good experience for them which they didn't like first but then got accustomed to it and even enjoyed it. What is more, the rubric helped them to concentrate on what the teacher expected from them, while self-assessment helped them to be aware of their flaws which they worked on correcting. Also, they showed concern about the truthfulness of their assessment, that is, they were not sure they were self-assessing correctly, and showed willingness to get the teacher's feedback on their self-assessment once for a while, until they felt more confident.

5.2. Delimitations of the study

This study had some delimitation which might have affected on the outcome. These delimitations can be valuable to other researchers for further research. They are as follows:

- the students wrote their essays at home without any time constraints, which means that those who were good writers but at the same time slow-thinkers had an opportunity to sit long and write their essays well

- these students may have referred to a dictionary, a relative or online sources for help while writing their essays at home
- the researcher wasn't the teacher of the two groups, so the writing assignments were limited to home tasks as the researcher didn't have the opportunity to directly supervise them
- the students wrote only one type of essay and the number of essays the students intended to write was limited

5.3. Limitations of the study

Along with the delimitations there were limitations to this research as well:

- the small sample size
- the proficiency level of the students: the students might have difficulty understanding teacher's comments or realize their mistakes. They were also not trained to use rubrics to self-assess themselves.
- the short period of time

5.4. Pedagogical implications of the study

This study can provide some further applications:

- EFL teachers can integrate rubrics instructions in EFL learning settings to help students become aware of their writing strengths and weaknesses.
- EFL learners can use rubrics to assess their writings and become autonomous learners and less dependent on the teacher. This will decrease teachers' load and

increase students' responsibility for their own production. Thus, both teachers and students will benefit from it.

- Teachers will take into consideration the fact that students need being taught how to assess their work and periodically give them feedback on their self-assessment guiding them to improve their self-assessment skills.

5.5. Implications for further research

- Studies could be carried out with a larger population. It is advisable that these studies be experimental in design to give a better understanding of the issue and to generalize the results.
- Also, long term instructions (train students how to use rubrics to self-assess their writings) and treatment (include different types of essays) could be worth considering to see their effect on writing improvement.
- As mentioned before, both experimental and comparison group students were present in each class, so it was impossible to hide from the students that some of them within the class belonged to experimental and others belonged to comparison groups. The researcher was able to convince them that there was no difference between them and that the research was done for their own sake. Other researchers could teach the two groups simultaneously so that they would control teacher factor and have separate experimental and comparison groups.

- The use of rubrics by EFL learners to assess their overall language skills could be investigated on a broader scale: say, students' use of rubrics to self-assess their speaking.

REFERENCES

- Aebbersold, J., & Field, M. (1997). *From reader to reading teacher*. New York: Cambridge University Press
- Andrade, H. (2000). Using rubrics to promote thinking and learning. *Educational Leadership*, 57(5), 13-18.
- Andrade, H. G. and Boulay, B. A. (2003). Role of Rubric-Referenced Self-Assessment in Learning to Write. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 97 (1), 21-34
- Andrade, H. G. (2005). Teaching with Rubrics: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly. *College Teaching*, 53 (1), 27-30
- Andrade, H. L. (2006). The Trouble with a Narrow View of Rubrics. *The English Journal*, 95 (6), 9
- Arter, J., Spandel, V., Culham, R., & Pollard, J. (1994, April). *The impact of training students to be self-assessors of writing*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans.
- Bangert-Drowns, R., Kulik, C, Kulik, J., & Morgan, M. (1991). The instructional effect of feedback in test-like events. *Review of Educational Research*, 61, 213-238.
- Black, P., Harrison, C., Lee, C., Marshall, B., & Wiliam, D. (2003). *Assessment for learning: Putting it into practice*. Berkshire, England: McGraw-Hill Education.
- Black, P. and Wiliam, D. (1998). Inside the Black Box: Raising Standards Through Classroom Assessment. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 80, (2), 139-148.
- Blue, G. (1994). Self-assessment of foreign language skills: Does it work? *CLE working paper*, 3, 18-35.

- Boud. D., & Faichikov, N. (1989). Quantitative studies of student self-assessment in higher education: A critical analysis of findings. *Higher Education, 18*, 529-549
- Bransford J.D., Brown A. & Cocking R. (2000). How People Learn: Mind, Brain, Experience and School, Expanded Edition. *Washington, DC, National Academy Press.*
- Brown, D. H. (2004). Language assessment: principles and classroom practices. New York: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Butler, D, & Winne, P. (1995). Feedback and self-regulated learning: A theoretical synthesis. *Review of Educational Research, 65(3)*, 245-281.
- Chandler, J. (2003) The Efficacy of Various Kinds for Improvement in the Accuracy and Fluency of L2 Student Writing, *Journal of Second Language Writing, 12*, pp 267 – 296.
- Chen, Y. M. (2008). Learning to self-assess oral performance in English: A longitudinal case study. *Language Teaching Research, 12(2)*, 235-262.
- Cooper, B. S. and Gargan A.(2009). Rubrics in Education: Old Term, New Meanings. *The Phi Delta Kappan, 91(1)*, 54-55
- Dietel, R. J., Herman, J. L., & Knuth, R. A. (1991). *What does research say about assessment?* Oak Brook, IL: NCREL
- Dikel, M. R. (2005). A guide to going online for self-assessment tools. Retrieved November 15,2005, from: [//www.rileyguide.com/assess.html](http://www.rileyguide.com/assess.html)
- Erwin, T. D. (1991). *Assessing student learning and development: A guide to the principles, goals, and methods of determining college outcomes.* Hoboken, NJ: Jossey-Bass.

- Falchikov, N. (1986). Product comparisons and process benefits of collaborative peer group and self assessments. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education 11* (2), 146-66.
- Ferris, D. (1995) Student Reactions to Teacher Response in Multiple-Draft Composition Classrooms, *TESOL Quarterly*, 29 (1), 34 – 54.
- Ferris, D. (2002) *Treatment of Error in Second Language Student Writing*, The University of Michigan Press.
- Ferris, D. and Hedgcock, J. S. (1998) *Teaching ESL Composition: Purpose, Process, and Practice*, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Ferris, D. (2008). Feedback: Issues and options. In *Teaching academic writing*, ed. P. Friedrich, 93–120. London: Continuum.
- Freeman, R. & Lewis, R. (1998). *Planning and Implementing Assessment*. London, Kogan Page. Retrieved from <http://scholar.google.com>
- Gardner, H. (1991). Assessment in context: The alternative to standardized testing. In B. R. Gifford & M. C. O'Connor (Eds.), *Changing assessments: Alternative views of aptitude, achievement and instruction*. Boston: Kluwer.
- Goldstein, L. M. (2004). Questions and answers about teacher written commentary and student revision: teachers and students working together. *Journal of Second Language Writing 13*(1), 63–80.
- Goodrich, H. (1997). Understanding rubrics. *Educational leadership*, 54(A), 14-17
- Guskey, T. (1994) R. "Making the Grade: What Benefits Students." *Educational Leadership 52*(2), 14- 20.

- Hanna, G. Dettmer, P. (2004). *Assessment for Effective Teaching*. Toronto, ON: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Harris, M. (1997). Self-assessment on language learning in formal setting. *ELT Journal*, 51(1), 12-14.
- Hatch, E. M. & Farhady, H. (1981). *Research design and Statistics for Applied Linguistics*. Tehran: Rahnama Publications.
- Heilenman, L. K. (1990). Self-assessment of second language ability: The role of response effects. *Language Testing*, 7 (2), 174-201.
- Higgins, R., Hartley, P., and Skelton, A. (2002). The conscientious consumer: Reconsidering the role of assessment feedback in student learning. *Studies in Higher Education* 27(1),53–64.
- Hillocks, G., J.R. (1986). *Research on written composition: New directions for teaching*. Urbana, IL: ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills/ National Conference on Research in English
- Hunt, J., Gow, L., & Barnes, P. (1989). Learner self-education and assessment: A tool for autonomy in the language learning classroom. *Language teaching and learning styles within and across cultures*, 207-217.
- Hyland, F. (2003). Focusing on form: Student engagement with teacher feedback. *System*, 21, 217–230.
- Kepner, Ch.G. (1991). An Experiment in the Relationship of Types of Written Feedback to the Development of Second-Language Writing Skills, *The Modern Language Journal*, 75 (3), 305-313

- Klenowski, V. (1995). Student self-evaluation processes in student-centred teaching and learning contexts of Australia and England. *Assessment in Education*, 2(2), 145-163.
- Kizlik, B. (2010). Measurement, Assessment, and Evaluation in Education. Retrieved at May 27, 2010 from <http://www.adprima.com/measurement.htm>.
- Kohn, A. (2006). Speaking My Mind: The Trouble with Rubrics. *The English Journal*, 95(4) 12-15
- McNamara, T. (2004). Language testing. In A. Davies & C. Elder (Eds.), *The handbook of Applied Linguistics* (pp. 763-783). Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Miao, Y., Badger, R. & Zhen, Y. (2006). A comparative study of peer and teacher feedback in a Chinese EFL writing class. *Journal of Second Language Writing* 15(2), 179–200.
- Mrudula, P. (2002). The influence of peer feedback on self and peer assessment of overall skills. *Language Testing*, 19 (2), 109-131.
- Nicol, D.J., and Macfarlane-Dick ,D. (2006). Formative assessment and self-regulated learning:
A model and seven principles of good feedback practice. *Studies in Higher Education* 31(2), 199–218.
- Nunan, D. (1999). *Second language teaching & learning*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle
- Office of Economic Cooperation and Development. (2005). *Formative assessment: improving learning in secondary classrooms*. Paris: OECD.
- Oskarsson, M. (1989). Self-assessment of language proficiency: Rationale and applications. *Language Testing*, 6(1), 1-13.

- Pallant, J. (2007). *SPSS Survival Manual*. NY: Open University Press.
- Roskos, K. & Neuman, S. B. (2012). Formative Assessment: Simply, No Additives. *The Reading Teacher*, 65(8), 534–538
- Ross, J. A. (2006). The Reliability, Validity, and Utility of Self-Assessment. *Practical Assessment, Research & Evaluation*, 11(10), ISSN 1531-7714
- Ross, J. A., Rolheiser, C., & Hogaboam-Gray, A. (1999). Effect of self-evaluation on narrative writing. *Assessing Writing*, 6(1), 107-132.
- Sadler D.R. (1989) Formative assessment and the design of instructional systems. *Instructional Science* 18, 119–144.
- Schmoker, M. (2006). *Results Now: How We Can Achieve Unprecedented Improvement in Teaching and Learning*. Washington, D.C.: ASCD
- Sommer, R. F. (1989). Teaching writing to adults. In J. C. Richards, & W. Renandya (Eds). *Methodology in language teaching: An anthology of current practice*. p.346. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Spandel, V. (2006). Speaking My Mind: In Defense of Rubrics. *The English Journal*, 96 (1), 19-22
- Srimavin, W. & Daraswang, P. (2003). Developing self-assessment through journal writing. Retrieved November 15, 2005, from <http://education5.net/d/developing-self--assessment-through-journal-writing-w3034>
- Sung, Y.-T., Chang, K.-E., Chiou, S.-K., & Hou, H.-T. (2005). The design and application of a web-based self- and peer-assessment system. *Computers and Education*, 45(2), 187-202.

- Walker, M. (2009). An investigation into written comments on assignments: Do students find them usable? *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education* 34(1), 67–78.
- Weaver, M. (2006). Do students value feedback? Student perceptions of tutors' written responses. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education* 31(3), 379–94.
- White, E. (1994). *Teaching and assessing writing: Recent advances in understanding, evaluating, and improving student performance* (2nd ed.). Portland, ME: Calendar Islands.
- Wiggins, G. P. (1998). *Assessing Student Performance: Exploring the Purpose and Limits*. San Francisco, Calif.: Jossey-Bass
- Wilson, M.(2007). Why I Won't Be Using Rubrics to Respond to Students' Writing. *The English Journal*, 96 (4), 62-66
- Wingate, U. (2010). The Impact of Formative Feedback on the Development of Academic Writing. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 35, (5), 519–533
- Wyngaard, S. and Gehrke, R.(1996). Responding to Audience: Using Rubrics to Teach and Assess Writing. *The English Journal*, 85(6) 67-70
- Yang, M., Badger, R. & Yu, Z. (2006). A comparative study of peer and teacher feedback in a Chinese EFL writing class. *Journal of Second Language Writing* 15(2), 179–200.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Analytic Rubric for Persuasive Essays (for the teachers)

I can't copy-paste but it is included in the hard copy

Appendix B

Analytic Rubric for Persuasive Essays

(for students: adapted from that of teachers’)

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Ideas and content	My essay presents a convincing argument. My position is clearly stated. I use enough and appropriate details and examples to support my position.	My essay presents a convincing argument. My position is well-understood. Most of the reasons and examples used to support my ideas are appropriate.	My essay presents a less convincing argument. My position is not so much clear because of insufficient or inappropriate support.	My essay is little convincing. My ideas are confusing, hence, not clear to the reader. My reasons are poor, and my examples are inappropriate.
Organization	My essay has an introduction. My essay has at least two supporting paragraphs, each developing the ideas stated in the introduction. My essay has a conclusion	I have either a strong introduction, developed supporting paragraphs or satisfying ending, but not all three.	Though my essay has organization all the paragraphs are poorly developed.	My essay is disorganized. It makes the reader confused.
Paragraphs	Each paragraph develops one idea. In each paragraph I have strong supporting details including examples.	Each paragraph develops one idea. In each paragraph I have supporting details. My examples are not appropriate	Each paragraph develops one idea. In each paragraph I don’t have enough details to support my point of view. My examples are not appropriate.	Each paragraph develops more than one ideas. My details are inappropriate and my point of view is poorly supported. I don’t have examples.
Vocabulary	I use a wide range of vocabulary accurately. I use idiomatic expressions accurately.	I use a wide range of vocabulary with few errors. I use simple words accurately. I use idiomatic expressions but sometimes they are inappropriate.	I use a limited range of vocabulary often with errors. I use simple vocabulary accurately. I use few idiomatic expressions with some errors.	My vocabulary is poor. I use simple words and often misuse them. I either never use idiomatic expressions or use them inappropriately.
Grammar and Cohesion	My sentences are accurate. I use simple and compound sentences. My sentences are connected with each other logically.	My sentences are accurate with minor errors. I use simple sentences accurately and compound sentences with a few errors. Most of my sentences are connected with each other logically.	The errors sometimes make my sentences not accurate. Most of my sentences are simple with few errors. Most of my sentences are connected with each other logically, and there are few incomplete sentences.	Most of my sentences do not express accurate meanings. My sentences are simple with some errors that make the reader interpret the meaning himself. My sentences are random and are not connected with each other logically.

Mechanics	I use the correct grammar, capitalization, spelling, and punctuation.	I make minor grammar mistakes. There are a few misspellings in my sentences.	I have spelling errors that distract the reader, but the meaning is understood. I have some grammar errors (tense, use of article, prepositions).	I have serious problems with my grammar, spelling, capitalization, punctuation which make my paper difficult to read. The meaning of my paper is often hard to understand.
-----------	---	--	---	--

Appendix C

Questionnaires

Consent form

Thank you very much for participating in this study.

Research Goals: This study seeks to examine the relationship between the use of rubrics for self-assessment and the students' writing performance

This survey will take less than 15 minutes.

By agreeing to participate, I affirm that I understand that:

- My participation is completely voluntary.
- The information I provide will be presented in a confidential manner.
- I may withdraw from the study at any time without the risk of any penalty.
- I understand the reason for the study is to examine the Armenian teachers' approaches to teaching at schools for academic research purposes.

Name: _____

Last Name

First Name

Middle Initial

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Pre-treatment test questionnaire

1. Have you ever heard the word 'rubric'? 'rubric' ?

If Yes, please explain what do you think it is?

2. Have you ever used rubrics in classroom to assess your performance?

3. Do you know on what criteria your writings are assessed?

4. On what criteria are your writings assessed? Please, check from the list.

- organization/
- use of different grammatical structures /
-
- correct use of tenses/
- use of a wide range of vocabulary/

- phrasal expressions/
- number of words/
- others (please specify)/

5. Does your teacher tell you about the criteria according to which your papers are graded, or do you just assume that your teacher grades you according to your above-checked criteria?

□□□□□ □□□□□□□□□□□ □□□□□□□□ □□□□□□□□□□□□
□□□□□ □□□ □□ □□□□□□□□□□□

My teacher informs me about the criteria before the writing verbally./ □□
□□□□□□□ □□□□□□□□□□□ □ □□□ □□□□□□□□□□□□□
□□□□□ □□□□□□□ □□□□□□ □□□□□□ □□□□□□□□□□□
□□□□□□□□:

My teacher informs me about the criteria before the writing in a written form./
□□ □□□□□□□ □□□□□□□□□□□ □ □□□ □□□□□□□□□□□□□
□□□□□ □□□□□□ □□□□ □□□□□□ □□□□□□ □□□□□□□□□□□
□□□□□□□□:

I know about the criteria when I get my graded paper because my teacher usually
explains why I get this or that grade./ □□ □□□□□□□ □□
□□□□□□□□□□□□□ □□□□□ □□□ □□ □□□□□□□ □□ □□
□□□□□□□□□ □□□□□□ □□□□□□□□□□:

I know about the criteria only when I ask my teacher about it./ □□ □□□□□□□
□□ □□□□□□□□□□□□□ □□□□□ □□□□□ □□□ □□ □□□□□□□□ □□
□□ □□□□□□□□□ □□□ □□□□□□:

I just assume that my writings are graded according to the criteria I checked from
the list./ □□ □□□□□□□□□ □□, □□ □□ □□□□□□ □□□□□□□□□□□□□
□□ □□□□□□□□ □□□□□□□□□□□□□ □□□□□ □□□ □□
□□□□□□□□□□:

6. Would you like to be informed about the criteria according to which your writings
are./ assessed? □□□□□□□□□□ □□□□□□□□□□ □□□□□ □□ □□□
□□□□□□□□□□□□□ □□□□□ □□□ □□ □□□□□□□□□□ □□ □□□□□□□
□□□□□□□□□□□□□:

□□ □□ □□
□□□ □□□, □□□□□□ □□□□□□□□□□

□□□ □□, □□□□□□ □□□□□□□□□□

Appendix D

Post-treatment test Questionnaire (for the comparison group)

1. Did you follow the rubric when you wrote your essays? Yes No

If Yes, did it help you to improve your writing? Yes No

If your answer is Yes, please, explain how it helped you? _____

2. Was it difficult for you to follow the rubric when you wrote the essays? Yes No

If Yes, what was difficult? Please, explain:

3. Would you like your teacher to give you the rubric to follow when you write your essays?

Yes No

4. Did you read the teacher's comments before writing the next essay? Yes No

5. Did you follow the teacher's comments while writing the next essay? Yes No

6. Did the teacher's comments help you improve your writing? Yes No

If Yes, how did it help you? Please, explain: _____

7. Which is more helpful to improve writing essays? If you think both are equally helpful, you can choose both of them.

teacher's comments following the rubric

8. If you have any comments, write here. _____

Appendix E

Post-treatment test Questionnaire

(for the experimental group)

1. Did you follow the rubric when you wrote your essays? Yes No

If Yes, did it help you to improve your writing? Yes No

If your answer is Yes, please, explain how it helped you? _____

2. Was it difficult for you to follow the rubric when you wrote the essays?

Yes No

If Yes, what was difficult? Please, explain: _____

3. Would you like your teacher to give you the rubric to follow when you write your essays?

Yes No

4. Did you use the rubric when you assessed your essays? Yes No

5. Was it difficult to assess your essays using the rubric? Yes No

If Yes, what was difficult? Please, explain: _____

6. Did assessing your essays help you improve your writing? Yes No

If Yes, how did it help you? Please, explain: _____

7. Did you follow your comments while writing your next essay? Yes No

8. Did you like assessing your essays? Yes No

9. Which is more helpful to improve writing essays? If you think both are equally helpful, you can choose both of them.

my comments on my essays following the rubric

10. If you have any comments, write here. _____

Appendix F

Pre-treatment test

Student (name, surname) _____

Level _____

Date _____

Write an essay on the following topic:

Hard work is very important for success. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer. Write at least 220 words.

Post- treatment test

Student (name, surname): _____

Level: _____

Date: _____

Write an essay on the following topic:

Good knowledge of the English language is important for a person to be successful in their future job nowadays. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

Appendix G

Essay topics given to the students during the treatment

Task 1

Grades encourage students to learn. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

Task 2

Students should be allowed to use mobiles in school. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

Task 3

The computer is a useful tool for schoolchildren. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

Task 4

Physical education in school is as important as other subjects. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.