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Exploring the Attitudes of First-year ESL Students and Their Instructors toward Students' Academic Writing Ability

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ABSTRACT

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University-level ESL instructors play an important role in the development of students' academic writing, and yet this is challenging due to different writing perceptions and attitudes instructors and students have developed over time. It is, therefore, useful to determine which gaps related to writing process, writing quality, and overall academic writing proficiency, must be bridged to enhance communication and understanding between students and instructors. This study seeks to investigate and compare the different attitudes held by students (n = 92) and instructors (n = 6) at two different ESL writing levels. Surveys and interviews were collected, and descriptive statistics, Welch's one-way ANOVA, and Appraisal analysis were performed to analyze participants' attitudes. Results indicated that students at both the lower- and intermediate-level were generally more positive than their course instructors in terms of assessing their writing process and arguments and details; and the group's means differences were found to be statistically significant. Qualitative findings also showed that instructors were generally more critical and cautious in their assessment than students were of their academic writing ability. To resolve the misalignment, it is recommended that the importance of academic writing is discussed early in the semester.

KEYWORDS

attitudes, ESL students, first-year, academic writing, Appraisal

1. Introduction

It has been widely accepted that strengthening L2 learners' academic writing skills is of critical importance in higher education. According to Ferris (2009), students' abilities to gain critical writing skills in higher education are shaped by the quality of writing programs, teacher preparation, instructional materials and methods, student-teacher/tutor interactions, and types of assessments and feedback used. However, it is argued that the attitudes learners and instructors bring into the classroom also contribute a great deal to students' writing experiences, and that attitudes, particularly negative ones, can change in a more positive light with appropriately guided practices in the classroom (Negretti 2012, Petric 2002). One context in which it is of critical importance to study learners' attitudes is placement-based ESL writing courses. Although these courses are intended to help students meet the academic language demands of the university, those who are placed into ESL courses may have very few alternatives but to take them as early as possible, and as part of their degree completion (Lee 2020). In addition, ESL writing instructors may tend to see that such students are placed primarily to receive help and to improve any linguistic or communicative errors they make in their writing, which puts opportunities for co-creating and transforming knowledge on the periphery. Another factor that may work against ESL students placed into remedial writing courses may be that they are more motivated to gain relevant knowledge and skills in their major fields as opposed to improving their English language (Ferris 2009). It can then be said that students' and instructors' attitudes toward students' academic writing abilities and writing experiences may be quite disparate, leading to different expectations about what is taught and learned in the course. Thus, differences in attitudes could impact not only students' motivation and engagement but also their willingness to gain mastery over academic writing in the long term. As important as it is to explore the attitudes of ESL students and course instructors and determine where the gaps must be bridged, such studies are lacking to date. To that end, this study aims to describe and compare the attitudes of first-year ESL students, who were placed into ESL writing courses, and their instructors toward students' academic writing abilities.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Using Writing Attitudes and Perceptions to Evaluate Students' Writing

Exploring how students in higher education perceive academic writing, their writing process, and their identities as research writers has been of long interest to educators and professionals working with non-native speakers of English. Scholars have taken different approaches to understand this phenomenon, and as a result, various terminologies, such as "writing perceptions" and "attitudes" have been used. Although the terminologies may be tapping into the same construct, it is important to distinguish these terms as they may not suggest the same meaning to different fields and scholars. According to Castello, McAlpine, and Pyhalto (2017), writing perceptions "refer to mental representations that directly concern how writers define or characterize writing, and also the practices and habits they develop around writing activities" (p. 1110). Large bodies of second language writing studies have frequently explored students' writing perceptions as a way to compare how students of different language backgrounds or proficiency levels evaluate their own academic writing ability. Recent literature on writing perceptions has found that students' writing perceptions can yield a tremendous impact on their ability to write well as well as their involvement in the research community. For example, Negretti (2012) found that beginning academic writers who have developed a strong metacognitive awareness of the task, self-regulation, and

monitoring and evaluation of their performances are better able to fulfill task requirements, than those who lack such skills. Other bodies of literature have described writing perceptions as a binary concept where there exist both adaptive and maladaptive perceptions of writing. Among surveyed doctoral students, students who saw writing as knowledge creation or knowledge transformation were self-reported to be more productive and engaged with their writing and research (Castello et al. 2017, Lonka, Chow, Keskinen, Hakkarainen, Sandstrom and Pyhalto 2014). Students who saw writing as an innate ability, however, were related to blocks, disengagement, procrastination, and burnout (Castello et al. 2017, Lonka et al. 2014). However, these perceptions of writing extended beyond an individual's level of productivity and even affected students' perceived relationships with their supervisors and academic communities.

Whereas studies on writing perceptions are more concerned with the speaker's (meta)cognition, studies on attitudes toward one's writing examine the feelings and reactions of a speaker and possible factors that could shape such attitudes. One notable study was conducted by Petric (2002), who investigated the attitudes of 8 MA students at Central European University toward varying writing strategies. Positive attitudes were formed if an adopted strategy (e.g., journaling) appeared to significantly improve students' writing process. Negative or critical attitudes were raised if the adoption of a particular strategy conflicted with their preconceived beliefs about writing. However, some of the negative attitudes seemed to be mitigated after having practiced the strategy in the classroom (e.g., outlining). However, individual attitudes toward the same task can significantly vary with some students finding the experience motivating and exciting, and others finding it threatening and impossible to do on one's own. Although Petric did not report the exact number of positive and negative attitudes students had toward each writing strategy, the study's findings demonstrated that attitudes toward newly taught writing strategies were partially based on former experiences and partly based on how much practice was done in the classroom. It is also important to remember that students' attitudes toward writing strategies did not always match with what they did in person. As insightful as the study was, it was based on a very small sample of students, and there exists a need to conduct it with a larger sample that accounts for not only students' attitudes toward their writing process, but also their writing quality and overall academic writing proficiency. In addition, attitudinal studies within ESL academic writing contexts are heavily lacking. By conducting such a study, we can expand on our understanding of the attitudes that non-native speakers of English have about their academic writing ability.

How do instructors judge students' writing? A great body of research compares teacher ratings to peer- and self-assessments for the purposes of understanding how different readers (i.e., teachers, peers, and student-writers) judge the quality of essays. Teachers were found to be more severe raters than peers or student-writers when it came to judging observable language features such as grammar, organization, and content (e.g., Lindblom-ylanne, Pihlajamaki and Kotkas 2006, Matsuno 2009). However, ratings given by teachers were found to be more consistent with students' test performances than ratings provided by peers (Lindblom-ylanne et al. 2006). Although not specific to writing per se, research has also shown that low-performing L2 students tend to overrate their performances compared to high-performing students (e.g., Butler and Lee 2010, Ross 1998, 2006). Together, these studies show that teachers are more critical and consistent in their evaluations because they have greater experiences in separating performances and they are less likely to be swayed by affect. While there exist studies on teacher ratings and comparisons of teacher versus student ratings, far few of them have also incorporated a qualitative component that was of equal rigor to their quantitative analysis. To address this gap, the study draws on survey and interview data of students and instructors, and the qualitative component will be examined with the Appraisal analysis, a methodology that is discussed next.

2.2 Exploring Attitudes using the Appraisal theory

The Appraisal is a systemic functional linguistics (SFL) approach to studying speakers' and writers' attitudes, stances, and dialogic positionings (Martin and White 2005). This analysis is unique from other content analysis approaches in that writers'/speakers' attitudes are assumed to be expressed in the form of evaluative language within a sociocultural context, and that these attitudes are linguistically expressed with the goal of having their audience share some degree of solidarity with them (Martin and White 2005, Oteiza 2017).

The Appraisal is a system of evaluative resources within the discourse-semantic level of language (Martin and White 2005), and the system is composed of three sub-systems, namely, *attitude*, *engagement*, and *graduation*. The current study focuses only on the sub-system attitude to investigate students' and instructors' attitudes toward students' academic writing abilities. The attitude sub-system includes resources related to one's *affect* (that is, emotions or feelings), *judgment* (of self or of others), and *appreciation* (of things, ideas, or processes). Affect, judgment, and appreciation can be further distinguished as seen in Figure 1.
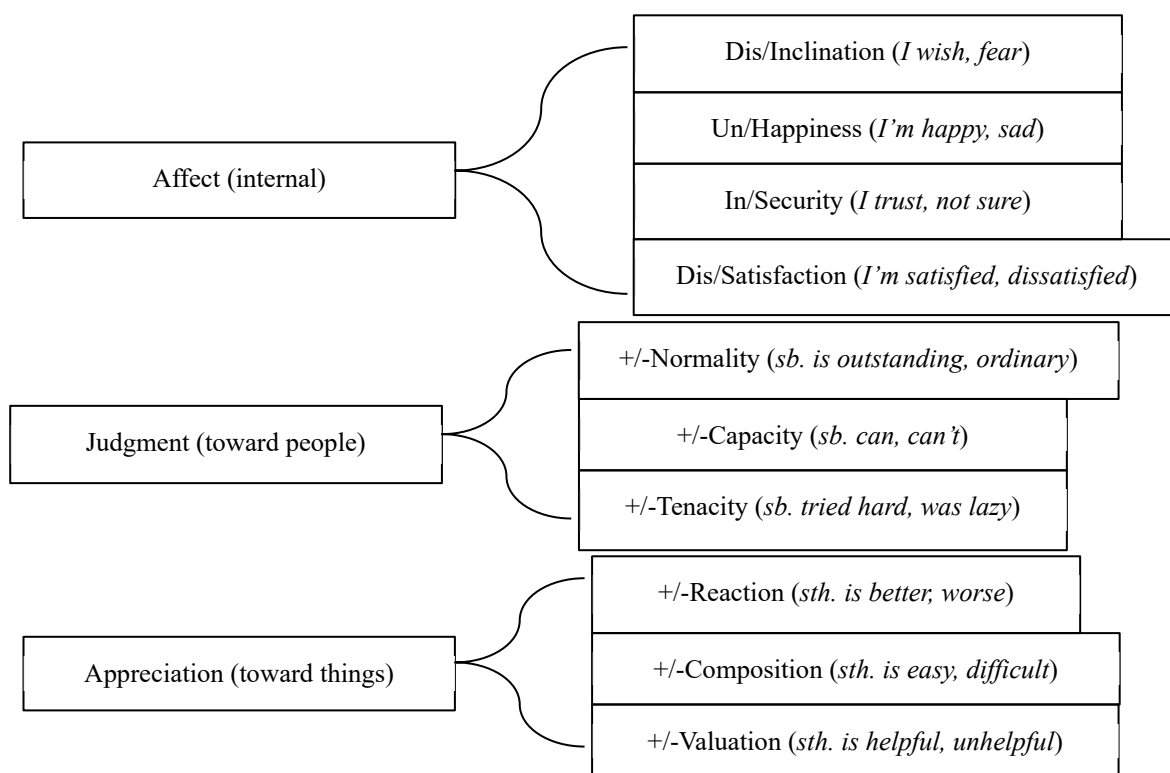

Figure 1. The Sub-system Attitude Found within the Appraisal Framework.

Within the sub-system of attitude, there exists three resources known as affect, judgment, and appreciation. Affect is a set of interpersonal resources that are concerned with expressing one's feelings; affect can be further distinguished into *dis/inclination* (that is related to one's desires or fears), *un/happiness* (feelings of happiness or unhappiness), *in/security* (feelings of peace and anxiety), and *dis/satisfaction* (feelings of achievement and frustration) (Martin and White 2005). Judgment is another set of interpersonal resources that are connected to evaluations of people's behavior and character. It can also be further distinguished into subcategories: positive and

negative *normality* (admiration or criticism of a person's specialness), *capacity* (positive and negative judgments about someone's ability), and *tenacity* (positive and negative attitudes of a person's dependability). Appreciation, the third set of resources of attitude, consists of positive and negative *reaction* (one's attitudes toward the quality and impact of objects and ideas), *composition* (attitudes toward the balance of things), and *valuation* (attitudes toward the importance of things). A more detailed description of the attitude framework is discussed in Martin and White (2005).

In EAP research, it is commonly used to study how writers express their attitudes to persuade their readers. In this area of research, it has been shown that as L2 writers advance in their English knowledge, their attitudes are more eloquently expressed than beginning L2 writers (e.g., Lee 2015). More recently, the Appraisal theory has been applied to wider educational contexts such as measuring the usefulness of automated writing evaluation (Huffman 2015), the appropriateness of test score decisions (Lee 2020), and differences in feedback mode (Cunningham and Link 2021). These studies demonstrated that investigating the attitudes of stakeholders provides tremendous value in terms of understanding the effectiveness of a certain learning or assessment tool, or mode of feedback. However, research that incorporates an Appraisal analysis of students' and instructors' attitudes toward students' academic writing skills have yet to be explored. The current study draws on this framework to identify the positive and negative attitudes that students and instructors held toward students' writing.

Many of the aforementioned studies have pointed out critical factors that distinguish engaged successful writers from disengaged unsuccessful writers, but it would be useful to shift the discussion to a direct comparison between the attitudes of students and that of their instructors. Drawing on the Appraisal theory would be advantageous as this allows for a close, context-bound reading of the language resources used by speakers to share their attitudes toward students' writing. The following 2 research questions guided the current study:

(1) What were the attitudes of students and instructors at the lower- and intermediate-level toward students' writing in terms of the writing process, writing quality, and academic writing proficiency?
(2) What reasons do they give for expressing such attitudes?

3. Method

3.1 Participants

Ninety-two undergraduate students participated in the survey, and twenty-six of the survey participants were interviewed. The students were enrolled in one of two ESL writing courses, lower-level (n = 35) or intermediate-level (n = 57), at an English-medium university in North America. Among the 26 interviewees, 11 were lower-level and 15 were intermediate-level students. The levels are determined by students' performances on the university's writing placement test, which is taken prior to the start of the school semester. Admitted students whose TOEFL iBT score is less than 100, or equivalent, are required to take the placement test, which consists of two different writing tasks. Test-takers receive a holistic rating of "B" (lower-level), "C" (intermediate-level), or "Pass" (advanced enough to take first-year composition course) that is rated by two or three raters. The scale for determining these different levels is based on the placement test writing rubric, which distinguishes students' writing in terms of organization, arguments and details, grammar and lexical use, and conventions. The study includes a wide range of L1 backgrounds, but Chinese speakers represented approximately half of the surveyed population. Other frequent L1s included Korean and Arabic. On average, students in the lower-level course self-

reported learning English for 6.69 years, and students in the intermediate-level course self-reported learning English for 8.49 years. Participation in the survey was part of the writing course activity but only the responses of those who consented to the research study were collected.

In addition, six instructors (two lower-level and four intermediate-level) participated in a survey and a follow-up interview. All six instructors, two men and four women, were Ph.D. students in applied linguistics. Except for one instructor, five of the six instructors self-reported being non-native speakers of English. The instructors, on average, taught ESL writing for 2.5 years at the university level.

3.2 Instruments

An explanatory mixed-methods approach was taken to conduct this study. Surveys were first conducted and then interviews were performed to understand the attitudes of students and instructors toward students' academic writing ability. In this study, academic writing is seen as a construct made up of several different but related sub-constructs, which include *writing process*; *organization*, *arguments and details*, *grammar and vocabulary*, and *conventions*; and *academic writing proficiency*. Items related to the writing process are derived from Flower and Hayes's (1981) cognitive process theory in writing. The writing process is described as a series of self-directed, goal-oriented steps: pre-writing, drafting, revising, and editing; it is an approach that is heavily practiced in ESL writing courses and first-year composition courses as a means to improve students' academic writing skills in North America. In addition, the rhetorical situation (i.e., the audience, the writer's purpose, use of appropriate voice and style) is explored as students' understanding of the rhetorical situation impacts how they carry out their writing at each step (Flower and Hayes 1981).

Organization, arguments and details, grammar and vocabulary, and conventions are constructs that are derived from the writing rubric that was used to place incoming international students into ESL writing courses. The rubric measured traits that could be identified in an end-product essay, and it is common to observe similar writing criteria being adopted in many large-scale (e.g., TOEFL and IELTS) and locally-developed second language assessment and testing domains (Dimova, Yan and Ginther 2020). In this study, these criteria informed students' *writing quality*. Finally, the survey included statements that asked respondents to judge students' *overall academic writing proficiency*. These statements were written as attitudinal statements (e.g., "My academic writing in English is poor"), and the purpose was to observe what attitudes students and instructors generally held toward students' academic writing.

The survey was developed in Qualtrics (https://www.qualtrics.com). Statements related to the writing process and writing quality were assessed on a seven-point Likert agree/disagree scale (i.e., *strongly agree* (7), *agree* (6), *somewhat agree* (5), *neither agree nor disagree* (4), *somewhat disagree* (3), *disagree* (2), and *strongly disagree* (1)). An overall positive rating is treated as having a positive attitude towards one's writing, whereas an overall negative rating is treated as the opposite. With regards to judgments about students' overall academic writing proficiency, the first eight negatively-worded statements prompted to respond on a seven-point Likert agree/agree disagree scale; and the last two affirmative statements were judged on a seven-point Likert good/poor scale (i.e., *very good* (7), *good*, (6), *somewhat good* (5), *ok* (4), *somewhat poor* (3), *poor* (2), and *very poor* (1)). The addition of negatively-worded statements was to force respondents to pay attention to the statements, and avoid clicking through each question with the same response. Table 1 summarizes the survey and the Appendix details survey statements and results.

Table 1. Survey Constructs and Items

Construct	No. of Items	Survey Question No.
Writing process	8	11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18
Writing quality		
Organization	5	19, 20, 21, 22, 23
Arguments and Details	6	26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31
Grammar and Vocabulary	4	32, 33, 34, 35
Conventions	4	37, 38, 39, 40
Overall academic writing proficiency	8	41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 47, 48, 49
Total	35	

For the qualitative component, semi-structured interviews were used (see Table 2). The interview questions prompted students and instructors to state their assessments about students' writing ability and elaborate on them. The formation of interview questions closely followed Brinkmann and Kvale's (2015) recommendation: the questions started with either *what*, *why*, or *how* in order to obtain relevant responses that would address the study's research question.

Table 2. Interview Questions

Writing process	Can you tell me the steps you take to write your essays? (Pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing, publishing)
	How has this approach worked for you? Why do you say so?
	Do you consider your audience, your purpose, tone and style? How do you do so? Why?
	What do you do when you face problems with your writing? Why?
Writing quality	Looking at your essays, what do you think about the organization of your essays? (Is it well-organized? Easy to follow? Logical? Clear?)
	What do you think about your arguments and details? (Is it well-explained? Clear? Sufficient? Relevant?)
	What do you think about your grammar and vocabulary use? (Is it appropriate? Accurate?)
	What do you think about your spelling? (Is it error-free?)
	What do you think about your source use? (Is it appropriate? Accurate?)
	Why do you say so? *(following each of the above question)*
Overall academic writing in English	What do you think about your academic writing in English? (good/bad, few problems/a lot of problems?)
	What do you think about the essays your write for your courses? (ESL and other)
	Why do you say so*? (following each of the above question)*

3.3 Procedure and Analysis

IRB approval was met prior to the start of the study. All instructors' and program supervisors' consent were received to proceed with the study. Prior to the full-scale study, the instruments were piloted on 25 students who were previously enrolled in an ESL writing course, and they were subsequently revised based on feedback.

Students and instructors took part in the survey in Weeks 3 and 4 of the semester, and the follow-up interview between Weeks 4 and 6 of the semester. The survey was treated as an integrated self-assessment activity that took place during class time. The principal investigator visited each classroom to briefly describe the research study, and students indicated whether their responses could be used for research at the start of the survey. Students then completed the surveys on their laptops and submitted them at the end of class. On average, students spent 20 to 30 minutes completing the survey.

After screening the data and ensuring that students were eligible to participate in the study, instructors were

asked to complete a survey for each student participant who was enrolled in his or her section. For example, if an instructor had 15 students, she completed 15 separate surveys in total. By the time the instructors were asked to complete the survey, students had submitted drafts of their first major writing assignment. Instructors referred to these drafts to make assessments of students' academic writing skills. On average, each instructor rated 12 essays per section, and instructors were given approximately 2 to 3 weeks to complete all surveys. All eligible participants received an invitation to participate in a follow-up interview. Interviews were conducted one-on-one in a quiet setting on campus. Interviews lasted between 20 and 30 minutes per person. Interviews were audio-recorded and then manually transcribed by the researcher.

Survey responses were downloaded as csv files from Qualtrics, and responses were converted to numeric values for item analysis (i.e., 1 for strongly disagree and 7 for strongly agree), in Excel. Items that were negatively stated were reversed prior to running item analysis. Separate item analyses for students and instructors were conducted in order to evaluate the reliability and validity of the survey instrument. Items that did not yield Pearson correlation coefficients above 0.50 were removed (Brown 2005). This led to the removal of items Q24 and Q25 from organization, and Q36 from conventions. Cronbach's alpha estimates and Pearson's correlation coefficients were re-calculated and were found to be reliable and converging for writing process (8 items, a = 0.83), organization (7 items, a = 0.58; after removal, 5 items, a = 0.73), arguments and details (6 items, a = 0.81), grammar and vocabulary (4 items, a = 0.90), and conventions (5 items, a = 0.76; after removal, 4 items, a = 0.87), and overall academic writing proficiency (9 items, a = 0.85). Q46 was further removed as this was only prompted to students but not to instructors, hence the total score for overall academic writing proficiency does not include responses to Q46.

Next, to run the statistics, each individual's item (i.e., student, instructor) scores were summed in Excel. For example, there were 8 items related to the writing process, and so the total score per respondent could theoretically range between 8 (a rating of 1 x 8 items) and 56 (a rating of 7 x 8 items). The descriptive statistics (i.e., mean, standard deviation, interquartile range, frequencies, percentages) for writing process, organization, arguments and details, grammar and vocabulary, conventions, and overall academic writing proficiency, across the four groups (i.e., lower-level students, intermediate-level students, lower-level instructors, and intermediate-level instructors), were performed using the Real Statistics Resource Pack software (Release 7.6) (www.real-statistics.com). Welch's one-way ANOVA test was run, as variances across groups were unequal, to determine whether differences among groups were statistically significant. Assumptions were checked and met (with the exceptions of *conventions*) prior to running Welch's ANOVA. The Games-Howell post-hoc test was used where differences were found to be statistically significant.

To answer the second research question, students' and instructors' interviews were qualitatively analyzed using Martin and White's (2005) Appraisal framework (see Figure 1). To do so, the transcripts were first formatted to allow for hand-coding and memoing. During the first round of coding, a codebook was developed, listing all the attitudes that emerged from the interview data. Attitudes were identified by carefully reading through each statement and identifying words, phrases, or clauses that would trigger positive or negative attitudes. For example, the following statement, "And then [I] put my thoughts in like my personal experiences related to the writing…," is a recount of a student describing her approach to writing. This would be identified as positive capacity [+Capacity] because it indicates that she is able to turn her thoughts ("prewriting") into writing ("drafting"). For the second round, revisions were made to the codebook and codings were later updated and tagged in the interview Word files. Once all codings were finished, an independent analyst coded 20% of the interview data that were randomly stratified sampled. The independent analyst was a Ph.D. holder in applied linguistics and an expert at Appraisal analysis. An interrater reliability of $k = 0.87$ was reached. Any changes that were discussed during this coding process were subsequently applied to the rest of the data as well as to the codebook. Speakers' attitudes

toward writing process, writing quality, and overall academic writing proficiency and their reasons were holding these opinions were organized in the form of a matrix. The quantitative and qualitative data were triangulated to address the two research questions.

4. Results

4.1 Survey Ratings Given by Students and Instructors

With regards to the writing process, Welch's ANOVA showed that the group means differences for writing process were statistically significant, $F_{3, 95.62} = 6.85$, $p < 0.05$. The lower-level students ($M = 44.34$, $SD = 5.99$) and the intermediate-level students ($M = 42.72$, $SD = 7.38$), on average, gave higher ratings of their writing process than lower-level instructors ($M = 41.11$, $SD = 4.71$) and intermediate-level instructors ($M = 37.83$, $SD = 8.29$). A post-hoc Games-Howell test showed that ratings between lower-level students and lower-level instructors, intermediate-level students and intermediate-level instructors, and lower-level instructors and intermediate-level instructors were significantly different at p < 0.05. Significant difference was also found between lower-level students and intermediate-level instructors, but this comparison is not meaningful given that instructors did not rate this group of students.

When it came to ratings of students' organization, group means differences were not statistically significant, $F_{3, 90.58} = 0.46$, $p = 0.71$. This would suggest that while students appeared to rate themselves more favorably, the difference in mean ratings between students and instructors across the two levels was not differentiable. On the other hand, ratings of arguments and details yielded more interesting results. Welch's ANOVA for arguments and details showed that there was a statistically significant difference in mean ratings between at least two groups $F_{3, 89.10} = 3.56$, $p < 0.05$. A Games-Howell test revealed that ratings between intermediate-level students and instructors were significantly different at p < 0.05. In other words, the intermediate-level students ($M = 29.18$, $SD = 4.39$) were much more optimistic than their instructors ($M = 26.51$, $SD = 5.47$) when it came to assessing their arguments and details, whereas mean rating differences between lower-level students ($M = 29.03$, $SD = 5.62$) and lower-level instructors' ($M = 27.11$, $SD = 4.5$), were not significant.

The group means differences for grammar and vocabulary were statistically significant, $F_{3, 93.39} = 3.92$, $p < 0.05$. Games-Howell test found that the mean rating was significantly different between intermediate-level students ($M = 20.35$, $SD = 3.61$) and lower-level instructors ($M = 16.26$, $SD = 1.36$) at p < 0.05. However, this comparison is not meaningful because lower-level instructors had not rated intermediate-level students' writing ability. Significant differences could not be found between intermediate-level instructors ($M = 15.60$, $SD = 4.09$) and their students or between lower-level students ($M = 20.71$, $SD = 4.25$) and their instructors.

Welch's ANOVA could not be run with ratings on conventions as the non-normal distribution of ratings did not meet the assumptions for running the test. The lack of wide separation in the instructor groups can be explained by the nature of the first assignment, which was used to make judgments about students' writing. The task did not require students to actively use outside sources, and as a result, the instructors were unable to confidently agree or disagree on whether students could appropriately and accurately draw and integrate sources into their writing.

Finally, Welch's ANOVA on overall academic proficiency showed that the group means differences were statistically significant, $F_{3, 93.18} = 8.47$, $p < 0.05$. Games-Howell post-hoc test found that these differences were significant between lower-level students and lower-level instructors and between lower-level instructors and intermediate-level instructors at p < 0.05. Lower-level instructors ($M = 44.91$, $SD = 7.04$), on average, rated their

students more positively than the students ($M = 36.17$, $SD = 8.27$). Similarly, the lower-level instructors rated more positively than the intermediate-level instructors ($M = 39.19$, $SD = 8.69$). No significant difference was found between the intermediate-level students ($M = 38.88$, $SD = 10.06$) and their instructors.

4.2 Attitudes of Students and Instructors

In this section, the most frequently appearing Appraisal features are reported and discussed; the findings of this qualitative analysis are used to triangulate and explain the survey results. The results are divided into the three categories, writing process, writing quality, and overall academic writing proficiency. Examples that exemplify the viewpoints of the students and instructors from the lower-level and intermediate-level are provided. The total number of Appraisal features identified in the writing process, writing quality, and overall academic writing proficiency were n = 1546, and these are reported as percentages in Table 3.

Table 3. Distribution of Attitudes (%)

		Writing Process (n = 523)			
		Low S (n = 122)	Intm S (n = 290)	Low I (n = 28)	Intm I (n = 83)
Affect (n = 185)	+	16	25	-	6
	-	11	22	7	12
Judgment (n = 245)	+	43	23	39	22
	-	17	16	21	30
Appreciation (n = 94)	+	6	6	14	12
	-	8	9	18	18
		Writing Quality (n = 871)			
		Low S (n = 257)	Intm S (n = 452)	Low I (n = 68)	Intm I (n = 94)
Affect (n = 276)	+	9	15	4	6
	-	18	25	10	13
Judgment (n = 348)	+	16	22	24	22
	-	25	15	22	26
Appreciation (n = 247)	+	14	11	12	9
	-	19	12	28	24
		Overall Academic Writing Proficiency (n = 152)			
		Low S (n = 23)	Intm S (n = 42)	Low I (n = 33)	Intm I (n = 54)
Affect (n = 51)	+	22	21	15	13
	-	13	12	24	19
Judgment (n = 40)	+	-	14	21	15
	-	17	12	3	17
Appreciation (n = 60)	+	43	26	27	20
	-	4	14	9	17

4.2.1 Writing process

Eleven out of eleven lower-level students and fourteen out of fifteen intermediate-level students used positive and negative judgment and affect when discussing their writing process. Specifically, most students used a

combination of words and phrases that indicated aspects of the writing process that they could (positive capacity) and couldn't do (negative capacity), which are associated with the category of judgment. Additionally, feelings of achievement (positive satisfaction) and frustration (negative satisfaction), which are associated with the category of affect, were expressed. The intermediate-level students, for example, highlighted both the strengths (e.g., revising their essays from start to finish) and drawbacks (e.g., little planning unless done in class) of their writing, in the form of positive and negative capacity. Here, Student 20022 shows that while she was able to draw on her personal experiences and online searches to identify a specific topic for her essay, she struggled with revising and editing as it required her to review her entire writing from start to finish. This awareness was partially derived from previous schooling where academic writing was taught.

> 20022: I want to have a background of the topic [that] I'm writing about so I come to the topic first and then after that I see the related searches that come up. And then [I] put my thoughts in like my personal experiences related to the writing… [+Capacity].
> Researcher: Do you revise and edit?
> 20022: I don't and that's where [my] weakest point is and I know I should but then, after all the brainstorming that I've been through, I don't want to go through that again…
> [-Capacity].

Overall, the intermediate-level students were generally satisfied with their ability to prewrite, draft, revise, and edit, however, they were also less satisfied with their performance in the ESL course, which, for some, negatively affected their process of writing. There were two major contributors to this phenomenon: first, their interest in the ESL writing topics, and second, the need to devote much time to writing, compared to studying for major-related courses, were by and large absent. Although earning good grades was a high motivator to complete all ESL assignments on time, the students' general lack of interest in the ESL course and in academic writing made it difficult to dedicate deliberate time and effort into the writing process.

The lower-level students were similar in most aspects to the intermediate-level students when it came to discussing about the writing process. However, the former group of students did not explicitly state that the ESL writing topics or lack of time had negatively affected their writing process. Instead, there was a greater focus on what students did (and did not do) when they engaged in academic writing in English. For example, Student 10005 recounted her writing process by sharing that she composed and edited at the same time. She did not find the process efficient and acknowledged that she might need help from an instructor and that it would be useful to take some form of ESL during her first year in college.

> 10005: Just like preview what I'm going to write [+Capacity], and because English is my second language, so I have to write, editing sentence by sentence and writing that way [+Security].
> Researcher: So you do a lot of like idea generations and then you type a little bit and then do you just fix it as you go?
> 10005: Yeah, just like typing. Fix errors, correct and editing while I'm typing. Usually I just type one time [+Capacity].
> Researcher: And does it help the way you do it?
> 10005: I don't think so [-Valuation]. Yeah, so actually, I think I should like [have] some meeting with my instructor and ask for advice [-Satisfaction].

Another interesting finding is that the lower-level students expressed more dependence on instructors and technology feedback compared to the intermediate-level students. To them, drawing on outside feedback was absolutely necessary in order to earn a desired grade. At the same time, there was less reliance on one's self to make any significant revisions or corrections to their writing.

The intermediate-level instructors (Instructor 20066) expressed slightly more negative judgment toward students' writing process than did the lower-level instructors. Similar to the students, positive and negative capacity as well as positive and negative satisfaction were expressed. The severity in intermediate-level instructors' judgments may have to do with the assignments given in the ESL courses. At the intermediate-level, assignment requirements are more complex and longer in length than at the lower-level, and therefore students at the intermediate-level were expected to put in more effort in their writing. A great deal more planning, drafting, revising, and editing would have been involved.

> 20066: I remember very few, like one, two, three students that I answered negatively [-Capacity] because when I shared with them that they need to have a clear focus [-Satisfaction], they didn't follow [-Normality]. They didn't revise in a way I expected them to do [-Normality].

As seen above, instructors at both levels attended to how much students followed through the writing process. Their assessments were based on what they observed in the classrooms and the drafts that were submitted by their students. Although there were individual variations, revising, editing, and meeting readers' expectations and needs appeared to be the biggest areas of concern. This may be due to instructors being able to observe these aspects of writing more easily than others, and that all instructors initiated some form of peer review and editing in class. Aspects of the writing process that were more difficult to judge were prewriting and drafting, as these were usually expected to be done at home or were merely checked for completion. In addition, both groups of instructors were certain that their students, including those who showed a lot of promise, needed more work on improving their writing process. The fact that students found their writing process more satisfying than did the instructors aligns with the quantitative finding on writing process.

4.2.2 Writing quality

In terms of writing quality, the most frequently occurring attitudes were as follows: 11 out of 15 intermediate-level students expressed positive and negative capacity, and 7 out of 11 lower-level students expressed positive reaction about their writing quality. To clarify, attitudes related to capacity have to do with one's judgment about a person's capability, and in this case, judgment about one's ability to organize, add appropriate arguments and details, use appropriate and accurate grammar and vocabulary, and draw and integrate sources. Attitudes related to reaction are concerned with one's appreciation of things, actions, or ideas, and in this study, the particular concern was the quality of one's text organization, arguments and details, grammar and vocabulary, and source integration.

The intermediate-level students frequently self-evaluated organization of text as a strength whereas not adding enough relevant arguments and details as a weakness. Students self-reported that they knew or have heard of how to integrate sources, but the extent to which these were practiced depended on the task. In other words, if the task (or instructor) explicitly called for source use, they would attempt to do so; if it were not asked for, they were less likely to do it. Students' evaluations of their writing quality have been derived from a combination of former and current English instructors' feedback, TOEFL or IELTS reports, and previous experiences with writing academic

papers in English. Of all the aspects related to writing quality, grammar and vocabulary were most heavily discussed as this appeared to be one category that students were most familiar with and could describe in length. The intermediate-level students believed that their uses of grammar and vocabulary were adequate based on their successful performances in other content and elective courses. However, they were aware that utilizing more advanced vocabulary and sentence structures would improve the quality of their writing, as seen in Student 20041. However, the motivation to regularly use more advanced vocabulary and syntax appeared to be lacking, especially if it risked bringing down one's grades.

> Researcher: Ok, how about grammar and vocabulary?
> 20041: For grammar, I make lots of mistakes…. [-Capacity].
> Researcher: How is your vocabulary?
> 20041: Vocabulary is, I will say on a scale of 10, it's seven [-Reaction].
> Researcher: Why do you give it a 7?
> 20041: I don't use any type of higher vocabulary or some complex words [-Capacity] so I need to work on that too [-Satisfaction].

The attitudes shared by lower-level students were similar in most aspects to the intermediate-level students. For example, the lower-level students claimed that macro-organization was their strength but their lack of incorporating relevant arguments and details was a weakness. When it came to source use, the lower-level students recalled having to integrate sources for high stakes tests and for a few major writing assignments, but these experiences were infrequent. Likewise, students made these self-evaluations based on their previous schooling experiences and the feedback that they received from their former and current English instructors. Unlike the intermediate-level students, many more students at this level were willing to accept that their academic writing in English needed significant improvement. They generally attributed this matter to being a non-native speaker of English (Student 10029). Once again, students focused most heavily on their grammar and vocabulary use. They claimed that while they retained some grammar and vocabulary knowledge and use, it would help to gain additional practice with the help of their current ESL instructor. Overall, the lower- and intermediate-level students had evaluated their organization, arguments and details, and conventions in a similar manner. The one fine distinction may be that intermediate-level students were aware of not using nearly enough advanced vocabulary and sentence structures in their essays, whereas lower-level students generally accepted that they needed more practice with writing due to being a L2 speaker.

> 10029: It is still difficult to understand every part [-Composition] since I'm a Korean and I use Korean language [-Security]. I never like correct all of the grammar when I spell it out [-Capacity]. Actually we have totally different with the English grammar and Korean language grammar…. [-Composition].

With the exception of grammar and vocabulary, the instructors at the two levels shared similar assessments of students' writing quality. In particular, a high number of positive and negative capacity and negative composition—an attitudinal category found within the subsystem of appreciation that concerns with the orderliness and level of difficulty of things—were expressed. All six instructors agreed that the students placed into the ESL courses would benefit from taking extra semesters of academic writing courses to improve their arguments and details and source use skills, and this included students who were clearly better-performing than the rest of the class. At the same time, the intermediate-level instructors were slightly more positive than the lower-level

instructors regarding students' grammar and vocabulary use. According to the instructors, the intermediate-level students did not encounter major issues with grammar or vocabulary use though some avoidance with using more complex sentence structures and vocabulary words were reported. Because students were encouraged to use various web-based sources that would help correct their grammar and vocabulary errors, the instructors did not express as much concern with students' grammar and vocabulary as they did with other aspects of writing.

On the other hand, the lower-level instructors noticed that grammar and vocabulary were major issues in students' writing and they agreed that enrolling in the ESL course would be opportune for students who were especially inadequate in their grammar and vocabulary knowledge (Instructor 10040). This is in line with what was found in the survey data, where lower-level instructors were more critical in their ratings of students' grammar and vocabulary. While the average intermediate-level student might demonstrate better grammar and vocabulary use than the average lower-level student, instructors would argue that all students still needed work on using more complex grammar and vocabulary in their writing.

> Researcher: How do you think about your students' grammar and academic vocabulary?
> 10040: Very weak, very weak [-Capacity]. Some students are very good at speaking [+Capacity], but sometimes their English is just broken [-Capacity]. Sometimes I have to make many many corrections about grammar and vocabulary as well [-Satisfaction].

Because students and instructors were asked to examine both the strengths of weaknesses of students' writing quality, the findings that emerged from this qualitative report were somewhat different from what was found in the quantitative findings. This is inevitable given that in a survey, participants were asked to indicate only one rating per construct, whereas in the interview, they had to consider all aspects of what students did and didn't do on a regular basis. Out of the four groups, the intermediate-level students were the most optimistic when it came to judging their writing quality, and the instructors were the most reserved. In spite of the positive self-assessments given by students, most of the interviewed students admitted that their academic writing could use some improvement, though whether this should be done in a remedial course was considered debatable. In a similar vein, instructors were certainly critical but this is not to say that instructors thought their students were "bad" writers. On the contrary, they saw great potential in their students and were relatively optimistic about their students making great strides.

4.2.3 Overall academic writing proficiency

Attitudes toward students' overall academic writing proficiency were similar between the intermediate- and lower-level students. Twelve out of fifteen intermediate-level students used positive capacity and reaction, and nine out of eleven lower-level students used positive reaction to judge their overall academic writing. In other words, when it came to judging one's overall academic writing proficiency, attitudes related to judgment and appreciation were most frequently observed, and this would not be surprising given that students were asked to judge a skill that could either be perceived as part of one's self (e.g., "I'm not English speaker" [-Capacity]) or as an external object (e.g., "English is not very hard" [+Composition]). Attitudes related to Affect were also present, particularly that of positive and negative satisfaction and security.

Although students at both levels thought that they had some issues with their writing process and writing quality, they judged that their overall academic writing was nevertheless fine, especially considering that they were non-native speakers of English. There were three major forces that seemed to push students to consider their overall

academic writing in a more positive light: First, students felt that they had invested more than enough time and money into their academic English education, and they did not feel that they were learning anything new or developing skills in their current ESL courses that would drastically improve their academic writing. Second, they claimed to be faring well in their major-related courses based on the grades they were receiving. Third, the students who were interviewed for the study maintained a positive self-image of themselves, confident in their abilities, despite having some issues with academic writing.

Below, Student 10023 believed that his overall academic writing proficiency was better-than-average and that he should be placed into a higher-level writing course. He expressed dissatisfaction with having to take another ESL course after spending years taking similar ESL writing courses at another college previously. At the same time, the student justified that any writing problems were due to English being not his first language:

> 10023: like yeah, did I was disappointed? Yeah kind of [-Satisfaction]. Yeah, I was expecting expecting like I would be like I will have like intermediate-level. Yeah. So I like I know like I'm not English speaker [-Capacity], speak English as my first language, but I I would like see myself like maybe, yeah, because like after I took like two English writing classes at the community college [+Security].

While there were students who doubted the effectiveness of taking two extra semesters of ESL writing courses, a small number of students saw the positives of taking the course regardless of how they thought of their academic writing:

> 10032: I like I have two class [+Happiness] of English and I like that because I'm with all the international student. So the English is not very hard [+Composition]. It's possible. So I like that because it's more slowly than the other classes and I can understand almost everything [+Capacity]. So okay, so and. I I need to to know how to write an academic essay for all my classes [+Satisfaction].

The above student, who neither thought her writing was particularly good nor bad, was more receptive to the idea of taking ESL because she saw ESL as a bridge for international students to adapt to the American academic culture. Students like 10032 understood that many of the writing skills taught in ESL could be transferred to other academic courses.

On the other hand, positive and negative satisfaction and capacity were expressed by all six instructors. The lower-level instructors in this study were slightly more satisfied with how their students performed in the class and considered the students' overall academic writing proficiency to be satisfactory based on their three-week performance. This is not to say that students' academic writing were of high quality, rather that their in-class performance generally met instructors' expectations. However, the intermediate-level instructors were more selective and observed distinctions between what they considered high and low performers. Specifically, poor performers appeared to struggle not only with their writing but also with class participation (Instructor 20064).

> 20064: As I told you, some of my students, their level is way below, their level is below the level of this class [-Capacity], which makes it psychology-speaking, really hard for them to do well because it will affect their self-image [-Security].

Despite the differences observed in lower- and intermediate-level instructors' attitudes, instructors at both levels agreed that ESL was beneficial for all students no matter how proficient a student appeared to the instructor. This

is because instructors were asked to make an assessment early on in the semester based on a few writing assignments; therefore, to avoid misjudgment, instructors were careful not to assume that any student, regardless of their current performance, had sufficient writing skills to move directly to the next writing level. As was found in the quantitative result, the qualitative finding shows that the lower-level instructors were less severe than the lower-level students and intermediate-level instructors in terms of rating students' overall academic writing proficiency.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

This study investigated the attitudes of undergraduate international students and their instructors toward students' academic writing abilities, using an explanatory mixed-methods research design. This investigation was carried out because we do not fully understand the extent to which learners' and instructors' attitudes toward students' academic writing abilities diverge, especially in placement contexts. Conducting such a study is important because a lack of awareness on the attitudes of these different stakeholder populations can lead to vastly different course expectations, which can have major consequences on students' motivation and engagement as well as their commitment to writing articulately for an academic audience.

Based on the survey results, significant group means differences were found on the writing process, arguments and details, and overall academic writing proficiency. On the other hand, group means differences in ratings on organization were found to be not significant. Post-hoc analysis revealed that significant differences in ratings occurred between instructors and students at one or more levels. In addition, the present study did not find strong evidence of lower-level students overrating their performances compared to higher-performing students, as was found in Butler and Lee (2010) and Ross (1998, 2006). This may be due to the lack of strong proficiency gaps found between lower- and intermediate-level students. In general, when it came to measuring specific aspects of writing (e.g., arguments and details), the intermediate-level students were more lenient, and the instructors at both levels were more critical. However, when it came to measuring academic writing holistically (i.e., overall academic writing proficiency), instructors were more lenient than their students.

These findings, to an extent, align with the findings of Saeli and Cheng (2019), who found that students who have had extensive formal education in academic writing, perceive themselves to be more self-confident. In the present study, intermediate-level students have shown more confidence than the lower-level students, and this was in part due to their more extensive education in academic writing. On the other hand, the intermediate-level instructors, followed by the lower-level instructors, were the most critical toward their students' writing in writing process, arguments and details, and grammar and vocabulary. This finding confirms the findings of Lindblom-ylanne et al. (2006) and Matsuno (2009), where teachers were more severe and consistent in their rating than peers or student-writers when it came to judging students' grammar, organization, and content. It appears that, regardless of placement level, the participants clearly held their own attitudes about what they considered to be good (and poor) writing, which aligns with Petric's (2002) argument that one's attitudes are strongly affected by reinforced, previous life experiences.

The reasons behind students' and instructors' attitudes toward students' writing were found using the Appraisal analysis. With regards to writing process, students expressed more positive than negative affect, judgment, and appreciation; instructors, on the other hand, used more negative than positive attitudes. This is in line with what was found in the survey results. Although students believed that they were able to prewrite, draft, revise, and edit, the writing situation impacted the degree to which students were able to follow a thorough process-approach to writing. Specifically, students were less inclined to engage with the writing process if the topic was not very

interesting or relevant to their majors. This confirms previous studies showing that international students are more likely to be motivated to engage in topics related to their majors than improve their general English skills (Ferris 2009, Lee 2020). However, another explanation may be that, in spite of knowing what the writing process is, international students who are placed into ESL courses may not have fully integrated the theory as part of their everyday writing routine (Ferris 2009), or that they do not find the practice particularly useful (Petric 2002).

Instructors, based on their observations of students' drafts, found that the majority of students' ability to revise, edit, and meet readers' expectations and needs were problematic. Because more time is dedicated to revising and editing and pondering over readers' expectations during class time, instructors noticed these aspects of the writing process more so than others (Kolb et al. 2013). Although the present study did not examine the length of time that students spent on each step of the writing process, it can be reasonably expected that students would have dedicated more time on areas of the writing that were actively monitored and checked by the classroom instructor, and therefore these features were easier to evaluate by instructors.

Assessments of students' writing quality (i.e., organization, arguments and details, grammar and vocabulary, and conventions) were mixed. Although students continued to express more favorable views than their instructors during the interview, they also discussed aspects of their writing that they considered to be their weaknesses. Frequently, students reported not adding enough relevant arguments and details to their essays or avoiding the uses of more complex sentence structures and academic vocabulary. Previous studies have shown that students with low academic writing proficiency often struggle with incorporating strong arguments and details (Cumming et al. 2005), and that they have weak grammar and vocabulary knowledge (Cumming et al. 2005, Gebril and Plakans 2013), as judged by raters. This study reveals that students are capable of noticing these struggles as well, so long as they are asked to weigh both the strengths and drawbacks of their writing in detail.

Although it was not apparent from the survey results, the intermediate-level students were able to articulate some of their struggles with writing better than the lower-level students. Whereas lower-level students commented more generally (e.g., "it is still difficult to understand every part"), intermediate-level students were more specific (e.g., "I don't use any type of higher vocabulary or some complex words"). According to Ferris (2009), as students' formal education in L2 and opportunities for receiving feedback increase, students are likely to better articulate aspects of their writing and notice areas that would need improvement. At the same time, this would suggest that perhaps fewer attitudes and explanations were captured from the lower-level students as a result of the lack of noticing and elaboration.

In the interview, instructors' attitudes were generally more severe than students' attitudes toward arguments and details and grammar and vocabulary. This can be partly explained by the fact that instructors having longer experiences with rating students' performances and that they are less likely to be swayed by affect (Lindblom-ylanne et al. 2006). Instructor rating bias may also be lessened when instructors have been previously trained to rate for large-scale tests and are familiar with the curriculum standards (Li 2016), and this was the case with the instructors who were recruited for the present study.

In terms of overall academic writing proficiency, more positive than negative affect, judgment, and appreciation were observed among students and lower-level instructors, whereas instructors at the intermediate-level tended to comment both the strengths and drawbacks of students' overall academic proficiency more evenly. Although lower-level instructors judged students' overall academic writing proficiency more positively than was expected, their assessments were based on how individual students performed on assignments given in the lower-level ESL course rather than on a standardized test. Furthermore, the instructors at both levels avoided being too critical of their students' overall academic writing proficiency as they were hesitant to make any firm judgments too early in the semester. However, the intermediate-level instructors' judgements were not only more severe but included a

wider range of appraisals. Except for one intermediate-level instructor who avoided being too critical, the remaining three instructors could easily identify high-, low-, and average-performing students in their courses.

Based on the study's findings, it is recommended that ESL teachers bridge gaps with their students on what academic writing is and discuss ways in which taking an ESL academic writing course can benefit the students. For example, early in the course of the semester, it would be productive to explain that academic writing is a form of communication tool and that successful writers use it to create and transform knowledge (Castello et al. 2017, Lonka et al. 2014), and that being metacognitively aware of one's rhetorical situation is key to writing successful academic essays (Negretti 2012). Teachers could also take some time to communicate their expectations with regards to how they would evaluate students' writing, and continuously reiterate them through feedback and practice. This could improve students' understanding, and more importantly, their attitudes toward learning new and more effective ways of writing for an academic audience (Petric 2002). The impact that faculty and the working environment have over students' motivation and their writing perceptions has been demonstrated repeatedly (Castello et al. 2017).

Some limitations exist with the current study. It would have helped to extend the length of study and increase the number of participants for a richer and more detailed data collection. In the future, large batches of data collection done over the course of an academic year would be useful. Although the current study was primarily interested in students' and instructors' attitudes toward incoming students' academic writing abilities at the beginning of the semester, whether such attitudes would have remained or changed towards the end of the semester would be worth investigating, as this can further inform how instructors should go about instructing academic writing to incoming international students. In spite of these limitations, the present study raised awareness on how students' and instructors' attitudes toward academic writing can be divergent especially in the beginning of the semester, and that these attitudes are developed and maintained long before students are placed into ESL courses. It is therefore critically important to have regular discussions on academic writing and demonstrate sympathy and understanding for the students from the outset so that, to the extent possible, everyone is able to enjoy being part of a writing community.

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Examples in: English
Applicable Languages: English
Applicable Level: Tertiary

Appendix

Construct	Item No. and Statement	Low S M±SD	Intm S M±SD	Low I* M±SD	Intm I* M±SD
Writing process	11. I address my reader's (e.g., instructor's) expectations and needs when I write my essays	5.64± 1.09	5.17± 1.19	4.97± 0.75	4.74± 1.22
	12. I deliver my purpose for writing (e.g., to argue, to describe, to reflect) when I write my essays	5.56± 0.97	5.44± 1.10	5.06± 0.73	4.82± 1.17
	13. I use appropriate voice and style (e.g., avoiding casual language, maintaining a formal tone) when I write my essays)	5.64± 1.06	5.37± 1.24	4.86± 0.85	5.05± 1.23
	14. I plan how I am going to write (e.g., brainstorm, outline, freewrite, research) before I start writing	5.17± 1.52	4.97± 1.34	5.17± 0.89	4.72± 1.31
	15. I put my ideas into complete sentences and paragraphs when I write my essays	5.77± 0.96	5.67± 1.00	5.06± 0.84	5.33± 0.95
	16. I revise my essays (e.g., organizing, adding, or changing information) so that my ideas/arguments make sense to the reader	5.79± 1.06	5.25± 1.53	5.46± 0.74	4.44± 1.46
	17. I edit my essays (e.g., check grammar, mechanics, spelling errors, citations) before submitting my final paper to my instructor	5.79± 1.06	5.62± 1.28	5.17± 0.66	4.49± 1.51
	18. I seek help from others (e.g., feedback) or use resources when I face problems related to my writing	6.03± 1.27	4.86± 1.70	5.37± 0.81	4.23± 1.52
Writing quality -Organization (Q19-Q25)	19. I write well-organized essays	4.69± 1.34	4.95± 1.14	4.91± 1.01	4.53± 1.20
	20. I write essays that are easy to understand	5.38± 0.91	5.52± 1.09	5.20± 0.93	4.84± 1.15
	21. I write essays that show a wide range of appropriate use of cohesive devices (e.g., and, so, but)	5.69± 1.03	5.49± 1.08	4.00± 1.08	4.72± 1.15
	22. I write essays that show a wide range of appropriate use of transitional devices (e.g., therefore, however, although)	5.49± 1.02	5.32± 1.12	4.00± 1.03	4.67± 1.20
	23. I write essays that show a logical organization (e.g., introduction-body-conclusion)	5.38± 1.29	5.67± 1.00	4.91± 0.95	4.82± 1.21
	24. I write essays that include some repetitive information	-	-	-	-
	25. I write essays that include some irrelevant information	-	-	-	-
-Arguments & Details (Q26-Q31)	26. I write essays that show a clear focus on a given topic	5.00± 1.05	5.14± 0.98	5.11± 0.99	4.68± 1.02
	27. I write essays that show well-explained arguments	4.82± 1.10	4.68± 0.98	4.29± 1.13	4.33± 1.23
	28. I write essays that include clear details and examples	4.79± 1.17	4.97± 0.88	4.57± 0.92	4.51± 1.12
	29. I write essays that include enough details and examples	4.56± 1.21	4.65± 1.00	4.51± 0.95	4.35± 1.19
	30. I write essays that include relevant details and examples to the topic/task	4.90± 1.12	4.98± 0.96	4.66± 0.91	4.77± 1.05
	31. I paraphrase/summarize/quote outside sources skillfully to support my arguments	4.79± 1.34	4.59± 1.12	3.97± 1.01	3.86± 1.13

-Grammar & Vocabulary (Q32-Q35)	32. I write essays that show a wide range of appropriate grammar structures	4.56± 1.19	4.90± 1.16	4.14± 0.94	4.46± 1.13
	33. I write essays that show a wide range of accurate grammar structures	4.28± 1.23	4.70± 1.21	4.23± 1.03	4.25± 1.20
	34. I write essays that show a wide range of appropriate vocabulary use	4.51± 1.12	4.67± 1.31	4.09± 0.85	4.65± 1.20
	35. I write essays that show a wide range of accurate vocabulary use	4.49± 1.14	4.78± 1.28	4.14± 0.88	4.46± 1.24
-Conventions (Q36-Q40)	36. I write essays that include very few spelling errors that do not interfere with understanding	-	-	-	-
	37. When I use outside sources in my essays, they are paraphrased appropriately	5.29± 1.10	5.32± 1.07	4.09± 0.37	3.96± 1.09
	38. When I use outside sources in my essays, they are paraphrased accurately	5.00± 1.14	4.81± 1.26	4.06± 0.34	3.93± 1.05
	39. When I use outside sources in my essays, they are cited appropriately	5.31± 1.25	5.25± 1.09	4.06± 0.34	3.86± 1.08
	40. When I use outside sources in my essays, they are cited accurately	5.11± 1.18	4.98± 1.16	4.06± 0.34	3.84± 1.05
Overall academic writing proficiency in English	41. My academic writing in English is poor	4.23± 1.42	4.84± 1.65	6.06± 0.97	4.95± 1.34
	42. I write bad essays in English	4.82± 1.37	4.98± 1.57	6.14± 0.91	5.30± 1.00
	43. The essays that I write for my courses are bad	4.72± 1.32	5.02± 1.56	6.00± 1.06	5.33± 1.02
	44. I have a lot of problems with my academic writing in English	4.44± 1.60	4.62± 1.70	5.69± 0.93	4.40± 1.33
	45. My instructors/professors are confused with my academic writing in English	4.85± 1.33	5.00± 1.32	5.34± 1.43	4.86± 1.19
	46. My peers/classmates are confused with my academic writing in English	-	-	-	-
	47. My academic writing in English is worse than most of my classmates	4.64± 1.55	5.17± 1.45	6.23± 0.91	5.47± 1.38
	48. My academic writing in English is overall…	4.03± 0.99	4.63± 1.22	4.74± 0.98	4.46± 1.34
	49. The essays that I write for my classes are…	4.13± 0.95	4.79± 1.15	4.71± 0.93	4.42± 1.31

*For instructors, the statements are switched from *I* and *my* to *My student*, *s/he*, and *his/her*