Writing assessment literacy: Surveying second language teachers’ knowledge, beliefs, and practices

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A B S T R A C T

Assessing student writing constitutes the major portion of second language writing teachers’ workloads; however, studies assessing and quantifying teachers’ writing assessment literacy (knowledge, beliefs, practices) are comparatively rare. In the present study, second language writing instructors from tertiary institutions (N = 702) were surveyed. Data were collected with a 54-item survey instrument administered through SurveyMonkey®. Items were formulated to ascertain writing teachers’ backgrounds and perspectives on assessment using multiple choice, Likert-scale, and open-ended response items. Analysis focuses on four research questions: (1) How have second language writing teachers obtained assessment knowledge? (2) What do second language writing teachers believe about writing assessment? (3) What are the assessment practices of second language writing teachers? (4) What is the impact of linguistic background and teaching experience on writing assessment knowledge, beliefs, and practices? Teachers reported training in writing assessment through graduate courses, workshops, conference presentations; however, nearly 26% of teachers in this survey had little or no training. The results also showed relative effects of linguistic background and teaching experience on teachers’ writing assessment knowledge, beliefs, and practices.

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Assessment remains a ubiquitous element of any writing classroom and is vitally important to the academic growth of students (White, 2009). An understanding of good assessment practices – often referred to as assessment literacy – is critical for teachers. Assessment literacy has been defined as an understanding of the principles of sound assessment (Popham, 2004; Stiggins, 2002), which is central to achieving and maintaining the overall quality of teaching and learning. In fact, Popham (2009) claimed that a lack of assessment knowledge can “cripple the quality of education” (p. 4). For second language writing teachers to become assessment literate, they need guidance in those aspects of assessment involving scoring, grading, and making judgments about students (Popham, 2004; Taylor, 2010; Volante & Fazio, 2007; Weigle, 2007; White, 2009). Teachers need to know how to create fair assessments that provide information about their students’ writing ability. They need to know how to develop scoring rubrics and assessment criteria. Bad assessment practices can have a potent effect on students. The consequences of uninformed assessment can be losses for students in time, money, motivation, and confidence.

Despite the importance of ensuring that teachers are assessment literate, scholars point to a dearth of teachers who possess adequate knowledge about assessment (Brown & Bailey, 2008; Malone, 2013; Popham, 2009; Scarino, 2013; Stiggins, 1999, 2002; Taylor, 2013; Weigle, 2007; White, 2009). Others assert that many teachers do not feel adequately prepared

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to assess their students’ performance (Mertler, 2009; Stiggins, 1999). Mertler (2009) surveyed and interviewed teachers, asking them if they felt amply trained in assessment—teachers confessed to feeling ill-equipped to assess their students’ work. Other work (Zhu, 2004) has also shown that teachers’ limited assessment literacy causes them to feel uncomfortable and unprepared.

Scholars and researchers have consistently argued for the inclusion of assessment in teacher training (Crusan, 2010; Malone, 2013; Weigle, 2007); however, it is not clear to what extent, if any, this suggestion has been implemented. Lee (2010) made the case for teacher training and its benefits. She interviewed four second language writing teachers who described a course in their MA studies that focused on the teaching of writing; they credited the course with helping them reflect on their practices and recognize the value of some process-oriented practices such as peer review, genre analysis, and conferencing. Prior to the class, they had equated the teaching of writing with grammar and vocabulary. Once they had completed the course, however, the teachers believed that their identities had changed; for the first time, they felt empowered to refer to themselves as writing teachers. As a result of the course, Lee (2010) claimed, “. . . the teachers became intrigued about the ineffectiveness of traditional practices, questioned the status quo, and attempted alternative approaches to writing instruction and assessment” (p. 153). Clearly, strong professional development can lead to teachers seeing themselves as writing teachers and as assessors of writing.

Dempsey, PytlíkZíllig, and Bruning (2009) contend that language teachers often neglect the teaching of writing in their classrooms as a result of inadequate training in the teaching and assessment of writing. In a mixed-methods study, they examined Internet-based assessment activities and their effect on teachers’ writing assessment knowledge, beliefs, and practices. Teachers interacted with students online, reading and analytically assessing their writing. Results of the study indicate that practice and expert feedback served to improve teachers’ knowledge about writing assessment as well as their assessment practices and their confidence in their ability to assess student writing.

In this paper, we refer to a specialized area of assessment literacy—that of writing assessment literacy, and if we push further, we focus specifically on second language writing assessment literacy. To explore this topic, we first review current thinking and recent research on the topic of second language assessment literacy in general, then with attention to issues of context, experience, and linguistic background. Based on this overview, we followed related work using large scale survey data collection to design and disseminate an exploratory survey to gain a general sense of second language writing teachers’ self-reported assessment literacy. We review the results of the survey with implications and direction for future research on this nascent issue.

1. The assessment literate teacher

In 2007, Hirvela and Belcher declared that the field of second language writing has overlooked the preparation of second language writing teachers, focusing instead on students learning to write. In light of this evidence, it would not be presumptuous to assume that there has been even less teacher preparation in writing assessment. Weigle (2007) made that very point; she acknowledged a lack of training in writing assessment, pointing to the importance of teacher training in writing assessment while lamenting that many graduate TESOL programs do not require an assessment course where this topic could be given attention. However, evidence suggests that assessment courses may not remedy this oversight for writing. In a 2008 follow-up to their 1996 survey of language testing instructors regarding the courses they teach, Brown and Bailey reported that while teaching of the separate skills is relatively common, the teaching of writing assessment in language testing courses is much less widespread.

1.1. What should second language teachers know about assessment?

In an effort to call attention to the components that make up assessment literacy, scholars (Brown & Bailey, 2008; Malone, 2011; Popham, 2009; Stiggins, 1999; Weigle, 2007; White, 2009) have attempted to elucidate what teachers need to understand about assessment in general and writing assessment in particular.

Regarding what teachers need to know about assessment, Brown and Bailey (2008) summarize seven standards for teacher development in assessment. These standards, developed by the American Federation of Teachers, the National Council on Measurement in Education, and the National Education Association (1990) include skills in

- choosing assessment methods appropriate for instructional decisions;
- developing assessment methods appropriate for instructional decisions;
- administering, scoring, and interpreting the results of both externally produced and teacher produced assessment methods;
- using assessment results when making decisions about individual students, planning teaching, developing curriculum, and improving schools;
- developing valid pupil grading procedures which use pupil assessment;
- communicating assessment results to students, parents, other lay audiences, and other educators; and
- recognizing unethical, illegal, and otherwise inappropriate assessment methods and uses of assessment information (p. 350).
In regard to writing assessment, Weigle (2007) calls for second language writing teachers to acquire writing assessment skills including developing, administering, and scoring writing tasks. She argues that stakeholders need to gain a solid understanding of the uses and abuses of language tests. She adds that teachers need to identify good assessment and understand its use in the classroom, understand both formative and summative assessment, recognize components of a good paper, appreciate the highly contextualized concept of good writing, and acquire literacy in the use of data obtained from externally mandated tests. Crusan (2010) also calls for second language writing teachers to be informed assessors of writing. Her list of teacher must-haves includes understanding the difference between formative and summative assessment, creating writing prompts that elicit data needed for various purposes, understanding the importance of fronting of criteria, and comprehending the uses and abuses of writing assessment. Scholars and researchers are not alone in their push for assessment literacy, as teachers, too, believe that writing assessment is an important skill that they need to master and often request additional training in assessment techniques (Malone et al., 2008; Malone, Swender, Montee, Gallagher, & Wicher, 2008).

Assessment literacy is not just about content or delivery but how this content is enmeshed with teachers’ knowledge, beliefs, and practices. Borg (2003) defines teacher cognition as “the unobservable cognitive dimension of teaching—what teachers know, believe, and think” (p. 81). Influences impacting teachers’ literacy and teachers’ philosophies include teaching context, teachers’ prior language learning experiences, and teacher learning, both as a practitioner and a student. These factors influence teachers’ decisions about what to do in the classroom and how to do it.

1.2. Teaching context

Along with knowledge, beliefs, and practice, context is crucial to our understanding of the issue of teacher training in writing assessment. Ruecker, Shapiro, Johnson, and Tardy (2014) examine the role of English in different contexts around the world, focusing on the assessment of L2 writing (as well as the importance and challenges of teaching L2 writing); they note that little research has been done to investigate these matters. Their findings point to a variety of context-related issues that affect teachers such as the availability of resources, teachers’ workloads, the place of writing in English in different contexts, and institutional mandates about how writing is taught and assessed.

Teachers may find themselves conflicted about their beliefs about classroom practices. This is especially clear when wrestling with a personal teaching philosophy in opposition to institutional demands—a teacher might struggle to reconcile her philosophy of dealing with students’ questions and the possibility that this practice impedes progress in covering all the required material. Teachers struggling in this way soon become unhappy with their practice as it so little reflects their philosophy. Clearly, then, compliance to institutional mandates affects the way writing is taught and assessed. These contextual restrictions influence notions such as the definition of good writing, student expectations of classroom activities, and teacher training.

Recognizing context as important but difficult to collect specific data when casting a wide next across cultures, we decided to work with two factors that are related to context, but are the individual level rather than the institutional or classroom level. The two individual factors that we operationalized in our study were teaching experience and linguistic background. These factors include context specificity through teacher characteristics and allow for more static parameters to study. However, we recognize that to truly study the impact of context on assessment literacy it is necessary to go beyond surveys to research engaged directly onsite.

1.3. Teaching experience

Beliefs and perceptions about language learning and teaching are often based on teachers’ previous language learning experiences (Johnson, 1999); these beliefs form the basis for their teaching philosophies. However, Johnson (1999) adds that teaching is a “socially constructed activity that requires the interpretation and negotiation of meanings embedded within the classrooms and schools where teachers teach,” (p. 767) claiming that participating in the social practices of the classroom is necessary to learn the complexities of teaching (Johnson, 2009; Johnson & Golombek, 2011). Scarino (2013) reminds us that the development of assessment literacy and teacher literacy are interconnected and require a great deal of reflection on one’s perspectives of teaching and assessing. Therefore, while learning experiences impact teaching, teacher training incorporates field experiences to create new schema for teachers to reflect and drawn from.

1.4. The non-native english speaking (NNEST) and native english speaking teacher (NEST)

Also related to context is the issue of teacher first language, which has had more research attention than context or experience; however, assessment literacy does not appear in this literature. For a time in the history of English teaching, native English speaking teachers (NESTs) were consistently categorized as more competent and non-native English speaking teachers (NNESTs) as less competent. Apart from being discriminatory and unfair, this is quite simply untrue. Hopefully, this attitude has shifted. The field has moved away from some of our biases and recognizes that “one’s mother tongue, culture, nationality, and race do not define one’s professional identity and position” (Mahboob, 2010). Instead scholars have focused on the strengths brought to the field by NNESTs, a group that constitutes the majority of English teachers globally (Matsuda & Matsuda, 2001).
Medgyes (1992) examined the merits of NNESTs in his groundbreaking work calling attention to the fact that NNESTs are equally qualified to become successful teachers among other things; the topic has proven to be an active and fertile research area (Moussu & Llurda, 2008). Mahboob (2010) reminds us that the “NNEST lens is a lens of multilingualism, multiculturalism, and multiculturality through which NNESTs – as classroom practitioners, researchers, and teacher educators – take diversity as a starting point, rather than as a result” (p. 1). In reviewing the research on NNEST and NEST, we did not find studies exploring the issue of writing assessment literacy for these two groups.

1.5. The importance of assessment literacy

Good assessment practices are essential to the teaching of second language writing. White (2009) remarks, “While research indicates that teachers spend as much as one quarter to one third of their professional time on assessment related activities, almost all do so without the benefit of having learned the principles of sound assessment” (p. 6). Teachers may have received instruction in giving feedback to students; however, guidance in writing assessment involving scoring, grading, or making judgments about student work is also needed. In addition to classroom assessment, writing is often assessed in general tests of English language proficiency and used in decision making, such as placement of students into classes. For language teachers to interpret and use scores from these large scale measures, they need to understand the fundamentals of writing assessment. Volante and Fazio (2007) stress the need for assessment literacy and advocate for the training of teachers. In a study exploring levels of assessment literacy, they surveyed candidates at a teacher education program in a Canadian university asking them to describe their training in assessment and to comment on what they knew about purposes for and methods of assessment. Teachers were also asked to comment on the need for further training in assessment. Analysis of the results pointed to relatively low self-efficacy ratings across the four years of the program. Further, results revealed a penchant for summative assessment among the student teachers. Their findings indicate a need for an assessment course that focuses on classroom assessment.

Contributing to the assessment literacy of practitioners is the responsibility of language testers (Popham, 2009; Taylor, 2010, 2013). Understanding more about what second language writing teachers currently know, believe, and practice could guide us in how to provide support for further learning on this topic. Thus, the present study seeks to complement and expand the existing literature using the following questions to guide the design of the study:

(1) In what ways have second language writing teachers obtained assessment knowledge?
(2) What do second language writing teachers believe about writing assessment?
(3) What are the assessment practices of second language writing teachers?
(4) What is the impact of linguistic background and teaching experience on writing assessment knowledge, beliefs, and practices?

2. Methods

A survey was designed to elicit second language writing teachers’ backgrounds and perspectives on assessment. The 54-item questionnaire focused on what second language writing teachers know about writing assessment, how they have learned what they know, their beliefs about writing assessment, and common classroom practices. The survey included multiple choice, 5-point Likert scale, and open-ended items delivered electronically to writing instructors (N=702). The details of development steps are described below. The researchers are based in the U.S. and in Egypt; however, we realize the need to recognize that some items in our survey are likely framed in a U.S. paradigm. One example of this is choices given for the types of writing classes taught. To rectify this situation, we provided comment boxes throughout the survey and data from these comment boxes are incorporated if provided by the respondents. However, results related to context, in particular, course names, should be interpreted carefully. Future work is needed to better understand the equivalence, or lack thereof, of English writing courses in tertiary institutions across the globe.

2.1. Participants and contexts

For this exploratory study, we utilized a broad recruitment strategy to access as many potential participants internationally as possible. We chose to survey second language writing teachers (both ESL and EFL) at tertiary institutions about assessing writing. Participants were recruited through an email (see Supplementary material) sent through various Internet listservs (e.g. Language Testing Research and Practice, Second Language Writing at the Conference on College Composition and Communication, Second Language Writing Interest Section at TESOL, Symposium on Second Language Writing List). Casting a wide net resulted in a high number of respondents; however, it limits the generalizability and claims made from the data as we did not sample from a clearly defined population.

The participants in this study teach in 41 countries on five continents (Africa, Asia, Europe, North America, South America). A large portion of the respondents (78.2%) were native speakers of English, while 21.8% of the participants named any one of the following 32 languages as their native language: Arabic, Korean, Hungarian, Farsi, Portuguese, Japanese, Spanish, Polish,
Chinese (both Mandarin and Cantonese), Swedish, Russian, Romanian, Hindi, French, Turkish, Malay, Dutch, Urdu, Estonian, German, Kabyle, Thai, Lao, Greek, Latvian, Vietnamese, Danish, Finnish, Kurdish, Yoruba, and Taiwanese.

Participants’ contexts varied: however, all respondents teach at the tertiary level. 21.5% of the participants teach at intensive English programs while 38.6% teach in a four-year university composition program and 11.1% in a two-year college composition program. The participants taught a wide range of writing courses as outlined in Table 1. These categories are not universal; we used U.S. terminology and provided options for respondents to add names of courses they teach. However, more respondents chose the categories provided.

2.2. The survey

The survey instrument used in this study was developed by the researchers in a series of steps. Preliminary items were individually developed by each of the researchers after reading a shared set of literature on assessment literacy (e.g. Malone, 2013; Mertler, 2009; Popham, 2009; Scarino, 2013; Stiggins, 2002; Taylor, 2010), which included aspects of writing assessment deemed important for teachers to acquire. We did not set out with a specific construct of writing, but instead drew on the literature focused on what teachers should know. Inherent in that literature are assumptions about writing instruction, which will be explored in relation to constructs of writing and assessment in our discussion of results. The items were combined and refined to cover the research questions adequately and to omit redundancies.

Then, the researchers worked through a series of drafts and incorporated revisions into a version for piloting of the questionnaire (Dörnyei, 2003). The final questionnaire, a 54-item survey instrument administered through SurveyMonkey®, included multiple choice, Likert-scale, and open-ended response items, which investigated teachers’ backgrounds and perspectives on assessment. Comment boxes allowed instructors to explain their responses to the open-ended items.

The survey was piloted with two experienced composition teachers (one with NEST and one NNESI) who worked through the survey while performing a modified verbal report protocol. One of the researchers sat beside each teacher as she took the survey and asked for input on each item. The teachers evaluated the design and implementation of the survey on SurveyMonkey®, commenting on ambiguous items and misunderstandings; based on this input, changes were made to specific items where misinterpretation could have occurred. In general, these teachers found the text in the survey easy to understand and ultimately confirmed that the final version of survey was both accessible and usable. Questionnaire reliability was 0.75 (using Cronbach’s alpha).

2.3. Analysis of survey

Descriptive statistics were used to answer questions for the overall sample of teachers by grouping questions into the three domains of interest: knowledge, beliefs, and practice. To further explore patterns across sub-groups of teachers, Mann-Whitney U and Kruskal-Wallis tests were conducted along with follow-up tests such as pair-wise comparisons. The Mann-Whitney U test was used to investigate the effects of language background on writing assessment knowledge, practices, and beliefs as two dimensions (native vs. nonnative). Since teaching experience has four levels, the Kruskal-Wallis test was employed to look into differences across these levels.

Qualitative data were collected from survey comments. The data were coded in accordance to the three themes of knowledge, beliefs, and practices; however, a sub-theme – rubrics – emerged from the data. In order to best understand the qualitative data, the first author downloaded and printed survey comments, reviewed them, and independently open coded them (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To check for accuracy of classification, a second reader read through the comments and the first reader’s categories and comments. The purpose for open coding was to discover how the survey respondents conceptualized their knowledge, practices, and beliefs regarding writing assessment and to look for meaning in the data.

1 As mentioned previously, these course-related designations present some challenges in our interpretation. However, participants largely used these categories rather than writing in alternatives in the “other” box, suggesting that they considered these labels sufficient in describing courses in their setting.
Table 2
Teacher experience and education.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience: Length of time teaching writing, in years (Q6)</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3–5</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>25.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6–10</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>21.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11–20</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>29.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21+</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>23.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education: Degree that teachers felt qualified them for their current position (Q7)</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PhD (graduated or near completion)</td>
<td>331</td>
<td>29.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MA</td>
<td>591</td>
<td>84.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BA</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>21.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other: MFA in poetry, Certificate (RSA, CELTA, DELTA, TEFLA)</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: respondents could chose more than one degree, thus the percentage total is higher than 100%.

Table 3
Teachers’ knowledge of basic concepts of classroom writing assessment: percentages, means, and standard deviations (SA = Strongly agree, A = Agree, NS = Not sure, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly disagree).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response percentages &amp; (Q52, Q51, Q50, Q53, Q48, Q49)</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>NS</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I know how to design good writing tasks.</td>
<td>24.6</td>
<td>60.3</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>0.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The concept of alternative assessment is easy to me.</td>
<td>27.7</td>
<td>41.5</td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>0.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I comprehend the concept of scoring rubrics.</td>
<td>55.6</td>
<td>41.3</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>0.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am unsure about how to design scoring rubrics.</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>54.0</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>2.07</td>
<td>0.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understand the concept of portfolio assessment.</td>
<td>48.7</td>
<td>42.2</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>0.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know what is meant by integrated writing tasks.</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>0.81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These data are reported in relation to the quantitative findings to provide more depth to the overall results. Excerpted representative quotations are included throughout the results sections.

3. Results

This study explores writing assessment literacy by surveying teachers’ knowledge of writing assessment, their beliefs/philosophies regarding the assessment of writing, and their writing assessment practices. To contextualize the data, we sorted survey items according to these three categories. In this section, first data derived from multiple-choice items and Likert scale items are discussed for the whole group within each domain with relevant participant comments from the qualitative data. Then, we report the results of the analysis on linguistic background and teaching experience.

3.1. Knowledge

Two categories of information regarding knowledge appeared in the survey. The first concerned the foundations of teachers’ knowledge in terms of experience and training. The second area looked at knowledge of certain key concepts in writing assessment, particularly for classroom contexts.

The majority of teachers in our sample had extensive experience, with over half of them having taught writing for more than 10 years. Nearly one third of the respondents had earned PhDs; however, 84.2% considered their MA enough qualification for their current writing position. Most of the Master’s degrees were in TESOL (177, 25.2%) and English literature/creative writing (137, 19.1%) followed by applied linguistics/linguistics (95, 13.5%). A small number had earned MAs in composition/rhetoric (55, 7.8%) and education (46, 6.6%). Some respondents had completed a TESOL certificate in addition to their MA (84, 12.0%). Twenty-one percent felt that a Bachelor’s degree to qualified them for their current position. Without specifics of these teachers’ assignments, it is hard to say whether this indeed qualified them or not; however, it is noteworthy that the field of TESOL considers an MA the terminal degree, which raises questions regarding the suitability of a BA as the lone credential for teaching L2 writing. Table 2 summarizes the data regarding experience and education.

In addition to experience and education, the questionnaire asked teachers about specific training in teaching writing, assessment, and writing assessment. For this group of respondents, there seemed to be a fairly good degree of training. Many had received education in teaching writing as well as assessment through coursework. Contrary to the literature, which presents a bleak picture of teacher preparation in assessing writing, about 80% of our sample responded that they had training in writing assessment; however, the finding that 20% of the sample had no training is concerning as it is a fairly sizable number of teachers in writing classrooms without knowledge of how to assess their students. The most common place to learn about assessment was in coursework, followed by inservice/preservice training and conference presentations. As Fig. 1 shows, despite the high numbers of participants with training in these venues, 119 (17%) reported no training in assessment, and 130 (18.5%) had not had specific training in writing assessment.
Along with items regarding preparation, the questionnaire asked participants about their knowledge of several common aspects of writing assessment. Table 3 presents the percentages for these responses, and Fig. 2 illustrates the raw numbers across agreement and disagreement. In general, teachers seemed familiar with the concepts by agreeing or strongly agreeing with statements. For example, over 80% felt that they knew how to design good writing tasks. Based on these results, it seems that many respondents were knowledgeable about writing task design, rubric use, portfolios, and integrated writing tasks. However, 79.8% (N = 560) reported that they were unsure about rubric design (Q53).

Contrary to this largely positive report of knowledge about teaching and assessing writing, survey comments paint a different picture. Of the 171 respondents who added a comment to their response, about 40% observed that their training for the teaching of college composition to native and/or nonnative speakers was largely on the job, especially as tutors in writing centers, and 30% noted that their training was largely through self-study: teaching, observation, and reading. Teachers commented that although they had taken a class regarding teaching methodologies, it covered several language skills, with the writing section lasting only a week or two. Several respondents described institutional reluctance concerning the necessity of training in composition.

3.2. Beliefs about writing assessment

Closely connected to experience and knowledge are teacher beliefs about writing assessment. These beliefs are a critical piece of assessment literacy. The questionnaire targeted the different beliefs instructors have about writing assessment. The results showed that the instructors believed that a wide range of tasks were useful in assessing writing. Out-of-class writing assignments received the highest recognition (90%) followed by portfolio assessment (88%) and timed in-class assignments (82%). When asked about their attitudes towards writing assessment, 53% of the instructors found assessment interesting and challenging, while 33% accepted it as a necessary part of their job. Less than 10% reported a negative attitude about writing assessment. The instructors were also asked about using scoring rubrics in writing classes. Nearly half of the instructors believed that rubrics are an important tool in helping students understand why they receive a specific grade. However, 27% of the respondents believed that students do not usually pay attention to rubrics (Fig. 3).
Questions 21–40 on the questionnaire addressed the beliefs teachers have about writing assessment in more detail (See Appendix A for a detailed Table with percentages of responses and means). These items targeted three areas of beliefs:

- Beliefs about scoring accuracy (questions 22, 23, 24, 28, 30, 32, 33, 37)
- Beliefs about assessment methods used in writing assessment (questions 21, 25, 26, 27, 31, 38)
- Beliefs about general assessment issues in writing classes (questions 29, 34, 35, 36, 39, 40)

The participants had mixed feelings about scoring and writing assessment. 66% of the participants agreed that scoring of writing is always inaccurate; however, when asked whether scoring is a subjective process, almost 60% of them disagreed. In addition, 55% of the instructors found it difficult to achieve inter-rater reliability while 80% believed that rater training is not helpful. When asked whether working with colleagues during scoring is difficult, 53% agreed that it was, indeed, problematic. Furthermore, 53% of the participants believed that writing exams provide a good estimate of writing ability. In regard to self-assessment, the participants were divided. Another item asked whether content should be given more weight than grammar when scoring; 60% of participants agreed with this statement.

The second issue discussed in this section of the survey concerned beliefs about assessment methods used in writing classes. 80% of the participants reported that portfolios are good tools for writing assessment while self-assessment was considered a suitable writing tool by 73%. It was surprising to us that 70% of the participants believed in the suitability of multiple-choice items as a method for assessing writing while only 35% had faith in the appropriateness of essay exams. In addition, 57% of the instructors thought that teacher-made tests are better than standardized writing exams. Furthermore, integrated writing assessment was perceived by 65% of the instructors as a good thing to do.

The final issue in this section focused on general feelings about writing assessment. Approximately 87% of the participants perceived themselves as good writing instructors while 93% thought of assessment as an important skill for writing teachers. 92% of the instructors agreed that assessment has an important role in the teaching of writing. When asked whether assessment provides good feedback to students, 85% of the participants responded positively. 90% of the participants believed that assessment is not time consuming.

Review of the written comments by teachers is given in Table 4 and shows the emergent codes from the qualitative analysis of teacher beliefs. A considerable number of teachers wrote responses expressing frustration and challenges in assessing writing. One teacher expressed the challenge of assessment in the following way, “Finding ways to say what will actually help a student improve is not an easy task.” These issues with writing assessment (feeling frustration regarding effective ways to help students) were reported in the comment boxes associated with the items and were more common than the issue of assessment being time-consuming or of feeling ill-prepared.

### 3.3. Practices

While experience affects beliefs, beliefs engender practice all of which comprises assessment literacy. Therefore, the final section of the questionnaire also examined assessment practices in writing classes as reported on by participants. Around 95% of the participants reported using multiple drafts in their writing classes and approximately the same percentage reported using rubrics or criteria with their students. When asked whether they create their own rubrics, 90% responded that they do, in fact, create most or all of the rubrics they use in class, and a relatively similar percentage, reported making sure that their students understand the information included in the rubrics. Around 66% of respondents informally introduce the rubrics to their students to achieve this purpose.
Table 4
Which statement BEST describes how you feel about assessing writing: comments summarized.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Sample comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feel frustration</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>I feel frustrated and resentful. I spend long hours debating weighting of grades.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Believe it to be time consuming/labor intensive</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>. . . giving good-quality, thoughtful feedback is time-intensive, and with a 5-5 load (usually 3 of which are writing courses), there are days when I look at my to-do list and feel completely overwhelmed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find it challenging</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>While I do find it interesting and challenging, I also find writing assessment very difficult.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Believe it is the least attractive aspect of teaching writing</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>I feel almost defeated while grading when I see that I am still not teaching some students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Believe they are not prepared</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>I am not confident in my ability to assess well.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hate assessing writing</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>I love teaching writing; I hate grading. I find it stresses out students and serves as a perverse incentive. Assessment is punitive and discourages students (and teachers) from learning from their 'mistakes'.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5
Teacher’s writing assessment practices: percentages, means, and standard deviations (SA = Strongly agree, A = Agreed, NS = Not sure, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly disagree).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response percentages%</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>NS</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I use scoring rubrics when grading essays. (Q41)</td>
<td>33.5</td>
<td>48.6</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I discuss with colleagues the results of my writing exams. (Q42)</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>50.4</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We do rater training in our program. (Q43)</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>34.5</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>26.9</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>1.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I use portfolios in my writing classes. (Q44)</td>
<td>37.0</td>
<td>56.2</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>42.4</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>1.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I integrate writing with other skills when I design writing exams. (Q45)</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>46.9</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I ask students to do self-assessment in writing classes. (Q46)</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>55.0</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>0.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I use computer technology in writing assessment. (Q47)</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>1.28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 5, questions 41–47 focused on classroom writing assessment practices (Table 5 details percentages and Fig. 2 shows raw numbers of agreement and disagreement). While 80% of the participants indicate that they use scoring rubrics in their writing programs, only 50% report conducting rater-training sessions. 80% of the instructors agree that they encourage their students to do self-assessment, and 62% report using portfolios in their classes. In addition, approximately 60% indicate that they use technology in their classes, and 68% reported using integrated writing assessment. When asked whether they discuss assessment results with their colleagues, 63% report doing so.

From written comments on questions about the practices surrounding rubric use, it was clear that some respondents were using a standardized rubric in their programs—they referred to bands on specific tests and programmatic rubrics. 149 respondents mentioned specific strategies that supported their expertise concerning rubrics qualitatively. Analysis of the comments yielded the following practice in using rubrics:

- Norm students with rubrics
- Conference in small groups to talk about rubric criteria
- Conference with individual students to address components of rubrics and their representation in the student’s work
- Create rubrics with students
- Use papers and rubrics to practice grading
- Teach criteria
- Teach the language of the rubric
- Relate the rubric to what has been taught in class

All in all, respondents’ commentary showed agreement about the importance of helping students understand and use the various components of rubrics to assess their own writing as well as that of their peers; many also commented on the importance of making students aware of how and why they grade the way they grade.

3.4. Effects of linguistic background

The previous sections discuss knowledge, beliefs, and practices for the full group of respondents; however, given the potential impact of context, we used two factors, linguistic background and years of teaching experience to divide the data further and look for patterns. In order to look into the effects of linguistic background (native vs. nonnative English speakers) on writing assessment knowledge, beliefs, and practices, a Mann-Whitney U test was conducted. The results of the analysis showed linguistic background significantly affecting both teachers’ practices ($z = -2.11, p = 0.035$) and their knowledge about writing assessment ($z = -3.82, p < 0.001$). Descriptive statistics indicated that nonnative writers reported using more writing assessment practices and also rated themselves as more assessment-literate compared to the native
sample. Mean rankings substantiated this, as seen in Table 6, that nonnative teachers had an average rank of 381.95 while native teachers had an average rank of 343.01 for their self-reported writing assessment practices. As for their self-reported writing assessment knowledge, native teachers had a mean rank of 336.14 while nonnative teachers obtained a higher mean rank of 406.63. However, the results showed no significant differences between both groups in terms of their beliefs about writing assessment (z = −0.33, p = 0.74).

3.5. Effects of teaching experience

A Kruskal–Wallis test was used to examine the effect of four levels of teaching experience (based on a division by years of experience: 1–5, 6–10, 11–20, and 21+ years) on writing assessment beliefs, practices, and knowledge. The analysis yielded significant differences on both teachers’ writing assessment beliefs $\chi^2 (3, N = 702) = 9.30$, p = 0.02) and knowledge $\chi^2 (3, N = 702) = 28.87$, p < 0.001) based on years of experience. However, no significant differences were obtained for the practices variable $\chi^2 (3, N = 702) = 1.56$, p = 0.67).

In order to further investigate these results, follow-up tests were conducted to assess pairwise comparisons among the four groups. For the beliefs variable, the only significant difference obtained was between the least experienced group (1–5 years) and the group with the highest level of experience (21+ years) as shown in Table 7. However, pair-wise comparisons for the assessment knowledge variable showed a number of differences among the four levels based on the pair-wise comparisons. As shown in Table 8, the most experienced group of teachers’ (21+ years) self-reported data showed less assessment knowledge than the first two levels (1–5 years and 6–10 years). The least experienced group of teachers (1–5 years) reported assessment knowledge that is higher than the third group (11–20 years). This result indicates that novice teachers tend to have more confidence in their writing assessment knowledge while the most experienced group believes the opposite.

### Table 6
Mann-Whitney U Test for native and nonnative teachers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Background</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean Rank</th>
<th>Sum of Ranks</th>
<th>Mann-Whitney U</th>
<th>Z</th>
<th>Significance value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beliefs</td>
<td>Native</td>
<td>549</td>
<td>352.83</td>
<td>193703</td>
<td>41269</td>
<td>−33</td>
<td>0.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nonnative</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>346.73</td>
<td>53050</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>702</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practices</td>
<td>Native</td>
<td>549</td>
<td>343.01</td>
<td>188314</td>
<td>46658</td>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>0.03**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nonnative</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>381.95</td>
<td>58439</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>702</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>Native</td>
<td>549</td>
<td>336.14</td>
<td>184539</td>
<td>50433</td>
<td>3.82</td>
<td>0.000***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nonnative</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>406.63</td>
<td>62214</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>702</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* a Significance level is 0.05.

### Table 7
Pair-wise comparisons for teaching experience and beliefs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Test statistics</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>Std. test statistics</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Adj. Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1–5 &amp; 6–10</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>22.35</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.896</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1–5 &amp; 11–20</td>
<td>30.57</td>
<td>20.75</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1–5 &amp; 21+</td>
<td>58.94</td>
<td>21.88</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>0.007</td>
<td>0.04**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6–10 &amp; 11–20</td>
<td>27.65</td>
<td>21.61</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6–10 &amp; 21+</td>
<td>56.03</td>
<td>22.69</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>0.014</td>
<td>0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11–20 &amp; 21+</td>
<td>28.38</td>
<td>21.12</td>
<td>1.34</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* a Significance level is 0.05.

### Table 8
Pair-wise comparisons for teaching experience and writing assessment knowledge.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Test statistics</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>Std. test statistics</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Adj. Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1–5 &amp; 6–10</td>
<td>35.11</td>
<td>22.27</td>
<td>1.58</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1–5 &amp; 11–20</td>
<td>75.32</td>
<td>20.68</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.002**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1–5 &amp; 21+</td>
<td>109.58</td>
<td>21.80</td>
<td>5.03</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.000***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6–10 &amp; 11–20</td>
<td>40.22</td>
<td>21.53</td>
<td>1.87</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6–10 &amp; 21+</td>
<td>74.47</td>
<td>22.61</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>0.006**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11–20 &amp; 21+</td>
<td>34.25</td>
<td>21.04</td>
<td>1.63</td>
<td>0.104</td>
<td>0.62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* a Significance level is 0.05.

b Significance level is 0.001.
3.6. Summary

The teachers who responded to our survey reported familiarity with common concepts in writing assessment, and while the majority had some training in writing assessment, 20% reported none. Over 80% felt that writing assessment was interesting and part of their job, with a small number holding negative views toward it. Their beliefs and opinions varied somewhat regarding the issues of scoring accuracy, the role of grammar in assessing writing, and the quality of teacher made tests; however, there was more agreement about the value of portfolios and self-assessment. Over 90% agreed that assessment was important for students—it can provide good feedback, and, surprisingly, it is not time-consuming. Teachers reporting on practices also revealed some positive results as many used multiple-drafts and created their own rubrics, both seen as good practice in teaching writing (Crusan, 2010). There was more variation in some of the issues surrounding rubrics such as introducing them to students and including some training on rubrics. Also somewhat varied was the reported use of portfolios, technology, and integrated assessment.

Based on the survey results, significant differences emerged in relation to linguistic background and teacher experience. For linguistic background, there were differences in two domains—knowledge and practice. For teaching experience, reported practice was not significantly different but knowledge and beliefs were.

4. Discussion and implications

In this study, we examined teachers’ knowledge, beliefs, and practices regarding writing assessment. Contrary to the dearth of assessment knowledge reported by scholars (Brown & Bailey, 2008; Popham, 2009; Stiggins, 1999, 2002; Weigle, 2007; White, 2009), our survey results paint a slightly more positive picture with regard to writing teachers’ knowledge of writing assessment for our respondents. Nearly 63% reported that they learned about assessment in general and 57% of respondents reported that they learned about writing assessment as a part of a course. Caution is warranted when interpreting this result since we depended only on self-reported data from teachers who might provide a more positive view about their assessment knowledge for social desirability reasons. However, we noticed that while many teachers qualified themselves as able assessors of writing, they also professed a lack of confidence in their assessment abilities, particularly in rubric creation.

One of the most interesting findings in this study is the effect of linguistic background, which significantly affected both teachers’ practices and knowledge about writing assessment. NNESTs reported a higher level of assessment literacy, a better grasp of writing assessment, and a wider variety of writing assessment practices. This aligns with current perspectives on the issue of teachers’ linguistic background, which has suggested that NNESTs in non-English speaking contexts have more training as teachers (Jenkins, 2006).

Another finding of interest is teaching experience, which significantly affected beliefs about writing assessment and assessment literacy. Teachers with fewer years of experience differed significantly from their more experienced colleagues in their beliefs about writing assessment. In terms of assessment literacy, more experienced teachers reported less assessment knowledge. Additionally, the least experienced group of teachers in this study reported higher assessment knowledge than teachers with 11–20 years of teaching experience.

The reasons for these differences are unclear but might be due to changes over time in pre-service teacher education or the presence or absence of in-service training. Another possibility might be teachers that Tsui (2005) refers to as “experienced non-experts” (p.3); in other words, expertise is not guaranteed by the number of years of teaching experience. Finally, this group might be more resistant to professional development than their newer colleagues (Rodriguez & McKay, 2010).

While our study was not initially designed to examine the ways in which context affects writing assessment, we found some evidence in the qualitative data that teaching context had an impact on assessment literacy and teachers’ assessment philosophy. For example, teachers who reported heavy teaching loads were more inclined to talk about assessment negatively. One teacher remarked, “My teaching load of five writing classes each semester leaves me very little time to provide anything other than a cursory reading and grade assignment to my students’ papers. I have nearly 150 students each semester; my feeling of burn out is very real.”

The results of the study can be seen to reflect components of a general construct of writing and of writing assessment for the respondents of our study. For example, process writing appeared through high marks on practice such as portfolio assessment, self-assessment, and collecting multiple drafts. This might also be revealed in comments about rubric use. Teachers’ internalized constructs of writing assessment seemed to include aspects of large scale standardized assessment and formative assessment. Respondents mentioned using both standardized rubrics and locally developed rubrics. They indicated using multiple-choice questions to assess writing as well as multiple types of performance based assessment tasks. These responses reflect the field of language assessment, which grapples with distinguishing these two domains of assessment – large scale and local – without consensus on their differences and their overlap (Inbar-Lourie, 2008; Taylor, 2010).

The findings of this study both confirm and contradict the assertions of researchers such as Brown and Bailey (2008), Popham (2009), Stiggins (1999, 2002), Weigle (2007), and White (2009) who reference both a lack of knowledge about assessment and adequate teacher preparation in assessment (Meertler, 2009; Stiggins, 1999). In the present study, teachers reported feeling inadequately prepared to assess writing particularly in the use/creation of rubrics; the opposite is also true, as is evident in comments wherein teachers displayed knowledge of the training they provide to students regarding rubrics.
5. Limitations

As with any study utilizing survey data, the present study is not exempt from problems associated with this research design. A survey instrument always introduces the possibility that answers are skewed. In the case of the current study, respondents may attempt to conform to current assessment theory rather than accurately reflect their usual practices. Many times in survey data, respondents report answers they believe are expected from, in the case of this study, a good teacher—a problem in much survey research is the issue of social desirability (Johnson & Van de Vijver, 2002).

Yet another limitation in the study centers on the lack of distinction between formative and summative writing assessment. The survey asked respondents to consider assessment activities that are both formative and summative and also germane to the classroom, including quizzes, timed in-class writing, out of class writing assignments, final exams, revisions, peer review, teacher conferences, and portfolios. All these assessment types were lumped into one category and were included as answers to the question: Check all of the activities that you consider to be writing assessment. We realize that teachers perform differently depending on whether they are providing formative assessment or summative assessment.

Finally, our study is disseminated to cast a wide net and did not strictly identify a sample of the larger population of writing assessment teachers. This limits the generalizability of our results. As the study was exploratory, we choose listserv broadcasting, which allowed us to reach out to as many respondents as were possible. In order to get a large international response, we felt this approach could reach writing teachers who may not be clearly identified by professional organization membership or directories of tertiary institutions. However, this decision leaves our results open to critique in regard to its representativeness.

The answers to our study’s research questions in turn elicited more questions worthy of study. Such questions may well be better addressed by case-study research with sufficient depth to draw context specific conclusions and distinguish relationships between individual factors, personal histories, and institutional and societal contexts. It is our intent and hope that this study will provide baseline data as a point of reference for future in depth studies on assessment practices and regional practices.

6. Conclusion

Throughout this study, we have traced the themes of knowledge, beliefs, and practices in regard to teachers and writing assessment literacy. There is evidence that some teachers have received training in writing assessment. While this evidence of training is encouraging, qualitative analysis of questionnaire comments reveals that a number of the teachers surveyed felt confusion and concern in the creation and use of rubrics and, in some cases, in writing assessment in general. Any teacher-training program that does not take these factors into consideration does its candidates a disservice by not equipping them with the necessary tools to compete in a very dynamic educational market. Most importantly, however, the addition of a writing assessment component produces candidates more capable of serving students and colleagues via best practices in writing assessment.

Appendix A.

Teachers’ beliefs about writing assessment: Percentages, means, and standard deviations. (SA = Strongly agree, A = Agreed, NS = Not sure, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly disagree)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>SA (%)</th>
<th>A (%)</th>
<th>NS (%)</th>
<th>D (%)</th>
<th>SD (%)</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Writing can be assessed indirectly through multiple-choice questions. (Q21)</td>
<td>41.0</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scoring of writing is always accurate. (Q22)</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>52.1</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>0.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scoring of writing is subjective. (Q23)</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>24.9</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>45.9</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>1.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is difficult to achieve high rater agreement in writing assessment. (Q24)</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>45.3</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>26.6</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>1.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essay exams are best when they come to assessing writing skills. (Q25)</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>1.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing is best assessed when integrated with other skills like reading and listening. (Q26)</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>42.6</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>0.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-assessment can be a good technique for assessing writing. (Q27)</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>55.0</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In general, writing (essay) exams provides a good estimate of writing ability. (Q28)</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>44.7</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing assessment provides good feedback for writing instruction. (Q29)</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>59.5</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>0.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rater training is NOT helpful for writing teachers. (Q30)</td>
<td>38.7</td>
<td>41.2</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>0.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A portfolio is a good tool for assessing writing. (Q31)</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>48.8</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>0.83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When scoring writing, I believe content should receive more weight than accuracy (grammar). (Q32)
Self-assessment provides an accurate picture of student writing ability. (Q33)
Assessment plays an important role in writing classes. (Q34)
Assessment is an important capability that writing teachers should master. (Q25)
Writing assessment is time consuming. (Q36)
It is difficult to work with other colleagues during scoring of writing exams. (Q37)
Teacher-made writing tests are better than large-scale standardized writing exams. (Q38)
i consider myself to be a good writing instructor. (Q39)
My students usually do poorly on writing exams. (Q40)

Appendix B. Supplementary data

Supplementary data associated with this article can be found, in the online version, at http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.asw.2016.03.001.

References


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