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**Faculty of Letters and Languages**  
**Department of English**



**Exemplar Feedback in Essay-Based Assessment: An Analysis of  
Attitudes and Current Practice**  
**Case Study: Teachers and Students at the Department of English,  
Mohammed Seddik Benyahia University, Jijel**

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfilment for the Requirements of a Master Degree in  
English Didactics

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## Dedication

*I lovingly dedicate this work*

*To the queen of my heart for her endless love, motivation, encouragement, and patience. To the most precious and gentle soul in the world, my beloved **mother**.*

*To my beloved brother **Khalil** for his encouragement, love, and support.*

*To my beloved family who were there for me whenever I needed help and provided me with the motivation that I needed to carry on the present research.*

❖ *To my stunning aunts **Nabiha, Hanan, and Widad**.*

❖ *To my beloved uncles **Hocine and Soufien**.*

❖ *To my precious cousins **Meriem, Amina, Khaled, and Sifana**.*

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### **Abstract**

The present study explored teachers' and students' attitudes towards the effectiveness of exemplar feedback in overcoming the difficulty of essay-based assessment. It, also, attempted to explore current practice of exemplar feedback and the perceived impact of exemplars on students' affect, self-regulation, and achievement. Two hypotheses were advanced; the first predicted that the use of exemplar feedback would be welcomed by teachers and students from the five levels, be they licence first-year licence, second-year licence, third-year licence, master-one, or master-two students. The second stated that the more students gain experience in essay-based assessment, the less they will need exemplar feedback. To test these hypotheses, two online questionnaires were administrated to 250 students from all levels and 18 permanent teachers. The stratified sample of students was made up of 50 students from each level to allow equal representation of students and comparison of results. The results have shown that teachers and students had positive attitudes towards the use of exemplar feedback, but they have not experienced it in full potential as its use was relatively inadequate, and it has not been applied in preparing for examinations at a large scale. In addition, students seemed to become more interested in receiving exemplar feedback as they succeeded to higher levels, except for master-two students who showed less positive attitudes about it. Both teachers and their students believed that exemplar feedback fosters students' self-regulated learning, enables them to meet their teachers' expectations, and enhances their achievement.

*Key words:* Feedback, Exemplar Feedback, Essay-Based Assessment

### **List of Abbreviations**

**TEFL:** Teaching English as a Foreign Language

**ZPD:** Zone of Proximal Development

**L1:** Licence year One

**L2:** Licence year Two

**L3:** Licence year Three

**M1:** Master One

**M2:** Master Two

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## **General Introduction**

### Introduction

1. Review of Previous Research
2. Statement of the Problem
3. Hypothesis of the Study
4. Research Questions
5. Aims of the Study
6. Means of Research
7. Structure of the Dissertation

## **Introduction**

After correcting examination papers, it is a standard practice for teachers at the Department of English, Mohammed Seddik Benyahia University, Jijel, to provide feedback aiming to demonstrate how grading was carried out. This feedback aims also to raise awareness of the thinking or learning that need to be adopted by students in order to develop their overall performance in future assessment tasks. Nonetheless, and despite being provided with the same instruction, students often show varying interpretations of their teacher's expectations.

One way for guiding students to what is valued by their teachers is through the use of exemplar feedback which is supplying students with past exam copies so as to provide them with a detailed description about what they should implement to succeed in exams. In this vein, the present study seeks to explore the effectiveness of integrating exemplar feedback in essay-based assessment for both teachers and students at Mohammed Seddik Benyahia University, Jijel.

### **1. Review of Previous Research**

The use of exemplar feedback or samples of students' past exam copies, in education was first advocated by Sadler (1987, pp. 191-209). Feedback was proposed to be feed-forward through using exemplars in preparing students for assessment tasks. That is, feedback should not only focus on students' past and present performances; it should also focus on preparing them for future assessment by engaging them in the process of analysing exemplars. This suggestion was supported by the results obtained from studies by Scoles, Huxham, and Mcarthur (2013, pp. 631- 643), and Wimshurst and Manning (2013, pp. 451-463), which revealed that students who accessed exemplars had better marks than the ones who did not.

Exemplars can be annotated by teachers through adding comments on how an answer meets particular criteria of assessment. In this regard, findings from a long-term study conducted by Newlyn and Spencer (2010) showed that students valued the use of annotated exemplars. In addition, exposure to annotated exemplars correlated positively with students' marks, meaning that exemplars led to the development in their performance (pp.67-75).

Students' attitudes toward the use of exemplars were studied in relation to self-regulation and self-efficacy. Using surveys, teaching journals and semi-structured interviews in investigating first-year-undergraduate students' attitudes towards using exemplars, Howie, Lightfoot, and Dickson (2017) found out that students believed that they can enhance their motivation, foster their understanding of academic writing, and boost their confidence in assessment (pp. 1-13). Grainger, Heck, and Carey (2018) conducted a similar study, in which they explored the impact of different ranges of annotated and unannotated exemplars. Results from this study revealed that exemplars supported self-regulated learning and self-efficacy as students maintained that exemplars encouraged them to be active participants, take full ownership on their learning, monitor their progress, and set learning goals through using exemplars as benchmarks (pp. 1-8).

The role of exemplars in fostering learners' comprehension of quality and skills transferring in assessment tasks was studied by To and Carless (2015). The findings showed that peer discussion on exemplars and teacher's guidance play a crucial role in enhancing students' understanding of quality in their assignments and in increasing their critical awareness of the differences between exemplars and their answers in exams (pp. 1- 16).

The effect of combining exemplars with other forms of feedback was explored by Hendry and Jukic (2014) who compared the use of exemplars and marking guide against the use of exemplars, a marking guide, and teacher's explanation. In this study, students were given exemplars of two qualities high and poor. Without being aware of this variation,

students were asked to allocate marks for the exemplars following the teachers' marking guide. Then, the teacher marked the same exemplars using the same marking guide, and he explained why he allocated a high or a low mark for them. After that, the researchers emailed an online questionnaire to the students in order to capture their perceptions towards marking exemplars and receiving teacher's explanation of the marking. The results of the online questionnaire showed that students expressed their appreciation to both exemplar marking and teacher's explanation, which enabled them to learn the logical structure of a good-exam answer (pp.1-9).

The research studies discussed above shed light on the impact of exemplar feedback on students' motivation, self-efficacy, self-regulation, and marks, and they investigated the ways exemplars should be implemented. Similarly, the current investigation aims at investigating attitudes towards the effectiveness of integrating exemplar feedback on enhancing students' affect, self-regulation, and achievement, and identifying the current practice of exemplar feedback. However, there has not been, to the researcher's current knowledge, any exploratory study with a large and diverse sample to investigate and compare both teachers' attitudes and their current practices of exemplar feedback and students' attitudes, from different levels, towards the use of exemplar feedback within the context of teaching English as a foreign language.

## **2. Statement of the Problem**

In the field of Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL), within the context of the University of Mohammed Seddik Benyahia, the difficulty of essay-based assessment tends to get higher as university students pass their second year in Licence university studies and across to their final fifth year of graduating in Master. Licence students, who are beginners in essay exams, need their teachers' guidance and preparation to what they expect before engaging in essay assessment. This aid is removed gradually, and by reaching their fourth

year in university studies, learners are supposed to become experts in writing essays and no subject is provided in teaching essays or preparing for essay-based assessment.

Teachers often provide both Licence and Master students with feedback after they finish their essay exams in form of marks accompanied by set of comments with little preparation to what they value in assessment tasks. In addition, students often focus more on how to negotiate better marks in following teachers' comments and they are not practically encouraged to spot their mistakes and learn from them to perform better in future assessment. Other students, especially those who get low marks, may blame their teachers for their failure. Teachers' assessment criteria are often misunderstood and teachers are criticised for being strict, subjective, and unfair; consequently, teachers and students fail to develop a sense of trust that the marks students receive in essay exams reflect their level.

### **3. Hypotheses of the Study**

The present study aims to test the hypothesis that if exemplar feedback were used, the students would develop better experiences in essay-based assessment, meaning that the suggestion of using exemplar feedback will be welcomed by both teachers and students.

A second hypothesis in study is based on supposition that less experienced students in university studies need exemplars more than the more experienced ones. Thus, it is hypothesized that the higher the level of the students is in the Department of English, the less they will perceive the importance of or the need for exemplar feedback about essay exams.

### **4. Research Questions**

Within the context of the Department of English, and targeting students of English from all levels as well as their teachers, the focus of this study is to answer the following questions:



- Do teachers supply students with exemplar feedback to prepare them for essay-based examinations?
- What are students' and teachers' attitudes towards the usefulness of exemplar feedback in overcoming the difficulties they face in essay exams?
- What would the impact of exemplars be on students' affect, self regulation and achievement?
- What is the current practice of exemplar feedback?
- How should exemplars be implemented to accommodate both teachers and students?
- Will the importance of exemplar feedback decrease as students gain more experience in studying English and undergoing essay-based assessment?

### **5. Aims of the Study**

The present study has a three-fold aim. First, it aims at investigating whether teachers and students at the Department of English, be they first-year students, second-year students, third-year students, master-one students, and master-two students, have the same attitudes towards the effectiveness of exemplar feedback in overcoming the difficulty of essay-based assessment. Second, it investigates the impact of exemplars on students' affect, self-regulation, and achievement. Third, it explores whether and how teachers apply exemplar feedback in preparing students for their own essay exams in the context of teaching and learning within the University of Mohamed Seddik Benyahia, Jijel.

### **6. Means of Research**

To check the research hypotheses advanced in the present study, two online questionnaires have been administered to 250 students from all levels at the Department of English and 18 teachers from the same institution. The two research instruments are intended to explore teachers' and students' attitudes and the teachers' current practices of using exemplar feedback as a tool for preparing students in essay-based assessment.

## **7. Structure of the Dissertation**

The current study is divided into two parts, a theoretical and a practical part. The Former comprises two chapters. The first chapter, entitled “Exemplar Feedback as an Integral Type of Feedback”, provides insights into exemplar feedback and supplies its definition, the steps teachers follow to design exemplars, and traces the emergence of exemplar feedback in education. Next, it explores related concepts to the term and illustrates approaches to using exemplar feedback. The second chapter, “entitled essay-based assessment” explores exams based on essays by, first, defining assessment and its major types and examining the historical background of assessment and approaches to language testing, then, defining essays and their patterns of organization. Next, the discussion turns to the criteria for assessing essays with an intention to concentrate on the crucial role that they play in language testing and specifying their advantages and disadvantages. The practical part of the study covers the methodology followed in investigating the variables, describes the research instruments, then provides the analysis, and discussion of the results obtained. A general conclusion is provided to summarise the major elements covered in the theoretical part and the practical part and highlight limitations, recommendations, and suggestions for further research.

# **Chapter One: Exemplar Feedback as an Integral Type of Feedback**

## Introduction

### 1.1. Definition of Exemplar Feedback

### 1.2. Steps for Creating Exemplars

#### 1.2.1. Drafting the Exemplars

#### 1.2.2. Selecting Sufficient Exemplars

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#### 1.4.1. Feedback

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## Conclusion

## **Chapter One: Exemplar Feedback as an Integral Type of Feedback**

### **Introduction**

Achieving success in assessment might be a difficult task for learners especially when assessment standards and criteria are implicit. In order to facilitate this process for them, educators have introduced exemplar feedback which makes standards and criteria of assessment explicit to learners and seeks to raise their awareness of what is expected from them to achieve in an assessment task.

The present chapter explores various elements underlying exemplar feedback. First, it presents some key definitions of exemplar feedback, steps for creating exemplars, and explores the emergence of exemplar feedback in education. It, then, sheds light on exemplars and related concepts. Last, it presents approaches to exemplar-feedback use.

### **1.1. Definition of Exemplar Feedback**

Exemplars are generally defined as concrete samples of former students' work chosen to illustrate particular standards of assessment (Newlyn, 2013, p. 26; Orsmond, Merry & Reiling, 2002, pp. 309-321; Sadler, 1987, pp. 200-201). They are a type of feedback that seeks to facilitate and enhance the learning and the teaching processes, and they serve as a tool that guides the learners to what teachers expect in an assessment task. Newlyn (2017) expanded this definition by adding that teachers can, also, produce exemplars based on what they observe in their students' products (p. 74).

Exemplars are of different types; they range from poor to high quality, and they can be annotated or not annotated, depending on including written description to show how an exemplar meets specific criteria of assessment. This is clearly stated by Newlyn (2013) as follows:

Exemplars may indicate a grade range, as is typical at most institutions, such as fail, pass, credit, distinction and high distinction, and they may be annotated so as to indicate how the exemplar satisfies the stated criteria for assessment or they may simply be presented as they were submitted for assessment by the former student (p.26).

In the same vein, Carless and Chan (2016) argued that exemplars simplify “dimensions of quality” (p. 1) to students and enable them to develop their judgments about academic standards (p.11).

As regards their function, Handley and Williams (2011) indicated that exemplars are “engaging for instrumental as well as developmental reasons” (p. 98). They are instrumental in that they serve as an aid that shows learners how to enhance their performance and developmental in that they enable learners to elaborate their understanding of particular knowledge, skill, and content in a given subject matter (p. 98).

An exemplar needs to be accompanied by “a summary judgment of its quality together with an explanatory description” (Sadler, 2009, p. 821). This procedure is similar to annotating exemplars, but in summary judgment, teachers provide students with their criteria of assessment in a spoken form. Nevertheless, summary judgment and annotations are crucial for effective exemplar-feedback use. When teachers explain particular criteria and assessment standards found in the exemplars, they enlarge learners’ knowledge of what they value in an assessment task.

In the light of the above-mentioned definitions, exemplars can be simply defined as existing pieces of students’ work or samples produced by the teachers to exemplify quality and serve as a vehicle that promotes learning. They aim to broaden learners' understanding of what they should accomplish to succeed in an assessment task.

## **1.2.Steps for Creating Exemplars**

The process of selecting appropriate exemplars to be used as feedback undergoes series of steps. Teachers should go through drafting the exemplars, selecting a sufficient number of exemplars, and revising the exemplars.

### **1.2.1. *Drafting the Exemplars***

Before drafting any exemplar, teachers should, first, ask for the consent of students to use their work anonymously (Price, 2018, p. 45). After having the permission, exemplars are formed from former students' written works or it can be produced by teachers based on what they notice in their students' products (Newlyn, 2017, p. 74).

In drafting exemplars, teachers should preferably annotate them by writing a series of explicit comments in order to explain whether or not an exemplar meets criteria and standards of assessment and to clarify how the allocated marks resulted from the application of those criteria (Newlyn 2017, p.74; Newlyn & Spencer, 2010, p. 68).

In addition to annotating the exemplars, teachers should select exemplars of different qualities, representing high, average, and low quality so as to enable learners to comprehend and grasp the gaps among the exemplars and to distinguish the best ways to fulfil an assignment. Furthermore, some learners may find difficulties in making inferences on the assessment criteria embedded in the exemplars; therefore, teachers should follow four ways in order to facilitate this process for them and remove any ambiguity that can occur. Teachers should:

- Vary the length of exemplars at the level of sentence, paragraph, or essay.
- Underline or highlight important sentences in an exemplar.
- Take into account the level of the learners, and reformulate difficult sentences or words beyond their level and revise words and phrases that may lead to confusion and hinder students' understanding.

- Signal essential ideas with key words or symbols and write definitions in the margin (Chong, 2018, p. 13).

In practice, this can be illustrated by the example of showing students how to write a good argumentative essay. The teacher can bring three annotated exemplars or more ranging from high to poor quality. When students analyze the exemplars, they recognize alone or with the help of their teachers what makes an exemplar poor, average or a high in quality.

### ***1.2.2. Selecting Sufficient Exemplars***

Teachers should select numerous exemplars to confirm that learners can have access to efficient standards and criteria of assessment because few exemplars cannot represent all the criteria in a subject matter at the same level. Few exemplars, however, can be sufficient providing that teachers add annotations to them to make different criteria and assessment standards explicit to learners (Sadler, 1987, pp.200-207). Teachers should, then, present to learners a minimum of three to five exemplars with different ranges of quality (high, average, and low) to foster their awareness and understanding of what makes a correct or an appropriate exam answer.

### ***1.2.3. Revising the Exemplars***

Since exemplars are concrete samples of previous students' work, they may contain cultural elements such as fashion, lifestyle, and technology. As a result, exemplars may go out of date as time passes and may not be suitable to be used with different groups of learners. To overcome this issue, an exemplar should be "revised periodically" and updated for it to fulfil its essential goal which is to reflect particular standards of quality for learners (Sadler, 1987, p. 200).

### **1.3. Emergence of Exemplar Feedback in Education**

In the 1990s and the 2000s, researchers in higher education developed an interest in studying exemplar feedback provided to students. For instance, a National Student Survey was conducted to investigate students' experiences in higher education institutes in the United Kingdom back in 2007 and revealed that students were mostly displeased with feedback more than any other learning aspects. The practice of feedback was based on grades and comments that aimed to enable learners to learn from their mistakes and avoid making them in future assessment tasks. However, some students failed to learn from feedback and needed further explanation from their teachers. For this reason, scholars attempted to find ways to enhance learners' ability to engage and learn more from feedback (Hounsell, 2008, pp.1-7).

Recently, scholars have raised the need for engaging learners with exemplar feedback with the aim to maximize their understanding of assessment criteria and standards through discussing why and how these criteria are implemented and placing feedback before students tackle assessment tasks (Hounsell, 2008, pp. 1-7; Hendry, n.d, pp. 1-9; Sadler, 1987, pp. 200-201).

### **1.4. Exemplars and Related Concepts**

Feedback, model answers, deep learning, surface learning, tutorials, and practice tests are major concepts that have a close relation to exemplar feedback. Hence, it is crucial to discuss the major differences and similarities between them and exemplar feedback.

#### **1.4.1. Feedback**

Feedback is a powerful tool that enhances the learning process. Due to its centrality in exemplar feedback, its meaning as well as the criteria that make it effective require attention since they apply in some respects to exemplar feedback.



**1.4.1.1. Definition of Feedback.** Feedback is any information provided by an agent (e.g. a teacher, peer, book, parent, self, or experience) to a learner in order to improve his understanding or performance in a given subject matter (Hattie & Timperley, 2007, p. 81). Ramaprasad (1983, pp. 4-5) argued that feedback shows gaps in one's learning and illustrates ways to alter and refine those weaknesses. If delivered effectively, feedback can significantly improve learning processes and outcomes (Wiggins, 2012).

One comprehensive description of the purposes which feedback serves was provided by Price et al. (2010) who identified five major purposes which are: correction, reinforcement, forensic diagnosis, benchmarking and longitudinal development.

- Corrective purpose of feedback is the centre of the traditional definition of feedback. Thereby, the teacher's role is to correct learners' utterances, implicitly or explicitly.
- Reinforcement purpose of feedback is introduced by behaviourists who regarded feedback as a powerful external stimulus that can be provided to learners. If learners' responses to feedback are favourable, they receive a reward. If not, they receive a punishment. Accordingly, feedback is regarded as a tool that generates wanted behaviours and excludes undesirable ones.
- Forensic diagnosis purpose of feedback aims at highlighting areas of ambiguity and enabling teachers to spot areas of strengths and weaknesses in students' learning.
- Benchmarking purpose of feedback clarifies gaps among what is taught, what is comprehended by learners, and what is expected from them to develop.
- Longitudinal development purpose of feedback aims at addressing skills, knowledge, and content learners need to develop in order to perform better in future tasks (pp. 278-279).

In short, feedback may focus on students' past, present, or future performances. It targets students' present performances by correcting their utterances or stimulating wanted behaviours. It examines both students' past and future performances through specifying gaps in their learning and what is expected for them to learn. Feedback, also, addresses future performances through illustrating what learners need to develop to enhance their achievement in future tasks.

Forensic diagnosis, benchmarking, and longitudinal development purposes of feedback are echoed by the present study in which feedback is centred on the use of exemplars with the purpose of clarifying assessment criteria for students, showing them areas they need to improve to meet the expectations of their teacher, and preparing them for future assessment.

**1.4.1.2. Effective Feedback.** Due to the prominent role of feedback in learning, scholars have tried to underline the significant criteria for effective feedback (Hattie & Timperley, 2007, pp.88-90; Nicole & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006, p. 205; Shute, 2008, p.158). Feedback should foster students' self-regulated learning, include two types of information which are: verification and elaboration, and answer three questions which are: where am I going? how am I going, and where to next?

According to Nicole and Macfarlane-Dick (2006, p. 205), good feedback is one that fosters learners' self-regulation of their learning. Self-regulated learners are the ones who are "metacognitively, motivationally, and behaviorally active participants in their own learning process" (Zimmerman, as cited in Zimmerman & Schunk, 1989, p. 4). In other words, self-regulated learners are active participants in their learning process; they devote their ideas, emotions and performances to achieve particular learning goals.

Seven criteria are listed for effective feedback to take place; feedback should:

- Exemplify the qualities of a good performance. For example, goals, criteria, expected standards.

- Encourage self- assessment.
  - Deliver rich information about learners' learning progress.
  - Support learners' active participation in learning by interacting with their peers and teachers.
  - Guarantee a comfortable learning atmosphere free from stress and anxiety.
  - Enable learners to distinguish gaps in their learning and ways to overcome them.
  - Provide information for teachers about the ways they can better their teaching
- (Nicole & Macfarlane-Dick 2006, p. 205).

Feedback provided to learners, according to the criteria above, should encourage them to be active learners who set learning goals and self-assess their progress in learning. Besides, it should boost their confidence, motivation and reduce any negative feelings they may have in their learning process.

Kulhavy and Stock (as cited in Shute, 2008) specified the information that needs to be included in feedback. According to them, it should include two types of information which are verification and elaboration. Verification is the act of checking the correctness of an answer. This process can take place in various ways; a teacher can simply comment on a piece of writing correct or incorrect or he can provide more informative verification that can be implicit or explicit. Elaboration refers to guidance and detailed description of what constitutes a correct answer to broaden learners' understanding of the learnt items (p. 158). For instance, it raises learners' attention to which answer is correct and which one is wrong. In this vein, elaboration can“(a) address the topic, (b) address the response, (c) discuss the particular error(s), (d) provide worked examples, or (e) give gentle guidance” (p. 158). Similarly, Finn, Thomas, and Rawson (2017) suggested the following ways to elaborate feedback which are: “explanations, follow up questions, location of the correct information in the text, or a combination of multiple types of information” (p. 1).

According to Hattie and Timperley (2007), feedback must answer three questions which are where am I going? How am I going? Where to next?

- Where am I going? Information provided to learners should be goal-oriented. In other words, feedback should serve a series of learning goals such as enhancing learners' understanding of certain qualities or experiences.
- How am I going? Effective feedback should provide learners with information about their current development and the processes they follow in their learning.
- Where to next? Effective feedback should prepare learners for future tasks through fostering their self-regulated learning, enhancing their understanding, and filling the gaps in their learning (pp. 88- 90).

The present study aims at answering Hattie and Timperley's three questions through using exemplars that contain goal-oriented information with the aim of enhancing students' performance in assessment and illustrating steps learners follow to reach better outcomes. They serve as a feed-forward strategy that presents the elements learners should continue doing or do differently in the next assignment or assessment. In this sense, feedback and exemplar feedback are similar in terms of their learning objectives. They aim to encourage learners' active participation in learning and to enable them to meet the expectations of their teachers. In short, exemplar feedback and feedback aim to show learners what they should follow to succeed in assessment tasks in a comfortable atmosphere.

#### **1.4.2. Model Answers**

A model answer is a sample crafted by the teachers to reflect the perfect answer learners should follow. Thus, it can be beyond their level of competence and difficult for them to reach (Newlyn, 2013, p. 26). It is similar to product approach to teaching writing where writing development is seen as a pure imitation of a model text produced by the teachers (Ghufron, 2016, p. 40). In other words, teachers provide learners with a model, and learners are expected

to copy that model and have it as a source for learning. However, imitation can lead to plagiarism, which is the process of taking others' work and referring to it as one's own (Handley & Williams, 2011, p. 98).

Like model answers, exemplars can, also, be produced by the teachers. However, unlike model answers, teachers produce exemplars in different ranges of quality (high, average, and poor) based on what they notice in their students' answers. Hence, a teacher's purpose of introducing exemplars to students is to show them gaps in each exemplar and to enable them to discover by themselves or with his help the best ways of answering in exams. Moreover, the use of exemplars presents less risks of plagiarism than model answers do since they ask students to elaborate their ideas on given topics and develop their critical thinking rather than simply mimicking the provided models.

### ***1.4.3. Surface Learning and Deep Learning***

With regard to its quality, learning can be divided into two types: deep learning and surface learning. First, deep learning is a learning that remains for a lifetime. It is a type of learning that learners acquire through understanding major concepts and linking these concepts to past and future learning. In addition, learners acquire a deep learning of learned items when they try to construct their knowledge through interacting with their peers and teachers. Second, surface learning is a type of learning that is easy to forget. Surface learners memorize concepts without fully understanding them; they are passive receivers of knowledge (Hermida, 2015, p. xix).

Exemplar feedback aims to foster students' deep learning of assessment criteria and encourages them to ask questions about how these criteria are expressed in the exemplars. Additionally, it focuses on fostering their understanding of given concepts.

#### **1.4.4. Tutorials**

Crowded classes do not enable teachers to cover all their students' needs because of the restricted time of the teaching/ learning sessions; as a consequence, low-achieving students struggle to comprehend taught materials and need more attention from their teachers. According to Ting (2013), one solution for this issue is the use of tutorials that serve as a method that focuses on teaching small classes. Scholars, in the field of higher education, acknowledged the role of tutorials in enhancing students' performances because they exemplify knowledge, content, and skills learners need to acquire to succeed. Tutorials support a student-centred teaching approach and have various benefits for learners. They foster their understanding of learnt items and show them how they can use their learned knowledge in different contexts (pp. 150-155).

Tutorials are similar to exemplars; teachers serve as tutors for learners who explain, exemplify, and illustrate particular content, skill, and knowledge learners need in order to perform better in different contexts. That is, they aim to foster learners' deep learning and understanding of given concepts.

#### **1.4.5. Practice Tests**

Practice tests train students for exams in order to reduce their test anxiety. Snooks (2005) identified processes for introducing a practice test to students. To begin with, learners need to answer the practice test individually. When they finish, they discuss with each other the questions and their answers. After that, the teacher shows the correct answers to the learners, and they are encouraged to ask questions about why an answer is correct or incorrect. Practice tests have major advantages. When learners take various practice tests, they become accustomed to different question formats which raise their achievement in future tests (pp. 110-112).

The steps of using practice tests are similar to the steps of exemplar-feedback use where learners analyse provided exemplars, discuss them with their peers and teachers, and ask questions related to the exemplars. Moreover, both practice tests and exemplars serve as training for learners to perform well in assessment. However, unlike exemplars, practice tests do not follow a systematic selection of different performances where students are introduced to samples of various qualities.

### **1.5. Approaches to Exemplar-Feedback Use**

In their search for suitable approaches to implement exemplar feedback effectively, scholars identified two major approaches, namely, dialogic use of exemplars and scaffolded use of exemplars. (Chong, 2008, pp. 6-13; Carless & Chan, 2016, pp.1-11; Carless, et al., 2018, pp. 2-6).

#### **1.5.1. *Dialogic Use of Exemplar Feedback***

Learning in the classroom is not a one-way process; it involves learners in a process of interaction with their peers and teachers to construct their knowledge. Carless (2016) advocated the use of the dialogic processes of exemplar feedback because they allow learners to “make sense of information from various sources and use it to enhance their work or learning strategies” (p. 1). Dialogue on exemplars is proven to be one of the effective ways of boosting learners’ achievement (Carless & Chan, 2016, pp.1-11).

Carless, et al. (2018) argued that a good exemplar dialogue should fulfil three major aims. First, it should guarantee full students’ participation where they can communicate about their perspectives towards the exemplars. Second, it should develop their critical thinking and awareness of how the abstract criteria are exemplified in the exemplars. Third, it should be helpful for them in future assessment (pp. 5-6).

In dialogic approach to exemplar-feedback use, teachers ask students to analyse exemplars prior to engaging them in exercises or activities. Hendry and Jukic (2014, p.1)

identified three major steps for dialogic analysis of exemplars. First, students analyse the provided exemplars and mark them using their teacher's marking guide. Second, they discuss with each other their ways of allocating marks to the exemplars. Finally, the teacher shows them the actual mark for each exemplar and explains why he or she allocated a higher or a lower mark for each one.

Chong (2018) described the best ways for designing dialogic tasks on exemplars by specifying how teachers should ask questions. He stated that teachers should ask students evaluative questions containing keywords from the assessment standards and point to the important features in the exemplars. They should avoid script dialogue that outlines the exact questions they should ask. Instead, they should follow a flexible approach where a student's answer may generate a given question by asking students open-ended questions that require a variety of answers such as, what are your comments about the vocabulary used in this exemplar? When answering, students should be encouraged to provide examples found in the exemplars to illustrate their understanding (p.13).

Dialogic analysis of exemplars is essential because it enriches learners' vocabulary, enables them to learn from other peers, and makes them avoid blindly imitating the exemplars as in the case of model answers, i.e. avoid plagiarism.

### ***1.5.2. Scaffolded Use of Exemplars***

Scaffolded use of exemplars is another approach to exemplar-feedback use where learners are scaffolded to distinguish different examples of quality (high, average, and low) without having an explicit explanation from their teachers. Rather, they have a major scaffold through the use of exemplars (Chong, 2008, p.6).

Scaffolding is "the role of teachers and others in supporting the learner's development and providing support structures to get to that next stage or level" (Raymond, 2000, p. 216). Accordingly, scaffolding is a teaching strategy which is used to support learners' mastery of



tasks, and it is a tool that moves learners from their actual developmental level to their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). ZPD is the difference between what learners can achieve individually and what they can achieve with the assistance of a more knowledgeable other (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86).

This teaching strategy is characterized by being temporary as teachers reduce their assistance gradually until the learners' ability to complete tasks individually increases (Raymond, 2000, pp. 169-201). In other words, at early stages of development, learners need full guidance from their teachers. Through time, they gain skill and expertise and they take more and more responsibility until they become independent and fully responsible for their learning.

In scaffolded use of exemplars, students analyse exemplars without the teacher's verbal explanation, i.e. implicitly. They, first, complete an exercise and interact with their teacher and peers. After that, they analyse exemplars and compare them to their answers with reference to assessment standards and criteria (Carless, et al., 2018, p. 2; Chong, 2008, p. 6). Hence, introducing exemplars after students tackle practice activities is a distinct feature of the scaffolded use of exemplar feedback.

Scaffolded use of exemplars has various benefits for learners. The risk of using exemplars as models to be copied is reduced because learners are involved in tackling exercises before analysing samples of previous students' work. Besides, it fosters learners' cognitive development and evaluative judgment through realising the similarities and differences between the exemplars and their answers. Moreover, learners receive a major scaffold from the exemplars themselves that explains gaps in their learning, and what they should do to surpass them. Scaffolded approach permits them to fully grasp task requirements through analysing exemplars with different dimensions of quality (Carless, et al., 2018, p. 6;

Chong, 2008, pp. 6-7). After having enough practice, the support learners receive is reduced gradually until they answer alone in their examinations.

### **Conclusion**

Exemplar feedback is a crucial element in foreign language learning and teaching. It is a type of feedback that is centred on providing learners with former students' papers (exam sheets) to exemplify particular standards and criteria of assessment in order to enable learners to learn more from feedback. In order for exemplars to be effective, they have to be carried out using a systematic procedure. Teachers should select sufficient exemplars in various qualities (high, average, and low) and add explanatory comments (annotations) to them so that they become accessible to students. Exemplar feedback is related to other constructs such as feedback, model answers, deep learning, tutorials, and practice tests in that it has the advantages of specifying the gaps in students' knowledge and training students to overcome them, clarifying what they should fulfil to succeed in assessment, and facilitating the learning/teaching process. However, it is more effective because it avoids problems of mimicking the presented models (plagiarism) and enables learners to meet the expectations of their teachers. In the process of discussing exemplars, teachers can choose to present exemplars before or after engaging students into tasks or exercises to prepare them for assessment.

## **Chapter Two: Essay-Based Assessment**

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## **Chapter Two: Essay-Based Assessment**

### **Introduction**

Essay-based assessment is a fundamental concept in language learning by means of which learners can display their comprehension and mastery of learnt items. Besides, information gained from it enables teachers to measure learners' knowledge, skills and even attitudes.

The current chapter starts by defining assessment, its major types, and the historical background of assessment and approaches to language testing. In addition, it discusses different definitions of essay and its major patterns of organization. Next, it presents common criteria for essay assessment and, finally, illustrates advantages and disadvantages of essay-based assessment.

### **2.1. Definition of Assessment**

In educational contexts, assessment is defined as “a formal attempt to determine students' status with respect to educational variables of interest (Popham, 2017, p.10). It is a process that engages learners in series of tasks such as tests, assignments and examinations in order to gather information about their progress and achievement in a subject matter (Sadler, 2005, p. 177). The areas that are assessed, according to Salvia, Ysseldyke, and Bolt (2010, p.4), are learners' academic, behavioural, physical competences, and gaps in their learning. Besides, the purposes of assessment include enhancing learners' achievement, improving instruction, programs, and services in higher education (Banta &Palomba 2015, p.1).

### **2.2.Types of Assessment**

Different scholars have distinguished three major dichotomies for language assessment which are informal versus formal assessment, formative versus summative assessment, and

norm-referenced versus criterion-referenced assessment. These categories vary from one another in terms of intention, purpose, and interpretation (Mihai, 2010, p. 26).

### ***2.2.1. Formal versus Informal Assessment***

With regard to its intention, assessment can take various forms; it can be a series of unplanned comments and responses or a set of systematic procedures designed to measure students' performances (Mihai, 2010). When assessment occurs spontaneously and unintentionally, it is informal assessment. For example, "an informal assessment takes place when a math teacher says, "Good job" to a student who provided the correct answer to a question such as "How much is 5 divided by 10?" (p. 27). Informal assessment is essential, but it does not add to students' final grades (pp. 26-27). However, formal assessment is a set of systematic as well as planned procedures and exercises that aim at quantifying students' achievement and their mastery of a desirable body of knowledge in numeral scores. Furthermore, this type of assessment is comprised of tests, quizzes, term papers, portfolios, and journals (Douglas, n.d, p.6; Mihai, 2010, p. 27). Formal assessment aims to measure students' performances and to test students' acquisition of knowledge.

### ***2.2.2. Formative versus Summative Assessment***

Formative assessment is an ongoing assessment which focuses on students' processes of learning rather than their end results (products). This type of assessment takes place during instruction in order to assist learners and boost their performances (Mihai, 2010, p.28). In other words, formative assessment illustrates learners' current knowledge, gaps in their learning, and the required adjustments that should be made for them to continue their growth in learning and to achieve defined learning objectives set by their teachers. Additionally, "self assessment, portfolios, conferencing, and diaries are usually formative assessment" (Douglas, n.d, p.6). Contrastingly, summative assessment focuses on the product of learning; it takes place at the end of a unit, course, semester, program, or school year in order to test students'

completion of given tasks and to measure their overall performance (Cheng & Fox, 2017, p.5). That is to say, it gives teachers a summary of what learners have learned at the end of instruction.

### ***2.2.3. Norm-Referenced versus Criterion-Referenced Assessment***

In a norm-referenced assessment, the scores of test takers are interpreted in relation to the score of a particular group or the norms. The norms are the mean (the average score), the median (the middle score), the mode (the most common score), the standard deviation (how varied and spread out the group scores are), and the percentile rank (an indication of how well a particular test taker has performed compared to other group members). Since the major purpose of norm-referenced assessment is to compare students' performance with another group of students, the data obtained from this type of assessment is incapable of spotting areas learners need to improve in order to score better in future tests. On the contrary, criterion-referenced assessment assesses learners in terms of how well they mastered a desired body of knowledge. Unlike norm-referenced assessment, the information obtained from criterion-referenced assessment aids the teachers in their decision-making on the current level of learners, and whether or not they need to work more on a particular subject matter to enhance their achievement. Criterion-referenced assessment should be specific; when teachers design a criterion-referenced assessment, they should identify the particular domain, content, and ability they want to test their learners in (Milhai, 2010, pp. 29-32).

### **2.3. Historical Overview of Assessment and Language Testing**

Historically, assessment in education has witnessed several changes and reforms. According to Malinowski (1993, p.6), traditional assessment attempted to measure quality in educational systems by specifying certain competencies learners should have at entry and exit levels. In addition, it was based on skill assessment and institutional assessment. Skill assessment involves measuring students' skills and knowledge in a given subject matter in

order to have a full understanding of their current level. Institutional assessment involves gathering quantitative data to measure the effectiveness of a given institution. Skill and institutional assessment provided educational personnel insights about learners' levels and the effectiveness of institutions, but the data obtained from them did not reflect day-to-day classroom teaching. Thus, "Assessment Forum" of the American Association of High Education urged scholars to introduce new methods and techniques to overcome this issue in assessment (as cited in Malinowski, 1993, pp.6-7). Educational assessment has started to focus more on the role of assessment in enhancing learning and engaging learners in the learning process rather than just measuring students' performance against a set of criteria and standards.

In the 1970s and early 1980s, two major approaches to language testing were introduced which are: discrete point and integrative approach to language testing. Later in the 1980s, another approach was added to the field of language testing which is communicative-language testing (Douglas, n.d., pp. 8-10).

Discrete point divides language competences (listening, speaking, reading, writing, phonology, and syntax) into sub-elements that can be tested in isolation (Douglas, n.d. p.8). That is to say, discrete point tests each language item separately. Testing language in isolation was criticized by Oller (1979) who argued that language is a whole that cannot be broken down into sub-elements. He further added that communicative competence requires integration and cannot be tested through lists of separate tests of grammar, vocabulary, and reading (as cited in Douglas, n.d, p.8).

As opposed to discrete point, integrative language testing approach has been introduced in order to test language competences in combination and integration. Examples of these tests are cloze tests and dictation. This language testing approach was criticized for testing language form and ignoring communicative-language skills. Another criticism was that tests,

in this approach, were decontextualized and lacked real life knowledge. In other words, they were artificial and did not reflect real world activities (Alduais, 2012, pp. 204-205).

By the advent of Dell Hymes' theory of communicative competence, which raised the idea that knowing a language should not be restricted to knowing its grammar, syntax and morphology, communicative language testing has been introduced. According to this approach, a test should focus on context (real world knowledge) and meaning. Additionally, it should measure learners' ability to use language for communicative purposes (Alduais, 2012, pp. 205-206).

## **2.4. Essay-Based Assessment**

Throughout the history of testing, language has been tested or assessed using different approaches; however, the prominent one is the use of essays. Essays can be written following different patterns of organization and assessed following major criteria that define the quality of students' grades (high, average, or low). The method of essay-based assessment has advantages and disadvantages on students' learning.

### **2.4.1. Definition of Essay**

An essay is an extended piece of writing that discusses a particular topic or subject; it consists of at least three body paragraphs (Oshima & Hogue, n.d, p. 56; Zemach & Rumisek, n.d, p. 56). As stated by Abrams, an essay is "Any short composition in prose that undertakes to discuss a matter, express a point of view, or persuade us to accept a thesis on any subject" (as cited in Mackenzie, 2007, p.6). In addition, Fawcett (n.d) compared essays to a group of paragraphs "about one subject" and that, "In many ways, an essay is like a paragraph in longer, fuller form. Both have an introduction, a body, and a conclusion. Both explain one main or controlling idea with details, facts, and example" (p. 183).



An introduction to an essay is, also, commonly referred to as an introductory paragraph. It attracts the reader's attention to the topic of the essay. It contains a thesis statement that tells the reader about the main subject or idea of the essay. The thesis statement is comprised of subtopics that should be discussed in each body paragraph, and it usually comes at the end of the introduction (Fawcett, n.d, p. 184; Oshima & Hoguen, n.d, pp. 56-57; Zemach & Rumisek, n.d, pp. 56).

The body paragraphs of the essay support the thesis statement. Each body paragraph starts with a topic sentence that reflects a subtopic that is mentioned in the thesis statement followed by supporting sentences that elaborate the topic sentence through the use of suitable examples. It ends by a concluding sentence that summarizes the ideas in the paragraph. Therefore, the number of body paragraphs depends on the number of subdivisions (subtopics) in the thesis statement (Oshima & Hogue, n.d, p.64; Zemach & Rumisek, n.d, p. 56).

The conclusion is the last paragraph in the essay that illustrates its essential idea through summarizing the main body of the essay or restating the thesis statement (Oshima & Hogue, n.d). It serves three major purposes. First, it shows the end of the essay. Second, it refreshes the readers' mind about the main elements in the essay. Third, it enables the writer to leave a final impression on the reader by suggesting results, solutions, recommending, or urging for a change in action (p.72).

#### ***2.4.2. Patterns of Essay Development***

An essay can be organized following various patterns of essay development which are exemplification, narration, description, process, cause and effect, comparison and contrast, classification, and argument. These patterns of essay development are crucial for organizing essays.

**2.4.2.1. Exemplification.** An exemplification essay is referred to as an illustration essay. It provides specific examples in order to clarify and explain general statements and to support the purpose of the essay (Kirszner& Mandell, 2009, p. 187). Examples can be “facts, expert testimony, and personal experience” (Sims, 2012, p. 237). Moreover, it starts by an introduction that is composed of general statements that clarify the major purpose of the essay and a thesis statement that shows what the writer wants to illustrate through the examples, the goals behind stating them, and the message he or she wants to convey (pp. 238- 240). This essay can be organized around a single example or several related examples that support the thesis statement.

**2.4.2.2. Narration.** A narrative essay recalls historical events from the past and the present and tells a personal or fictional story to express feelings or experiences. These can be expressed in a chronological order; however, if the writer wants to draw the reader’s attention, he or she can start from the end of the story or event until he or she gradually moves to the beginning of the narration. A writer may organize his or her essay around one event or several events (Kirszner& Mandell, 2009, pp. 192-194; Sims, 2012, pp. 127-129).

**2.4.2.3. Description.** A descriptive essay provides a clear and lively description of a person, place, or object using the five senses, be it sight, sound, touch, smell, or taste. In this pattern of organization, the introductory paragraph provides two pieces of information which are background information and a thesis statement that introduces what the writer wants to describe in the main body. Moreover, each body paragraph may focus on one feature or different features of the subject being described. Three options can be followed to organized descriptive essays. A writer can choose to describe a subject from the least important features to the most important ones; he or she can describe an object from the top to the bottom. They can describe a subject from far to near (Kirszner & Mandell, 2009, pp. 197-199; Sims, 2012, pp. 151- 154).

**2.4.2.4. Process.** A process essay, also, called how-to essay, clarifies the processes and steps on how to achieve something. It can explain a process or give instructions (Kirszner& Mandell, 2009, p. 204). That is to say, a process essay can serve two main purposes; it can aim at making others understand the steps that need to be followed to accomplish a goal or providing instructions that enable others to perform a particular task.

**2.4.2.5. Cause and Effect.** A cause/ effect essay is an essay that discusses the causes of something (the reasons), the effects of something (the results), or both cause and effects. It can be structured using a block organization or a chain organization (Oshima& Hogue, n.d).

In a block organization, the essay is divided into two blocks. One block is for the causes in one, two, or three paragraphs depending on the number of causes, and another block is for the effects in one or two paragraphs depending on the number of effects. These two blocks, i.e. causes and effects, are separated by a short sentence called transition phrase which summarizes the first block of the essay (the causes) and introduces the second block (the effects). Essays that discuss only causes or only effects may have a transition phrase that separates different kinds of cause or effects (p.95).

In a chain organization, causes and effect are related to each other in a chain “one event causes a second event which in turn causes a third event which in turn causes a fourth event, and so on” (p.98). In other words, causes and effects are related to each other. A cause leads to an effect; this effect, in turn, becomes a cause that leads to another effect.

#### **2.4.2.6. Comparison and Contrast**

A Comparison and contrast essay explains the similarities and differences between two items. Two patterns can be followed to organize comparison and contrast essays which are: point-by-point organization and subject-by-subject organization. Point-by-point organization takes place when a writer compares a feature of two subjects in a paragraph then another feature of the two subjects in another paragraph. Subject-by-subject takes place when a writer

compares two subjects in different paragraphs. That is, he or she discusses features of subject one in a paragraph. After that, he or she covers features of subject two in another paragraph (Kirszner& Mandell, 2009, pp. 216- 217).

**2.4.2.7. Classification.** A Classification essay is an essay that divides a subject into its subparts and arranges them into categories. Each paragraph discusses a given category in details, and a writer may write one category in each paragraph or major categories in separate paragraphs (Kirszner& Mandell, 2009, p. 222; Sims, 2012, p. 194).

**2.4.2.8. Argumentative.** An argumentative essay expresses an argument that the writer wants to present. He or she can show his agreement or disagreement with an issue backing up his or her claim with examples, evidence such as facts and statistics. Unlike the previous mentioned patterns of essay development, the writer discusses his or her arguments as well as the other side's arguments and refutes them using strong evidence and examples. Similar to the cause and effect essay, the argumentative essay is organized by either a block pattern or a point-by-point organization.

In block organization, the essay is divided into two blocks. In the first block, the writer introduces the opponents' arguments and refutes them using his or her arguments. This block can have two or more paragraphs depending on the number of the opponents' arguments. In the second block, the writer writes his or her arguments and supports them with clear evidence. The order of the blocks can be reversed. For instance, a writer may start by his or her arguments in the first block, then, writes the other side's arguments and refutes them in the second block.

In point-by-point organization, the writer starts by the other side's arguments and refutes them in a paragraph, then he or she starts a new paragraph with the other side's arguments and refutes them in a second paragraph and so on (Sims, 2012, p.293).

### **2.4.3. *Criteria for Writing a Good Essay***

Essay writers should respect set of criteria which are: unity, coherence, clarity, word choice, organization, and accuracy. The more they respect these criteria of assessment, the better end product will be.

**2.4.3.1. Unity and Coherence.** Unity and coherence are essential features of writing a good essay. First, unity occurs when a writer writes about one subject in the introductory paragraph, main body, and conclusion. Second, coherence is the use of cohesive devices which are words and phrases that link sentences, paragraphs, ideas to one another in the essay (Zemach & Rumisek, n.d, p. 78). Cohesive devices are grammatical and lexical (Paltridge, 2006).

Grammatical cohesive devices are reference, conjunctions, substitution, and ellipsis. Reference is the process of identifying an item from within the text or outside the text. The main reference patterns are anaphoric, cataphoric, exophoric, and homophoric. Anaphoric reference is where the identity of an item can be identified through referring back to another word or phrase used earlier in a text. Cataphoric reference illustrates an item which refers forward to another word or phrase which is expressed later in the text. Exophoric reference interprets an item being referred to by looking to the context where the item occurred. Homophoric reference looks at the cultural knowledge to explain the item being referred to. Conjunctions are words or phrases that are used to link sentences or phrases in an essay. They can be classified into additive, adversative, causal and temporal conjunctions. Additives introduce new information; adversatives state contrast; causatives express causes and effects, and temporal conjunctions classify and sequence events. Substitution refers to replacing a noun, a verb, or a clause with another language form. Ellipsis is the omission of a noun, noun group, or a clause, which can be retrieved by referring back to another word or phrase used before in the text (pp.129-143).

Lexical cohesive devices are repetition, synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy, meronymy, and collocation. Repetition refers to repeating an item in the text; it can be influenced by tense, number, or words with the same root. Synonymy is the use of words that have the same meaning while antonymy is using contrast words. Hyponymy is the use of lexical items that have general-specific relationship while meronymy refers to classes of lexical items that have a whole-to-part relationship with one another. Collocation refers to words that are habitually combined together (pp.133-137).

**2.4.3.2. Clarity.** An essay should be precise, concise, and clear by avoiding ambiguous words that can have more than one meaning, using delicate language, avoiding too much repetition that can cause boredom to the reader and using pronouns when the antecedent is clear (Starkey,2004, pp, 11- 18). That is to say, a writer should not leave any doubt to the reader and make his essay comprehensible.

**2.4.3.3. Word Choice.** According to Starkey (2004) writers should carefully select their words to express their intended meaning. They need to be aware of the literal meaning and the figurative meaning of words. The literal meaning of a word is the way words are explained in the dictionary while the figurative meaning of words refers to the word and its hidden or metaphorical meaning; it can carry a cultural meaning and its faulty use can upset and offend the reader (pp. 21-22). Additionally, the writer should use a formal language and avoid using slangs and cliché. The former is an informal type of language used by a particular group of people in speech. The latter is expressions that are overused to the point where they lost their original meaning (p.32).

**2.4.3.4. Organization.** An essay is a group of paragraphs that cover one main idea. As it has been explained in the present chapter, each type of essay is organized following a specific pattern of organization that should be respected by writers. They should begin their essays

with an introduction that contains a thesis statement which lists the subtopics that need to be explained in each body paragraph and end their essays with a conclusion that restates the thesis statement or summarizes the major idea of the essay.

**2.4.3.5. Accuracy.** Accuracy is the use of a correct language system. A writer should respect the grammatical rules of the language he or she is writing in so that he or she writes an essay that is pleasant to read. These rules are the correct use of tenses, subject-verb agreement, punctuation, articles, and spelling (Van Geyte, 2013, pp. 50-59).

Summarizing the criteria of good essays, mentioned above, Cambridge English (2016) identified a scale for assessing essays ranging from 0 to 5, where 0 is the lowest mark and 5 is the highest mark as illustrated by Table 2.1 below:

**Table 2.1**

A scale for assessing essays (Cambridge English, 2016, p.2)

	<b>Content</b>	<b>Communicative Achievement</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Language</b>
<b>5</b>	All content is relevant to the task. Target reader is fully informed.	Uses the conversations of the communicative task effectively to hold the target reader's attention and communicates straightforward and complex ideas, as appropriate.	Text is well-organized and coherent, using a variety of cohesive devices and organizational patterns to generally good effect.	Uses a range of vocabulary, including less common lexis, appropriately. Uses a range of simple and complex grammatical forms with control and flexibility. Occasional errors may be present but do not impede communication.

<b>4</b>	<i>Performance shares features of Bands 3 and 5.</i>			
<b>3</b>	Minor irrelevances and/or omissions may be present. Target reader is on the whole informed.	Uses the conversation of the communicative task to hold the target reader's attention and communicate straightforward ideas.	Text is generally well organised and coherent, using a variety of linking words and cohesive devices.	Uses a range of everyday vocabulary appropriately, with occasional inappropriate use of less common lexis. Uses a range of simple and some complex grammatical forms with a good degree of control. Errors do not impede communication.
<b>2</b>	<i>Performance shares features of Bands 1 and 3.</i>			
<b>1</b>	Irrelevances and misinterpretations of task may be present. Target reader is minimally informed.	Uses the conventions of the communicative task in generally appropriate ways to communicate straightforward ideas.	Text connected and coherent, using basic linking words and a limited number of cohesive devices.	Uses everyday vocabulary generally appropriately, while occasionally overusing certain lexis. Uses simple grammatical forms with a good degree of control. While errors are noticeable, meaning can be determined.



<b>0</b>	Content is totally irrelevant.  Target reader is not informed.	<i>Performance below Band 1.</i>		

Following the criteria above, a student can have a 5 out of 5 by taking into account the readers, writing an essay that is relevant to the question, developing interesting ideas that capture readers' attention, organizing the essay effectively, and using a sophisticated language. A student can have a 3 out 5 when he/she misinterprets the essay question, writes straightforward ideas, uses basic cohesive devices, and writes in a simple language with some complex grammatical structures. A student can have 1 out 5 when he or she writes irrelevant ideas in his or her essay and uses a basic language.

#### **2.4.4. Advantages of Essay-Based Assessment**

Essay-based assessment has various advantages. Tuckman (1993) specified three major advantages of essay tests; essay tests measure students' higher cognitive processes, they are valid, and they have positive side effects.

First, essay tests measure students' higher cognitive processes which are analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. Answering in essay test requires learners to apply, analyse, synthesize, and evaluate their learned knowledge as they need to combine everything they have learned to construct an essay. These higher mental abilities cannot be expressed through short tests such as multiple-choices test that aim to measure students' ability to name, identify, and describe particular items. However, not all essay tests can successfully measure students' higher mental abilities because some of them aim to measure students' ability to recall learned items only, and they can be substituted by short-answer items.

Second, essay tests are valid because they measure an authentic and a real performance of students rather than a check mark of their performances. In addition, they provide reliable information for teachers on students' grasp of taught items and their ability to demonstrate their knowledge in an essay.

Third, essay tests have positive side effects. Answering an essay test develops students' ability to think, organize their ideas, and write them in an essay. This helps learners to develop their ability to construct high-quality answers and to develop their creativity to add new things to their writing unlike short-answer items that only require learners to reproduce memorized knowledge (pp. 21-22).

#### ***2.4.5. Disadvantages of Essay-Based Assessment***

Tuckman (1993) specified three major disadvantages of essay tests. According to him, essay tests take time to be corrected, they are difficult to score reliably, and students' individual abilities affect their essay answer

First, essay tests take time and effort for teachers to correct. Students' responses to essay tests can be lengthy and disorganized which make it difficult for teachers to read and evaluate. However, short-item answers such as multiple-choice questions are easier for teachers to assess because learners are asked to select the correct answers only.

Second, it is difficult to score essays reliably. According to Noyes, Vernon, and Millican, (as cited in Tuckman,1993), assessors often allocate marks differently for the same essay responses especially when essay question gives freedom for student to answer. Teachers, in different occasions, can allocate different marks for the same essay, and different teachers can allocate different marks for the same essay. Hence, scores that teachers give to essays might not reflect the actual quality of the essay.

Third, students' responses are based on other factors other than their ability to display their mastery of knowledge. Students' abilities to write essays affect the quality of their essay

responses. Some students are slower than other students in organizing their thoughts; some students take more time to answer than others and may not finish writing their essays in the defined time frame of the exam. As a result, they may have a lower mark not because they could not display their knowledge, but because they could not answer within the time frame of the exams (pp.22-24).

### **Conclusion**

Assessment is essential in the teaching and the learning processes as it provides information to teachers about learners' level of performance. Assessment can take place during or after instruction. It can be a series of planned or unplanned procedures. It can aim to compare students' performances with another group of students or to measure how well they have mastered learned knowledge. One way of measuring students' knowledge is by asking them to write essays which are a group of paragraphs (introduction, main body, and conclusion) that cover a main idea. An essay can be organized following major patterns of essay development which are exemplification, narration, description, process, cause and effect, comparison and contrast, classification, and argumentation. When writing an essay, students should focus on unity, coherence and accuracy of their essays, meaning that they should select their words and organize their essay carefully. Essays have the advantage of being a valid assessment tool and can develop students' higher mental abilities.

## **Chapter Three: Field Work**

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## **Chapter Three: Field Work**

### **Introduction**

The present chapter presents the practical part of the study which has a two-fold aim. First, it aims at investigating whether all teachers, first-year students, second-year students, third-year students, master-one students, and master-two students at the Department of English have the same attitude towards the effectiveness of exemplar feedback in essay-based assessment. Second, it explores whether teachers at the Department of English apply exemplar feedback in preparing students for their own essay exams. This chapter covers the research methodology followed in data collection beginning with a description of the population and the sample, and the questionnaires administrated to the subjects. It, next, provides analysis and interpretation of the data obtained to answer the research questions and to test the hypothesis posed in the research proposal of this study.

### **3.1. The Data Collection Procedure**

Two-online questionnaires were administrated to samples of students and teachers to capture their attitudes towards the use of exemplar feedback and its current practice in the context of teaching and learning at the University of Mohammed Seddik Benyahia. The student questionnaire was handed to 250 students of English from all levels, in which 50 students were selected from each of the five levels (L1, L2, L3, M1, and M2) while the teacher questionnaire was answered by 18 teachers in the Department of English.

### **3.2. Population and Sampling**

The present study is concerned with investigating the effectiveness of exemplar feedback and its current practice. It was conducted in the second semester of the academic year 2019/2020 within the Algerian context of Teaching English as Foreign Language (TEFL) at the University of Mohammed Seddik Benyahia, Jijel. The population of the study is made

up of all students of English and all teachers at the Department of English language. 18 permanent teachers out of the population of 30 teachers at the Department of English constitute the sample of the study; they have been selected on the basis of immediate convenience sampling because they volunteered to answer the online questionnaire. 250 students out of 1107 were chosen to take part in this study, representing over one fourth of the whole population. 50 students were retained from each level to provide for stratified sampling and ensure equal representation for each level.

### **3.3. The Students Questionnaire**

#### ***3.3.1. Description and Administration of Students Questionnaire***

The student questionnaire is composed of twenty questions which are arranged in four sections. Section one is entitled “General Information”. Section two is entitled “Essay-Based Assessment”. Section three is entitled “Current Practice of Exemplar Feedback” while section four is entitled “Attitudes towards Exemplar Feedback”.

The first section gathers general information about the students. It consists of one question (Q1) that aims at identifying student’ level whether they are first-year students, second-year students, third-year students, master-one students, or master-two students.

The second section collects insights about the students’ awareness of assessment criteria of essay-based assessment and the problems they encounter in essay exams. It is a combination of eight questions (Q2 to Q9). In Q2 and Q3, students are asked to rate their knowledge of assessment criteria of essays and to identify the frequency of having essay-based assessment. In Q4, students are asked to rate the difficulty of answering in an essay exam. Q5 allows students to express their satisfaction or unsatisfaction with the marks they receive on their essays in exams and explain the reasons for it. Q6 requests students to select type (s) of essays that are difficult for them to write in the exams. Q7 seeks to discover

whether students focus more on content, focus more on form, or focus both on content and form when they write an essay in exams. Q8 and Q9 demand from students to rank a set of problems they face in essay-based assessment from most difficult to least difficult, and they give them the freedom to mention other problem (s) they face when they have exams based on essays.

The third section investigates current practice of exemplar feedback and whether it is applied by teachers in the context of learning at the Department of English within the University of Mohamed Seddik Benyahia, Jijel. It contains five questions (Q10 to Q14). Q10 examines if teachers provide feedback to students before exams, after exams, or both before and after exams. In Q11, students are asked to quantify the number of teachers who usually supply them with exemplar feedback. A description comes after Q11 in order to raise students' awareness that if their answer is none to Q11, they can skip Q12 to Q14. The latter explore how teachers apply and introduce exemplars to students to prepare them for their own exams where Q12 intends to explore the ways teachers follow to adapt and annotate exemplars so that they can be tailored to the students' level of competence, and Q13 and Q14 identify the number and the quality of exemplars that are usually introduced to students before their essay exams.

The fourth section seeks to collect data about students' attitudes towards exemplar feedback. It comprises six questions (Q15 to Q20). In Q15, students are asked about whether they prefer to receive feedback before or after the exams. Q16 to Q20 aim to explore students' attitudes towards the usefulness of exemplars and their impact on their affect and achievement. Q16 and Q17 seek to identify whether analysing exemplars that explain what teachers expect in assessment can make answering in the exams easier for students, and whether they consider it useful to be supplied with their past exam copies; whatever their answer is, students are asked to support it with justification. Q18 aims to find out the effects

of knowing the teacher's assessment criteria and realizing that teachers have assessed their previous students fairly on motivating students to study, reducing their anxiety, and increasing their self-efficacy. Q19 aims to test the ability of exemplar feedback in enhancing students' achievement and self-regulation. In Q20, students are asked to select their preferable approach to exemplar-feedback use be it dialogic approach or scaffolded one.

### 3.3.2. Analysis of Students Questionnaire

#### Section One: General Information

**Q1. Level of students. Options: a)First year licence (L1)b)Second year licence (L2)  
c)Third year licence (L3) d)Master one (M1) e) Master two (M2)**

The first 50 students from each level, Licence year one, Licence-year two, Licence-year three, Master-year one and Master-year two, who answered the online questionnaire are selected to be part of this study. This ensures equal representation for each level.

#### Section Two: Essay-Based Assessment

**Q2. Rating knowledge of assessment criteria of essays. Options: a) Poor b) Fair c) Good  
d) Very Good e) Excellent**

**Table 3.1**

*Students' Awareness of the Assessment Criteria of Essays*

Options	L1		L2		L3		M1		M2		Total	
	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	(N)	(%)
<b>a</b>	8	16	6	12	4	8	2	4	1	2	<b>21</b>	<b>8.4</b>
<b>b</b>	16	32	11	22	20	40	16	32	13	26	<b>76</b>	<b>30.4</b>
<b>c</b>	23	46	29	58	24	48	26	52	31	62	<b>133</b>	<b>53.2</b>
<b>d</b>	3	6	4	8	2	4	5	12	5	10	<b>19</b>	<b>7.6</b>
<b>e</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	<b>1</b>	<b>0.4</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>100</b>



Students from the five levels (L1, L2, L3, M1, and M2) seem to have the same opinions about their awareness of assessment criteria of essays in that more than half of them (53.2%) rated their awareness as good, and almost a third of them (30.4%) qualified their awareness as fair with a slight increase in awareness in favour of Master students over Licence students (L1: 80%, L2:84%, L3:92%, and 98% for both M1 and M2). Few students (8.4%) have a poor knowledge of such criteria. On the other hand, few students rated their knowledge of assessment criteria as very good (7.6%) or excellent (0.4%).

**Q3. The frequency of having essays in students' exams. Options: a) Never b) Rarely c) Sometimes d) Often e) Always**

**Table 3.2**

*The Frequency of Undergoing Essay-Based Assessment*

Options	L1		L2		L3		M1		M2		Total	
	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	(N)	(%)
<b>a</b>	8	16	5	10	1	2	0	0	0	0	<b>14</b>	<b>5.6</b>
<b>b</b>	13	26	13	26	4	8	1	2	0	0	<b>31</b>	<b>12.4</b>
<b>c</b>	24	48	19	38	15	30	2	4	2	4	<b>62</b>	<b>24.8</b>
<b>d</b>	5	10	7	14	22	44	23	46	17	34	<b>74</b>	<b>29.6</b>
<b>e</b>	0	0	6	16	8	16	24	48	31	62	<b>69</b>	<b>27.6</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>100</b>

For all the students, essays seem to be ever-present in assessment as the overall percentage of students who stated that they have them regularly (sometimes, often, and always) is estimated at 82%. Assessment seems to be made exclusively on the basis of essays in M2 (100%), M1 (98%) and L3 (90%); essays are less and less used towards the beginning levels as 42% of L1 and 36% of L2 claimed that they have almost never or never had essay-based assessment.

**Q4. Rating the difficulty of answering in an essay exam. Likert scale ranging from 1 (Very Easy) to 5 (Very Difficult)**

**Table 3.3**

*Rating the Difficulty of Essay-Based Assessment*

Options	L1		L2		L3		M1		M2		Total	
	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	(N)	(%)
<b>1</b>	3	6	5	10	1	2	2	4	1	2	<b>12</b>	<b>4.8</b>
<b>2</b>	8	16	5	10	9	18	7	14	8	16	<b>37</b>	<b>14.8</b>
<b>3</b>	31	62	32	64	26	52	26	52	34	68	<b>149</b>	<b>50.6</b>
<b>4</b>	5	10	7	14	11	22	14	28	7	14	<b>44</b>	<b>17.6</b>
<b>5</b>	3	6	1	2	3	6	1	2	0	0	<b>8</b>	<b>3.2</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>100</b>

The majority of students from all levels considered essay exams of average difficulty (50.6%). However, two patterns seem to appear in their results on the basis of percentages of the students who considered essays as either very easy/easy or very difficult/difficult. First, the percentage of students who believed that essays are easy is slightly higher in Licence (L1: 22%, L2: 20%, L3: 20%), than in Master (M1: 18%, M2: 18%). Second, the percentage of students who considered that essays are difficult is higher in L3 (28%) and M1 (30%) than in other levels (L1:16%, L2:16%, and M2: 14%).

**Q5. Students' satisfaction with the marks they receive on their essays in exams. Options:**

**a) Yes b) No**

**Please, justify:**

**Table 3.4***Students' Satisfaction with their Marks in Essay-Based Assessment*

Options	L1		L2		L3		M1		M2		Total	
	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	(N)	(%)
<b>a</b>	20	40	27	54	23	46	21	42	14	28	<b>105</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>b</b>	30	60	23	46	27	54	29	58	36	72	<b>145</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>100</b>

More than half of the students (58%) are unsatisfied with their marks in essay exams. The percentage of unsatisfied students is more significant in M2 (72%), followed by L1 (60%), then M1 (58%) and L3 (54%). For L2 students, more than half of them (54%) are pleased with the marks they received in their essay exams.

**Table 3.5***Justification for Students who are Unsatisfied with the Marks*

Options	L1	L2	L3	M1	M2	Total	
	<u>N</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>N</u>	(N)	(%)
Teachers' assessment is unfair, strict and subjective	3	4	6	10	10	<b>33</b>	<b>13.20</b>
Marks do not reflect student's level.	3	1	1	4	3	<b>12</b>	<b>04.80</b>
Lack of competence and skills in writing good essays	7	7	3	5	5	<b>27</b>	<b>10.8</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>28.80</b>

28.8% of students from all levels provided justifications for their unhappiness with marks they received in their essay exams. 18% of them said it is because those marks do not reflect their level, and they criticized teachers' assessment criteria for being unfair, strict, and subjective. A student said, "... the teachers can be very strict and take into consideration every single mistake even when we tell them that the time of the exam wasn't enough to answer some exercises and to write a whole essay in one hour and a half". Some students

(10.8%) attributed their dissatisfaction with the marks to their inability to cope with the hardness of essay-based assessment; they need more practice to reach the desired level. One student argued, "...our skills at essays did not and will not develop except through training"

Only students who received good marks in essay exams argued that their marks reflect their level as they have good writing skills.

**Q6.Type (s) of essays which is/are difficult for students to write in the exams. (more than one answer can be selected) a)Classification b) Narration c) Argumentation d) Cause and Effect e) Comparison and Contrast**

**Table 3.6**

*Types(s) of Essays that is (are) Difficult for Students to Write in Exams*

Options	L1		L2		L3		M1		M2		Total	
	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	(N)	(%)
<b>a</b>	17	20.99	17	20.48	20	25	11	15.94	11	14.47	<b>76</b>	<b>19.54</b>
<b>b</b>	18	22.22	8	09.64	14	17.5	21	30.43	13	17.1	<b>74</b>	<b>19.02</b>
<b>c</b>	20	24.69	18	21.69	16	20	21	30.43	22	28.95	<b>97</b>	<b>24.94</b>
<b>d</b>	8	09.88	14	16.87	15	18.75	6	08.7	12	15.79	<b>55</b>	<b>14.14</b>
<b>e</b>	18	22.22	26	31.32	15	18.75	10	14.49	18	23.68	<b>87</b>	<b>22.36</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>389</b>	<b>100</b>

The results of this multiple choice question showed that the bigger part of students from all levels (24.94%) considered argumentative essay as the most difficult essay to write in exams. This percentage is high in M1 (30.43%), M2 (28.95%), followed by L1 (24.69%). Comparison and contrast essay comes next in which 22.36 % of all students selected it as one of the essays that causes problems for them in exams, especially L2 (31.32%) who regarded it the most problematic essay. The bigger part of L3 (25%) considered classification essay as the most difficult essay to write; however, it is the least difficult for M2 (14.47%). A small number of L2 (9.64%) and L3 (17.5%) viewed that narrative essay is difficult to write. Cause

and effect essay has a lesser degree of difficulty for all students from all levels (M1: 8.7%, L1:9.88%, M2: 15.79%, L2: 16.87%, L3: 18.75%).

**Q7. Aspects students focus on when they write an essay in exams. Options: a) Focus more on form (grammar, vocabulary, and organization) than content (required or precise information and clear ideas).b) Focus more on content than form. c) Give equal importance to form and content.**

**Table 3.7**

<i>Aspect(s) Students Focus on When They Write Essays in Exams</i>												
Options	L1		L2		L3		M1		M2		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	(N)	(%)
<b>a</b>	12	24	2	4	7	14	4	8	2	4	27	10.8
<b>b</b>	12	24	12	24	11	22	14	28	18	36	67	26.8
<b>c</b>	26	52	36	72	32	64	32	64	30	60	156	62.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>100</b>

The majority of students from all levels seem to agree on giving an equal importance to form and content when they write essays (62.4%). Next, 26.8% of the students focus more on content than on form especially in Master (M2:36% and M1: 28%). A minority of students who focus more on form than content (10.8%) is found, particularly, in Licence (L1:24% and L3:14%).

**Q8. Rating problems in essay exams from 1 (most difficult) to 7 (least difficult). Options: a) Knowing what the teacher expects. b) Understanding the exam question. c) Knowing how to express yourself using English. d) Effective management of exam time. e) Feeling afraid of teacher's negative evaluation. f) Feeling anxious about exams. g) Feeling unconfident about your ability to succeed**

**Table 3.8***Rating the Difficulty Problems in Essay Based Assessment*

<b>Options</b>	<b>L1</b>	<b>L2</b>	<b>L3</b>	<b>M1</b>	<b>M2</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Average Difficulty (out of 7)</b>						
<b>a</b>	2.88	2.9	2.4	2.78	1.98	<b>2.59</b>
<b>b</b>	2.84	2.8	2.82	3.8	2.92	<b>3.04</b>
<b>c</b>	2.8	2.62	2.94	3.2	3.58	<b>3.03</b>
<b>d</b>	2.52	2.62	2.74	2.76	2.92	<b>2.71</b>
<b>e</b>	2.96	2.74	3.04	2.76	3.26	<b>2.95</b>
<b>f</b>	2.62	2.76	2.92	3.18	3.1	<b>2.92</b>
<b>g</b>	3.14	2.86	3.8	2.5	3.67	<b>3.19</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>2.82</b>	<b>2.76</b>	<b>2.95</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3.06</b>	<b>2.91</b>

Meeting teachers' expectation is proven to be the most difficult aspect all students face (2.59); it is mainly encountered by M2 (1.98) and L3 (2.4), who are graduating students. Effective time management, as the second most difficult aspect for all students, is especially problematic for L1 (2.52) and L2 (2.62); it is also the second most difficult factor for L3, M1, and M2 (2.74, 2.76 and 2.92, respectively). Next, exam anxiety is the third most difficult aspect all students face in essay exams (2.92), mainly, L2 (2.76) and M2 (3.1). The fourth most difficult aspect all students suffer from is teachers' negative evaluation (2.95). The latter has a negative effect on students in L2 (2.74), M1 (2.76), and M2 (3.26). Knowing how to express oneself in English comes, subsequently, in the fifth place for L3 (2.94), M1 (3.2), and M2 (3.58); it is the most difficult for L2 (2.62), and the third most difficult for L1 (2.8). L3

(3.8), L1 (3.14), and M2 (3.67) agreed that feeling unconfident about their ability to succeed is the least difficult aspect in essay-based assessment. Other students from other levels disagreed on the least difficult aspect. L2 (2.9) believe that knowing what the teacher expects is the least difficult aspect while M1 (3.8) think that understanding the exam question is the least difficult one.

### **Q9. Other problem (s) students face when they have exams based on essays.**

**Table 3.8**

*Other Problems Students Face in Essay-Based Assessment*

<b>Options</b>	<b>L1</b>	<b>L2</b>	<b>L3</b>	<b>M1</b>	<b>M2</b>	<b>Total</b>	
	<b><u>N</u></b>	<b><u>N</u></b>	<b><u>N</u></b>	<b><u>N</u></b>	<b><u>N</u></b>	<b>(N)</b>	<b>(%)</b>
Linguistic problems expressing ideas	11	13	11	11	5	<b>49</b>	<b>42.61</b>
Failing in concentrating	4	3	3	5	15	<b>30</b>	<b>26.09</b>
Organization and respecting the number of words that should be included in the essay	0	5	6	12	7	<b>30</b>	<b>26.09</b>
Teachers' evaluation	2	1	1	1	2	<b>7</b>	<b>06.09</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>100</b>

Most students from all levels added that they have difficulty in linguistically expressing their ideas (42.61%). 26.09% said that they cannot concentrate on the day of exam and another 26.09% find difficulty in writing a well organized essay containing a well formed introduction, body, and conclusion and respecting the number of words that should be included in the essay. 6.08% of the students suffer from teachers' negative evaluation.

### **Section Three: Current practice of Exemplar feedback**

**Q10. The timing of teachers' feedback about his/ her assessment criteria. Options: a) Before exams b) After exams c) Both before and after exams**

**Table 3.10***The Timing of Teachers' Feedback*

Options	L1		L2		L3		M1		M2		Total	
	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	(N)	(%)
<b>a</b>	19	38	15	30	19	38	6	12	0	0	<b>59</b>	<b>23.6</b>
<b>b</b>	11	22	12	24	10	20	27	54	41	82	<b>101</b>	<b>40.4</b>
<b>c</b>	20	40	23	46	21	42	17	34	9	18	<b>90</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>100</b>

The bigger part of students in L1 (40%), L2 (46%), and L3 (42%) claimed that their teachers provide them with feedback about their assessment criteria both before and after exams. On the contrary, 82% of M2 and 54% of M1 claimed that their teachers provide them with feedback about his assessment criteria after exams. The provision of feedback to students before exams is directed particularly at Licence students as more than a third of students of L1(38%), L3(38%), and L2 (30%) than Master students (M1:12% and M2: 0%).

**Q11. The number of teachers who usually supply students with exemplars to prepare them for their essay exams. a)All b) Most c) Some d) Few e) None**

**Table 3.9***The Number of Teachers who Supply Students with Exemplar Feedback*

Options	L1		L2		L3		M1		M2		Total	
	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	(N)	(%)
<b>a</b>	1	2	1	2	2	4	0	0	0	0	<b>4</b>	<b>1.6</b>
<b>b</b>	7	14	2	4	2	4	2	4	1	2	<b>14</b>	<b>5.6</b>
<b>c</b>	7	14	11	22	11	22	5	10	1	2	<b>35</b>	<b>14</b>



<b>d</b>	8	16	9	18	11	22	11	22	10	20	<b>49</b>	<b>19.6</b>
<b>e</b>	27	54	27	54	24	38	32	64	38	76	<b>148</b>	<b>59.2</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>100</b>

More than a half of the students, from all levels, claimed that none of their teachers provide them with exemplar feedback to prepare them for essay exams. This percentage is high in master (M2: 76% and M1: 64%) and it gets lower in licence (L3: 38%, L2 and L1: 54%). 33.6 % of all students indicated that few or some of their teachers prepare them for exams through the use of exemplars especially L1, L2, and L3 (30%, 40%, and 44%, respectively) followed by M1 (32%) and M2 (22%). A minority of them (7.2%) said that most or all of their teachers provide them with exemplar feedback starting by L1 (16%), L2 (6%) and L3 (8%) to M1 (4%) and M2 (2%).

**The students who responded None to question 11 are asked to skip questions 11 to 14.**

**Q12. Teachers' procedure for annotating exemplars. (More than one answer can be selected) Options: a) Underlines important term. b) Highlights essential elements. c) Writes key words and definitions in the margin. d) Signals where important information can be found with key words or symbols in the margin. e) others, please specify:**

**Table 3.10**

*The Teachers' Ways for Annotating Exemplars*

Options	L1		L2		L3		M1		M2		Total	
	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	(N)	(%)
<b>a</b>	12	29.27	12	30	11	27.5	7	21.21	2	14.29	<b>44</b>	<b>26.19</b>
<b>b</b>	14	34.15	11	27.5	10	25	11	33.33	6	42.86	<b>52</b>	<b>30.95</b>
<b>c</b>	9	21.95	8	20	5	12.5	6	18.18	1	07.14	<b>29</b>	<b>17.26</b>
<b>d</b>	6	14.63	6	15	11	27.5	6	18.18	4	28.57	<b>33</b>	<b>19.65</b>
<b>e</b>	0	0	3	7.5	3	7.5	3	09.09	1	07.14	<b>10</b>	<b>05.95</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>100</b>

The majority of L1 (34.15%), M1 (33.33%), and M2 (43.86%) claimed that their teachers annotate exemplars by highlighting important elements in the exemplars while the majority of L2 (30%) and L3 (27.5%) stated that their teachers highlight essential elements in the essay to make it accessible for them. 19.65 % said that their teachers signal important information with key words and symbols in the margin. This percentage is significant in M2 (28.57%) and L3 (27.5%). A small number of students from all levels (17.26%) stated that their teachers write key words and definitions in the margin to signal important information (L1: 21.95%, L2: 20%, M1: 18.18%, L3: 12.5%, and M2: 7.14%).

Ten students (5.95%) added set of procedures their teachers follow to discuss exemplars with them. 90% of the ten students added that their teachers ask them to spot by themselves the important elements in the exemplar. In addition, they increase their noticing of the mistakes committed by other students in the exemplars and, then, show them ways for correcting them. 10% of them said that their teachers ask them to allocate marks for the exemplars.

**Q13. The quantity of exemplars teachers discuss with student to prepare them for their essay exam. a) 1 or 2 for each exam b) 3 or 4 for each exam c) 5 or more for each exam**

**Table 3.11**

*The Number of Exemplars Teachers Introduce to Students*

Options	L1		L2		L3		M1		M2		Total (N)	Total (%)
	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>		
<b>a</b>	14	60.87	13	56.52	19	73.08	13	72.22	9	75	<b>68</b>	<b>66.66</b>
<b>b</b>	8	34.78	7	30.44	6	23.08	5	27.78	2	16.67	<b>28</b>	<b>27.45</b>
<b>c</b>	1	04.34	2	08.70	1	03.84	0	0	0	0	<b>4</b>	<b>03.92</b>
<b>No response</b>	0	0	1	04.34	0	0	0	0	1	08.33	<b>2</b>	<b>01.96</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>100</b>

The majority of students from all levels (66.66%) claimed that their teachers supply them with one or two exemplars for each exam (M2: 75% , L3: 73.08, M1: 72.22%, L1: 60.67%, and L2: 56.52%). 27.45% of all students, from all levels, indicated that their teachers supply them with three or four exemplars for each exam (L1: 34.78%, L2: 30.44%, M1: 27.78%, L3: 23.08%, and M2:16.67%). A minority of licence students claimed that their teachers provide them with five or more exemplars for each exam (3.92%)(L1: 4.34%, L2: 8.70%, and L3: 3.84%). 1.96% of the students did not provide a response for this question.

**Q14. The quality of previous essay-exam papers that are usually discussed by teachers before students' essay exams. (More than one answer can be selected) Options: a) Poor quality essays b) Average quality essays c) High quality essays**

**Table 3.12**

*The Quality of Exemplars Introduced to Students*

Options	L1		L2		L3		M1		M2		Total	
	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	(N)	(%)
<b>a</b>	2	8.69	5	21.73	6	23.07	3	16.66	1	8.33	<b>17</b>	<b>16.66</b>
<b>b</b>	12	52.17	8	34.78	14	53.84	11	61.11	7	58.33	<b>52</b>	<b>50.98</b>
<b>c</b>	2	8.69	2	8.69	6	23.07	1	5.55	1	8.33	<b>12</b>	<b>11.78</b>
<b>a + b</b>	2	8.69	0	0	0	0	1	5.55	1	8.33	<b>4</b>	<b>3.92</b>
<b>a + c</b>	0	0	2	8.69	0	0	1	5.55	0	0	<b>3</b>	<b>2.94</b>
<b>b + c</b>	4	17.39	6	26.08	0	0	1	5.55	1	8.33	<b>12</b>	<b>11.76</b>
<b>No response</b>	1	4.34	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	8.33	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>100</b>

This question is intended to investigate whether teachers vary the quality of the exemplars supplied to students or not. More than a half of all students, from all levels, (50.98%) claimed their teachers supply them with average quality exemplars (M1: 61.11%, M2: 58.33%, L3: 53.84%, L1: 52.17%, and L2: 34.78%). This percentage is followed by

16.66% of all students from all levels who said that their teachers supply them with poor quality exemplars (L3: 23.07%, M1: 16.66%, L2: 21.73%, L1: 8.69%, M2: 8.33%). 11.78% of them indicated that their teachers supply them with high quality exemplars. This percentage is significant in L3 (23.07%), followed by an equal percentage of L1 (8.69%) and L2 (8.69%), then, M2 (8.33%) and M1 (5.55%).

Based on the responses of students, teachers supply all students except L3 with exemplars of two types of quality. The combination of average and high quality exemplar (b + c) is somehow a frequent combination for all students (11.76%) except L3 (L2: 26.08%, L1: 17.39, M2: 8.33%, and L1: 5.55%); whereas, the combination of a poor and an average quality exemplar (3.92 %) is used in L1 (8.69%), M2 (8.33%), and M1 (5.55%) while the combination of a poor and a high quality exemplar (2.94%) is used in L2 (8.69%) and M1 (5.55%).

#### Section Four: Attitudes towards Exemplar Feedback

**Q15. Students' preferable timing of feedback. Options: a) Before the exam b) After the exam c) Neutral**

**Table 3.13**

*Students' Preferable Timing of Feedback*

Options	L1		L2		L3		M1		M2		Total	
	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	(N)	(%)
<b>a</b>	24	48	34	68	32	64	31	62	35	70	<b>156</b>	<b>62.4</b>
<b>b</b>	13	26	5	10	7	14	6	12	10	20	<b>41</b>	<b>16.4</b>
<b>c</b>	13	26	11	22	11	22	13	26	5	10	<b>53</b>	<b>21.2</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>100</b>

The majority of M2 (70%), L2 (68%), M1 (62%), L3 (32%), and L1 (48%) preferred to receive feedback before the exam. 26% of L1, 20% of M2, 14% of L3, 12% of M1, and 10%

of L2 preferred to receive feedback after exams. 21.2 % of students from all levels were neutral.

**Q16. Exemplars that explain what teachers expect in essay exams will make answering in the exam easier for students. a) Strongly disagree b) Disagree c) Neutral d) Agree e) Strongly agree**

**Table 3.14**

*The Ability of Exemplar Feedback to Facilitate Essay-Based Assessment for Students*

Options	L1		L2		L3		M1		M2		Total	
	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	(N)	(%)
<b>a</b>	5	10	1	2	1	2	2	4	3	6	<b>12</b>	<b>4.8</b>
<b>b</b>	5	10	3	6	3	6	1	2	2	4	<b>14</b>	<b>5.6</b>
<b>c</b>	13	26	10	20	10	20	7	14	6	12	<b>46</b>	<b>18.4</b>
<b>d</b>	20	40	20	38	28	56	27	54	22	44	<b>117</b>	<b>46.8</b>
<b>e</b>	7	14	16	32	8	16	13	26	17	34	<b>61</b>	<b>24.4</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>100</b>

A bigger part of students from all levels agree (46.8%) or strongly agree (24.4%) on the fact that analyzing exemplars facilitates essay exams for them. A minority of them disagree (5.6%) or strongly disagree (4.8%) and argued that exemplars do not facilitate essay exams for them. 18.4% were neutral. Students gradually raise their interest in analyzing exemplars as they move from L1 to M1. In that 54% of L1 agree or strongly agree on the use of exemplars to facilitate essay exams for them. After that comes both L2 and L3 with the same percentage of 70% of students who either agree or strongly agree; 80% of M1, also, agree or strongly agree on the use of exemplars. This percentage is slightly reduced in M2 in which 70.8% of them either agree or strongly agree.

**Q17. It is better if teachers bring to students their past exam copies to learn from their mistakes. a) Strongly agree b) Agree c) Neutral d) Disagree e) Strongly disagree**

**Table 3.15***The Usefulness of Supplying Students with Their Past Exam Copies*

Options	L1		L2		L3		M1		M2		Total	
	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	(N)	(%)
<b>a</b>	25	50	27	54	19	38	22	44	16	32	<b>109</b>	<b>43.6</b>
<b>b</b>	17	34	16	32	25	50	22	44	27	54	<b>107</b>	<b>42.8</b>
<b>c</b>	7	14	6	12	4	8	3	6	5	10	<b>25</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>d</b>	1	2	1	2	2	4	1	2	2	4	<b>7</b>	<b>2.8</b>
<b>e</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	4	0	0	<b>2</b>	<b>0.8</b>
Total	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>100</b>

Almost all students from all levels strongly agree (43.6%) or agree (42.8%) that supplying them with their past exam copies is useful. A minority of them disagree (2.8%) or strongly disagree (0.8%). 10% were neutral. Q17 shows that the percentage of students who welcome the integration of exemplar feedback in essay based assessment increases through the levels starting by L1 (84%), L2 (86%), L3 (88%), and M1 (88%). This percentage is reduced slightly in M2 (86%) of students who either agree or strongly agree on the use of exemplars to foster students' ability to learn from their mistakes.

Students justified their agreement by stating that:

- Students may share common mistakes during writing essays, but discussing each student's unique mistake will definitely help them focus more on their own weaknesses in order to make better progress.
- The moment the learner gets his exam paper all his concern goes directly to the mark he got. Therefore, little attention or no attention is paid to the remarks the teacher has

made. However, if teachers distribute learners' papers once again and discuss their mistakes, it will be of great benefit for them.

- Through his feedback on my past exam copies I can guess how the teacher will evaluate and assess my next exam
- Providing students with exemplars will help them to know what kind of mistakes they have committed. In this way, they will learn from their mistakes and avoid them in the future.

Students who either disagree or strongly disagree justified their response by saying that they do not need to learn from their mistakes.

**Q18. The effect of knowing teachers' fair assessment criteria on students affect. Options: (More than one answer can be selected) a) Motivate me to study. b) Decrease my exam anxiety. c) Build my confidence that if I work hard, I will have high grades. d) Others, please specify**

**Table 3.16**

<i>The Effects of Realizing the Teachers' Fair Assessment Criteria</i>													
Options	L1		L2		L3		M1		M2		Total		
	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	(N)	(%)	
<b>a</b>	28	39.43	36	51.42	29	42.02	24	31.57	23	30.26	<b>140</b>	<b>38.67</b>	
<b>b</b>	10	14.08	8	11.42	8	11.59	12	15.78	14	18.42	<b>52</b>	<b>14.36</b>	
<b>c</b>	28	39.43	23	32.85	27	39.13	36	47.36	29	38.15	<b>143</b>	<b>39.50</b>	
<b>d</b>	5	7.04	3	4.28	5	7.24	4	5.26	10	13.15	<b>27</b>	<b>7.45</b>	
<b>Total</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>362</b>	<b>100</b>	

This question is a multiple choice question that aims to collect insights about the effect of exemplar feedback on students' affect. The vast majority of all students, from all levels (78.17%) claimed that knowing teachers' fair assessment through the use of exemplars can motivate them and enhance their-self efficacy that if they work hard, they will have high

marks. 14.36% of students, from all levels, said that exemplar feedback can decrease their exam anxiety.

Other students (7.45%) added that realizing teachers' fair assessment can develop a sense of trust between the teacher and the students in that it makes them respect their teachers and stop blaming them for their bad results. It also enhances their achievement and encourages them to work harder to gain desired marks.

**Q19.The Impact of Exemplar Feedback on Students' Self regulation and Achievement. (More than one answer can be selected) a) Enrich my vocabulary b) Develop my writing style. c) Help me improve my exam marks. d) Enable me to develop a learning plane) Allow me to set learning goals for exams. f) Enable me to meet the expectations of my teacher. g) Others, please specify:**

**Table 3.17**

*The Impact of Exemplar Feedback on Students' Self regulation and Achievement*

Options	L1		L2		L3		M1		M2		Total	
	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	(N)	(%)
<b>a</b>	30	22.72	31	22.62	27	20.45	20	13.60	16	11.59	<b>123</b>	<b>17.98</b>
<b>b</b>	31	24.32	31	22.62	31	23.48	36	24.48	29	21.01	<b>158</b>	<b>23.09</b>
<b>c</b>	26	19.69	25	18.24	23	17.42	26	17.68	22	15.94	<b>121</b>	<b>17.69</b>
<b>d</b>	13	9.84	13	9.48	14	10.60	14	9.52	12	8.69	<b>66</b>	<b>9.64</b>
<b>e</b>	15	11.36	10	7.29	17	12.87	13	8.84	17	12.31	<b>72</b>	<b>10.52</b>
<b>f</b>	15	11.36	25	18.24	17	12.87	37	25.17	38	27.53	<b>132</b>	<b>19.29</b>
<b>g</b>	2	1.51	2	1.45	3	2.27	1	0.68	4	2.89	<b>12</b>	<b>1.75</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>684</b>	<b>100</b>

A large number of L1 (47.06%), L2 (45.24%), and L3 (43.93%) claimed that analyzing exemplars can enrich their vocabulary and develop their writing skills. A bigger part of M1(49.65%) and M2(48.54%) believed that analyzing exemplars can develop their



writing skills and enable them to meet the expectations of their teachers. 20.16% of all students across levels, said that analyzing exemplars can enable them to be self-regulated learners who develop learning plans and set learning goals. 17.69% of all students argued that exemplars can help them improve their exam marks (L1: 19.69, L2:18.24%, %1: 17.68%, L3: 17.42% , M1:17.68% and M2: 15.94). 4.8% of all students added that exemplars can enable them distinguish their strength and weaknesses and prepare them well for the exam.

**Q20. Procedures teachers would you like to follow in discussing exemplars. Options:**

- a) You, first, analyze exemplars and mark them using the teacher’s marking guide. Then, you discuss with your peers the way you have allocated the marks. After that, the teacher shows you the actual mark of each exemplar and explains why he allocated a higher or a lower mark.**
- b) You, first, complete a task and interact with your teacher and peers. After that, you analyze exemplars and compare them to your answers with reference to assessment criteria.**

**Table 3.18**

*Students’ Preferable Approach to Exemplar-Feedback Use*

Options	L1		L2		L3		M1		M2		Total	
	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	(N)	(%)
<b>a</b>	28	56	28	56	29	58	33	66	21	42	<b>139</b>	<b>55.6</b>
<b>b</b>	22	44	22	44	21	42	17	34	29	58	<b>111</b>	<b>44.4</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>100</b>

More than half of all the students, from all levels,(55.6%) favoured dialogic use of exemplars. Almost an equal percentage (44.4%) of all students preferred scaffolded use of exemplar feedback. The majority of L1 (56%), L2 (56%), L3 (58%), and M1 (66%) opted for

dialogic approach to exemplar-feedback use while the majority of M2 (58%) preferred scaffolded use of exemplar feedback.

### ***3.3.3. Interpretation of the Student Questionnaire Results***

The student questionnaire results revealed that essay-based assessment is a frequent assessment for licence students, particularly L2 and L3 as well as master students. Essay exams seem to get harder as students progress in their university studies from licence year one up to master one. That is to say, they become more challenging to write as students' level increases; however, when students reach the final stage of their studies, master two, essay exams seem to become easier, as shown by results to questions 3 and 4.

Students' responses to Q2 show that students' awareness of assessment criteria tend to get higher as they move from L1 up to M2, meaning that there is a difference of awareness between students in licence and students in master. Despite this variation, Q4 shows that the majority of students expressed their dissatisfaction with their marks, and the way they are assessed. They criticised their teachers' assessment criteria for being unfair, strict, and subjective.

Knowing teachers' expectations proved to be the most problematic factor for all students in general and graduating students (L3 and M2) in particular as shown in students' responses to Q8. One possible reason is that teachers take for granted that students have mastered learning and how university or academic studies proceed as answers to Q10 show. At advanced levels, teachers see it unnecessary or unsuitable to provide feedback before exams or prepare students in strategies of taking exams. This is supported by findings of Q11 in which teachers direct exemplar feedback to students in licence to prepare them for their essay exams. Exemplar feedback is gradually removed as students gain more experience in essay exams and become aware of assessment criteria. It should be noted that exemplar feedback is not frequently applied in the context of learning and teaching in the University of Mohammed

Seddik Benyahia because more than a half of the students are not introduced to exemplars as a way for preparing them for their essay exams.

Findings of Q12 to Q14 show the processes teachers follow to introduce exemplars for students. First, teachers annotate exemplars using various methods; they highlight or underline important elements in the exemplars, write key words and definitions in the margin, and signal where important information can be found with symbols in the margin. Second, they tend to introduce one or two exemplars for each exam, which is a small number, and they are either average quality or a combination of a high and an average quality. It is concluded that teachers do not vary the quality and the number of exemplars introduced to students.

Students' attitudes towards exemplars are explored in Q15, Q16, and Q17. The majority of students, from all levels, prefer to be prepared for exams, implying their readiness to analyse exemplars in order to overcome the main problem they face in essay exams as it is shown in the results of Q15. Similarly, Q16 revealed that the majority of students welcome exemplar feedback, and believe that it can facilitate essay exams for them. Students' interest in analysing exemplars gets higher as they move from L1 to M1; however, it is slightly lower in M2. In addition, findings of Q17 shows that the majority of students believe in the importance of analysing past-exam copies that serve as exemplar feedback and help students to learn from their past mistakes and overcome them.

Exemplars serve as models for students to observe and are found to be beneficial for students' affect, as indicated by results of Q18. If students notice that their peers received credit for their hard work, they will be motivated to work harder in order to gain high marks and be confident that they will be rewarded for their efforts, overcome exam anxiety and improve their learning. Responses to Q18 also show that through analysing exemplars,

students develop a sense of trust in their teachers, as they realise that teachers provide them with the marks that reflect their level and so stop blaming their teachers for their failure.

In addition to being beneficial for enhancing students' affect, exemplar feedback can have positive impact on students' self-regulated learning and achievement. When students analyse exemplars, they learn new ways for expressing their ideas and develop the competence of writing a good essay. Consequently, students improve their marks and become self-regulated learners who devise learning plans and set learning goals as it shown in the results of Q19.

Students in all licence levels (L1, L2, L3) and students in master one (M1) prefer to be introduced to exemplars following a dialogic approach to exemplar-feedback use while students in master two (M2) favour a scaffolded approach to exemplar-feedback use as it is shown in their responses to Q20.

### **3.4. The Teacher Questionnaire**

#### ***3.4.1. The Description and Administration of the Teacher Questionnaire***

The teacher questionnaire is composed of eighteen questions. Similar to the student questionnaire, questions are arranged in four sections. Section one is entitled "General Information". Section two is entitled "Essay-Based Assessment". Section three is entitled "Current Practice of Exemplar Feedback". Section four is entitled "Attitudes towards Exemplar Feedback".

The first section aims to collect general information about the teachers. It consists of one question (Q1) that aims at specifying the level (s) the teachers have taught at the Department of English.

The second section aims at investigating teachers' beliefs about their students' knowledge of assessment criteria followed in assessment and their judgment about the

problems students face when they answer in essay exams. It is composed of five questions (Q2 to Q6). Q2 measures teachers' frequency of integrating essays in exams. Q3 and Q4 request teachers to estimate whether students are well aware of assessment criteria of essays and to identify on which aspect (content, form, or both content and form) they focus more when they assess students' essays. In Q5 and Q6, teachers are asked to select the type (s) of essays that are hard for students to write and to tick problems student may face in essay-based assessment.

The third section investigates current practice of exemplar feedback and whether teachers apply it in the context of teaching at the Department of English within the University of Mohamed Seddik Benyahia, Jijel. It contains seven questions (Q7 to Q13). Q7 focuses on the teachers' timing for providing feedback to students i.e. before exams, after exams, or both before and after exams. Q8 investigates whether teachers use exemplar feedback. A description follows Q8 for teachers who do not use exemplar feedback to skip question (Q9 to Q13). The latter aim at exploring the procedure teachers follow to introduce exemplars to students. In Q9, teachers are asked to select the ways they follow to annotate exemplars so that they meet the level of learners. Q10 and Q11 demand from teachers to identify the number and the quality of exemplars they introduce to students. In Q12 and Q13, teachers are asked to explain the steps they follow to introduce exemplars and the types of questions they ask to students to discuss assessment criteria embedded in them.

The fourth section seeks to collect data about teachers' attitude towards exemplar feedback. It comprises five questions (Q14 to Q18). Q14, Q15, and Q16 aim to explore teachers' attitude towards the usefulness of exemplars and their impact on students' personality traits and achievement. Q14 and 15 identify teachers' point of view towards the usefulness of exemplars in explaining what they expect of students, facilitating essay exams for them, and whether they consider supplying students with their past exam copies useful for

them to learn from their past mistakes. Q16 aims to find out the benefits students gain from knowing that their teachers have assessed other students' work fairly and its impact on motivating them to study, decreasing their anxiety, and increasing their self-efficacy. In Q17, teachers are asked about exemplar feedback and its ability to enhance students' achievement and self-regulation. Q18, identifies whether teachers prefer to introduce exemplars to students following a dialogic approach or a scaffolded one.

### 3.4.2. Analysis of the Teacher Questionnaire

#### Section One: General Information

**Q1. Level (s) teachers have taught at the Department of English. Options: a) First-year licence b) Second-year licence c) Third-year licence d) Master one e) Master two**

**Table 3.19**

*Levels teachers have taught*

<b>Options</b>	<b><u>N</u></b>	<b><u>%</u></b>
<b>a+ b + c + d+ e</b>	2	11.11
<b>a + b + c+ d</b>	1	5.55
<b>a + c + d + e</b>	1	5.55
<b>b + c + d + e</b>	1	5.55
<b>a + b + c</b>	4	22.22
<b>a + b + e</b>	1	5.55
<b>a + d + e</b>	1	5.55
<b>a + c</b>	1	5.55
<b>b + c</b>	3	16.66
<b>c + d</b>	1	5.55
<b>d + e</b>	2	11.11
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>100</b>

11.11 % of the questioned teachers have taught all five levels of students, be they L1, L2, L1, M1, or M2. 44.44% of them have taught licence students only, 11.11 % of them have taught master students only while 44.44% of them have taught students at different levels (licence and master).

### Section Two: Essay-Based Assessment

**Q.2 Teachers' frequency of using essay in their exams. Options: a) Always b) Often c) Sometimes d) Rarely e) Never**

**Table 3.20**

*The Frequency of Essay-Based Assessment*

<b>Options</b>	<b><u>N</u></b>	<b><u>%</u></b>
<b>a</b>	5	27.7
<b>b</b>	10	55.55
<b>c</b>	2	11.11
<b>d</b>	1	5.55
<b>e</b>	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>100</b>

The majority of teachers implement essays in exams in which 83.25% of them often or always use essays in their examinations. A minority of them claimed that they sometimes (11.11%) or rarely (5.55%) use them in exams.

**Q3. Teachers' perception about their students' knowledge of the assessment criteria of essays. Options: a) Yes b)No c)Somehow**

**Please justify your answer:**

**Table 3. 21***Students' Awareness of Assessment Criteria of Essay Exams*

<b>Options</b>	<b><u>N</u></b>	<b><u>%</u></b>
<b>a</b>	8	44.44
<b>b</b>	5	27.77
<b>c</b>	5	27.77
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>100</b>

44.44% of teachers claimed that their students are aware of assessment criteria of essay. An equal of percentage of teachers (27.77%) are either certain about their students' unawareness of assessment criteria of essays or uncertain about their knowledge of such criteria.

The teachers who think that their students are knowledgeable of the assessment criteria of essays justified their response by saying that they always introduce their students to those criteria prior to essay exams. A teacher said that, "I always provide my students with a very comprehensive model along with a detailed assessment scale". Teachers who believed that their students are unaware of assessment criteria of essays argued that the students' scores reveal their unawareness of the expectations set out in the criteria

Teachers who were uncertain about their students' knowledge of assessment criteria of essays claimed that:

- Most students ask why they got lower marks than they expected. They think that they supplied the right information and made no mistakes and, hence, deserve more.
- They have a vague idea that essays are corrected on the basis of content, form, and language. I usually remind them of this and sometimes give them scale and general criteria in the exam paper.



**Q4. Aspect (s) teachers focus on more when they assess students' essays. Options: a) You focus more on form than content. b) You focus more on content than form. c) You give equal importance to form and content.**

**Table 3.22**

*Aspects Teachers focus on in Essay-Based Assessment*

<b>Options</b>	<b><u>N</u></b>	<b><u>%</u></b>
<b>a</b>	1	5.55
<b>b</b>	6	33.33
<b>c</b>	11	61.11
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>100</b>

61.11% of teachers claimed that they focus on both content and form when they assess students' answers. More than a third of them (33.33%) said that they give more importance to form than content. A minority of them (5.55%) focus more on form than content in essay-based assessment.

**Q5. Type (s) of essays that is /are difficult for students to write in the exams. Options: a) Classification b) Narration c) Argumentation d) Cause and Effect e) Comparison and Contrast**

**Table 3.23**

*Types of Essays that are Difficult for Students to Write*

<b>Options</b>	<b><u>N</u></b>	<b><u>%</u></b>
<b>a</b>	4	11.42
<b>b</b>	3	8.57
<b>c</b>	17	48.57
<b>d</b>	4	11.42
<b>e</b>	7	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>100</b>

A bigger part of teachers (48.57%) regarded argumentative essay as the first type of essay that causes difficulty for students in exams. The second most difficult essay is comparison and contrast essay in which more than a third of teachers (20%) selected it as one of the difficult essays to write. Classification and cause and effect essays come next; an equal percentage of teachers (11.42%) selected them as two of the essays that are hard for students to write. Narration comes in the last position in which a minority of teachers (8.57%) selected it as an essay that is difficult for students to write in exams.

**Q6. Problems teachers believe their students face when they write essays in exam questions. Options: a) Knowing what you expect of them. b) Understanding the exam question. c) Knowing how to express themselves using English. d) Effective management of exam time. e) Feeling afraid of teacher's negative evaluation. f) Feeling anxious about exams. g) Feeling unconfident about their ability to succeed. h) Others, please specify:**

**Table 3.24**

*Problems Students Face in Essay-Based Assessment*

Options	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
a	10	31.25
b	0	0
c	8	25
d	6	18.75
e	2	6.25
f	0	0
g	3	9.37
h	3	9.37
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>100</b>

A large number of teachers claimed that students face two major problems. They are unable to meet the expectations of their teachers (31.25%) and they fail to express themselves using English (25%). These two percentages are followed by 18.75% of teachers who believed that their students cannot manage exam time effectively. A minority of

teachers indicated that their students suffer from teachers' negative evaluation (6.25%) and they lack self-efficacy about their ability to succeed (9.37%). All teachers (100%) agreed that students do not find difficulty in understanding exam questions, and they do not suffer from exam anxiety. 9.37 % of teachers added that their students find problems in selecting the items that should be included in the essay. They tend to "over generalize the question and include in the answer all the lesson that corresponds to that question".

### Section Three: Current Practice of Exemplar Feedback

**Q7. Teachers' timing of feedback. Options: a) Before exams b) After exams c) Both before and after exams**

**Table 3.25**

*Timing of Teacher's Feedback*

<b>Options</b>	<b><u>N</u></b>	<b><u>%</u></b>
<b>a</b>	3	16.66
<b>b</b>	2	11.11
<b>c</b>	13	72.22
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>100</b>

The majority of teachers (72.22%) illustrate their assessment criteria to student both before and after exams. Almost an equal percentage of teachers either explain their assessment criteria before exams (16.66%) or after exams only (11.11%).

**Q8. Teachers supply their students with exemplars to prepare them for essay exam. Options: a) Yes b) No**

**Table 3.26**

*The Use of Exemplars*

<b>Options</b>	<b><u>N</u></b>	<b><u>%</u></b>
<b>a</b>	2	11.11
<b>b</b>	16	88.88
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>100</b>

Almost all teachers (88.88%) do not supply their students with exemplar feedback. Only two of them (11.11%) use exemplars to prepare their students for essay-based assessment.

The teachers who responded no to question 8 are asked to skip questions 9 to 13. Hence, 12 teachers skipped those questions, and only two teachers continued answering them.

**Q9. The way teachers annotate exemplars. Options: a) Underline important terms. b) Highlight essential elements. c) Write key words and definitions in the margin. d) Signal where important information can be found with symbols in the margin. e) Others, please specify**

**Table 3.37**

<i>Annotating Exemplars</i>		
<b>Options</b>	<b><u>N</u></b>	<b><u>%</u></b>
<b>a + b + c</b>	1	50
<b>a + b</b>	1	50
<b>e</b>	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>100</b>

**Q10. The number of exemplars teachers discuss with their students to prepare them for their essay exam. Options: a) 1 or 2 for each exam b) 3 or 4 for each exam c) 5 or more for each exam**

Both teachers supply students with one or two exemplars for each exam. This number might be insufficient for students to distinguish the assessment criteria embedded in the exemplars.

**Q11. The quality of the exemplars teachers usually discuss with students before their essay exams. Options: a) Poor quality essays b) Average quality essays c) High quality essays**

**Table 3.27***The Quality of Exemplars*

<b>Options</b>	<b><u>N</u></b>	<b><u>%</u></b>
<b>a +c</b>	1	50
<b>b</b>	0	0
<b>c</b>	1	50
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>100</b>

Teachers who answered this question did not agree on the quality of exemplars they introduce to their students. A teacher (50%) claimed that he/ she presents to his/ her students high quality exemplars while a teacher (50%) claimed he/she supplies his/her students with a combination of poor quality exemplars and average quality exemplars.

**Q12. The steps teachers usually follow to introduce exemplars for students.**

One teacher said that he/she starts by introducing the topic for the students. After that, he/she asks them to write about the topic. Then, she/he involves them in pair work to spot each others' mistakes and write them on the board. Next, he/she supplies students with poor quality papers for them to self-assess their answers. The other teacher indicated that he/she introduces high quality papers to students and asks them to evaluate their work.

**Q13. Type (s) of questions teachers ask to students in the process of discussing exemplars. a) Evaluative questions containing keywords from the assessment standards. b) Open-ended questions.**

Both teachers (**100%**) agree on asking evaluative questions containing keywords from the assessment standards to discuss exemplars.

**Section Four: Attitudes towards Exemplar Feedback**

**Q14. Analyzing exemplars that explain what teachers expect in exams will make answering in the essay exam easier for students. a) Strongly disagree b) Disagree c) Neutral d) Agree e) Strongly agree**

**Table 3.28***The Ability of Exemplars in Facilitating Exams*

<b>Options</b>	<b><u>N</u></b>	<b><u>%</u></b>
<b>a</b>	3	16.66
<b>b</b>	0	0
<b>c</b>	8	44.44
<b>e</b>	3	16.66
<b>f</b>	4	22.22
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>100</b>

44.44% did not express their agreement or disagreement on the ability of exemplars to facilitate exams for students. 33.88% of them strongly agree (22.22%) or agree (16.66%) with the idea that exemplar feedback facilitates exams for students. A minority of them (16.66%) expressed their disagreement and believed that exemplar feedback does not facilitate essay exams for students.

**Q15. Supplying students with their past exam answers enable them to learn from their mistakes. a) Yes b) No c) Neutral**

**Please explain your choice**

**Table 3.29***Supplying Students with Their Past-Exam Copies*

<b>Options</b>	<b><u>N</u></b>	<b><u>%</u></b>
<b>a</b>	16	88.88
<b>b</b>	0	0
<b>c</b>	2	11.11
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>100</b>

Almost all teachers (88.88%) agree that supplying students with their past-exam copies can enable them to progress in their studies. 11.11% were neutral and did not justify

their choice. Teachers who agreed with the necessity of supplying students with their past exam copies claimed the following:

- The mistakes or errors usually follow a pattern that keeps repeating itself, and unless they are made explicit, they will remain unremediated.
- I believe that a great amount of students do learn from their mistakes. There are times when students need you to point out where the problem is.
- It enables them to reflect on their learning and make the necessary adjustments to make better progress.

**Q16. Students' benefits from noticing through discussing exemplars that teachers assess students' exam papers fairly. a) Be motivated to study. b) Be less anxious in exams. c) Build their confidence that if they work hard, they will have high grades. d) Others, please specify**

**Table 3.30**

*The Impact of Realizing Teachers' Fair Assessment on Students Affect*

<b>Options</b>	<b><u>N</u></b>	<b><u>%</u></b>
<b>a</b>	8	26.66
<b>b</b>	8	26.66
<b>c</b>	14	46.66
<b>d</b>	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

The bigger part of teachers (46.66%) believed that when students notice teachers' fair assessment criteria, they develop their self-efficacy on their learning and be confident that they can have their desired marks if they worked hard to obtain them. An equal percentage of teachers (26.66%) claimed that exemplar feedback can motivate student to learn, and it can reduce their exam anxiety.

**Q17. The aspects teachers believe exemplars can aid students. a) Enriching their vocabulary. b) Developing their writing style. c) Helping them improve their exam**

marks. d) Enabling them to develop a learning plane) Allowing them to set learning goals for exams. f) Enabling them to meet the expectations of their teachers. g) Others, please specify

**Table 3.31**

*The Impact of Exemplars on Students' Self Regulation and Achievement*

Options	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
a	3	6.12
b	13	26.53
c	11	22.44
d	10	20.40
e	0	0
g	2	4.08
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>100</b>

A large number of teachers believed that exemplar feedback can enhance students' writing style (26.53%) and it can improve students' marks in essay exams (22.44%). More than half of the teachers, in an equal percentage (20.40%), said that it can foster students' self-regulated learning, and it can help them meet the expectation of their teachers. a minority of teachers (6.12%) claimed that exemplar feedback can enhance students' vocabulary. 4.08 % of teachers added that:

- All are possible, but with different degrees, and this depends on the nature of the subject taught.
- They can also become professional in negotiating the grades they deserve.

**Q18. Procedures teachers prefer to follow to discuss exemplars. Options:**

**a) You, first, ask students to analyze exemplars and mark them using your marking guide. Then, they discuss with you and their peers the way they have allocated the marks. After that, you show them the actual mark of each exemplar and explain why you allocated a higher or a lower mark.**



**b) You, first, ask students to complete a task and interact with you and their peers. After that, they analyze exemplars and compare them to their answers with reference to assessment criteria.**

**Table 3.32**

*Teachers' Preferable Approach to Exemplar-Feedback Use*

<b>Options</b>	<b><u>N</u></b>	<b><u>%</u></b>
<b>a</b>	7	38.88
<b>b</b>	11	61.11
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>100</b>

The majority of teachers (61.11%) preferred to follow scaffolded approach for exemplar-feedback use; whereas, more than a third of them (38.88%)favoured dialogic approach to exemplar-feedback use.

### **3.4.3. Interpretation of the Teacher Questionnaire Results**

Through Q1, it is made sure that the teachers selected to be part of the present study taught different levels at the Department of English. This ensures that responses represent assessment criteria and feedback that is given for each level. The participating teachers implement essay-based assessment regularly as part of their examination practices as it is shown in responses to Q2. Teachers believed that their students are somehow knowledgeable about the assessment criteria of essay exams in response to Q3. The major problems teachers believed their students face in essay exams are students' failure to meet their expectations and to express themselves using English, as revealed in Q6.

As far as teachers' feedback is concerned, it often provided both before and after exams. This revelation of Q7 shows that teachers are indirectly or theoretically urging for the use of exemplar feedback to prepare students for their exams. However, in practice, very few teachers provide students with exemplar feedback as it is shown in the results of Q8. Hence, it

could be said that exemplar feedback is occasionally applied in the context of the University of Mohammed Seddik Benyahia.

According to Q9, Q10, Q11, and Q13, the very few teachers who supply their students with exemplars annotate them by underlining and highlighting important elements in the exemplars or writing definitions and key words in the margin. They supply their students with one to two exemplars for each exam. These exemplars are of high or combination of poor and average quality. It can be argued that the number and the quality of exemplars supplied to students are insufficient because supplying students with only one quality exemplar (high) or a combination of two qualities (poor and average) may not permit learners to spot the gaps in each exemplar and learn from them. Teachers, however, can overcome this issue by providing students with a combination of poor and high quality exemplars that enlarge students' awareness to the differences between the exemplars and allow them to understand about the logical structure they should follow in essay exams (Hendry & Jukic, 2014).

Concerning the type of questions teachers ask, it is shown that teachers often ask their students close-ended questions, and this does not allow students to express their perceptions about the criteria embedded in the exemplars. According to Chong (2018), Teachers should engage their students in discussions and ask them open-ended questions in which a student's answer leads to another question following a flexible approach to asking questions.

Teachers' readiness to implement exemplar feedback as part of their teaching practices is examined in Q14 and Q15. It was found that most teachers welcome the use of exemplar feedback. They think that since an exemplar makes their expectations explicit to learners, it makes exams easier for them. They, also, believe in the crucial importance of bringing students' past-exam copies to enable them to learn from their mistakes and boost their achievement.

Exemplars are proven to be effective in helping learners to overcome the major issues that are related to their affect, as it is illustrated in the findings of Q15. Most teachers argued that exemplar feedback enhances students' self-efficacy. When students notice, through the analysis of the exemplars, that their teachers were fair with their previous students, they feel confident that they will be rewarded for their effort too, and hence, they work hard to achieve better outcomes. Besides, teachers agree that exemplar feedback can increase students' motivation and reduce their exam anxiety.

Exemplar feedback has many advantages; teachers believe that when students analyse exemplars of poor, average and high qualities, they develop their writing style, and learn different expressions they can use to express themselves; consequently, they improve their exam marks. Besides, they become able to meet the expectations of their teachers, and foster their self-regulated learning by developing learning plans. Few teachers, however, think that exemplar feedback can enrich students' vocabulary.

As far as teachers' preferable approach to exemplar-feedback use, it is the scaffolded approach in which they engage learners in a set of practice activities then introduce exemplars to them and ask them to compare their responses with the supplied exemplars as it is shown in their responses to Q18.

### **3.5. Overall Analysis and Interpretation of Results**

As a reminder, the present investigation sought to answer the following research questions:

- Do teachers supply students with exemplar feedback to prepare them for their essay-based examinations?
- What is the current practice of exemplar feedback?
- What are students' and teachers' attitudes towards the usefulness of exemplar feedback in overcoming the difficulties students face in essay exams?

- Will the importance decrease as students gain more experience in studying English and undergoing essay-based assessment?
- What would the impact of exemplars be on students' affect, self regulation, and achievement?
- How should exemplars be implemented to accommodate both students and teachers?

### ***3.5.1. The Use and the Current Practice of Exemplar Feedback***

The data obtained from the teacher and the student questionnaire added to the existing literature by showing the limited use of exemplar feedback in the context of teaching and learning at the University of Mohammed Seddik Benyahia where only two teachers implement it in their teaching practices. Based on the student questionnaire, teachers mainly provide students in licence with exemplar feedback to train them for essay exams. However, teachers believe that since students in master have gained more experience in essay-based assessment than licence students, they do not need to be prepared for the exams. On the contrary, according to master students' responses, they favour being provided with feedback before essay exams and they feel in need of their teachers' exemplar feedback.

In practice, teachers add explanatory comments to the exemplars to make criteria found in the exemplar comprehensible for students. They highlight or underline important elements, and they signal essential ideas with key words or symbols in the margin. These are good practices because they make assessment criteria of essays explicit to learners (Chong, 2018). However, teachers supply students with a limited number of exemplars in a limited range of quality, which offers little preparation for students' essay-based assessment. Teachers should not suffice it to use only one or two exemplars of good and average qualities; instead, they should use at least three exemplars and vary their quality by contrasting between poor and

good quality exemplars (Sadler, 1987). In the process of discussing exemplars, teachers ask students evaluative questions containing key words from the assessment standards.

### ***3.5.2. Students' and Teachers' Attitudes towards the Use of Exemplar Feedback***

The majority of students and teachers held positive attitudes towards the use of exemplar feedback to overcome the difficulties students face in essay based assessment. They, also, welcome its use in their learning and teaching practices. They thought that exemplars can make essay exams easier for their students because they illustrate what teachers' expect in exams. Besides, they value the crucial importance of supplying students with their past exam copies as a way to help them learn from their past mistakes and overcome them. These findings are highly consistent with Howie, Lightfoot, and Dickson (2017) whose study results revealed that students have had positive attitudes towards the use of exemplar feedback. The present study added that teachers, also, have positive attitudes towards the use of exemplar feedback.

### ***3.5.3. Students' Change of Attitudes towards the Use of Exemplars as they Progress in their Studies***

Students seem to develop more interest in analysing exemplars as they move through the grades or levels of licence studies and reach peak interest in master one; whereas, when students reach master two, they seem to have slightly less positive attitudes about exemplars use.

### ***3.5.4. The Impact of Exemplar Feedback on Students' Affect, Self Regulation and Achievement***

The analysis of the student questionnaire and the teacher questionnaire proved that exemplar feedback is beneficial for boosting students' affect, self-regulation and achievement.

When learners notice their teachers' fair assessment criteria through the use of exemplars, they feel more motivated to study. Besides, they enhance their self-efficacy and become certain that their teachers are not subjective, strict, or unfair. On the contrary, they start to trust that their teachers do their best to help them improve; this realisation contributes in decreasing their exam anxiety and helps them prepare well for the exams. Exemplars improve students writing style; they allow students to learn new ways of expressing their ideas and enrich their vocabulary. Moreover, exemplar feedback encourages self-regulated learners who set learning goals and design learning plans. All the aforementioned advantages of exemplar feedback help learners improve their performance in examinations. These findings are in line with the results of studies by Grainger, Heck, and Carey (2018), Scoles et al. (2013), Wimshurst and Manning (2013), and Newlyn and Spencer (2010).

### ***3.5.5. The Accommodating Implementation of Exemplar Feedback***

Students in all licence levels and students in master one favour the use of dialogic approach to exemplar-feedback use. They agree that their teachers should introduce exemplars to them before they engage them in practice activities or exercises. That is, they value their teachers' direct preparation in the use of exemplars by, first, discussing the criteria embedded in them, and then solving practice activities or exercises. On the contrary, students in master two, who have the most experience in essay-based assessment, prefer to solve exercises or practice activities before being introduced to exemplars. That is to say, they favour to analyse exemplars implicitly without their teachers' verbal explanation. Similarly, the bigger part of teachers favoured the scaffolded use of exemplar feedback in which exemplars serve as an immediate scaffold for learners who are assisted in analysing exemplars in different ranges of qualities and recognising criteria embedded in them through comparing and contrasting their answers with the provided models.

**Conclusion**

The present chapter presented the practical part of the study and investigated students' and teachers' attitudes towards the use of exemplar feedback and its ability to overcome the difficulties in essay-based assessment. It, also, explored current practices of exemplar feedback and identified the impact of exemplar feedback on students' affect, self-regulation, and achievement in the context of teaching and learning at the Department of English at the University of Mohammed Seddik Benyahia, Jijel. The analysis of the teacher and the student questionnaires showed the positive attitudes both teachers and students held towards the use of exemplar feedback despite the fact that it was not frequently applied in their teaching and learning practices. Moreover, an increase in the students' positive attitudes was noticed as they passed through the levels from licence to master one. However, master two students have slightly less positive attitudes with regard to the utility of exemplars. It, also, revealed that exemplar feedback had positive impact on students' affect, self-regulation, and achievement.

## **General Conclusion**

1. Putting it altogether
2. Pedagogical Recommendations
3. Limitations of the Study
4. Suggestions for Further Research



## **General Conclusion**

### **1. Putting it altogether**

The present study explores teachers' and students' attitudes towards the use of exemplar feedback and its current practice at the University of Mohammed Seddik Benyahia. This study comprises two parts, a theoretical one and a practical one.

The theoretical part is, in turn, divided into two chapters. The first chapter puts under scrutiny the concept of exemplar feedback that emerged in the field of education in order to foster students' awareness of assessment criteria. It consists in the provision of samples of previous exam copies to prepare students for assessment tasks. For an effective exemplar-feedback use, teachers should introduce a minimum of three annotated exemplars to students in different dimensions of quality ranging from high to average to poor quality. Moreover, in order to discuss exemplars, teachers can select to introduce them to their students before or after engaging them in practice activities following dialogic or scaffolded approaches to exemplar-feedback use.

The second chapter explores essay-based assessment and defines assessment as a curial activity in education that measures students' competences. It can vary based on its intention, purpose, and interpretation. One way for measuring students' competences is through the use of essays which are pieces of writing that containing an introduction, a body, and a conclusion. They can be organized following different patterns of organization such as exemplification, narration, description, process, cause and effect, comparison and contrast, classification, and argumentation. Moreover, the criteria followed to assess essays include respecting the unity as well as the organization of ideas to cover the main idea. Essay-based assessment can be difficult to write and assess; however, it is a valid tool of assessment that has positive effects on students.

The second section of the study is devoted to the practical part of this study. It revealed the infrequent use of exemplar feedback in the context of the University of Mohammed Seddik Benyahia. Teachers introduce to students a limited number of exemplars in a limited range of quality and ask students close-ended questions as a way for discussing exemplars. This procedure is insufficient because few exemplars cannot explain all the assessment criteria in a subject matter for students. Despite the limited use of exemplar feedback, the majority of students and teachers have positive attitudes towards the usefulness of exemplar feedback. Students, on the other hand, have varied attitudes, but they tend to develop better attitudes as they move from L1 to M1. Still, their positive attitudes tend to decrease to some degree when they reach to M2. The present study showed the positive impact exemplars can have on students' affect, self-regulated learning and achievement.

## **2. Pedagogical Recommendations**

Based on the reported findings, a number of pedagogical recommendations are suggested in terms of the number and quality of exemplars that should be supplied to students, annotation and discussion of exemplars.

- a) Teachers should present to students a minimum of three to five exemplars with different ranges of quality (high, average, and low) to enrich their understanding of assessment criteria and standards.
- b) Teachers should add explanatory comments (annotations) to the exemplars so that the assessment criteria embedded in them become comprehensible by students.
- c) Teachers should revise and update exemplars periodically to meet the needs of their students.
- d) Teachers should follow a flexible approach by asking students open-ended questions about the criteria found in the exemplars

- e) In the process of discussing exemplars, teachers should guarantee full students' participation where they can ask questions and express their point of views towards the exemplars.
- f) Teachers should encourage students to learn from their mistakes or other students' mistakes through the use of exemplars.

### **3. Limitations of the Study**

The present study confronted some obstacles that harmed its successful implementation and resulted in certain limitations.

- a) The present study cannot make cause and result relationships due to its descriptive nature.
- b) Exemplar feedback is a recently suggested concept. Many phenomena related to it are still not explored such as its conceptualization and implementation.
- c) The research could not make sure about the respondents' real identity because the questionnaire was submitted online and answered by volunteers.

### **4. Suggestions for Further Research**

Based on the insights gained from this study, it is noteworthy to suggest some recommendations for future research in the field of TEFL.

- a) In order to collect better insights on the effectiveness of exemplars, it is suggested that researchers opt for an experimental research to test the impact of annotated exemplars on students' experiences in essay-based assessment in which the experimental group should be given annotated exemplars ranging from poor to high quality, and the control group should be introduced to the teacher's marking guide only.
- b) Future researchers are encouraged to investigate the effectiveness of different approaches to exemplar-feedback use such as scaffolded and dialogic approaches.

- c) Other types of research include giving students exemplars and asking them to evaluate them at home.

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## Appendix1

### Student Questionnaire

Dear student,

We kindly invite you to answer this questionnaire which aims at investigating attitudes and current practices of exemplar feedback in essay-based assessment.

Your responses shall be treated anonymously and remain completely confidential. Please tick the appropriate answers or write full statement answers where necessary. Thank you in advance for your cooperation and for the time devoted to answering this questionnaire.

**Prepared by:**

KITOUNI Amira

#### Key Definitions

1. Exemplars are students' papers from previous exams presented by teachers to foster understanding of assessment standards and criteria.
2. Feedback is information provided by a teacher to a learner in order to improve his/her understanding or performance in a given subject matter.
3. Assessment is the act of engaging learners in assignments, tests or examinations in order to gather information about their progress and achievement in a subject matter.

#### Section One: General Information

1. What is your level?

- a) First-year licence
- b) Second-year licence
- c) Third-year licence
- d) Master one
- e) Master two

## Section Two: Essay- Based Assessment

2. How do you rate your knowledge of assessment criteria of essays?

a) Poor

b) Fair

c) Good

d) Very Good

e) Excellent

3. How often do you have essays in your exams?

a) Never  b) Rarely  c) Sometimes  d) Often  e) Always

4. How difficult (1) or easy (5) is it to answer in an essay exam?

Very Easy

Very Difficult

1

2

3

4

5

5. Generally speaking, are you pleased with the marks you receive on your essay in exams?

a) Yes

b) No

Please justify your answer .....

6. Which type (s) of essay proves difficult for you to write in the exams? (You can tick more than one answer)

a) Classification

b) Narration

c) Argumentation

d) Cause and effect

e) Comparison and contrast

7. When you write an essay in exams you:

- a) Focus more on form (grammar, vocabulary, organization) than content (required or precise information).
- b) Focus more on content than form.
- c) Give equal importance to form and content.

8. Rate the difficulty of the following problems from 1 (most difficult) to 7 ( least difficult)

- a) Knowing what the teacher expects.
- b) Understanding the exam question.
- c) Knowing how to express yourself using English.
- d) Effective management of exam time.
- e) Feeling afraid of teacher's negative evaluation.
- f) Feeling anxious about exams.
- g) Feeling unconfident about your ability to succeed.

9. Which other problem (s) do you face when you have exams based on essays?

.....

### **Section Three: Current Practice of Exemplar Feedback**

10. When does your teacher provide you with feedback about his/ her assessment criteria?

- a) Before exams.
- b) After exams.
- c) Both before and after exams.

11. How many teachers usually supply you with other students' exam papers (exemplars) to prepare you for your own essay exams?

- a) All
- b) Most
- c) Some

d) Few

e) None

**If your answer is None, then Skip questions 12 to 14**

12. When your teacher introduces other students' exam copies (exemplars), he/she: (you can tick more than one answer)

a) Underlines important terms.

b) Highlights essential elements.

c) Writes key words and definitions in the margin.

d) Signals where important information can be found with key words or symbols in the margin.

e) Others, please specify.....

13. How many previous exam papers (exemplars), if any, did your teacher discuss to prepare

for your own essay exams?

a) 1 or 2 for each exam.

b) 3 or 4 for each exam.

c) 5 or more for each exam.

14. What is the quality of previous essay-exam papers that are usually discussed by your teachers before your essay exams? ( you can tick more than one answer)

a) Poor-quality essays

b) Average-quality essays

c) High-quality essays

**Section Four: Attitudes towards Exemplar Feedback**

15. I prefer receiving feedback on answering and grading my essay-exam papers:

a) Before the exam.

b) After the exam.

c) Neutral.

16. Analyzing students' exam papers (exemplars) that explain what my teacher expects in exams will make answering in the exam easier for me.

a) Strongly disagree

b) Disagree

c) Neutral

d) Agree

e) Strongly agree

17. I think that it is better if my teacher brings me my past exam copies to learn from my mistakes?

a) Strongly agree

b) Agree

c) Neutral

d) Disagree

e) Strongly disagree

Please explain your choice.....

.....

18. Knowing that my teacher has assessed his previous students' exam papers fairly will

a) Motivate me to study.

b) Decrease my exam anxiety.

c) Build my confidence that if I work hard, I will have high grades.

19. Analyzing exam papers can: (you can tick more than one answer)

a) Enrich my vocabulary

b) Develop my writing style.



- c) Help me improve my exam marks.
- d) Enable me to develop a learning plan
- e) Allow me to set learning goals for exams
- f) Enable me to meet the expectations of my teacher

20. Which of the following two procedures would you like to follow in discussing previous exam papers (exemplars)

- a) You, first, analyze exemplars and mark them using the teacher's marking guide. Then, you discuss with your peers the way you have allocated the marks. After that, the teacher shows you the actual mark of each exemplar and explains why he allocated a higher or a lower mark.
- b) You, first, complete a task and interact with your teacher and peers. After that, you analyze exemplars and compare them to your answers with reference to assessment criteria.

**Thank You for Your Contribution**

## Appendix2

### Teacher Questionnaire

Dear Teacher,

We kindly invite you to answer this questionnaire which aims at investigating attitudes and current practices of exemplar feedback in essay-based assessment.

Your responses shall be treated anonymously and remain completely confidential. Please tick the appropriate answer (✓) or write full statement answers where necessary. Thank you in advance for your cooperation and for the time devoted to answering this questionnaire.

**Prepared by:**

KITOUNI Amira

### Key Definition

Exemplars are students' papers from previous exams presented by teachers to foster understanding of assessment standards and criteria.

### Section One: General Information

1. Which level (s) have you taught at the Department of English so far? (You can tick more than one answer)
  - a) First-year licence
  - b) Second-year licence
  - c) Third-year licence
  - d) Master one
  - e) Master two

## Section Two: Essay- Based Assessment

2. How often do you have essays in your exams?

b) Always

c) Often

d) Sometimes

e) Rarely

f) Never

3. Do you think that students are well aware of the assessment criteria of essays?

a) Yes

b) No

c) Somehow

Please justify you answer.....

4. On which aspect (s) do focus more when assessing essays?

a) Focus more on form (grammar, vocabulary, organization) than content (required or precise information).

g) Focus more on content than form.

h) Give equal importance to form and content.

5. Which type (s) of essay proves difficult for students to write in the exams? (You can tick more than one answer)

f) Classification

g) Narration

h) Argumentation

i) Cause and effect

j) Comparison and contrast

6. Which of the following problematic to students when they write essays in exam questions? (you can tick more than one answer)

- a) Knowing what you expect of them.
- b) Understanding the exam question.
- c) Knowing how to express themselves using English.
- d) Effective management of exam time.
- e) Feeling afraid of teacher's negative evaluation.
- f) Feeling anxious about exams.
- g) Feeling unconfident about their ability to succeed.
- h) Others, please specify.....

### Section Three: Current Practice of Exemplar Feedback

7. When do you provide you with feedback about your assessment criteria?

- d) Before exams.
- e) After exams.
- f) Both before and after exams.

8. Do you bring your current students' or other students' exam papers from previous exams (exemplars) to prepare students for essay exams?

- a) Yes
- b) No

**If your answer is No, then Skip questions 9 to 13**

9. When you introduce exemplars, you :(you can tick more than one answer)

- a) Underline important terms.
- b) Highlight essential elements.
- c) Writer key words and definitions in the margin.

d) Signal where important information can be found with key words or symbols in the margin.

e) Others, please specify.....

10. How many exemplars, if any, did discuss with students to prepare them for their essay exams?

d) 1 or 2 for each exam.

e) 3 or 4 for each exam.

f) 5 or more for each exam.

11. What is the quality of exemplars that you usually discuss with students before their essay exams? ( you can tick more than one answer)

a) Poor-quality essays

b) Average-quality essays

c) High-quality essays

12. What are the steps you usually follow in the process of discussing exemplars? ( You can tick more than one answer)

13. Which questions (s) do you ask students in the process of discussing exemplars? (You can tick more than one answer)

a) Evaluative questions containing key words from the assessment standards.

b) Open-ended questions.

#### Section Four: Attitudes towards Exemplar Feedback

14. Analyzing students' exam papers (exemplars) that explain what my teacher expects in exams will make answering in the exam easier for me.

a) Strongly disagree  b) disagree  c) Neutral  d) Agree  e) Strongly agree

15. Supplying students with their past exam copies enable them to learn from my mistakes?

a) Yes

b)No

c) Neutral

Please explain your choice.....

.....

16. When students notice through discussing exemplars teachers has assess students' exam papers fairly, they will:(You can tick more than one answer)

d) Motivate me to study.

e) Decrease my exam anxiety.

f) Build my confidence that if I work hard, I will have high grades.

17. Analyzing exam papers can help students in: (you can tick more than one answer)

a) Enriching their vocabulary

b) Developing their writing style.

c) Helping them improve their exam marks.

d) Enable them to develop a learning plan

e) Allow them to set learning goals for exams

f) Enable them to meet the expectations of their teacher

g) Others, please specify.....

18. Which of the following two procedures would you like to follow in exemplar?

a) You, first, ask students to analyze exemplars and mark them using your marking guide.

Then, they discuss with you and their peers the way they have allocated the marks. After that, you show them the actual mark of each exemplar and explains why you allocated a higher or a lower mark.

b) You, first, ask students to complete a task and interact you teacher and their peers. After that, they analyze exemplars and compare them to their answers with reference to assessment criteria.

**Thank You for Your Contribution**

## ملخص

تبحث هذه الدراسة في مواقف الأساتذة والطلبة اتجاه استخدام طريقة التغذية الراجعة النموذجية في التغلب على صعوبة التقييم في الاختبارات القائمة على كتابة المقالات، كما حاولت اكتشاف الممارسة الحالية للتغذية الراجعة النموذجية وتأثيرها على الطلبة من ناحية التنظيم والإنجاز. تم وضع فرضيتين في هذه الدراسة، الفرضية الأولى تقول بأن استخدام التغذية الراجعة النموذجية سيكون موضع ترحيب من قبل الأساتذة والطلبة من المستويات الخمسة (الأولى ليسانس، الثانية ليسانس، الثالثة ليسانس، الأولى ماستر، الثانية ماستر)، أما الفرضية الثانية تقول أنه كلما زاد اكتساب الطلاب للخبرة في كتابة وإنتاج المقالات كلما قلت حاجتهم إلى التغذية الراجعة النموذجية. لاختبار هاتين الفرضيتين، تم إجراء استبيانين عبر الإنترنت، الاستبيان الأول موجه للطلبة تم إجرائه على 250 طالبًا من المستويات الخمسة، والاستبيان الثاني موجه للأساتذة تم إجرائه على 18 أستاذًا دائمًا، وقد تم استخدام العينة الطبقية حيث تم توزيع الاستبيان على 50 طالبًا من كل مستوى وهذا من أجل السماح بتمثيل متساوي لطلبة كل مستوى ومقارنة النتائج. أظهرت النتائج أن الأساتذة والطلبة لديهم مواقف إيجابية تجاه استخدام التغذية الراجعة النموذجية، لكنهم لم يجربوها بكامل إمكاناتها لأن استخدامها لم يكن مناسبًا نسبيًا، ولم يتم تطبيقها في التحضير للاختبارات على نطاق واسع، بالإضافة إلى ذلك بدأ أن الطلاب كلما وصلوا لمستوى أعلى كلما زاد اهتمامهم بالتغذية الراجعة النموذجية باستثناء طلبة السنة الثانية ماستر الذين أظهروا مواقف أقل إيجابية حول هذا الموضوع، ويعتقد كل من الأساتذة والطلبة بأن التغذية الراجعة النموذجية مفيدة للطلبة حيث أنها تحفزهم وتمكنهم من تلبية توقعات معلمهم.

الكلمات المفتاحية: طريقة التغذية الراجعة، طريقة التغذية الراجعة النموذجية، التقييم عبر المقالة

## Résumé

La présente étude a examiné les attitudes des enseignants et des élèves à l'égard de l'efficacité de la rétroaction exemplaire pour surmonter la difficulté de l'évaluation par dissertation. Il tente également d'explorer la pratique actuelle de la rétroaction exemplaire et l'impact infecte l'affect des exemples, l'autorégulation et la réussite des élèves. Deux hypothèses sont avancées ; le premier prédit que l'utilisation de commentaires exemplaires serait bien accueillie par les enseignants et les étudiants des cinq niveaux, qu'il s'agisse d'étudiants de licence de première année, de licence, deuxième année, licence de troisième année, master-un ou de master-deux. Le second indique que plus les étudiants acquièrent l'expérience en évaluation par dissertation, ils auront moins besoin de commentaires exemplaires. Pour tester ces hypothèses, deux questionnaires en ligne ont été administrés à 250 élèves de tous niveaux et à 18 enseignants permanents. L'échantillon est composé de 50 étudiants de chaque niveau pour permettre une représentation égale des étudiants et une comparaison des résultats. Cette dernière est montrée que les enseignants et les élèves ont des attitudes positives à l'égard de l'utilisation de la rétroaction exemplaire, mais ils ne l'ont pas expérimenté à plein potentiel car son utilisation est relativement inadéquate et elle n'est pas appliquée dans la préparation d'examens à grande échelle. De plus, les étudiants semblent plus intéressés à recevoir des commentaires exemplaires à mesure qu'ils réussissent à des niveaux plus élevés, par contre les étudiants de deuxième année master ont des attitudes moins positives à ce sujet. Par cela, les enseignants et leurs élèves estiment que des commentaires exemplaires favorisent l'apprentissage des élèves, et permettent à la fin de répondre aux attentes des enseignants et améliorent leur rendement.

Mots clés: rétroaction, rétroaction exemplaire, évaluation basée sur un essai