

**Assessment for Learning as a Means to  
Promote Students' Writing Proficiency**

**Paula Joana Katchi Cravo**

**Relatório de Estágio de Mestrado  
em Ensino de Inglês  
no 3º Ciclo do Ensino Básico e no Ensino Secundário**

**Versão corrigida e melhorada após a sua defesa pública**

**Janeiro, 2023**

Relatório de Estágio apresentado para cumprimento dos requisitos  
necessários à obtenção do grau de Mestre em Mestrado em ensino de Inglês  
no 3º ciclo do ensino básico e no ensino secundário realizado sob a  
orientação científica de  
Professora Doutora Carolyn Leslie

*Dedicatória pessoal*

*Ao meu marido e aos meus dois filhos que me acompanharam no desenvolvimento deste estudo.*

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

I thank Professora Doutora Lili Cavaleiro for triggering my interest on the topic, and first outline the work I came to develop for my final report. I thank Professora Sílvia Fortes for all her valuable advice and open-minded attitude during my practicum. I thank deeply Professora Doutora Carolyn Leslie, whose though-provoking questions, acute considerations, clear and prompt feedback, and great sense of humour inspired me all the way through the process of developing my practicum and writing this report. Last, but not least, I thank my students who participated in my study in such a positive and mindful way.

# **ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING AS A MEANS TO PROMOTE STUDENTS' WRITING PROFICIENCY**

**PAULA JOANA KATCHI CRAVO**

## **ABSTRACT**

**KEYWORDS:** assessment for learning (AfL), writing proficiency, formative assessment tools, teacher feedback, self-assessment, written tasks, third cycle and secondary level

The present study conducted as part of the practicum during my master's degree studies in teaching English at third cycle of basic school and at secondary level aimed to help enhance students' writing through formative assessment tools and practices. These entailed the use of rubrics, success criteria checklists, students' self-assessment using rubrics and teacher feedback through error correction codes, comments, and the writing of a second draft by students. The study was conducted during a 6 month period, in the second and third term of the school year, and involved two groups of students: 30 ninth-graders and 21 eleventh-graders. As research methodology, small scale classroom-based action research was used, which entailed a qualitative and quantitative approach to data collection. The data collection tools consisted of a teaching journal, questionnaires, the teacher assessment and the students' assessment of the written tasks proposed through the use of rubrics. The written tasks carried out by the ninth-grade students were a book review and a blog comment, and those developed by the 11-grade students were an opinion essay and a letter of application. Results showed that students felt motivated to use the formative assessment tools implemented in class. They revealed ability in self-assessing their work through the use of rubrics and an ability to correct their mistakes. Moreover, the students' responses indicated that they felt competent in writing texts such as those proposed and they acknowledged that their writing, in general had improved. Collaborative co-construction of the writing rubrics specific for the tasks, which could lead to students' greater understanding of the rubrics remains, an area for further research. Results of the study may encourage English teachers to implement assessment for learning as discussed in the present study at the third cycle and at the secondary level, as a means to promote students' writing proficiency.

# **AVALIAÇÃO PARA A APRENDIZAGEM COMO MEIO PARA PROMOVER A PROFICIÊNCIA ESCRITA DOS ALUNOS**

**PAULA JOANA KATCHI CRAVO**

## **RESUMO**

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** avaliação para a aprendizagem, proficiência escrita, ferramentas de avaliação formativa, feedback do professor, autoavaliação, tarefas escritas, terceiro ciclo do ensino básico e nível secundário

O presente estudo realizado como parte do estágio do mestrado em ensino de inglês no terceiro ciclo do ensino básico e no ensino secundário teve como objetivo ajudar a aprimorar a escrita dos alunos por meio de ferramentas e práticas de avaliação formativa. As práticas e as ferramentas consistiram no uso de rubricas, listas de verificação de critérios de sucesso, autoavaliação dos alunos usando rubricas e feedback do professor por meio de códigos de correção de erros, comentários e a redação de uma segunda versão pelos alunos. O estudo foi realizado durante um período de 6 meses, no segundo e terceiro trimestres do ano letivo, e envolveu dois grupos de alunos: 30 alunos do 9º ano e 21 alunos do 11º ano. Como metodologia de pesquisa, utilizou-se a pesquisa-ação em sala de aula em pequena escala, que implicou uma abordagem qualitativa e quantitativa na colheita de dados. Os instrumentos de colheita de dados consistiram num diário de ensino, questionários, a avaliação do professor e a avaliação dos alunos das tarefas escritas propostas, com recurso a rubricas. As tarefas escritas realizadas pelos alunos do 9º ano foram uma resenha de livro e um comentário no blog, e as desenvolvidas pelos alunos do 11º ano foram um ensaio de opinião e uma carta de candidatura a um emprego. Os resultados mostraram que os alunos se sentiram motivados a utilizar os instrumentos de avaliação formativa implementados nas aulas. Eles revelaram capacidade de autoavaliação de seu trabalho através das rubricas e capacidade de corrigir os seus erros. Além disso, as respostas dos alunos indicaram que eles se sentiam competentes para escrever textos como os que foram propostos e reconheceram que a sua escrita, em geral, havia melhorado. A co-construção colaborativa das rubricas específicas para as tarefas, o que poderia levar a uma maior compreensão das rubricas por parte dos alunos, continua a ser uma área para pesquisas futuras. Os resultados do estudo podem incentivar os professores de inglês a implementar a avaliação da aprendizagem, conforme discutido no presente estudo, no terceiro ciclo e no ensino secundário, para promover a proficiência escrita dos alunos.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### INTRODUCTION

1. Area of interest.....	1
2. Aims of the study .....	2
2.1 Students' learning writing goals .....	3
3. The structure of the study .....	4

### CHAPTER I: THEORETICAL CONTEXT

1. Process of writing approach .....	5
2. Learner autonomy .....	5
3. Assessment for learning .....	5
4. Use of rubrics .....	7
5. Use of success criteria checklist .....	9
6. Students' self-assessment .....	9
6.1 Student self-assessment and the use of rubrics .....	11
7. Teacher feedback .....	11
7.1 Teacher feedback through the use of error correction codes .....	12
7.2 Teacher's feedback through the use of rubrics .....	13
Summary .....	14

### CHAPTER II: METHODOLOGY

1. Questionnaire I of the action research .....	17
2. Teacher journal .....	17
3. The practices implemented in class .....	18
3.1 Draft 1 of written assignments.....	19
3.1.1 Pre-writing activities .....	19
3.1.2 Use of success criteria guidelines and success criteria checklists .....	19
3.2 Class feedback and individual feedback .....	20
3.3 Teacher formative assessment vs students' self-assessment .....	21
3.4 Creation and implementation of the rubrics .....	21

3.4.1. The use of rubrics by the teacher .....	23
3.4.2. The use of rubrics for students' self-assessment .....	23
3.5 Draft 2 of written assignments.....	24
3.6. Questionnaires II and III of the action research .....	24

## CHAPTER III: THE PRACTICUM

1. Context .....	26
1.1 The ninth-grade participants .....	26
1.2 The eleventh-grade participants .....	27
2. Observation for learning .....	27
3. My action research .....	28
3.1 Results of questionnaire 1 .....	29
3.2 Ninth-grade written task 1, a book or film review .....	34
3.2.1 Class feedback on draft 1 of the ninth-grade students' reviews .....	34
3.2.2 Results of written task 1, <i>a book or film review</i> by 9 <sup>th</sup> grade students .....	35
3.2.3 Personalized feedback through the use of the error correction codes, individual feedback, and writing of the second draft of the review.....	36
3.2.4 Teacher's assessment of second draft and comparison with the first draft .....	37
3.2.5 Distribution of the second questionnaire to the ninth-grade students .....	38
3.3 Ninth-grade written task 2, a blog comment .....	41
3.3.1 Class feedback on draft 1 of the ninth-grade students' blog comment .....	41
3.3.2 Results of written task 2, <i>a blog comment</i> by 9 <sup>th</sup> grade students .....	41
3.3.3 Personalized feedback through the use of the error correction codes, individual feedback, and writing of the second draft of the blog comment .....	42
3.3.4 Teacher's assessment of second draft and comparison with the first draft .....	43
3.3.5 Distribution of the third questionnaire to the ninth-grade students .....	44
Summary of results of written task 1 and written task 2 by the ninth-grade students .....	47
3.4 Eleventh-grade written task 1, an opinion essay .....	48



3.4.1 Class feedback on draft 1, of the eleventh-grade students' opinion essay.....	48
3.4.2 Results of written task 1, <i>an opinion essay</i> by 11 <sup>th</sup> grade students .....	49
3.4.3 Personalised feedback through the use of the error correction codes, individual feedback, and writing of the second draft of the opinion essay .....	50
3.4.4 Teacher's assessment of second draft and comparison with the first draft .....	51
3.4.5 Distribution of the second questionnaire to the eleventh-grade students .....	52
3.5 Eleventh-grade written task 2, a letter of application .....	55
3.5.1 Class feedback on draft 1 of the eleventh-grade students' letter of application	55
3.5.2 Results of written task 2, a letter of application by 11 <sup>th</sup> grade students.....	55
3.5.3 Personalized feedback through the use of the error correction codes and writing of the second draft of the letter of application .....	56
3.5.4 Teacher's assessment of second draft and comparison with the first draft .....	58
3.5.5 Distribution of the third questionnaire to the eleventh-grade students .....	58
Summary of results of written task 1 and written task 2 by the eleventh-grade students .	61

#### CHAPTER IV: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

1. Aims, summary of findings and discussion .....	63
2. The importance of the action research for my own professional development.....	68
3. Relevance of the study for other teaching contexts and suggestions for future research.....	69
4. Final conclusion .....	70

REFERENCES .....	71
------------------	----

#### LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: <i>Stages, Procedures and Tools in Action Research</i> .....	16
Table 2: <i>Written tasks proposed</i> .....	18
Table 3: <i>Questionnaire 1: part 1 (9<sup>th</sup> grade and 11<sup>th</sup> grade students)</i> .....	29
Table 4: <i>Questionnaire 1: part 5 (9<sup>th</sup> grade and 11<sup>th</sup> grade)</i> .....	30
Table 5: <i>Questionnaire 1: part 6 (9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade)</i> .....	31
Table 6: <i>Questionnaire 1: part 7 (9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade)</i> .....	32
Table 7: <i>Questionnaire 1: part 7 (continuation, 9<sup>th</sup> grade and 11<sup>th</sup> grade)</i> .....	33

## Ninth-grade written task one

Table 8: <i>Teacher’s assessment and self-assessment of 9<sup>th</sup> grade written task 1</i> .....	35
Table 9: <i>Difference between teacher’s assessment and self-assessment in the different categories of the rubric for the book/ film review</i> .....	35
Table 10: <i>Difference between teacher’s assessment of the first and the second draft in the different categories of the rubric for the book/ film review</i> .....	38
Table 11: <i>Ninth-grade students’ use of the tools provided during their writing process</i> .....	38
Table 12: <i>Ninth-grade students’ perception of feedback</i> .....	39
Table 13: <i>Ninth- grade students’ use of rubrics</i> .....	40

## Ninth-grade written task two

Table 14: <i>Teacher’s assessment and self-assessment of 9<sup>th</sup> grade written task 2</i> .....	41
Table 15: <i>Difference between teacher’s assessment and self-assessment in the different categories of the rubric for blog comment</i> .....	42
Table 16: <i>Difference between teacher’s assessment of the first and the second draft in the different categories of the rubric for the blog comment</i> .....	43
Table 17: <i>Ninth-grade students’ use of the tools provided during their writing process</i> .....	44
Table 18: <i>Ninth-grade students’ perception of feedback</i> .....	45
Table 19: <i>Ninth-grade students’ use of rubrics</i> .....	46
Table 20: <i>Ninth-grade students’ perceptions of writing blog comments vs writing film reviews</i> .....	47

## Eleventh-grade written task one

Table 21: <i>Teacher’s assessment and self-assessment of 11th grade written task 1</i> .....	49
Table 22: <i>Difference between teacher’s assessment and self-assessment in the different categories of the rubric for essay of opinion</i> .....	50
Table 23: <i>Difference between teacher’s assessment of the first and the second draft in the different categories of the rubric for the opinion essay</i> .....	51
Table 24: <i>Eleventh-grade students’ use of the tools provided during their writing process</i> .....	52
Table 25: <i>Eleventh-grade students’ perception of feedback</i> .....	53
Table 26: <i>Eleventh-grade students’ use of rubrics</i> .....	54

## Eleventh-grade written task two

Table 27: <i>Teacher’s assessment and self-assessment of 11th grade written task 2</i> ...	55
Table 28: <i>Difference between teacher’s assessment and self-assessment in the different categories of the rubric for the letter of application</i> .....	56
Table 29: <i>Difference between teacher’s assessment of the first and the second draft in the different categories of the rubric for the letter of application</i> .....	58
Table 30: <i>Eleventh-grade students’ use of the tools provided during their writing process</i> .....	59
Table 31: <i>Eleventh-grade students’ perception of feedback</i> .....	60
Table 32: <i>Eleventh-grade students’ use of rubrics</i> .....	60
Table 33: <i>Eleventh-grade students’ perceptions of writing opinion essays vs letter of application</i> .....	61

## APPENDICES

Appendix A.1: The CEFR illustrative descriptor scales: communicative language competences for B1 level .....	76
Appendix A.2: The CEFR illustrative descriptor scales: communicative language competences for B2 level .....	77
Appendix B.1: Questionnaire 1 – part A .....	78
Appendix B.2: Questionnaire 1 – part B .....	80
Appendix C.1: Pre-writing activity – writing a review .....	81
Appendix C.2: Pre-writing activity – writing a review .....	82
Appendix C.3: Pre-writing activity – writing a review .....	83
Appendix D: Pre-writing activity – writing a blog comment .....	85
Appendix E: Pre-writing activity – writing an opinion essay .....	86
Appendix F: Pre-writing activity – writing a letter of application.....	87
Appendix G.1: Written Task 1 for ninth-grade: a book /film review & success criteria guidelines and success criteria checklist.....	88
Appendix G.2: Written task 2 for the ninth-grade: a blog comment & success criteria guidelines and success criteria checklist .....	90
Appendix G.3: Written task 1 for eleventh-grade: an opinion essay & success criteria guidelines and success criteria checklist .....	92
Appendix G.4: Written task 2 for eleventh-grade: a letter of application & success criteria guidelines and success criteria checklist .....	94

Appendix H.1: Class feedback to book reviews (PowerPoint slides) .....	97
Appendix H.2: Class feedback to book reviews (PowerPoint slides).....	98
Appendix I: Class feedback to blog comments (PowerPoint slide) .....	99
Appendix J.1: Class feedback to opinion essays (PowerPoint slides) .....	100
Appendix J.2: Class feedback to opinion essays (PowerPoint slides) .....	101
Appendix J.3: Class feedback to opinion essays (PowerPoint slides) .....	102
Appendix K: Class feedback to letter of application (PowerPoint slides) .....	103
Appendix L: Error correction code .....	104
Appendix M.1: Rubric for written task 1 for the ninth-grade: book/film .....	105
Appendix M.2: Rubric for written task 2 for the ninth-grade: blog comment.....	106
Appendix M.3: Rubric for written task 1 for the eleventh-grade: opinion .....	107
Appendix M.4: Rubric for written task 2 for the eleventh-grade: letter of application...	108
Appendix N: Lead-in: image used to foster students' understanding of rubric .....	109
Appendix O.1: Questionnaire II – for 9 <sup>th</sup> grade students .....	110
Appendix O.2: Questionnaire II – for 11 <sup>th</sup> grade students .....	111
Appendix P.1: Questionnaire III – 9 <sup>th</sup> grade students .....	114
Appendix P.2: Questionnaire III – 11 <sup>th</sup> grade students .....	116
Appendix Q.1: Sample 1 of a film review .....	118
Appendix Q.2: Sample 2 of a film review.....	119
Appendix R.1: Sample 1 of blog comment .....	120
Appendix S.1: Sample 1 of an opinion essay .....	121
Appendix S.2: Sample 2 of an opinion essay .....	122
Appendix T.1: Sample 1 of a letter of application.....	123
Appendix T.2: Sample 2 of a letter of application.....	124

## INTRODUCTION

In an increasingly interconnected world, written communication, carried out at a growing speed plays a major role in networking, and in voicing one's opinion, in various contexts. Having good writing skills seems, therefore crucial. Vance (2021a) argues that the full mastery of a language requires the individual's competence in reading, speaking, listening and writing, as these are interrelated, since the use of the language generally entails the practice of more than one skill. English teachers should, therefore, according to the same author, promote the development of the four skills referred to in the EFL classroom. The development of writing was central in the present study.

What is the role of English teachers in fostering students' development of their written skills? Vance (2021b) points out that teaching writing often entails teachers adopting the role of a facilitator, in which they help students throughout the writing process. My interest in designing and putting into practice assessment tools to support my students' development of their writing skills was the foundation of the present study conducted as part of the practicum during my master's degree studies in teaching English at secondary level.

### **1. Area of interest**

My interest in assessment for learning, which aims at improving learning through the use of assessment interconnected to the learning and teaching process (MacDowell et al., 2009) related to writing stems from two main concerns that I have held over my years of teaching. These were my capacity to conduct a lengthy process of correcting students' written work, which involved mainly writing the correct words over students' mistakes, and the students' real benefit from that correction. Firstly, such a time-consuming task of correcting students' work has led me to provide fewer writing opportunities than my students need. Secondly, I have realized that most of the time students overlook the corrections and are mostly concerned with their final qualitative or quantitative grade awarded taking into account students' performance in linguistic aspects, organisation and ideas. Thus, the teacher's effort in the correction seems useless as students do not seem to learn from the correction of their work done by their teacher. In addition, students, understandably, do not seem motivated to rewrite a second draft of their work, if they simply have to rewrite it incorporating my corrections, without reflecting on their mistakes. Lastly, this problem prevents most students from having a portfolio of high-quality assignments, which would bring them satisfaction and to which they could refer to for future assignments, or even future needs outside school. My concern led me to ponder how to best enhance my students' involvement in their learning process, and how to lead students to strongly benefit from

teacher feedback. Furthermore, my belief that writing can and should be taught, and that students should not write without being explicitly taught and given the necessary tools led me to consider ways to guide my students in their writing process.

As pointed out by Black et al. (2003), the term *assessment for learning (AfL)* has become a usual substitute for *formative assessment*, and it is defined as “a process, one in which information about learning is evoked and then used to modify the teaching and learning activities in which teachers and students are engaged” (p.122). In this report the two terms referred to are used interchangeably and focused on written assessment. It is claimed that the concept of AfL enhances learning by informing the student about his or her improvement throughout their learning progress (Oscarson, 2009) and its practical recommendations shed light on my concern. I gained the belief that the use of appropriate tools would first of all help my learners learn to write different types of texts, and secondly, contribute to a shared responsibility of assessment, by teacher and students. Ultimately, the use of selected tools would lead to students’ increased autonomy and writing proficiency.

## **2. Aims of the study**

The ability to write correctly and appropriately in different genres is vital to gain respect and credibility from others. This study, whose main research question is “How can assessment for learning promote students’ writing proficiency?” was part of the practicum for the Master’s degree studies in Teaching English in the third cycle and at the secondary level. It was carried out in a private school in the outskirts of Lisbon and it aimed at preparing students to communicate efficiently through writing.

Written communication in English is widely used, and students may wish to study abroad in the near future, or work in a foreign country later in their lives. Students need, therefore, to be equipped to respond well in various written communication contexts. Indeed, English teachers play an important role in promoting learners’ proficiency, which enables them to use the English language to express meaning appropriately. However, it is accepted that a common concern among language teachers is the lengthy process of correcting students’ written work, which generally is unrealistic, thus hindering them from setting written tasks more regularly.

The aim of this research was to conduct an action research study, over a period of five months in the academic school year 2021-2022 targeted at helping a group of thirty 9<sup>th</sup> grade students and a group of twenty-one 11<sup>th</sup> grade students improve their writing proficiency through the implementation of AfL. The study proposed aims to use tools that were associated with AfL and that could facilitate the correction of students’ written work and could

ultimately help them to become more autonomous in the development of their written skills.

The setting of students' writing goals addressed below helped to determine students' writing proficiency. That is, their ability to achieve those goals was considered, in the present study, a sign of proficiency in those areas.

## **2.1 Students' learning writing goals**

The exit level of the ninth-grade aims at the B1 level of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (Council of Europe, 2020) according to the *Aprendizagens Essenciais / Articulação com o perfil dos alunos* (Direção Geral da Educação, 2018a). The self-assessment grid for written production at B1 level consists of the following: "I can produce straightforward connected text on topics that are familiar or of personal interest" (Council of Europe, 2020, p.178). Moreover, concerning written and online interaction it states:

I can interact about experiences, events, impressions and feelings, provided I can prepare beforehand. I (...) can respond to comments and questions in some detail. (Council of Europe, 2020, p.179)

Eleventh-grade English teaching aims at the B2 level of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (Council of Europe, 2020) according to the *Aprendizagens Essenciais / Articulação com o perfil dos alunos* (Direção Geral da Educação, 2018b). Along with the Portuguese official document mentioned, the CEFR should to be addressed. The Council of Europe (2020) proposes four modes of communication, which are reception, production, interaction and mediation. For the present study, which is aimed at promoting students' written skills, written production and written interaction are the main components developed for both age groups.

Firstly, written production entails, according to the Council of Europe (2020), creative writing, reports and essays. Its self-assessment grid at B2 level states the following:

I can produce clear, detailed texts on a wide range of subjects related to my interests. I can produce an essay or report, passing on information or giving reasons in support of or against a particular point of view. (p.178)

Written interaction, on the other hand, involves similar language to oral language. This encompasses two scales, as mentioned in the Council of Europe (2020): "correspondence", which is centered on an interpersonal exchange and "notes, messages and forms" that entail information transfer (p.83). Its self-assessment states:

I can interact with several people, linking my contributions to theirs and handling misunderstandings or disagreements, provided the other avoid complex language and



are generally co-operative. I can highlight the significance of facts, events and experiences, justify ideas and support collaboration. (Council of Europe, 2020, p.179)

In addition, the CEFR (2020) presents descriptor scales for the following aspects of communicative language competences: linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence and pragmatic competence. Firstly, linguistic competence includes such aspects which are important for writing: “general linguistic range”, “vocabulary range”, “grammatical accuracy”, “vocabulary control” and “orthographic control”. Secondly, the sociolinguistic competence refers to “sociolinguistic appropriateness. Lastly, the pragmatic competence includes, among other aspects, “coherence and cohesion”, which are other aspects undoubtedly relevant for the written skill. The descriptor scales for levels B1 (aimed for the ninth-grade students) and B2 (aimed for the eleventh-grade students) which are displayed respectively in Appendices A.1 and A.2 illustrate the learning goals for the two groups of students, and the progression from one level to the following one. Students’ English writing proficiency indicated in the present study entails students’ ability to use the written English language effectively taking into account the official documents referred to in the present subsection.

The development of students’ written production and written interaction are undoubtedly crucial in today’s communication, which has become fast, varied in subjects, and in target readers. Good English proficiency is therefore a common requirement in different contexts.

### **3. The structure of the study**

The following chapter of this paper includes the literature review which provides background information to support my study. Chapter II describes the methodology used in the action research. The research tools adopted, the procedures used to collect data, and the way data was analysed are explained. Chapter III describes the practicum in detail. The participants of the study and their educational context are referred to, as well as the activities carried out in class. In addition, the data that answers the research questions are clarified and reflected upon. Lastly, the final section of this paper summarises the findings of the research question, discusses results and presents the final conclusion of the study. In addition, it discusses the importance of the action research for my own professional development and suggests future research that could relate to the present study.



## **CHAPTER I: THEORETICAL CONTEXT**

This section begins by reviewing firstly the literature related to the process of writing approach. Secondly, it provides a brief background to AfL. Then it reports on the use of rubrics, success criteria checklist, self-assessment, and teacher feedback in prior studies, offering an explanation of the concepts that are interconnected and relevant for this study.

### **1. Process of writing approach**

The process approach to writing entails the students' focus on the process, while they carry out their written tasks, rather than on the products themselves (Onozawa, 2010). Brown (cited in Onozawa, 2010) suggests that writing involves a thinking process, and the written product results from that thinking process. Onozawa (2010) argues that the writing process typically entails three sequential steps, which are pre-writing, drafting, and revising. However, more steps, such as editing and evaluation can be included in the process.

Raimes (cited in Onozawa, 2010, p.157) points out that in the process of writing students discover new ideas, and exploit new language to express their ideas. Indeed, in contrast to the oral use of the language, which is not possible to undo, writing offers the chance of continuous improvement, by going back and forth, on the same piece of writing, before its final stage. Overall, the process of writing approach requires students to look in depth at the several stages of their written tasks.

### **2. Learner autonomy**

Learner autonomy, referred to as a buzz-word of the 1990s by Dam (2004) is used “to denote learners’ active involvement in and responsibility for their own learning process” (p.1), entailing therefore an ability and willingness to acquire knowledge independently, as well as in co-operation with peers, thus indicating social skills. Benson (2013) suggests that autonomous language learning refers to the learning that takes place outside the context of formal instruction, in which learners have control over aspects of their learning. Benson (2013) argues that the wide availability of resources on the Internet for English language learners at present can drive them to autonomous language learning without the intervention of the teacher. Learner autonomy and formative assessment are closely aligned as both concepts refer to student taking responsibility over his or her learning processes. In addition, learner autonomy and self-assessment are interconnected. Indeed, an autonomous learner is capable of self-assessing his or her work, and self-assessment promotes learner autonomy.

### **3. Assessment for learning**

There is extensive literature that indicates that formative assessment is crucial in promoting learning and learners’ empowerment. Oscarson (2009) advocates that “formative

assessment is often referred to as AfL, and is primarily used to improve learning by giving the student information on his or her learning progress while still learning” (p.62). In other words, formative assessment offers students the chance to understand their own learning stage. Ramaprasad (cited in Black & William, 2009) refers to the three central processes in which formative assessment is grounded: 1- establishing where the learners are in their learning; 2- establishing where they are going; 3- establishing what needs to be done to get them there. These processes lead to students’ learning while assessment takes place.

Formative assessment is often felt by teachers as opposing summative assessment which is “given to determine how much students have learned at a particular point in time, for the purpose of communicating achievement status to others” (Chappuis, 2014, p.4). However, Chappuis demonstrates that formative and summative assessment may work hand in hand. The author points out that on one hand, students’ performance can lead to a shift from an intended formative assessment to summative assessment, if evidence shows that the students have attained the goals set for their level. On the other hand, prior to summative assessment the same task can be used formatively. For example, when a student performs a writing task that is submitted to the teacher, who provides feedback, and this is followed by the students’ revision and final submission (p.5).

The above rationale seems to have been adopted by Portuguese educational policies that, in recent years, have gradually emphasized the relevance of students’ learning process over the final product. Programa de Inglês-Nível de Continuação- 10º,11º e 12º anos (Moreira et al., 2001/2003) recommends that:

More than assessing the product, it is necessary to focus on the monitoring and regulation of the processes that underlie the accomplishment of learning activities along with the analysis of the relationship between knowledge, practices and attitudes. In fact, the set of these elements should be considered through different assessment modes, such as self-assessment, peer assessment, diagnostic assessment, summative assessment, and above all, formative assessment. (p.44, my translation).

The aforementioned suggested practices are varied, giving the teacher the opportunity to use different assessment tools. In line with the official document referred to above, Fernandes et al. (2020), who is responsible for the *Projecto de monitorização, acompanhamento e investigação em avaliação pedagógica* (MAIA project) aiming at pedagogical assessment in Portuguese schools throughout the country, included in their intervention plan the use of formative assessment and the active participation of the students in their learning process as vital actions to put into practice.

Black and William (2009) further point out that the teacher, the peer and the learner share responsibilities in the learning process: “the teacher is responsible for designing and implementing an effective learning environment and the learner is responsible for the learning within that environment” (p.4). The three central processes in which formative assessment is grounded, as suggested by Black and William (2009) and explained above involve different strategies. The tools mentioned in the literature and relevant for the present study are: a) use of success criteria guidelines, and success criteria checklist. This is, the teacher’s clarification of learning intentions, on the one hand, and the students’ understanding of those same learning intentions enables learners to know where they are going; b) use of rubrics for students’ self-assessment and to help them understand what they should do to go further; and lastly c) the teacher’s feedback, through the use of comments and error correction codes, which is essential for facilitating students’ understanding of where they are in their learning stage and how they can improve their work. The tools described fit into the AfL framework, in which learners and the teacher share responsibility in the learning process.

#### **4. Use of rubrics**

*Rubrics* are described by Andrade (1996) as a scoring tool that lists the descriptors for a piece of work and that articulates gradations of quality for each descriptor, from excellent to poor”. As the same author points out, rubrics are useful in teaching and in assessment, by “making teachers’ expectations clear and by showing students how to meet these expectations” (p.2). Indeed, the explicit descriptions of levels of achievement in each category, from the lowest to the highest qualitative score displayed in the rubric indicate what the learner still needs to do to improve his or her work. In addition, according to Andrade (1996), they are teachers’ timesavers, and they help students assess their own work as well as their peers’ work.

The levels of achievement entail, according to Tzagari et al. (2018) standards by which judgements and decisions can be made. Moreover, the same authors claim that “in language assessment we use more than one criterion because no language performance can be properly described with only one criterion” (p.211). That is, a selection of different categories should be part of the rubrics.

Cope and Kalatziz (personal communication, December, 2021) suggest that a rubric involves specifying gradations of quality, that should be neither too many so that the users do not become confused, nor too few, which would limit its use. The authors indicate that three or four levels should be adopted. Moreover, they point out that a clear description of the rating levels, in which each level corresponds to a different degree of success achieved by the

student in his or her task, will lead to reliable scores. Andrade (2005) advises on the use of rubrics to:

orient us towards our goals as teachers. We use them to clarify our learning goals to students, guide our feedback on students' progress towards the goals, and judge final products in terms of the degree to which the goals were met. Like many teachers, I use rubric before, during, and after I deliver instruction, and the benefits are numerous. (p.27)

The use of rubric described above seems to point to formative assessment. In fact, as suggested by Panadero et al. (2013) rubrics may help students to focus more on the learning process. Additionally, Chappuis (2014) specifies the features of an effective rubric to diagnose students' achievement. He advocates for the use of descriptive language, in which the information displayed is accurate, complete and organised. Also, the author advocates the use of general rubrics across tasks so that students internalise the characteristics of quality that apply to their work, and also so that they are not told exactly what to do, which would lead to reduced learning (pp.52-54). Similarly, Chowdhury (2019) suggests that the use of general rubrics may benefit students' acquisition of knowledge and skills useful to perform similar tasks. However, the use of general rubrics is refuted by Andrade (2005), who suggests that teachers should create task-specific rubrics with students to assess students' work, and to avoid students' misunderstandings about the instructions for their assignments.

Furthermore, understanding the way students internalize the levels of achievement should be addressed. Bruno et al. (2016) carried out two case studies over two years, in Portugal, targeted at finding out how students internalize the levels of achievement of Physics and Chemistry, involving two high school students. Observation, interview and documental analysis were used for collecting data. Findings of the study by Bruno et al. (2016) revealed that understanding the levels of achievement is complex, mainly due to their terminology, and that the teacher's role in the discussion of exemplars can have a crucial role in helping students understand the rubrics. The reliability of the study can be, however, pondered upon, due to the reduced number of participants. Likewise, Andrade (2005) argues that indeed good instruction, such as models, feedback and opportunities to ask questions should not be replaced by the use of rubrics, and that these should be used in conjunction.

Considering the application of rubrics in developing students' writing skills, several studies have been carried out. For instance, a study carried out by Andrade and Boulay (2003) involving 397 students from 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades from southern California suggests that a rubric containing criteria such as *ideas* and *content*, *organisation* and *paragraphs* may have helped

middle school students to write an historical fiction essay more effectively. In addition, a study by Kim (2019) aimed at exploring the effects of rubrics in the development of English writing by 19 Korean high school EFL students was carried out, over four rubric-referenced self-assessment lessons. Surveys, interviews, self-assessment diaries and essay self-assessments served as qualitative data. The results of the study indicated that rubric-referenced self-assessment promoted learning, that it was more effective with weaker writers, and that it led students to gain autonomy.

### **5. Use of success criteria checklist**

The use of rubrics described above was referred to as a tool used in formative assessment, since it aims at helping students focus on requirements for the task. Similarly, the use of success criteria checklists can be considered effective tools in formative assessment because they lead students to ensure they fulfill each step required, throughout the writing process.

Rowlands (2007) suggests the use of success criteria checklists. These aim to “list the steps students should take as they are learning a process or highlight the features required for a completed assignment” (p.61). In other words, these lists attempt to help students include the required components, in an organised manner in their task. According to the author, checklists help learners gain confidence and also lead them to greater autonomy while performing their tasks. The author points out that checklists should be made simple and user friendly, so that items in the checklist serve as a reminder of the components or features that students need to take into consideration during the accomplishment of their tasks. Furthermore, Rowlands (2007) suggests that after repeated experiences in using task specific checklists students tend to internalise the steps and no longer need to use checklists in a similar task.

### **6. Students’ self-assessment**

Self-assessment is, according to Oscarson (2009), an essential element of formative assessment, which entails students’ ability to assess their performance, so that they understand what they need to learn and not be dependent on their teacher. Oscarson (2009) puts forward that self-assessing may become more challenging for foreign language learners due to the complexity of the language learning process. In addition, the number of studies concerning self-assessment of language learning in high school is, as observed by Oscarson (2009), scarce. In her study carried out in Sweden, targeted at four classes of secondary students focusing on EFL students’ assessments of their written production and specific writing skills, the author concluded that the students demonstrated competence in self-assessing their

writing, both in group and individually. Moreover, the author concludes that students, in general, were aware of their performance levels. Furthermore, Oscarson (2009) claims that learning is a shared responsibility by teachers and learners. In addition, she suggests that students' own assessments are a genuine and valid complementary source of information on students' learning, and that teachers trained in using self-assessment are better equipped to assess their students' achievement levels.

Regarding students' focus on language skills such as grammar and spelling, when they assess their writing, Oscarson (2009) advocates that their focus mirrors the focus on grammar and spelling carried out in schools. In addition to the language skills mentioned, students may also develop the ability to assess other formal skills, such as punctuation and paragraphing, if they understand their importance, the author suggests. Overall, Oscarson's attempt to implement self-assessment was held as a positive and relevant experience by teachers and students. Also, the study indicates that through training, students become, over time, more, capable to assess their own work correctly, becoming thus increasingly more autonomous.

The learning process in AfL is a shared responsibility between student and teacher. Student ability to self-assess his or her work throughout the different stages is, for that reason, an important aspect to be considered. An autonomous learner reveals "an awareness of the aims and processes of learning and is capable of the critical reflection which syllabuses and curricula frequently require but traditional pedagogical measures rarely achieve" (Bergen, cited in Dam, 2004, p.2). Overall, the student who is competent in self-assessment grows into an autonomous learner, who is capable of participating positively and confidently in his or her academic development.

Milhinhos de Assis, (2012) focused on self-assessment of writing skills in her study that involved three students at a B2 level, during two school terms. It showed that by using self-assessment based on content, accuracy, range, organisation and cohesion, part of the assessment criteria based on the University of Cambridge Examinations marking scheme for the writing paper, there was a strong correlation between peer, self and teacher assessments.

In contrast, a study carried out by Esfandiari and Myford (2013) compared the levels of *severity* of self-assessors, peer-assessors and teacher assessors when rating 188 essays written by university students in Iran. It is relevant to point out that student assessors and teacher assessors participated in a one-hour training session, in which they were informed on how to rate the essays. The study involved the use of a 6-point analytic scale to provide ratings on 15 assessment criteria, applied in a 5-paragraph essay and the results showed that teacher assessors were the most rigorous, while self-assessors were the most lenient.

## **6.1 Student self-assessment and the use of rubrics**

Self-assessment entails students being able to measure their performance. Panadero et al. (2013) suggest that self-assessment, which implies asking the students to self-assess and score their task without the use of a tool is ineffective. Cope and Kalatziz (personal communication, December, 2021) suggest the use of rubrics for self-assessment, which show the student how his or her work is assessed, and leads him, or her to try to assess the work using the same tool. Moreover, the authors address the two key assessment ideas to confirm the efficiency of rubrics, which are validity and reliability. Validity, as pointed out by the authors, entails measuring what it aims to measure, whereas reliability reflect the differences in outcomes of the different students' performances. Andrade (2005) suggests that reliability of rubrics is essential. Likewise, Chappuis (2014, p. 51) indicates that "a good rubric answers the question "where am I going"" by describing in specific terms the features that constitute quality for a given learning target". In addition, the author suggests that a well-designed rubric is helpful to diagnose strengths and areas for improvement, to provide feedback to students who will revise their work, and lastly to help students develop their understanding of quality and their ability to set goals for improvement. In all, it serves as a tool for formative assessment. Thus, qualitative descriptors must be included in the scoring criteria if they are to function formatively to diagnose needs, provide feedback to students, and engage students in self-assessment. In fact, rubrics and self-assessment seem to be a favourable combination.

## **7. Teacher feedback**

In the present section, feedback as a tool in AfL is considered. Firstly, there are a number of principles that should be observed when feedback is provided, which are addressed by Tsagari et al. (2018): any feedback should be personal, age-appropriate and provided as soon as possible. In addition, the author suggests that feedback should be based on criteria understood by both the teacher and the students. Moreover, holding high expectations for all the students and providing them with feedback is vital. Additionally, *feedforward* is proposed by Tsagari et al. (2018), who suggest that students should be provided with a successful model of the task, and they should grasp what they need to do in order to reach a good result. Lastly, feedback should refer to positive and negative aspects, and the teacher should show how improvement could be achieved.

Secondly, it is relevant to understand how the teacher's feedback can contribute to students' learning. Vogt and Froelich (cited in Tsagari et al., 2018) consider that: "effective feedback must support students' learning rather than only judge their learning outcomes.



Feedback must be comprehensible to learners so that they can use it to improve their learning. Feedback should not be a one way phenomenon.” (p.129)

Chappuis (2014) claims that “effective feedback does not do the thinking for the student” (p.109). In other words, students are, according to the author, helped by being provided with tools to solve the problems. Moreover, Chappuis (2014) advises that the action taken by the student in order to overcome the areas of improvement pointed out by the teacher is, in fact, what promotes learning. Tsagari et al. (2018) refer to two terms, which are *feedforward* and *feedback*. The former “looks ahead toward the next task. *Feedforward* as proposed above, offers constructive guidance on how to improve” (p.213). That is, the two terms are interconnected, and ultimately, feedback is meant to trigger students to be active in their learning processes. What tools can the teacher use in the provision of feedback? The use of error correction codes and the feedback through the use of rubrics are suggested and discussed in the next sections.

### **7.1 Teacher feedback through the use of error correction codes**

Error correction codes are the symbols written by the teacher for the areas of improvement in written texts and can be used as a means to provide feedback. Boshier (1990) advocates the importance of editing skills within the writing process, as “the final, clean-up stage in that process” (p. 91) and suggests the use of error correction codes, instead of students being provided the corrections of written errors. The editing based on error correction codes “engages students in a problem-solving approach to error and makes them responsible for their own learning” (Boshier, 1990, p. 88). Furthermore, the author points out that a meaningful context for grammar instruction is provided by focusing on errors from the students’ own writing. Lastly, the editing placed at the final stage of the writing process may release the students from an overconcern with making mistakes, and may free them towards their discovery of meaning (Boshier, 1990).

The use of error correction codes is suggested by Chappuis (2014), and is a possible way to provide feedback to students, as can be seen in a study conducted by Ekinici and Ekinici (2020). The study carried out during eight weeks aimed at finding out the effects of using error correction codes on the development of students’ writing skills. In addition, it looked at understanding students’ perceptions about the use of error correction codes. It involved twenty-five pre-intermediate level EFL students at Ata University in Turkey and the results showed that providing indirect written feedback through error correction codes led to students’ improvement of their writing skills. In general, it helped improve accuracy, but grammar and punctuation were the most strongly benefitted areas. Another important finding



of the study was that students preferred receiving indirect feedback through error correction codes in comparison to direct correction, as it was claimed to be less intimidating for the student, according to Ekinici and Ekinici (2020). The use of correction codes could also be treated by the students as a sort of a game, which tended to be very appealing, due to its challenging feature.

## **7.2 Teacher's feedback through the use of rubrics**

Andrade (2005) indicates that the use of instructional rubrics helps teachers save time. It is commonly accepted that feedback is crucial in students' progress. Andrade (2005) points out that feedback becomes even more useful if students are given specific information about strengths and weaknesses of their tasks. However, it is known that this is extremely time consuming. The author suggests that a well-designed rubric gives teachers the possibility to give individualized feedback in a convenient time frame, by circling boxes on a rubric. Chowdhury (2019) suggests the use of task-specific rubrics, in which detailed characteristics of each dimension are given for a specific task, and which should, according to the author, not be shared with students before submitting their grades.

Moreover, other necessities of using rubrics are pointed out by Chowdhury (2019), such as the need to grade different assignments using the same criteria, the need to make differentiated comments on students' work, the need to help improve students' poor results due to students' failure to complete the assignment, and lastly, the need to respond to students' lack of understanding of the marking criteria used. In all, rubrics may contribute to effective feedback, which will enhance students' learning.

From another perspective, the effect of rubric feedback on students' performance should be considered. What type of rubrics may lead to enhanced learning? Wollenschlager et al. (2016), whose study involved 120 secondary students in Germany, aimed at identifying the decisive factor in making feedback through rubrics effective on student performance, motivation, and in attuning accuracy in science. Three different types of rubric feedback were used. Firstly, the rubric was handed out to the students to make learning goals transparent. Secondly, the rubric was handed out along with information on the students' task performance. Lastly, the rubrics, the information on the students' task performance, and individual cues on how to improve were given to students. Results of this study indicated that it was individual indications on how to improve that led to better performance, and to students perceiving themselves as more competent and more accurate in their self-assessment.

To sum up, the transparency of learning goals in rubrics is not enough, according to the authors. Students improve their performances if they receive personalized indications, in conjunction with rubrics.

### Summary

There will, in the future, be no difference between instruction and assessment because the two elements will be present in the classroom, according to Cope and Kalantziz (2021). They state that: “(...) Assessment will be everything and there won't be instruction separate from assessment.(...). We can embed assessment all the way through learning, and we won't have that distinction anymore”. Cope and Kalantziz (personal communication, December, 2021) seem to foresee assessment as a natural element, always present in the classroom. Moreover, assessment is to become, according to the authors, intertwined in instruction, pointing thus to assessment – with its various tools- functioning as means to learning.

Rubrics, success criteria checklists, self-assessment, feedback, and error correction codes mentioned in the previous sections of this chapter are some of the tools used in formative assessment of writing aimed at supporting students’ learning process.

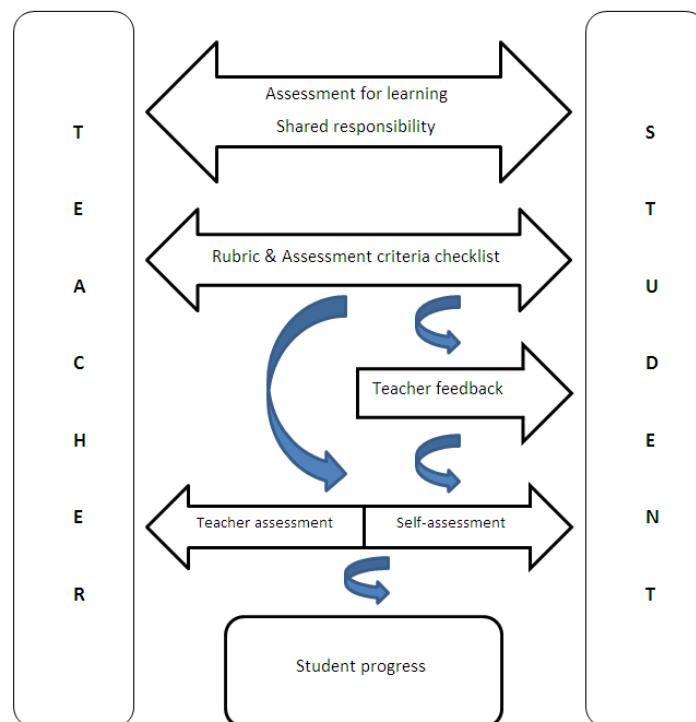


Fig.1 Assessment for learning as a shared responsibility by teacher and learners

The use of the various assessment tools seems to point toward an increased share of responsibility between teacher and learners in the learners’ learning process. In a later stage of

the process, students self-assess their work based on the information they are provided with beforehand. Students are informed about the learning goals they should reach and about the work quality in the different stages of their writing process. In short, the main purpose of the assessment tools proposed is to promote students' learning (Fig.1).

Moreover, the shared use by teachers and learners of some of the tools described earlier seem to confirm students' accountability for their own learning, as well as teachers' need to make learning goals clear. It is my aim to implement the use of the tools mentioned above during my practicum in order to gain a deeper understanding about strategies that may lead to students' greater involvement in their own learning process.

## CHAPTER II: METHODOLOGY

“How can assessment for learning promote students’ writing proficiency?” is the main research question of this study. As research methodology, a small-scale action research project was implemented involving two groups of students, one from the 9<sup>th</sup> grade, and another from the 11<sup>th</sup> grade. A qualitative and quantitative approach to data collection was used. The action research was carried out as shown below (Table 1):

**Table 1**

*Stages, Procedures and Tools in Action Research*

---

<u>1. Planning</u> December	Identification of the puzzle area: how to help students improve their writing proficiency through assessment for learning
	a) Distribution of questionnaire I before writing tasks.
	b) Use of teaching journal.
	c) Pre-writing tasks
	d) Two written assignments with success criteria guidelines and success criteria checklist for each class. Teacher assessment of the written texts using rubrics without sharing the results with the students.
<u>2. Action</u> &	e) Class feedback and feedforward through PowerPoint slides and individual feedback through the use of an error correction code.
	f) Students self-assessment using the same rubrics as the teacher.
	Comparison of students’ self-assessment with teacher’s assessment.
<u>3. Observation</u> January-May	g) Students’ writing of the second draft of each written assignment using the error correction code and the peers’ help, and handing back the text to the teacher. Teacher assessment using the same rubrics and comparison with assessment of the first draft.
	h) Distribution of questionnaire 2 for ninth-grade students and for eleventh-grade students after the first written assignment.
	i) Distribution of questionnaire 3 for ninth-grade students and for eleventh-grade students after the second written assignment.
<u>4. Reflection</u> June-July	Analysis of quantitative data expressed as percentages, analysis of qualitative data and reflection on the results (see following chapter).

---

*Note.* (Adapted from Burns, 2010, p.8.)

The implementation of the action research project referred to writing took into consideration the genres of texts that students were expected to write at their level, and in accordance with the school curricula.

### **1. Questionnaire I of the action research**

Questionnaire 1 (Appendices B.1 and B.2) provided information about students' perception of the importance of writing in English in comparison to speaking, and their ability to write different genres of text. In addition, the questionnaire provided insights about students' writing processes, their attitude towards feedback on writing, and their expectations concerning writing in English in future. Lastly, the questionnaire revealed students' views on assessment of writing. The gathering of the data led me to gain insight into my new teaching context prior to the implementation of the action stage.

The questionnaire, which was divided into two parts, was distributed in January, at two different times to avoid questionnaire fatigue. The questionnaire included mostly closed questions, which were straightforward and aimed at generating frequencies of response that could be categorized and analysed, as suggested by Cohen et al (2007). The closed questions were scored using both rank ordering, and a Likert scale. As pointed out by Cohen et al (2007), both are suitable in indicating degrees of response. The questions were organised in different sections with their respective subheadings, and all the sentences were in the affirmative, as suggested by Cohen et al., 2007.

One open-ended question aimed at finding out students' perceptions about how to improve their writing was included. The analysis required the identification of patterns in students' responses followed by categorisation. Results of both open-ended and closed questions were expressed as a percentage.

### **2. Teacher journal**

I used qualitative data from my teaching journal, which consisted of a collection of data through anecdotal notes: "The key to making notes is to quickly record any factual observations, such as incidents or behaviours that are relevant to the study. This record can be very useful in recording information that can be later reflected upon". (Tomal, 2020, pp 41-42). Indeed, the notes written in a rather spontaneous manner shed light on puzzling issues at a later stage of the action research when results were reflected upon. Likewise, spontaneous reactions, comments, and questions from my students that I considered pertinent for my study, during the lessons were recorded. Consequently, my reflections are presented as quotes from my journal, written in English at the end of the lessons.

### 3. The practices implemented in class

Each written task involved the use of tools, in different stages of the writing process (Table 1), that aimed at helping students gain awareness of their learning and gain autonomy. As shown in table 1 assessment was carried out within the writing process, and not only after the tasks conclusion. Areas of improvement overcome by the learners required them to be active in their learning process.

#### 3.1 Draft 1 of written assignments

Two written assignments were proposed for each group of students, as shown in table 2. The written tasks aimed at preparing students for the written task in their summative assessment. The proposals were in line with the national curricula (Direcção Geral da Educação, 2018a and Direcção Geral da Educação, 2018b), as well as with the course books for the 9<sup>th</sup> grade and for the 11<sup>th</sup> grade, by Gonçalves et al. (2021a) and Gonçalves et al. (2021b) adopted by the school. Lastly, the written tasks proposed were in agreement with the exit levels goals established by the CEFR (2020).

**Table 2**

*Written tasks proposed*

	Written assignments	
	9 <sup>th</sup> grade (B1 level)	11 <sup>th</sup> grade (B2 level)
Task 1	Book review	Opinion essay
Task 2	Blog comment	Letter of application

In addition, the tasks suggested were in line with those employed at B1 level, the Preliminary English Test (Cambridge English Language Assessment, 2022a) and in the B2 level, the First Certificate in English (Cambridge English Language Assessment, 2022b).

The 9<sup>th</sup> grade students wrote their assignment during the English lesson, in a period of about 30 minutes, in near agreement to the time frame given in the written tasks to the candidates sitting the B1 Preliminary after examples of these types of texts were shown. The 11<sup>th</sup> grade students wrote their assignments during the lessons, in a period of about 40 minutes, in accordance to the time frame given for the written tasks in B2 First. The use of success criteria guidelines provided by Cambridge examinations was due to its worldwide credibility in the field of EFL (English as a Foreign Language). The written tasks were preceded by the writing activities briefly referred to below.

### **3.1.1 Pre-writing activities**

Pre-writing activities were proposed in order to equip students with the know-how they needed to perform their written tasks. In the present section, the pre-writing activities, whose focus was mainly students' exposure to samples of the texts they were going to write, are briefly described.

a) Firstly the book or film review for the ninth-grade students followed the reading of other reviews (Appendices C.1,C2, and C.3), in which students looked for information. Then, they answered personalised questions concerning their own interests and knowledge about a specific book. Finally students were shown how to write their reviews using a logical structure, divided in paragraphs, each with its topic, which included the writing of their opinion about the book or film. (English-practice.net, 2022, Gonçalves et al., 2021a).

b) The second written task for the ninth-grade was preceded by the reading of a blog comment (Appendix D), and it included the rules of *netiquette*, to guide students on how to exchange ideas and encourage them to respect others who do not share the same ideas. Finally, the writing tips to write a blog comment were provided (Gonçalves et al., 2021a).

c) The opinion essay for the eleventh-grade students followed the reading of a sample of a well written essay about environmental problems (Appendix E): “Every country in the world has problems with pollution and damage to the environment. Do you think these problems can be solved?” (Skimins, 2022). Then students were provided success criteria guidelines on useful language to write their essays (Cambridge, n.d., p.2).

d) The second written task for the eleventh-grade students was preceded by activities (Appendix F) that aimed to help students to understand the vocabulary they should use in their letter of application, to revise the conventions used in formal letters, and to guide them in the organisation of the ideas (British Council, n.d, Gonçalves et al., 2021b).

The activities mentioned above had the purpose of preparing the students for the written tasks. These were accompanied by success criteria guidelines and a success criteria checklist as explained in the next sub-section.

### **3.1.2 Use of success criteria guidelines and success criteria checklists**

Each written task included success criteria guidelines and a success criteria checklist specific for the task (Appendices G.1,G.2,G.3 and G.4). Firstly, the success criteria guidelines provided to help students structure their texts were adapted mainly from those in the course books adopted. In addition, in some cases, the “don'ts” were added, as attention calls were felt as crucial by the teacher. The success criteria guidelines were written in simple sentences and

displayed in a table to facilitate students' reading. In contrast, for the opinion essay, the success criteria guidelines were adapted from B2 First for Schools (Cambridge, n.d).

Results from the study carried out by Kellogg (1990) support the use of outlining, as a pre-writing strategy. According to the author, the preparation of a written outline by the student, in which the ideas are structured before writing, enhanced the quality of the text, both in terms of its content and organisation. In the present paper, the term *outlining* is substituted by the term *success criteria guidelines*, and these are provided by the teacher, and not generated by the student.

Secondly, the success criteria checklists created by the teacher and carefully read through to the students were included in the written assignments. They included between three and six items, which students were expected to tick, after they finished their written task. They served mainly as a reminder of what students needed to accomplish, as pointed out by Rowlands (2007), referred to earlier in this study. Consequently, the success criteria checklist and the success criteria guidelines were in agreement.

### **3.2 Class feedback and individual feedback**

Class feedback was provided in PowerPoint slides to the students after each written task, and before receiving their work corrected. Feedback included good samples of work, whose authors were identified in order to acknowledge students' successful areas (Appendices H.1, H.2, I, J.1,J.2,J.3 and K). The feedback referred to structure, which included the ideas, linguistic aspects and features appropriate for the task. Furthermore, the PowerPoint slides contained areas to be improved, written by students who remained anonymous. In these, I excluded spelling mistakes, and basic grammar mistakes, which I corrected prior to their presentation, as I felt their disclosure would not only be unnecessary, as most of them resulted from distraction, but also these would cause resentment and hurt the students whose work I was using on behalf of all the group. The focus was therefore mainly on the sentence structure and the necessary content and its organization, appropriate for the task, which were areas that needed to be improved by a significant number of students.

Moreover, individual feedback, which consisted of short comments on positive aspects and on areas to be improved were included on the texts handed back to students. I also included questions to foster students' reflection when content was the main problem, rather than the language. In order to assess learners and to gather data to present and discuss in this study I used the rubrics (Appendices M.1, M.2, M.3 and M.4), which contained several categories that varied according to written task and a qualitative rating score ranging from "sophisticated", "competent", "partly competent", and "not yet competent". In order to



facilitate the data analysis, the qualitative assessment was converted into numerical grading, ranging from four to one, respectively, from “sophisticated” to “not yet competent”, followed by the conversion in percentage.

Concerning language mistakes, an error correction code ([Appendix L](#)) was used. Its use helped me to have a better view of the mistakes made by the students and to score students’ work in the rubrics. Its development stemmed from a selection of symbols displayed in various error correction codes available on the Internet. The criteria used to select the symbols were their usefulness, and the ease in drawing them. The students were first shown the error correction code on a PowerPoint slide, and the teacher went through the meaning of each symbol. Then the learners received a copy of the error correction code on an A5 paper and were asked to keep it in their files. The use of error correction codes is suggested by Chappuis (2014) so that students are led, at a later stage, to correct their own mistakes, as a result of enquiry or deeper thought. This reasoning defines, according to the same author, effective feedback. Moreover, the use of error correction codes helped students to self-assess their written work further promoting learner autonomy. Self-assessment is addressed in the next section.

### **3.3 Teacher formative assessment vs students’ self-assessment**

Firstly, I assessed students’ writing using the various categories of the different rubrics ([Appendices M.1, M.2, M.3 and M.4](#)) used for the various tasks. This assessment was not shared with the students to avoid influencing them in their self-assessment, and to gain understanding of their ability to self-assess their work. Subsequently, students self-assessed their written tasks using the same rubric as the teacher, after having received firstly the class feedback, and secondly their work corrected with the error correction code, and personalised comments and before rewriting the second drafts.

The use of rubrics was vital in both teacher’s formative assessment and students’ self-assessment. The teacher’s assessment and the students’ self-assessment were compared in the different categories of the specific task rubrics. Subsequently, the qualitative rating score was converted into numerical grading, and finally converted to percentage to facilitate the analysis. An insight on how the rubrics was generated and used will be shown in the subsection that follows.

### **3.4 Creation and implementation of the rubrics**

Most of the rubrics were generated by using *Rubistar*. The criterion for choosing a generator was the possibility of adapting the rubrics for the specific tasks. The categories were selected and their descriptions of performance were slightly adapted to second language

learners. The selection of the categories of the rubrics took into consideration linguistic aspects, such as grammar and spelling, commonly considered as important aspects in a language. In addition, the categories also aimed at helping students to write the appropriate content, and to use the suitable conventions for each task. The tasks and their specific rubrics took into account the illustrative descriptors provided by the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, 2020) (Appendix A1 and A2). For each task a rubric was created:

a) Rubric for the first written task for the ninth-grade, a film/ book review (Appendix M.1). The rubric adapted from Hadsell (2022) included four categories, which were *grammar and spelling*, *structure*, which entailed the organisation of the text, *summary*, which involved the writing of the major points of the plot, and *details*, which required examples from the book or film that impressed the writer. The student at B1 level, according to the Council of Europe, “can give straightforward descriptions on a range of familiar subjects within their field of interest” (2020, p.67).

b) Rubric for the second written task for the ninth-grade, a blog comment (Appendix M.2). The rubric was generated by *Rubistar* and adapted. It included *grammar and spelling*, *salutation and closing*, *sentences and paragraphs*, which referred to the coherent and correctly written sentences, and *ideas*. Expressing *ideas* in a blog comment can be considered relevant, since the communication is based on the sharing of thoughts. Additionally, as shown earlier in the present study, B1 level students are expected, according to the self-assessment grid of the Council of Europe (2020), to be able to exchange information about their experiences and feelings.

c) Rubric for the first written task for the eleventh-grade, an opinion essay (Appendix M.3). The rubric was generated by *Rubistar* and adapted. The categories included were *position statement*, which entails a clear and strong position by the author, *grammar and spelling*, *evidence and examples*, which entailed the use of well explained and relevant evidence and examples to support the writer’s view and *sentence structure*, which refers to well-constructed sentences, and use of varied structures. The *position statement* seems central in an opinion essay. As mentioned earlier in the present study, the Council of Europe (2020) states in its self-assessment grid that B2 level students are expected to produce essays, in which they are able to support their opinions.

d) Rubric for the second written task for the eleventh-grade, a letter of application (Appendix M.4). It included five categories, which were *salutation and closing*, *grammar and spelling*, *sentences and paragraphs*, *format*, which entails the compliance of the requirements

for a letter of application and *register*, which involves the use of formal words and expressions. The student at the B2 level is expected to be able to “use formality and conventions appropriate to the context when writing personal and professional letters and emails” (Council of Europe, 2020, p.83).

The levels of achievement of the rubrics which ranged from numerical grades, from four to one, were substituted by qualitative grades that ranged from *sophisticated*, *competent*, *partly competent*, and *not yet competent*. (Diede et al., 2019). Firstly, the concept and use of rubrics was clarified for students. For that purpose I used an image ([Appendix N](#)) that resulted from a frozen scene of a video by Wong (2012), rather than the actual rubrics, to appeal to students’ sense of humour. Then after some class discussion on what the message was about, I showed the students the video. I aimed at clarifying students what rubrics were, and that these were tools that would serve both the teacher and the students to assess their written work.

#### **3.4.1. The use of rubrics by the teacher**

I used the specific rubrics for the tasks to assess students’ work, whose result I did not share with the students to avoid influencing them in their self-assessment. For the purpose of collecting quantitative data, I used the numerical grading ranging from four to one that corresponded respectively to the qualitative assessment ranging from *sophisticated* to *not yet competent*. Firstly, I added the students’ numerical grades attributed by the teacher of all categories and divided by the number of categories to achieve the average that each student received over the marks they receive for each category. Secondly, I added the students’ numerical grades by category and divided it by the number of participants to obtain the teacher’s assessment in each category. The results were expressed in percentage.

#### **3.4.2. The use of rubrics for students’ self-assessment**

In contrast, the students used the rubric that discriminated the levels of achievement, but did not include the numerical correspondence. They were asked to circle the level of achievement of each category, as they found fit. In order to collect quantitative data, I used the same numerical assessment referred to above to register students’ self-assessment. Firstly I added the students’ numerical grades attributed by themselves of all categories and divided by the number of categories to achieve the average result of students’ self-assessment. Then, I added the self-assessors’ numerical grades and I divided it by the number of self-assessors to find out about the students’ self-assessment in each category. The results were expressed in percentage. In addition, I compared the teachers’ assessment to the students’ assessment, through the use of the rubrics. The result was expressed in percentage.

### **3.5 Draft 2 of written assignments.**

Teacher's class feedback, personalised feedback through comments, teacher feedback correction through the error correction codes and students' self-assessment using rubrics equipped learners to write a second draft in a thoughtful way approximately a week after writing their first draft of their work. The students were allowed to use their mobile phones, as a resource to seek for clarification when they needed, to promote students' autonomy. Students checked the spelling of words using their mobile phones, or any other information they needed. Other students who had difficulty correcting grammar mistakes, for example, needed some support. I encouraged students to work cooperatively in order to overcome their doubts concerning language, but also their difficulty in articulating their ideas.

The second drafts of the written assignments were analysed using the specific rubrics for the task and compared to the teacher's assessment of the first draft. The results were examined and expressed in percentage.

### **3.6. Questionnaires II and III of the action research**

Questionnaire II (Appendices Q.1 and Q.2) and questionnaire III (Appendices P.1 and P.2) were distributed after draft 2 of the second and the third written tasks respectively were concluded. Most of the questionnaire included the same questions. I expected to gain understanding about students' perception of the usefulness of the tools used: success criteria guidelines included in the written tasks, class feedback, which included good pieces of writing by the students and individual feedback, based on the use of the correction codes and comments. In addition, I aimed at understanding students' ability to correct their work using error correction codes, and also their skill in self-assessing their work through the use of rubrics. Lastly, I intended to comprehend if students had, over time, felt more confident in writing the proposed written tasks. Ultimately, I expected to grasp the efficiency of the tools and practices I used to promote assessment for learning in the classroom.

Similarly to questionnaire I, questionnaires II and III included mostly closed questions, for rank ordering, and for rating scales, organised in different sub-sections with their respective subheading. In addition, some open questions were incorporated in the questionnaires. Although they require more time and effort from the respondents, open questions "enable participants to write a free account in their own terms to explain and quantify their responses and avoid limitations of pre-set categories of response" (Cohen et al., 2007, p.321). The students' responses helped me understand students' opinions about the formative assessment tools implemented during my practicum. The analysis of open questions

required the identification of patterns in students' responses followed by categorisation. Then, results of both open and closed questions were expressed as a percentage.

## CHAPTER III: THE PRACTICUM

### 1. Context

This five-month study, whose main research question was “How can assessment for learning promote students’ writing proficiency?” involved two classes from a private Catholic school located on the outskirts of Lisbon that opened in the 1930s. Religious values alongside values of work and discipline in a joyful environment are part of the school’s ethos. The school teaches classes from kindergarten till the secondary level. A ninth-grade class and an eleventh-grade class participated in the present study. Their profiles are described next.

#### 1.1 The ninth-grade participants

The ninth-grade students had one forty-five and one ninety-minute lesson per week. *iTeen 9* (Gonçalves & Gonçalves, 2021a) was the course book together with the workbook adopted in the ninth-grade. The digital versions of the books were displayed on the interactive board and various supplementary materials were used throughout the practicum by the trainee teacher.

The class had thirty students, in which fifteen were boys and the other half were girls. Twenty-nine of these students were between fourteen and fifteen years old, and one student was seventeen years old. Besides English, this group of students learnt French as a second language.

All students, except one were native speakers of Portuguese. One of the students was Chinese. Chinese was his first language and he struggled to understand the contents of the various school subjects through Portuguese. Another student was fluent in French, besides Portuguese. Four students in this class were special needs students. Three of them had difficulties in understanding what they read and in writing. However, one of the students had previously studied in an international school, in Macau, and used English as the main language to communicate with her peers. The other student had Asperger syndrome and his main interest was History, namely World War I and World War II, which led him to watch films that portrayed that time in history, and he enjoyed sharing his interest in English with the rest of the class and also with the English teacher.

The vast majority of the students in this class had been studying at the school since they were very young. Thus, they had known each other for a long time and they tended to relate well to each other. The group was considered academically successful, and motivated by the teachers who had taught the students in the previous year.

## **1.2 The eleventh-grade participants**

The eleventh-grade students had two ninety-minute English classes per week. The course book together with the workbook adopted in the eleventh grade was *iTeen 11* (Gonçalves & Gonçalves, 2021b), whose digital versions were displayed on the interactive board. The teacher trainee supplemented the course book with materials from different sources adapted to her learners during her practicum.

The eleventh-grade class included sixteen boys and five girls, which equaled twenty-one students, aged sixteen to seventeen years old. The students chose physics and chemistry, mathematics, and geometry as core subjects to pursue their future studies.

Twenty of twenty-one students were native Portuguese speakers. One of the students was Chinese, spoke Chinese as his first language and had some difficulty in learning the contents of the different subject areas through Portuguese. This group of students was considered motivated to learn, and academically competitive and successful by their teachers, with the exception of the geometry teacher who expected the students to improve their work and achieve better results. The students were described by their English teacher as students who tended to be responsible, and highly interested in technology and mathematics, and less interested in the humanities.

## **2. Observation for learning**

While observing the ninth-grade and eleventh-grade English classes, my interest in helping students to improve their writing developed. Below I include an extract from my teaching journal:

After a week of having taught my two first lessons to eleventh-grade students, teacher Sílvia and I asked the students to hand me the opinion essay I had proposed as homework. From this group of 21 students I got 5 essays. (...) I realized that several students had done the work but were reluctant to hand it back to me. Was their reluctance due to the fact that I'm not their teacher? Or is it because this essay will not contribute for their final evaluation? Or is it because they feel insecure about their writing? Or could it maybe be a mixture of all these reasons?

In response to students' resistance, I explained that my correction of their essays would be useful for all of them, as mistakes tend to be repeated. I also explained that I would give them feedback. I am hoping that next time more students will hand in their written work, as I feel that this is valuable material to help them develop their writing. (October, 2021)

In fact, I had not fully realised that overcoming students' unwillingness to have their written work corrected by me would become something I would have to deal with. I had been introduced to the students as a teacher trainee, and I believed that making students' delivery of their work entirely optional had been the correct procedure, as to avoid pressure on the students and negative emotions in class. This meant, on the other hand, that I had to be persuasive on the usefulness of having students' written work corrected, so that I would be able to help to develop their writing proficiency and gather enough written material to write the present report.

It was vital to make students believe in the importance of feedback, as a stepping stone in the action research I was about to start. In the following lesson I aimed at helping students understand that feedback was crucial to their improvement. For that purpose, I used Bill Gate's quote: "We all need people who will give us feedback. That's how we improve". After that, I asked students to think about adjectives that would qualify effective feedback and to share their views with their peers. Subsequently, I shared the acrostic I had prepared to define "feedback". The words were F- fruitful; E- effective; E- engaging; D- detailed; B- beneficial; A-accurate; C- clear; K- kind.

I felt that I was persuasive with my eleventh-grade group of students about the importance of feedback and about my intention to help them. Not surprisingly, the words they used to define "feedback" were similar in meaning to the ones I used in the acrostic I later shared with them. And three words were the same, "detailed", "accurate" and "clear" (My teaching journal, November 2021).

I considered my clarification on feedback alongside my sharing of aims to help students to improve their written proficiency a core element in motivating the students to take part in the study I was going to start.

### **3. My action research**

In this section the results of questionnaire 1, collected in the initial stage of the action research, are presented. Then the results of the first written task and the use of the various assessment tools carried out by the ninth-grade students are displayed. This task is followed by a second questionnaire whose results are shown. The results of a second written task along with the use of the same assessment tools carried out by the same group are illustrated, and a third questionnaire follows. The display of results by the eleventh-grade students follows the same sequence, which is questionnaire 1, written task 1, and use of assessment tools, followed by questionnaire 2, and lastly, written task 2, and use of assessment tools, followed by



questionnaire 3. The analysis of the results aimed at understanding the role of assessment for learning implemented in developing students' written proficiency.

### 3.1 Results of questionnaire 1

As an initial stage of enquiry and before any intervention on my part, it was important to understand students' perception of the importance of writing, their skill at writing different types of texts, their views on feedback on writing, and their thoughts about assessment of writing. In addition, it was relevant to grasp students' expectations related to writing in English in their future. For that I distributed the first questionnaire to the ninth-grade-students and to the eleventh-grade-students (Appendices B.1 and B.2).

**Table 3**

*Questionnaire 1: part 1 (9<sup>th</sup> grade and 11<sup>th</sup> grade students)*

Students' views on learning English	Answers by students in percentage					
	agree		neither agree nor disagree		disagree	
	9th	11th	9th	11th	9th	11th
1. Speaking in English is more important than writing.	<b>68</b>	39	14	39	18	22
2. Speaking in English is as important as writing.	39	<b>50</b>	29	44	32	6
3. More writing should be done in class.	<b>25</b>	<b>28</b>	54	33	21	39
4. More writing should be done as homework.	<b>11</b>	<b>22</b>	18	17	71	61

Regarding the students' views on learning English (Table 3), the majority of ninth-grade students considered speaking more important than writing, with 50 percent of 11<sup>th</sup> year learners considering speaking and writing to be equally important (questions 1 and 2). Both age groups seemed uninterested in doing more writing, as less than 30 percent (question 4) agreed that more writing should be done either in class or at home.

Part 2 of the second part of questionnaire 1 (Appendix B.2) aimed at understanding how important students perceived the various writing tasks they tended to be asked to accomplish in the English lesson. Nearly 40% of ninth-grade students considered above all, and equally important being able to write stories and to interact through social media. Also for the 11<sup>th</sup>-grade students, results showed that the ability to interact through social media was considered very relevant for almost 40%. Being able to write emails to friends was equally important for the older students. The differences shown between the two groups of students

could reflect the different written tasks that are asked for each group, and also their social life that tends to expand, throughout the years when students increasingly become more independent from their families.

Part three of questionnaire 1 (Appendix B.1) aimed at understanding students' perception about difficulty and usefulness of writing. Overall, students of both the ninth-grade and of the eleventh-grade believed that writing was useful. However, results showed that 100% of the 11<sup>th</sup>-grade students considered writing very useful, whereas around 40% of the students of the ninth-grade considered writing not as useful as the older group. Interestingly, ninth-grade students tended to consider writing in English easier than the eleventh-grade students. Neither group reported writing in English difficult.

Perhaps the fact that the eleventh-grade students considered writing more difficult than their younger peers owed to the greater complexity of the written tasks proposed, and their greater ability to self-assess their written work in comparison with the younger students.

Part five of questionnaire 1 (Table 4) was aimed at understanding students' views concerning different aspects related to the written tasks proposed in the English classroom.

**Table 4**

*Questionnaire 1: part 5 (9<sup>th</sup> grade and 11<sup>th</sup> grade)*

Written tasks in the English class should be	Ranking by 9 <sup>th</sup> grade- students in percentage							Ranking by 11 <sup>th</sup> grade- students in percentage						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1 fun to do.	52	15	7	15	4	7	0	21	17	22	22	6	6	6
2 useful outside school.	44	30	11	11	4	0	0	51	23	12	7	0	7	0
3 corrected by the teacher.	3	5	21	7	21	20	23	11	17	6	16	27	17	6

Results indicated that the usefulness of written tasks outside school was a widespread concern for the ninth-grade students (question 2). The recreational character of the written tasks was also something valued by more than 50 percent of the students (question 1). Interestingly, the correction by the teacher was not considered significantly important by either of the groups (question 3), perhaps because they valued numerical grades more, which is a common feature among students.

Part six of the questionnaire (Table 5) aimed at understanding the students' writing process, namely their concern with reading the instructions beforehand, their readiness to write a second draft, their planning, and their vocabulary use. Results showed that 47% of

ninth-grade students did not seem to practise writing in English before their summative test (question 1). This could mean that most students felt confident about writing in English (question 11). 50 percent of ninth-grade students did not seem to value the writing of a second draft, as was shown by the students' answers (question 9).

**Table 5**

*Questionnaire 1: part 6 (9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade)*

Students' writing process	Ranking by 9 <sup>th</sup> grade students in percentage					Ranking by 11 <sup>th</sup> grade students in percentage						
	not true	at true	somewh	neutral	true	very true	not true	at true	somewh	neutral	true	very true
1. I practise writing in English before the summative test.	<b>25</b>	<b>22</b>	33	19	5	<b>28</b>	<b>28</b>	6	28	11		
2. I read the tips for writing the texts before the summative test.	18	11	21	36	14	17	28	11	22	22		
3. I read the instructions provided before starting to write my texts.	0	4	7	<b>29</b>	<b>60</b>	0	0	22	<b>28</b>	<b>50</b>		
4. I plan the structure on paper of my texts before starting to write.	<b>32</b>	<b>18</b>	28	11	11	<b>28</b>	11	39	6	17		
5. I check the instructions while I am writing the texts.	0	0	14	32	54	6	6	17	28	44		
6. I use a variety of words, even if I'm not sure about their meaning.	18	29	32	<b>21</b>	0	33	22	28	11	6		
7. I use a variety of words, even if I'm not sure about their spelling.	7	14	29	32	<b>18</b>	17	17	39	22	6		
8. I reread my text in the summative test before handing it to the teacher.	4	7	11	21	57	0	0	22	33	44		
9. I write a second draft of the same text after having been corrected.	<b>50</b>	<b>18</b>	25	7	0	<b>61</b>	<b>28</b>	6	0	6		
10. Writing in English is something I enjoy doing.	11	4	25	<b>54</b>	<b>7</b>	6	11	39	<b>17</b>	<b>28</b>		
11. I feel confident about my writing in English.	4	4	29	<b>45</b>	<b>18</b>	0	6	17	<b>28</b>	<b>50</b>		

The vast majority of the ninth grade students read the instructions before starting to write, and also during the writing process (questions 3 and 5). However, half of the students did not seem to plan the structure on paper before starting to write (question 4). Interestingly, over 50% of the students seemed to be ready to take some risks by using words, whose spelling they were not so sure about (question 7). Also, around 20 % of the students were ready to use words whose meaning they were not so sure about (question 6). Contrary to our

common belief, students' answers revealed that more than half of the students enjoyed writing in English (question 10).

The results indicated that a greater number of the eleventh-grade students, compared to the ninth-grade students, did not practise writing before the summative test (question 1). However, a significant number of students read the instructions before starting to write their texts (question 3), although, in general, they did not plan the structure on paper before starting to write (question 4). Results showed that despite older students' confidence in writing in English, they were less motivated to write than their younger peers (question 10). Presumably, their lack of motivation owed to the fact that the eleventh-grade students were not as interested in the humanistic area, as they were in the scientific one, as mentioned by their English teacher.

**Table 6**

*Questionnaire 1: part 7 (9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade)*

Students' views on feedback Answers by students in percentage	9th grade					11th grade				
	not true	somewhat true	neutral	true	very true	not true	somewhat true	neutral	true	very true
1. I am interested in checking my teachers' corrections in my texts.	0	4	25	<b>38</b>	<b>33</b>	0	11	11	<b>47</b>	<b>32</b>
2. I am interested in reading my teachers' comments in my texts.	0	0	13	<b>58</b>	<b>29</b>	0	0	26	<b>37</b>	<b>37</b>
3. I can understand my teachers' corrections.	0	4	13	<b>29</b>	<b>54</b>	0	0	21	<b>47</b>	<b>32</b>
4. I take into account my teachers' corrections when I write another text.	4	0	21	50	25	0	5	26	42	26
5. I feel nervous when I see the teachers' corrections.	33	21	25	13	8	63	16	16	5	0
6. I seek the teacher's clarification when I don't understand the corrections in my texts.	4	0	17	<b>33</b>	<b>46</b>	5	5	26	<b>26</b>	<b>37</b>
7. I compare my text with my peers' texts.	13	8	4	<b>29</b>	<b>46</b>	32	11	21	<b>21</b>	<b>16</b>
8. I write a second draft after receiving the teacher's feedback.	<b>38</b>	17	29	17	0	<b>74</b>	11	16	0	0

Part 7 of questionnaire 1 (Table 6) indicated that above 70% of the students both from the ninth-grade and from the eleventh-grade were interested in checking the teacher's corrections in their texts (question 1). However, the percentage of ninth-grade students who were interested in reading the teacher's comment in their texts was nearly 90 percent, whereas

among the older students the percentage decreased to 74 percent (question 2). In fact, students at the secondary level feel under pressure to score high grades, which will enable them to enter university. That contributes to their focus on their numerical grades in every school subject. Around 80 percent of the students of both levels seemed to understand their teacher's corrections (question 3), which could reveal students' ability to self-assess their work. The students, of both levels, in general, did not seem to feel nervous when they saw the teacher's corrections and the number of older students who seemed to feel nervous was very low (question 5), which may indicate the positive learning environment fostered at school.

The group of younger students appeared to be more willing to seek the teacher's clarification when they did not understand the corrections, than the older students (question 6). Also, the ninth-grade students appeared to be more open to compare their texts with their peers' texts than the older students (75 percent and 37 percent, respectively) (question 7). The vast majority of both groups of students admitted that they did not write a second draft after receiving the teacher's feedback, and the older students seemed even more reluctant to do so (question 8).

Concerning students' expectations, results from questionnaire 1 showed that the vast majority of students expected their written English to improve over time and seemed open to use written English in future in their studies abroad and over 70 percent of students of both groups expect to use written English in their job in the future. Their high expectations concerning the use of English in future seemed crucial to the implementation of my action research, as the participants, in general, appeared highly motivated students.

**Table 7**

*Questionnaire 1: part 7 (continuation, 9<sup>th</sup> grade and 11<sup>th</sup> grade)*

Assessment of writing	9 <sup>th</sup> grade students' answers in percentage			11 <sup>th</sup> grade students' answers in percentage		
	Yes	No	Not sure	Yes	No	Not sure
4. What type of feedback do you get on your written work?						
a) correction of spelling mistakes	63	21	17	80	10	10
b) correction of grammar mistakes	75	17	8	65	20	15
c) correction of punctuation	38	<b>50</b>	13	<b>30</b>	55	15
d) correction of words	58	29	13	60	20	20
e) a numerical grade	<b>46</b>	33	17	50	25	25
f) a one-sentence comment	<b>46</b>	29	25	30	25	45
g) several comments	17	54	29	<b>20</b>	45	35
5. Which is most useful for 9 <sup>th</sup> grade students?						
a) Numerical grade	0					

a) Spelling mistakes	<b>29</b>
b) Doesn't know/ unclear/ didn't answer	21
c) Correction of grammar mistakes	<b>12</b>
d) Comments	<b>8</b>
e) Other answers	26
6. Which is most useful for 11 <sup>th</sup> grade students?	
a) Several comments	<b>15</b>
b) Correction of grammar mistakes	<b>20</b>
c) Other answers/ no answers	65

Concerning feedback that 9<sup>th</sup> grade and 11<sup>th</sup> grade students are used to receiving from their English teachers, the majority of the students answered that they got more correction of grammar mistakes and spelling mistakes than other types of feedback (questions 4a 4b). The feedback using several comments seemed the least used feedback for both groups of students (question 4 a, c). Around fifty percent of the students seemed not to have got correction of punctuation (question 4). A numerical grade alongside a one sentence comment appeared to be the most common type of feedback provided on students' writing.

Regarding the usefulness of feedback, there were different answers given by the younger students, and by their older peers. Almost 30 percent of ninth-grade students answered that they thought that the correction of spelling and grammar mistakes was the most useful, and only eight percent of the students thought that the teachers' comments were the most useful feedback. On the other hand, older students claimed to find several comments, as well as the correction of grammar mistakes useful for the improvement of their writing.

### **3.2 Ninth-grade written task 1, a book or film review**

In February the students were asked to write a book or film review, which followed the pre-writing activities described in chapter 2. The task aimed at preparing students for the written task in their summative test. They were provided with the success criteria guidelines and the success criteria checklist appropriate to the task ([Appendix G.1](#)).

#### **3.2.1 Class feedback on draft 1 of the ninth-grade students' reviews**

Good samples of work were shown in PowerPoint slides, as a means to provide class feedback ([Appendices H.1 and H.2](#)) to the students before handing back their first draft. These consisted of parts of well written texts, in which mistakes that may have occurred were corrected to avoid embarrassment by students. The main focus was the content written by the students. In the example shown ([Appendix H.1](#)) the samples selected revealed the personal aspect of the writing that was recommended to the students.

In addition, structural problems were also shown, but anonymously. Again, I had already corrected spelling and various grammar mistakes in the texts I selected, with the exception of the verb tenses. The sample shown aimed at reminding the students to be consistent in their use of the verb tenses: “The story starts when he turned 11 and discovered he wasn’t like the other kids around him – he was a wizard. Harry goes to a magic school...”

In the sample “starts” and “goes” are in the present tense, whereas “turned” is in the past simple. This sample was used to remind the students that the summary of the plot in a review should be consistently written in the past simple. After the class feedback students were handed back their first draft.

### 3.2.2 Results of written task 1, a book or film review by 9<sup>th</sup> grade students

The analysis that follows refers to the teacher’s assessment, and to the students’ assessment of their written reviews. The results in table 8 show the comparison of the teacher’s assessment to the students’ assessment.

**Table 8**

*Teacher’s assessment and self-assessment of 9<sup>th</sup> grade written task 1*

Results in percentage	Teacher and student assessed identically	Teacher assessed more favourably than student	Student assessed more favourably than teacher
	16	68	16

Results shown in table 8 revealed that in general the teacher assessment was more favourable than the students’ self-assessment, as 68 percent of students self-assessed their work more harshly than the teacher. It was thus a minority of students who believed that their mark should be higher than the teacher’s assessment. The differences in the assessment by the teacher and by the students of the different categories of the rubric are shown in the table below (Table 9).

**Table 9**

*Difference between teacher’s assessment and self-assessment in the different categories of the rubric for the book/ film review expressed in percentage*

	Categories of the rubrics			
	Structure	Summary	Details	Grammar and spelling
Teacher	86	89	84	81
Students	86	84	78	70
Difference	0	5	6	11

There was no difference between teacher assessment and self-assessment concerning the structure. In the other categories the teacher’s assessment was more favourable than the



students' self-assessment. The more favourable assessment by the teacher in the *details* category, which consisted of examples from the book or film to emphasize the reader's point of view, could relate to the fact that students tended to be asked to write longer texts in the Portuguese subject area, and may have thought that they needed to write more. The greatest variation was 11 percent, which referred to *grammar* and *spelling*. Some mistakes may have resulted from students' distraction.

### **3.2.3 Personalized feedback through the use of the error correction codes, individual feedback, and writing of the second draft of the review**

Students were asked to correct their written assignment using the error correction code ([Appendix L](#)) after the class feedback. They were given the permission not only to use their mobile phone to search for the information they would need, such as spelling mistakes or verb forms, or expressions, or others, but also were allowed to seek their peers' help. In addition, the students were encouraged to ask me to clarify their doubts. The entry of my teaching journal shown below shows my perception of learning environment triggered:

Today I handed back my students' corrected reviews. I used correction codes. I was worried that the weaker students wouldn't be able to correct their mistakes. I said that students could ask me or a peer to help them. Students asked their peers to help them, and true cooperation among students could be seen in the classroom. In fact, a very vivid learning environment took place. It occurred to me that decoding the errors may have been felt as a sort of a game for the students. One of the students, said, enthusiastically, when he finished the correction, that he could assess his work as "sophisticated" in each category (Teaching Journal, 18<sup>th</sup> February 2022).

In fact, students, in general showed in their second drafts that they were able to correct their mistakes using the means mentioned above. The second drafts were written in the class.

A section of the first draft ([Appendix Q.1](#)) of a book review is transcribed below:

"Midnight Sun" is an America romantic film that was directed by Scott Speer and written by Eric Tristen and I released in 23 of march of 2018 and it was based on the Japanese film "A song to the sun". The main characters are Bella Thorne doing the paper of Katie, Patrick Schwarzenegger doing Charlie and Rob Riggle doing Jack, Katie's father.

Before writing the second draft, the student decoded each mistake signaled by the teacher, who used the error correction code ([Appendix L](#)). Each mistake was checked by the student who wrote the correct words above the words with errors. Then, as shown a second draft was written and is transcribed ([Appendix Q.1](#)) below:



“Midnight Sun” is an American romantic and drama film, that was directed by Scott Speer and written by Eric Kristen. This film was based on the Japanese film “A song to the sun”.

The main characters are Bella Thorne representing Katie, Patrick Schwarzenegger representing Charlie and Rob Riggle representing Jack, Katie’s father.

In the second draft the assignment was improved, as the mistakes pointed out by the teacher were corrected. “Representing” should be replaced by “playing”, which indicated that the students still needed to be clarified.

Content also needed to be verified by the teacher. The first draft (Appendix Q.2) of a section of the review transcribed included wrong facts about the book:

“10 Things I Hate About You” is a typical teen campus romantic comedy written by William Shakespeare, in which he describes a good friendship between sister and a romance of one of them, because her other sister can’t be in a relationship if the oldest sister isn’t.

The students were encouraged to be accurate in the information they provided in their book reviews, which led them to research using their mobile phones. In the second draft (Appendix Q.2) the inaccurate information was overcome, and some mistakes were corrected.

“10 Things I hate about you” is a typical teen campus romantic comedy, based on a book written by William Shakespeare, in which he describes a good friendship between two sisters, and their romances.

Indeed, the correction of content was primordial. Although the content was improved, in terms of accuracy and clarity, the spelling mistakes and the grammar mistakes persisted; “reaten”, “tow”, and “they’re”, should have been replaced by “written”, “two” and “their”, respectively. Thus, in some cases a second draft was still work-in-progress in terms of language, as it is shown in the sample above. Consequently, a second correction by the teacher and a third draft by the student would have been advisable.

### **3.2.4 Teacher’s assessment of second draft and comparison with the first draft**

As expected, the second draft showed improved versions of the students’ work. Results show that the structure of writing and the grammar and spelling were the aspects that improved the most (Table 10). That is, students, in general, were able to correct their mistakes and write shorter paragraphs, and clearer sentences, although changes were fairly minimal. The analysis of the students’ improvement in the different categories helped the teacher to understand students’ comprehension of the feedback provided.

**Table 10**

*Difference between teacher's assessment of the first and the second draft in the different categories of the rubric for the book/ film review*

Results in percentage	Draft 1	Draft 2
Structure	86	91
Summary	89	89
Details	84	85
Grammar and spelling	81	85

In order to gain understanding of students' perception about the writing process they had gone through, a second questionnaire was given to the students, soon after the written task was concluded.

### 3.2.5. Distribution of the second questionnaire to the ninth-grade students

Questionnaire 2 ([Appendix O.1](#)) was distributed to the ninth-grade students in March after writing their second drafts of the review. Firstly, I aimed at understanding how students used the tools provided.

**Table 11**

*Ninth-grade students' use of the tools provided during their writing process*

Students' answers expressed in percentage					
	Not true	Somewhat true	neutral	true	Very true
1. The success criteria guidelines helped me stay focused on my writing task.	0	0	22	<b>52</b>	<b>26</b>
2. The success criteria guidelines limited my ideas in my writing task.	<b>37</b>	30	26	7	0
3. The success criteria guidelines helped me plan my writing task.	7	7	7	<b>30</b>	<b>48</b>
4. I read the success criteria guidelines before starting to write.	4	0	11	30	56
5. I read the success criteria guidelines several times throughout my writing.	11	11	26	41	11
6. I read the success criteria guidelines when I finished writing.	<b>26</b>	15	19	30	11
7. The checklist helped me to revise my work.	11	11	19	<b>33</b>	<b>26</b>
8. I ticked the items in the checklist while I was writing.	41	15	15	<b>19</b>	<b>11</b>
9. I ticked the items in the checklist after finishing writing.	<b>26</b>	11	7	15	41

Results show that 78 percent of the students believed that the success criteria guidelines helped them stay focused on their writing task (question 1), 37 percent claimed they didn't limit their ideas and the majority of students (78 percent) believed they were useful in planning writing (questions 2 and 3 respectively).

The majority read the success criteria guidelines before and during writing (questions 4 and 5) but approximately a quarter responded that they did not consult them after writing (question 6). Only 30 percent said they ticked the checklist while writing (question 8) but 26 percent ticked it after writing (question 9), although the majority (59 percent) stated it helped them revise their work (question 7).

The open questions concerning the usefulness of the success criteria guidelines and the checklists confirmed students' preference. Although 11 percent of students admitted that neither the success criteria guidelines nor the checklist helped them, 48 percent stated that they preferred success criteria guidelines as they helped them plan their writing, guide the writing process and made them more aware of what they had to do.

Feedback was provided to students through different tools as explained in the previous section. Understanding the type of feedback that students found more suitable was relevant in my study. Results below (Table 12) show that 77 percent of the students considered class feedback helped them understand how to improve writing reviews (question 1) and 81 percent of students believed that individual feedback helped them to improve their written task.

**Table 12**

*Ninth-grade students' perception of feedback*

Students' answers expressed in percentage	Not true	Somewhat true	neutral	true	Very true
1. Class feedback helped me understand how to improve writing reviews.	0	4	19	<b>46</b>	<b>31</b>
2. Individual feedback helped me understand how to improve writing reviews.	8	0	12	<b>35</b>	<b>46</b>
3. Individual feedback leads me to feel anxious about my mistakes.	50	23	15	<b>12</b>	0
4. Correction codes helped me to understand my mistakes.	0	8	15	<b>38</b>	<b>38</b>
5. Correction codes helped me to look for information.	4	12	12	<b>42</b>	<b>31</b>
6. Correction codes made me confused.	42	23	15	8	12

Only 12 percent of the students felt nervous when faced with individual feedback (question 3). More than 70 percent of the students believed that the correction codes helped them to understand their mistakes (question 4) and also led them to look for information to correct their mistakes (question 5).

The open question which aimed at understanding whether students preferred class feedback, individual feedback through comments or use of error correction codes showed that 31 percent of students liked both class feedback and individual feedback, and 35 percent of the students preferred feedback through error correction codes. It seems, therefore that the type of feedback given to students catered, in general, for students' different needs. Some students who preferred class feedback mentioned that other people's mistakes could help them overcome their own mistakes. Several students who stated that they preferred the use of error correction codes felt that the fact that these led them to think and look for information helped them to improve their writing. Students were allowed to use their mobile phones to look for the information they needed, and they could ask their peers' help. The positive learning environment was a key factor in this context.

**Table 13**

*Ninth-grade students' use of rubrics*

Students' answers converted in percentage	Not true	Somewhat true	neutral	true	Very true
1. Rubrics helped me to self-assess my review.	8	4	<b>27</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>15</b>
2. Rubrics helped me to understand what I need to do to improve when I write reviews.	4	15	12	<b>19</b>	<b>50</b>
3. Rubrics are useful to understand what grade I will get in a review.	15	8	19	31	27
4. Rubrics make me anxious about my performance.	50	<b>27</b>	15	8	0

The students' use of rubrics was a relevant aspect to consider. Table 13 shows that nearly 30 percent of the students did not have a clear idea whether the use of rubrics helped them to assess their review. However, 61 percent of the students believed that the use of rubrics helped them to assess their written task (question 1). In addition, almost 70 percent of the students understood what they needed to improve due to the use of rubrics (question 2). However, the use of rubrics was not always felt as something positive. The table shows that it brought some anxiety to 30 percent of the students (question 4). The open question which

addressed students' intention to use rubrics in the future showed that 58 percent of the students planned to use it as a tool that would help them to understand what they would need to do, and also a tool that would help them check their work. Nineteen percent of the students stated that they would not use it. The belief that they were confusing, that they did not help them and that they would forget to use it were the reasons provided.

The last part of questionnaire 2 aimed at understanding students' perception about writing a review. Most students ranked writing a review as "easy", and "useful". A lower percentage of students stated "I liked doing the task". In fact, the degree of motivation in accomplishing the task varied among the students, which seemed to show that the students' perception of an *easy* and *useful* task did not trigger *per se*, stronger motivation to accomplish it.

### 3.3 Ninth-grade written task 2, a blog comment

In April the students were asked to write a blog comment ([Appendix M.2](#)), that aimed at preparing students for the written part of their summative test, and which followed the pre-writing activities shown in chapter 2. They were provided with the success criteria guidelines and the success criteria checklist appropriate to the task.

#### 3.3.1 Class feedback on draft 1 of the ninth-grade students' blog comment

Following the same procedure for task 1 described earlier in this paper, class feedback through PowerPoint slides was provided to the students before handing them back their work. Firstly, students were reminded that the *greeting* and the *closing* should be included in the blog. Then good samples of work were shown ([Appendix I](#)), in order to help them to improve their second drafts, after students' self-assessment.

#### 3.3.2 Results of written task 2, a blog comment by 9<sup>th</sup> grade students

The analysis that follows refers to the teacher's assessment, and to the students' assessment of their blog comments after seeing their work corrected with the correction code.

**Table 14**

*Teacher's assessment and self-assessment of 9<sup>th</sup> grade written task 2*

Results in percentage	Teacher and student assessed identically	Teacher assessed more favourably than student	Student assessed more favourably than teacher
	18	32	50

Half of the students' assessment was more favourable than the teacher's assessment. Nearly 20 percent of the assessment carried out by the teacher and by the students was equal, and around 50 percent of the student self-assessment was more favourable than the teacher assessment. The result could relate to the fact that writing blogs was not something students

were familiar with, despite their extensive use of social media. Students may have thought that writing a blog was less challenging than it actually was, and their effort may have been minimal. In addition, the fact that students' writing in social media tends to be unconcerned and spontaneous may have led students to write the blog comment in a similar state of mind, which ultimately may have led students to write unworried about following the success criteria guidelines they were provided with.

**Table 15**

*Difference between teacher's assessment and self-assessment in the different categories of the rubric for blog comment*

Results expressed in percentage	Categories of the rubrics			
	Salutation and closing	Grammar and spelling	Ideas	Sentences and paragraphs
Teacher	54	77	88	87
Students	63	78	91	82
Difference	9	1	3	5

The students' self-assessment of the blog comment was, in all the categories, except in *sentences and paragraphs* more favourable than the teacher's assessment. The greatest difference between the teacher's assessment and the self-assessment was *salutation and closing*, which could be seen as an aspect easily overcome, since it relates to conventions learnt by students regardless of their linguistic expertise. Students' inexperience in writing blogs, their focus on the body of the text and above all, their non-realisation of the existence of target readers may have hindered students from writing the *salutation* and the *closing* appropriately. *Grammar and spelling* did not trigger an evident disagreement between the teacher's assessment and the students' self-assessment. As indicated earlier, students were used to the teacher's correction of spelling and grammar mistakes, which could entail students' ability to better predict a score, once they saw their texts marked. In general, and despite students' more favourable assessment, they showed an ability to self-assess their work, that is, they knew what they had accomplished at that stage, and within their learning process.

### **3.3.3 Personalized feedback through the use of the error correction codes, individual feedback, and writing of the second draft of the blog comment**

As described earlier in relation to task 1, students were asked to correct their written assignment using the error correction code. Again, they were given the permission to use their mobile phone to search for the information they would need and they were allowed to seek their peers' help. The sample below of draft 1 of a blog comment contains spelling mistakes

that were shown to the student through error correction codes and comments ([Appendix R.1](#)).

A section of the text is transcribed below:

Social media brought alot of cool stuff, but I agree with him, the myst—is gone and that is terrible.

The real problem is that everithing is handled in facebook and Instagram when it shouldn't.

So I agree with Sam and I think social media are changing the way people talk.

As shown in the second draft, the student was able to improve the content of his task as it can be seen in paragraph 2 of the transcribed sample below:

Social media brought a lot of cool stuff, but I agree with him, the mistery is gone and that is terrible.

The real problem with social media is that things that should be handled in real life are handled in social media and other problem is that people who use it in an inappropriate way.

Overall, I agree with Sam and I think social media is changing the way people talk to eachother.

Bye!

The use of correction codes and the written suggestions provided by the teacher seemed to have helped some students to improve their writing both in the linguistic aspect, and in content. Students searched for information to overcome their linguistic problems, and the active role they took may have contributed to the flourishing of students' ideas and discourse. Some linguistic problems persisted in the sample shown, which indicates that further correction was needed.

### **3.3.4 Teacher's assessment of second draft and comparison with the first draft**

Not surprisingly, the second draft showed improved versions of the students' work. The students' progress is shown below (Table 16).

**Table 16**

*Difference between teacher's assessment of the first and the second draft in the different categories of the rubric for the blog comment*

<b>Results in percentage</b>	<b>Draft 1</b>	<b>Draft 2</b>
Salutation and closing	51	81
Grammar and spelling	77	89
Ideas	88	88
Sentences and paragraphs	87	89

Interestingly, the students' *ideas* did not evolve, possibly due to students' primarily focus on the correction of linguistic and structural aspects. However, in some cases, as shown in the transcript (Appendix R1) the students' ideas were better expressed and expanded in their second draft. Results in table 16 show that *salutation and closing* categories improved significantly, possibly due to their rather fixed and easy-to-grasp conventions. *Grammar and spelling* improved as students were able to decode the symbols used for errors correction.

### 3.3.5 Distribution of the third questionnaire to the ninth-grade students

In April the third questionnaire (Appendix P.1) was distributed to the ninth-grade students. It aimed at understanding students' perception about the usefulness of the tools used during their writing of the tasks. Results below (Table 17) indicated that 75 percent of the students considered that the success criteria guidelines helped them stay focused in their written task (question 1).

**Table 17**

*Ninth-year-students' use of the tools provided during their writing process*

Students' answers converted in percentage	Not true	Somewhat true	neutral	true	Very true
1. The success criteria guidelines helped me stay focused on my writing task.	4	4	17	<b>50</b>	<b>25</b>
2. The success criteria guidelines limited my ideas in my writing task.	17	21	<b>38</b>	25	0
3. The success criteria guidelines helped me plan my writing task.	13	0	17	42	29
4. I read the success criteria guidelines before starting to write.	13	8	17	38	25
5. I read the success criteria guidelines several times throughout my writing.	21	21	21	21	17
6. I read the success criteria guidelines when I finished writing.	13	13	25	25	25
7. The checklist helped me to revise my work.	13	4	29	25	25
8. I ticked the items in the checklist while I was writing.	<b>42</b>	4	29	17	8
9. I ticked the items in the checklist after finishing writing.	25	0	21	<b>21</b>	<b>33</b>

Results shown in table 7 are generally similar to the previous results shown in table 11 after students wrote their second drafts of the review. However, 25 percent of the students felt that the success criteria guidelines may have limited their ideas, and almost 40 percent of the respondents were undecided whether the success criteria guidelines had limited their ideas or



not (question 2). Although, previous results showed a considerably higher percentage of students who felt that the success criteria guidelines may have limited their ideas, and the number of students who thought that the success criteria guidelines had been helpful almost doubled, from questionnaire 2 to questionnaire 3. There was a wide discrepancy of students who consulted the success criteria guidelines throughout their writing process (question 5) in questionnaire 3. However, 50 percent of the students read the success criteria guidelines when they finished writing their task (question 6). A total of 42 percent of students did not use the checklist while they were writing, but 54 percent of them ticked the items in the checklist after finishing writing (question 9). The use of the checklist was not a priority for most students, despite the slight increased number of students who ticked the items in the checklist. It remains unclear whether students who did not tick the success criteria checklist looked at it, and if they did, students may have considered the success criteria guidelines enough to help them in their writing process. In all, students who did not tick the checklist cannot be considered *bad* students, as results indicated that students achieving the same results may have different strategies to keep on task.

**Table 18**

*Ninth-grade students' perception of feedback*

Students' answers converted in percentage	Not true	Somewhat true	neutral	true	Very true
1. Class feedback helped me understand how to improve writing blog comments.	21	8	21	<b>21</b>	<b>29</b>
2. Individual feedback helped me understand how to improve blog comments.	8	0	17	<b>33</b>	<b>42</b>
3. Individual feedback makes me feel anxious about my mistakes.	50	21	13	17	0
4. Correction codes helped me to understand my mistakes.	8	21	25	<b>17</b>	<b>29</b>
5. Correction codes helped me to look for information.	21	13	29	13	25
6. Correction codes made me confused.	46	13	13	<b>21</b>	<b>21</b>

Results shown in table 18 demonstrate that class feedback (question 1) and individual feedback (question 2) were favoured by the students in comparison with the use of correction codes (questions 4-6). However, the use of correction codes encouraged 38 percent of students to look for information in order to overcome their mistakes (question 5).

Interestingly, this result is considerably lower than in the previous task accomplished by the same group. For 42 percent of the students the use of correction codes seemed confusing, which could mean that for the students who thought that correction codes made confused, using them in class, but with the possibility of seeking clarification from peers and teachers may have been helpful.

On one hand, the percentage of students who thought that the correction codes had helped them increased. On the other hand, and conversely, the number of students who became more confused with the use of the error correction codes increased significantly, when compared with the previous writing task. This could be attributed to the fact that a significant number of students had not kept the error correction codes in their folders, contrary to the teacher’s indication, and thus had to look at the PowerPoint slide displayed, which may have been less user-friendly.

The use of rubrics was, according to the results shown in table 19, positive for students, who seemed to gain ability to self-assess their written task (question 1), who seemed better prepared to improve their writing task (question 2) and finally to predict the grade of their written task in the summative test (question 3).

**Table 19**

*Ninth-grade students’ use of rubrics*

Students’ answers converted in percentage	Not true	Somewhat true	neutral	true	Very true
1. Rubrics helped me to self-assess my blog comment.	8	13	25	<b>29</b>	<b>25</b>
2. Rubrics helped me to understand what I need to do to improve when I write a blog comment.	13	4	21	<b>38</b>	<b>25</b>
3. Rubrics are useful to understand what grade I will get in a blog comment.	13	4	21	<b>33</b>	<b>29</b>
4. Rubrics make me anxious about my performance.	58	8	25	8	0

Results in the last part of questionnaire 2 indicated that in general, students perceived the written task as easy and fairly useful for the future. A reduced percentage of students seemed to have disliked the written task, while 33 percent of the students seemed to enjoy accomplishing the written task. Nearly the same number of students seemed to have felt indifferent towards the task proposed.

**Table 20***Ninth-grade students' perceptions of writing blog comments vs writing film reviews*

Students' answers converted in percentage	Yes	No	Not sure
1. I feel more competent at writing blog comments than book or film reviews.	<b>29</b>	38	33
2. I feel equally competent at writing both the above.	<b>67</b>	25	8
3. I think that writing blog comments will be more useful than writing film or book reviews.	<b>13</b>	50	38
4. I think both the above will be useful.	<b>71</b>	21	8
5. I feel that rubrics helped me improve my writing in general.	<b>54</b>	21	25
6. I feel that the feedback helped me improve my writing in general.	<b>79</b>	8	13

Lastly, it was relevant to understand students' perceptions about their progress (Table 19). After having completed two written tasks, which were a film review and a blog comment, the self-assessment, and after having corrected their work, the students responded to questionnaire 3. Its last part aimed at encouraging students firstly to compare their writing ability of the tasks proposed. Almost 70 percent of the students felt competent in writing the two tasks (question 2). Only 13 percent of the students found writing a blogpost useful in comparison with writing a review (question 3), and 71 percent found both writing tasks useful (question 4). Both rubrics and feedback were considered helpful for students' development of writing skills (questions 5 and 6 respectively), but once more the students believed receiving feedback was more helpful than the use of rubrics (Table 20). Feedback may be more likely to become more meaningful as it refers to the students' performance than the rubrics.

#### **Summary of results of written task 1 and written task 2 by the ninth-grade students**

In the present section results concerning the two written tasks, the book/film review and the blog comment, carried out by the ninth-grade students are summarized. First of all, the results concerning both tasks showed that the teacher's assessment was more favourable than students' self-assessment in task 1, whereas in the second task the students' self-assessment was more favourable than the teacher's. This result may have stemmed from the fact that students gained more confidence over time. In both tasks, the success criteria guidelines provided were considered helpful by the students, as well as the feedback given prior to their writing of the second drafts. Although the vast majority of the students thought that the success criteria guidelines were more helpful than the checklists in both

questionnaires, the students, over time tended to use the checklists after finishing their writing as a way to review the task.

Surprisingly, the use of the error correction codes seemed to have caused more problems in the second task, despite the students' increased willingness to seek clarification or look for information to correct their work. The students considered both tasks equally easy, and the vast majority of students thought they were equally competent in writing the two tasks. However, they thought that writing a review was more useful and enjoyable than writing a blog comment, which could relate to the fact that writing blog comments may be outdated for this age-group, despite its inclusion in their book. On one hand, it could be argued that writing a blog provides students with an opportunity to write their opinion in an informal way, and it would precede the writing of opinion essays, for example. On the other hand, written tasks should reflect students' needs and interests in order to provide them meaningful learning opportunities. In times of rapid change the curriculum should keep up with what they do outside the class in English.

Finally, regarding the role of individual and class feedback, as a tool in AfL, 76 percent of 9<sup>th</sup> grade students felt that the feedback helped them improve their writing in general. Moreover, the writing tasks were carried out as processes, in which the students' mistakes were overcome either autonomously or with their peers' or teacher's help, but always triggered by reasoning, as students were given information on their progress while learning, as suggested by Oscarson (2009). The various assessment tools aimed at supporting students' learning and helping improve their written skills. Overall, assessment for learning promoted students' writing proficiency.

### **3.4 Eleventh-grade written task 1, an opinion essay**

In February the eleventh-grade students were asked to write their first written task ([Appendix M.3](#)), which would be used for the present study. The task followed pre-writing activities mentioned in chapter 2 of this report and preceded their written test, which included the writing of an opinion essay. They were provided with the success criteria guidelines and the success criteria checklist appropriate to the task.

#### **3.4.1 Class feedback on draft 1, of the eleventh-grade students' opinion essay**

Class feedback through PowerPoint slides ([Appendices J.1, J.2, and J.3](#)) was provided to the students before the teacher handed back students' work. The rubrics were shown in the slides and explained. Examples of the most successful areas, which were *position statement* and *evidence*, were identified and shared with the students ([Appendix J.1](#)). In addition, the areas that most needed improvement were shown too. Firstly, specific indications on how to

improve “sentence structure” were provided. The sentence written by a non-identified student ([Appendix J.2](#)) was displayed and on the right side several indications were provided in order to improve the paragraph.

Secondly, a good sample of a *closing paragraph* was displayed to help students overcome the problems they had revealed in their written task ([Appendix J.2](#)). Register was not included as a category in the rubrics. However, my correction of the students’ written tasks led me to later include it as a category. In fact,

contrary to my expectations, and in contrast with the general success of the other areas, keeping the essay consistently formal seemed challenging for the students. Their use of very informal expressions in formal texts such as “a lot”, and “way higher” surprised me. (My teaching journal, 17/02/2021).

Students were reminded through a PowerPoint slide not to use phrasal verbs, to think about complex words to substitute less complex ones, use more formal connectors, and finally use the passive voice.

### 3.4.2 Results of written task 1, an opinion essay by 11<sup>th</sup> grade students

The students were provided with the success criteria guidelines to help them plan their task, and also with the success criteria checklist to their work. The analysis that follows was based on the teacher’s assessment and students’ self-assessment through the use of rubrics of the first draft of the written task, and before students’ corrected their work using the correction code. The results below (Table 21) show the comparison of the teacher’s assessment to the students’ assessment.

**Table 21**

*Teacher’s assessment and self-assessment of 11th grade written task 1*

Results in percentage	Teacher and student assessed identically	Teacher assessed more favourably than student	Student assessed more favourably than teacher
	25	31	44

The results illustrate that 25 percent of the assessment carried out by the teacher and by the students was equivalent. Teacher’s assessment that was more favourable than the students’ self-assessment and thus possibly more lenient than the students’ self-assessment corresponded to 31 percent. Finally, 44 percent of the assessment carried out by the teacher seemed more rigorous than the students’ self-assessment of the same task.

**Table 22**

*Difference between teacher's assessment and self-assessment in the different categories of the rubric for essay of opinion*

Results expressed in percentage	Categories of the rubrics				
	Position statement	Evidence and examples	Sentence structure	Grammar and spelling	Closing paragraph
Teacher	86	84	67	72	66
Students	92	84	73	72	70
Difference	6	0	6	0	4

Results shown indicate that teacher and students agreed on the assessment of *evidence and examples* and *grammar and spelling*. Concerning the other categories, the difference between the teacher's assessment and the students' self-assessment was not significant, which seems to demonstrate students' ability to self-assess their work through the use of the tools provided. The self-assessment skill plays a central role in the development of learner autonomy, in which students play an active role in their learning.

### **3.4.3 Personalised feedback through the use of the error correction codes, individual feedback, and writing of the second draft of the opinion essay**

The students were given the error correction code and were asked to correct the first draft of their written assignment. The first sample of this assignment indicates the use of informal language. A short section of the first draft of an opinion essay ([Appendix S.1](#)) is transcribed: "From my point of view, nations that have more money are usually the one involved in worldwide problems, so in general I agree with this statement." The second draft demonstrates the student's ability to overcome the problems of the first draft, for example, "nations that have more money" was substituted by "wealthier nations", as shown in the transcribed section: "From my point of view, wealthier nations are the ones involved in worldwide problems, so in general I agree that richer nations are the ones responsible for problems around the world".

As mentioned earlier, as well as language, content was also considered by the teacher. In the sample ([Appendix S.2](#)) transcribed below the student's perspective seemed somewhat biased.

A study made in 2016 by EDGAR (Emission Database for Global Atmospheric Research informed us that the top 3 countries that pollute the most are China, the USA and India, two of them being poor countries. In 2016, China had approximately 1,4

billion people and it emitted approximately 10 billion tons of CO<sub>2</sub>. India, another big country, emitted 2 billion tons of CO<sub>2</sub>.

The teacher encouraged the student to include the perspective of the poor countries through the question written on the student's text: "don't India and China produce goods to be sent to wealthy countries?"

The student was therefore able to state his opinion with greater maturity and respect for the poor countries. The second draft ([Appendix S.2](#)) is transcribed below:

A study made in 2016 by EDGAR (Emission Database for Global Atmosphere Research) showed us that the top 3 countries that pollute the most are China, the USA and India, two of these being poor countries. Although these two countries export products to richer countries, they are still producing tons of trash that pollute our planet every day.

In the second draft, the student did not include the data he had included in the first draft. In fact, although his research helped him shape his opinion, the figures were not essential to write an opinion essay, as the student came to realise.

#### **3.4.4 Teacher's assessment of second draft and comparison with the first draft**

Writing the second draft is, as commonly accepted, not a widespread practice, especially among the older students, and more so during the lessons. However, a positive learning environment could be observed when students were writing their second draft in class:

"Look at how focused they are in correcting their work. They are aware of what they need to correct. It's a pity that we don't have time to do this every time", said my cooperating teacher while the students were writing their second drafts. (My teaching journal, 22/02/ 2022).

**Table 23**

*Difference between teacher's assessment of the first and the second draft in the different categories of the rubric for the opinion essay*

Results in percentage	Draft 1	Draft 2
Position statement	85	99
Evidence and examples	84	97
Sentence structure	63	91
Grammar and spelling	72	93
Closing paragraph	65	82



In fact, and as expected, in all the categories of the rubrics ([Appendix M.3](#)) the students scored higher results in their second drafts. *Sentence structure*, which had been identified as the least successful of the areas improved greatly, and also the *closing paragraph* was significantly better in the students’ second drafts, as shown in the class feedback provided through PowerPoint slides ([Appendix J.2](#)).

### 3.4.5 Distribution of the second questionnaire to the eleventh-grade students

In March, after students’ writing of their first draft of their opinion essay, followed by their self-assessment and their writing of their second draft, questionnaire 2 ([Appendix O.2](#)) was distributed. Firstly, I aimed at understanding how students used the tools provided. The results below (Table 24) confirmed that a high number of students felt that the success criteria guidelines helped them stay focused on their writing task (question 1) and also helped them plan their written task (question 3). However, for 33 percent of the students the success criteria guidelines could limit their ideas (question 2). Concerning the use of the checklist, it seems that most students, who used it, did so when they finished writing (question 6) and not while they were writing (question 8). Indeed, learning strategies varied among students who achieved similar results, and therefore the students’ use of the checklist at the end or while they were writing did not seem to cause an impact on the results.

**Table 24**

*Eleventh-grade students’ use of the tools provided during their writing process*

Students’ answers converted in percentage					
	Not true	Somewhat true	neutral	true	Very true
1. The success criteria guidelines helped me stay focused in my writing task.	0	11	11	<b>39</b>	<b>39</b>
2. The success criteria guidelines limited my ideas in my writing task.	11	<b>33</b>	39	11	6
3. The success criteria guidelines helped me plan my writing task.	0	6	17	<b>28</b>	<b>50</b>
4. I read the success criteria guidelines before starting to write.	6	6	11	17	61
5. I read the success criteria guidelines several times throughout my writing.	6	6	50	17	22
6. I read the success criteria guidelines when I finished writing.	22	17	6	<b>22</b>	<b>33</b>
7. The checklist helped me to revise my work.	11	11	28	22	28
8. I ticked the items in the checklist while I was writing.	<b>33</b>	17	28	11	11
9. I ticked the items in the checklist after finishing writing.	22	17	6	11	44



The results of the open questions revealed that 50 percent of the students favoured the use of the success criteria guidelines over the checklists. Various reasons were given, namely, that they helped them understand what they needed to write and they were useful in helping them organise their texts. A significant number of students did not answer, and the rest of the answers provided were too varied, and therefore not categorized and analysed in this study.

In the present study it was relevant to understand students' perception of the feedback provided to their written tasks (Table 25).

**Table 25**

*Eleventh-grade students' perception of feedback*

Students' answers converted in percentage	Not true	Somewhat true	neutral	true	Very true
1. Class feedback helped me understand how to improve writing opinion essays.	11	17	17	17	39
2. Individual feedback helped me understand how to improve writing opinion essays.	6	0	28	<b>11</b>	<b>56</b>
3. Individual feedback leads me to feel anxious about my mistakes.	50	33	6	6	6
4. Correction codes helped me to understand my mistakes.	0	6	17	<b>44</b>	<b>33</b>
5. Correction codes helped me to look for information.	0	22	28	33	17
6. Correction codes made me confused.	50	22	17	0	<b>11</b>

The students viewed individual feedback as a helpful tool to improve their writing of opinion essays (question 2). However, results showed that the error correction codes had a greater role in helping students understanding their mistakes (question 4). For almost 75 percent of students the error correct codes were not confusing and only 11 percent agreed with the statement (question 6).

The analysis of the open questions showed that over 50 percent of the students preferred individual feedback because it helped them understand their mistakes and improve their writing. The use of corrections was the main means used in individual feedback and it seems that a more regular use of these could lead to students' greater efficiency in using them, more satisfaction and enhanced development.

**Table 26***Eleventh-grade students' use of rubrics*

Students' answers converted in percentage	Not true	Somewhat true	neutral	true	Very true
1. Rubrics helped me to self-assess my opinion essay.	0	17	17	<b>39</b>	<b>28</b>
2. Rubrics helped me to understand what I need to do to improve when I write opinion essays.	0	6	17	<b>50</b>	<b>28</b>
3. Rubrics are useful to understand what grade I will get in an opinion essay.	6	17	<b>33</b>	33	11
4. Rubrics make me anxious about my performance.	50	17	22	6	6

Results displayed in table 26 show that 67 percent of the students considered the use of rubrics helpful to self-assess their opinion essay (question 1) and 78 percent of the students believed that the use of rubrics helped them understand what they needed to do to improve their written task (question 2). Over 30 percent of the students were not certain whether the use of rubrics would help them to understand the grade they would have in their opinion essay (question 3). Probably, the time gap between the writing of the essay and the filling of the questionnaire played its part. Interestingly, the use of rubrics brought some anxiety about their performance to some students (question 4).

The analysis of the open questions indicated that 61 percent of the students would like to use the rubrics to write opinion essays in future. Among several reasons presented were that rubrics helped them plan their essay, and that the rubrics helped them to remember to include all that was required.

The students' perception about writing an opinion essay was analysed (last part of questionnaire 2) and the results showed that most students thought that accomplishing the written task was fairly easy or easy. Above 50 percent of the students thought it was useful and 17 percent of them perceived it as useless. Results also indicated that students did not seem very keen on writing the proposed task nor did they seem to dislike it. Results seemed to indicate that students were indifferent towards writing an opinion essay, despite considering the task useful. Sense of competence, usefulness and motivation to accomplish the task seem thus somewhat disconnected.

### 3.5 Eleventh-grade written task 2, a letter of application

In March the eleventh-grade students were asked to write their second written task (Appendix G.4), a letter of application, which followed the pre-writing activities shown in chapter 2. Once more the students were provided with the success criteria guidelines to help them plan their task, and also with the success criteria checklist.

#### 3.5.1 Class feedback on draft 1 of eleventh-grade students' letter of application

Class feedback through PowerPoint slides (Appendix K) was provided to the students before handing back their work. The rubrics were shown in the slides and explained. *Salutation and closing* in formal emails/letters was a successful area. However, it was relevant to clarify the students who had not followed the conventions fully. In addition, it seemed pertinent to present samples of good arguments used by the students because their lack of work experience was a fact that needed to be considered. The samples illustrate the use of some creativity, which in fact was required from the students, who tended to limit their writing to facts.

#### 3.5.2 Results of written task 2, a letter of application by 11<sup>th</sup> grade students

The analysis that follows was based on the teacher's assessment and the students' self-assessment of the first draft of the written task, and before students' corrected their work using the correction code. The assessment was carried out through the use of rubrics that included the following categories: *Salutation and closing, grammar and spelling, sentences and paragraphs, format, and register*.

**Table 27**

*Teacher's assessment and self-assessment of 11th grade written task 2*

Results in percentage	Teacher and student assessed identically	Teacher assessed more favourably than student	Student assessed more favourably than teacher
	24	58	18

The results indicate that 24 percent of the assessment carried out by the teacher and by the students was the same when the various categories were added together. Teacher's assessment that was higher than the students' self-assessment corresponded to 58 percent, which could indicate students' considerable rigor in their self-assessment. Lastly, 18 percent of the assessment carried out by the teachers seemed more rigorous than the students' self-assessment.

The similarities between teacher's assessment and students' self-assessment ranged between 3 percent and 12 percent in the various categories, as it is indicated in the table above

(Table 28). The assessment of *salutation and closing*, and *grammar and spelling* were the categories that were more similar between teacher and students.

**Table 28**

*Difference between teacher's assessment and self-assessment in the different categories of the rubric for the letter of application*

Results expressed in percentage	Categories of the rubrics				
	Salutation and closing	Grammar and spelling	Sentences and paragraphs	Format	Register
Teacher	84	85	90	87	93
Students	81	82	78	81	84
Difference	3	3	12	6	9

The assessment of the category of *sentences and paragraphs* seemed the most dissimilar. Interestingly, in all the categories the teacher's assessment was more favourable than the students' self-assessment, which could stem from the fact that the group of students was featured as highly competitive and rigorous in the different subject areas, as observed by their different teachers. The students used self-assessment as a tool to support their learning process and the results seemed to indicate that assessment for learning promoted students' writing proficiency.

### **3.5.3 Personalized feedback through the use of the error correction codes and writing of the second draft of the letter of application**

The students were asked to correct the first draft of their written assignment, using the error correction code ([Appendix L](#)). As shown earlier the results of the assignment were significantly above average in all categories of the rubrics.

Draft 1 of the first sample of a letter of application reveals some problems in the organisation of ideas. The selection of the samples of the letter of application aims to illustrate the student's success in the writing of his second draft, in terms of organisation. In fact, in the first sample the sports mentioned by the student were dispersed in the text, which affects the organisation of paragraphs, as illustrated in the sample ([Appendix T.1](#)) transcribed below:

I think I am suitable for the role because I can speak different languages and I can play sports and even swim if necessary. I enjoy working with young people and if possible I could introduce ideas for new activities in the camp.

As said before I am capable to play many different sports. For example, football, basketball, water polo, handball and volleyball.

As shown below, in draft 2 ([Appendix T.1](#)) the student was able to improve the organisation of his ideas. That is, in the second draft the student listed the sports he did in a systematized manner and deleted the irrelevant words and expressions, which led him to improve the coherence of his text, notwithstanding the linguistic problems. The text is transcribed below:

I am writing to apply for the role of summer camp leader.

I think I am suitable for the role because I have worked as a camp leader before in my home country.

Not only that I can speak three different languages and I can play sports as for example, football, swimming, basketball, water polo, handball and volleyball. In addition, I can play the guitar.

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

As shown, the inversion using “not only” needed to be corrected. Thus, writing was considered a process aimed at improvement, and assessment aimed at helping students to develop their writing skills. In practical terms, the writing of a third version of a similar task was carried out when the students wrote their assignment in their summative test.

In the sample below, a transcription of the first draft of a letter of application ([Appendix T2](#)), various language problems are evident, namely the *salutation and closing*, the use of inadequate vocabulary and the inappropriate *register*:

Dear Sir,

I'm writing to apply for the role of summer camp leader I would like to gain it and I think I am suitable for that because I'm a lovely person and I like to have fun. I have 2 years experience working as a summer camp leader.

I very much hope you will accept me and I will enjoy it so much the camp.

Your sincerely,

The student was able to successfully correct his written task. The *salutation and closing* improved, the choice of words was upgraded, and the *register* became more formal as it was required. The transcription of draft 2 ([Appendix T2](#)) is shown below:

Dear Mr. Marco,

I am writing to apply for the role of summer camp leader.

I would like to participate and I think I am suitable for that role because I am an athletic man and I would like to play with younger children. I have 2 years experience working as a summer camp leader. I very much hope you will accept myself.

Yours sincerely,

The second draft of the task, shown above improved although the words choice could be improved. However, overall and as expected, the writing of the second drafts benefited the students' work quality (Table 29).

### 3.5.4 Teacher's assessment of second draft and comparison with the first draft

*Grammar and spelling* were the categories in which a greater difference between the two drafts was perceived. Students were able to correct their language mistakes, using the error correction codes, their mobile phones to search for the information they needed, and to ask their peers' help. In addition, the students were competent in making the necessary changes in order to develop the format of their texts.

**Table 29**

*Difference between teacher's assessment of the first and the second draft in the different categories of the rubric for the letter of application*

Results in percentage	Draft 1	Draft 2
Salutation and closing	84	97
Grammar and spelling	85	99
Sentences and paragraphs	90	96
Format	87	96
Register	93	97

The *salutation and closing* greatly improved. Students had received straightforward instructions regarding this category, which they had not fully followed. Once they received the feedback, they self-corrected this writing area. In all, and not surprisingly, students' upgraded writing in their second drafts was revealed in each category of the rubrics, as shown above (Table 29).

The practices described in the present chapter that were incorporated in the English class aimed at promoting students' writing proficiency through AfL. The written tasks preceded the summative assessment, which may have contributed to students' motivation to fulfill the tasks, more so due to the students' high motivation to excel in academic performance.

### 3.5.5 Distribution of the third questionnaire to the eleventh-grade students

In April the 11<sup>th</sup> grade students responded to the third questionnaire ([Appendix P.2](#)), which aimed at understanding students' views on the effectiveness of the tools adopted during the development of their written tasks.

Results shown (Table 30) indicate that over 50 percent of the students considered that the success criteria guidelines helped them stay focused on their writing task (question 1) and

helped them plan their writing task (question 3). However, nearly 40 percent of the students thought that the success criteria guidelines limited their ideas (question 2). Nevertheless, a similar number of students read the success criteria guidelines when they finished writing their text (question 6), which was positive since it shows that they read the success criteria guidelines throughout their writing and read them at the end too (questions 5 and 6).

**Table 30**

*Eleventh-grade students' use of the tools provided during their writing process*

Students' answers converted in percentage	Not true	Somewhat true	neutral	true	Very true
1. The success criteria guidelines helped me stay focused on my writing task.	0	13	13	<b>38</b>	<b>21</b>
2. The success criteria guidelines limited my ideas in my writing task.	4	17	25	<b>25</b>	<b>13</b>
3. The success criteria guidelines helped me plan my writing task.	0	4	13	<b>54</b>	<b>13</b>
4. I read the success criteria guidelines before starting to write.	0	4	17	13	50
5. I read the success criteria guidelines several times throughout my writing.	13	8	21	17	25
6. I read the success criteria guidelines when I finished writing.	21	13	17	<b>25</b>	<b>13</b>
7. The checklist helped me to revise my work.	4	13	17	17	33
8. I ticked the items in the checklist while I was writing.	<b>25</b>	<b>21</b>	4	21	13
9. I ticked the items in the checklist after finishing writing.	13	13	17	<b>8</b>	<b>33</b>

Nearly 50 percent of the students did not tick the items in the checklist while they were writing (question 8), and 33 percent of the students ticked the items after finishing writing (question 9). In total 83 percent of the students claimed they ticked the checklist at some point, which seems to indicate their interest in the tool provided.

Students' perception of feedback is illustrated below (Table 31). Over 50 percent of the respondents thought that class feedback and individual feedback helped them to improve their letters of application (questions 1 and 2). 46 percent of the students considered that correction codes helped them understand their mistakes (question 4). However, nearly 40 percent of the students thought that the correction codes made them confused (question 6). Possibly, students would have needed some training, which I was not aware of. I had shown

the error correction code to the students and had briefly explained the meanings of the symbols and I assumed that it was sufficient.

**Table 31**

*Eleventh-grade students' perception of feedback*

Students' answers converted in percentage	Not true	Somewhat true	neutral	true	Very true
1. Class feedback helped me understand how to improve writing letters of application.	13	4	13	<b>29</b>	<b>25</b>
2. Individual feedback helped me understand how to improve letters of application.	4	0	25	<b>21</b>	<b>33</b>
3. Individual feedback makes me feel anxious about my mistakes.	50	8	17	8	0
4. Correction codes helped me to understand my mistakes.	0	17	21	<b>25</b>	<b>21</b>
5. Correction codes helped me to look for information.	13	8	25	21	17
6. Correction codes made me confused.	17	21	8	<b>13</b>	<b>25</b>

Outcomes shown below (Table 32) bring light to the students' perception of the use of rubrics. 46 percent of the students considered that the rubrics helped them to self-assess their letter of application (question 1). In addition, 34 percent of the students thought that the use of rubrics helped them understand what they needed to do in order to improve their writing task, whereas nearly 50 percent were not so sure about its usefulness (question 2). Interestingly, a similar number of respondents considered it useful to understand what grade they would get in a letter of application, in a summative evaluation.

**Table 32**

*Eleventh-grade students' use of rubrics*

Students' answers converted in percentage	Not true	Somewhat true	neutral	true	Very true
1. Rubrics helped me to self-assess my letter of application.	4	17	17	<b>29</b>	<b>17</b>
2. Rubrics helped me to understand what I need to do to improve when I write a letter of application.	4	0	<b>46</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>
3. Rubrics are useful to understand what grade I will get in a letter of application.	13	8	21	<b>29</b>	<b>13</b>
4. Rubrics make me anxious about my performance.	58	13	4	4	4



Moreover, results showed that the majority of the students found writing the letter of application useful and easy. However, they did not enjoying writing it and twenty-five percent of the students seemed to feel indifferent towards the written task proposed.

The eleventh-grade students completed two written tasks, which were the opinion essays and the letters of application. Results shown below (Table 33) indicate that 50 percent of the students felt it was important to write both the tasks (question 2). 60 percent of the students believed that both the tasks will be useful for them (question 4).

**Table 33**

*Eleventh-grade students' perceptions of writing opinion essays vs letter of application*

Students' answers converted in percentage	Yes	No	Not sure
1. I feel more competent at writing letters of application than opinion essays.	17	38	29
2. I feel equally competent at writing both the above.	<b>50</b>	13	21
3. I think that writing opinion essays will be more useful than writing letters of application.	21	42	21
4. I think both the above will be useful.	<b>63</b>	4	17
5. I feel that rubrics helped me improve my writing in general.	<b>38</b>	<b>25</b>	21
6. I feel that the feedback helped me improve my writing in general.	71	4	8

The results of questions 5 and 6 show us that the majority of students thought that feedback was more useful in helping them improve their writing than the use of rubrics. In fact, there was a considerable number of students who seemed uncertain about the usefulness of the rubrics, which contrasted with a high number of students who favoured the feedback provided.

### **Summary of results of written task 1 and written task 2 by the eleventh-grade students**

In the written tasks, the opinion essay and the letter of application around 25 percent of the teacher's assessment and the students' assessment was similar, whereas students' self-assessment became more rigorous over time, from task 1 to task 2. Spelling and grammar mistakes were those students were best able to overcome when they wrote a second draft, possibly because the information needed is accessed easily and their correction tends to be straightforward. Then, the more specific aspects of the task, such as *position statement* in opinion essays and *salutations and closing* for letter of application were also areas in which students overcame their misunderstandings, presumably due to unambiguous models provided, which they looked at more carefully when they wrote their second drafts. The number of students who considered that the success criteria guidelines helped them to stay

focused on their task decreased by almost 30 percent, and the number of students who thought that the success criteria guidelines had helped them plan their writing task also decreased, but not so significantly. This may be attributed to a greater self-confidence achieved by students who adopted a more risk-taking attitude when they wrote the second task. Moreover, more students found it easy, compared to the first task, and more students enjoyed accomplishing the task.

Regardless of the results mentioned above that point to a more relaxed attitude towards the second writing task, which was the letter of application, 50 percent of students claimed to have felt equally competent to write the two written tasks. Finally, 71 percent of 11<sup>th</sup> grade students felt that the feedback helped them improve their writing in general. The practices carried out included the integration of various assessment tools, whose primary role was helping students to improve their writing. Overall, the students used the assessment tools and found them useful to stay focused on their task, to remind them what to do and to check their work. Ongoing and intertwined assessment was present throughout students' writing process, which led students to take responsibility over their learning revealing thus learner autonomy. By the end of implementation of the practices discussed in the present report they felt competent in writing the tasks proposed, which were the letter of opinion and the application letter. Their competence in writing the tasks agrees with the goals established by the CEFR for learners at B2 level, mentioned earlier in this study.

## CHAPTER IV: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this section the aims of the study are restated, a brief summary of findings is provided and a discussion supported by the literature is delivered. Secondly, the importance of the action research for my own professional development is explained. Then, the importance of the results in other teaching contexts is proposed, and finally, bearing in mind the limitations of the present study, ideas for future research related to the study that has been put into practice are suggested.

### 1. Aims, summary of findings and discussion

“How can assessment for learning promote students’ writing proficiency” was the main research question guiding my action research that involved a group of ninth-grade students and a group of eleventh-grade students, over a period of five months, which corresponded to two terms during an academic year. The study involved the writing of four written tasks in total that preceded summative assessment. More significantly, the study entailed assessment for learning through the use of success criteria guidelines and checklists for students to write their first draft. Then the use of class feedback and individual feedback through error correction codes and rubrics to help learners self-assess their writing were used as tools to help students understand the areas that needed improvement. Lastly, the study entailed the writing of the second draft by the students who could use their mobile phones, seek clarification from their peers or from the teacher as resources to obtain the information needed to correct their mistakes. In short, direct support was provided to students for improving their writing, but also the students’ role was crucial in their assessment process, which is in agreement with the characterisation of *AfL* suggested by Siarova et al. (2017). Moreover, students were provided with information on their accomplishment while they were learning, which is in line with Oscarson’s (2009) definition of formative assessment.

Understanding how *AfL* promoted students’ writing proficiency was the core concern in the present study. First of all, students’ willingness to improve their writing was a key factor to the work they developed and that served as grounds to my action research. Data was collected from students’ essays, self-assessment through rubrics, entries from a teaching journal and from a total of six questionnaires, three for each group of students. The results of the questionnaires are discussed below.

#### a) Discussion of results of questionnaire 1

Results showed that nearly 50 percent of the ninth-grade students and over 50 percent of the eleventh-grade students did not practise writing in English before their summative test, which could mean that the practice was optional and that they were not aware of what written task

they would encounter in their summative test, presumably because the teacher did not focus on a specific written task when revisions for the test were carried out.

It was also shown that the vast majority of both groups of students believed that the teacher's correction of their writing was crucial. For this reason, understanding the type of feedback students were used to receiving for their writing was relevant. According to their responses, for both levels the correction of spelling mistakes and the grammar mistakes were the aspects mostly corrected by their English teacher. It could be argued that this way of marking is not enough to help students improve their writing, as results from this study showed that other problems may occur in students' writing, such as those specific for the task. For example, the *position statement*, which is central in the opinion essay, may need to be improved. On the other hand, spelling mistakes and grammar mistakes could be corrected by the student through the use of the error correction codes, so that the students would have a better chance to improve learning, as it has been suggested by Chappuis (2014) and by the study conducted by Ekinici and Ekinici (2020). Ultimately, students who can correct their own mistakes have control of their learning, which, as suggested by Benson (2013), characterizes learner autonomy.

The second questionnaire was distributed to the students of the ninth and the eleventh grade, after the accomplishment of their first written task.

#### b) Discussion of results of questionnaire 2

Assessment for learning was implemented, and it aimed at promoting students' writing proficiency through the use of various tools that are typically related with formative assessment, such as through the use of more complete feedback and self-assessment that so far had been overlooked. This questionnaire aimed, first of all, at grasping students' use of the tools provided. The majority of the ninth-grade students considered the success criteria guidelines an important tool to help them focus on their writing task, but its use to plan their writing and their use of checklists was less widespread among the group. A significant number of students also considered the class feedback, as well as individual feedback helped them understand how to improve their writing task. In fact, Siarova et al. (2017) stresses the teachers' key role in providing feedback and in setting goals in AfL. The use of error correction codes, which was something new for the majority of the students, was also useful in helping students to decode their mistakes, according to the results.

Regarding the use of rubrics, a significant number of ninth-grade students thought that the rubrics helped them self-assess and improve their written task. As pointed out by Siarova

(2017), not only do learners need to understand the teacher's feedback, but they also need to grasp the main purposes of their learning.

Concerning the eleventh-grade students, a similar number of students in comparison with the ninth-grade students regarded success criteria guidelines as an important tool to help them focus on their writing task. However, a greater number of older students seemed to have used the success criteria guidelines to plan their work than younger students. The use of success criteria guidelines is in line with the written outline suggested by Kellogg (1990), who argues that it is a helpful pre-writing strategy that leads to improve text quality.

Above fifty percent of the students of the eleventh-grade considered class feedback and individual feedback useful to help them improve their writing task. In fact, effective feedback is a tool in AfL, which supports students' learning (Vogt and Froelich, cited in Tsagari et al, 2018). However, the number of students who thought feedback was useful was not as significant as among the younger groups of students. Presumably, older students become increasingly more capable to correcting their own mistakes. Nevertheless, the older students seemed more enthusiastic in using the error correction codes to look for information, than the ninth-grade students, which again seems to reveal their enhanced autonomy. Indeed, the older students may have acquired, throughout the years, the learning strategies that enable them to gain understanding of how they learn, and ultimately control their way of learning (Bajrami, 2015).

Similarly to the ninth-grade students, eleventh-grade students also regarded the rubrics helpful to self-assess their written task, as suggested by Andrade (1996), and to understand what they needed to do to improve their texts. A greater number of eleventh-grade students felt able to understand what grade they would get through the use of rubrics, in comparison with the ninth-grade students. The older students' concern about grades stems from the fact that the marks at the secondary level are decisive to enroll at university, and that apprehension, besides their greater "involvement in and responsibility for their own learning process" (Dam, 2004, p.41), which expresses learner autonomy, may explain their ability to predict their grade through the use of rubrics.

How assessment for learning can promote students' writing proficiency was the main research question of the present study. The students gained the ability to write different types of texts, with the support of various tools that helped them understand their learning stage, and improve their work. The tools used were in line with the practices used in AfL and aimed at engaging students in their learning process. In general, students adhered well to the tools proposed, and the upgraded versions of the second drafts written not as neat versions of

teachers' corrections, but as a product of student's thinking, as recommended by (Onozawa, 2010), indicated students' increased proficiency.

c) Discussion of results of questionnaire 3

The third and last questionnaire was distributed to each group of students after their conclusion of the second written task. The last questionnaire aimed at gaining insights on the use of the tools given to the students during their writing of the second task, and about the students' perception of their own progress in their writing proficiency. The results regarding the ninth-grade students' perception of the success criteria guidelines and the checklist were similar to questionnaire 2. Students considered the use of success criteria guidelines important in their writing process. However, this time a greater number of students thought that the success criteria guidelines could limit their ideas. It could be argued that indeed, *clustering*, referred to by Kellogg (1990), or brainstorming (in opposition to *outlining*, mentioned by the same author, or *success criteria guidelines*, the term used in the present study) may increase the number of ideas during the pre-writing stage, as suggested by Kellogg (1990). In fact, it is widely accepted that brainstorming entails the sharing of ideas freely, and spontaneously, which can be even chaotic. In a blog comment more freedom could be welcomed by the students who tended to enjoy sharing their opinions freely and informally, whereas in a review, a fixed structure could seem more helpful for the students, since their habit of commenting about books or films in greater depth is more limited.

A lower number of eleventh-grade students considered the success criteria guidelines an important tool to help them write their text, and more students thought it limited their ideas presumably due to their greater autonomy. A higher number of eleventh-grade students ticked the items in the checklist while they were writing, in comparison with the ninth-grade students. This could suggest that older students have greater ability to write their texts with greater thoughtfulness, than the younger students. It could also mean that older students may alternate writing to checking in their writing process.

Class feedback was considered relevant by all the students to improve their writing, but individual feedback, provided mostly through the use of correction codes was held as significantly more efficient by the ninth-grade students in helping them to develop their writing. In line with this outcome, Black et al. (2003) refer to a study that aimed at understanding the efficacy of different types of feedback, which concluded that learning gains were greatest for those students who were given only comments with no grades.

A higher number of eleventh-grade students seemed more confident in using the error correction codes to look for information, than in the group of the ninth-grade students.

Nevertheless, a greater number of eleventh-grade students thought error correction codes were confusing, in comparison with their younger peers. It seems that, although some older students found error correction codes confusing, they tried to overcome their doubts, by seeking clarification. As suggested by Boshier (1990), students “were engaged in a problem-solving approach to error” (p.88). Indeed, this group of students, being science and maths oriented, could be more motivated to use the error correction codes than the younger group of students, whom science and maths, or problem-solving did not motivate all the students.

The use of rubrics by the ninth-grade students in questionnaire 3 generated, in general, similar results to the previous questionnaire. Nonetheless, students found the rubrics less helpful in making them understand what they needed to do to improve their writing. Also, eleventh-grade students found the rubrics less helpful to self-assess their task, and less capable of helping them to understand what they needed to do to improve their texts, in the second task. As suggested by Andrade (2005), the contents of rubrics need to be clarified by the teacher. The students’ perception about the rubrics may have been a consequence of the teacher’s belief that further clarification of the rubrics was not necessary this time. It seems therefore that the teacher’s role is definitely relevant in helping students understand the assessment criteria, as suggested by Bruno, Santos, and Costa (2016).

Overall, similarly to Oscarson’s (2009) study which demonstrated students’ competence in self-assessment, in the present study students also showed competence in assessing their work using rubrics, which included categories that facilitated the setting of goals for improvement, as suggested by Chappuis (2014). Moreover, the results of the study by Kim (2019) indicated that weaker writers benefitted from rubric-referenced self-assessment. Indeed, students, in general, including the weaker writers were able to self-assess their written tasks. A study carried out by Esfandiari and Myford (2013) showed that teacher assessors were the most rigorous, while self-assessors were the most lenient. In the present study results seem to indicate that both students and the teacher were equally rigorous, as non-significant differences occurred.

Students’ competence in self-assessment led them to write improved versions of their texts and translated into students’ increased autonomy. Not surprisingly, by the end of the action research older students revealed greater ability to self-assess. They also showed, in their second drafts, greater facility in correcting their grammar and spelling mistakes through the use of the error correction codes than the younger students. However, in general, both age-groups were equally successful in improving their second drafts to the higher standards.



It seems relevant to point out that the prospect of the summative assessment may have also triggered students' willingness to write a second draft of each task, which was something students were not used to doing, as indicated by the results of the first questionnaire. The students' writing of the second drafts was performed in class, supported by the use of error correction codes which led students to think, and to work with their peers. The effectiveness of the use of the error correction codes observed in the writing of the second draft could be questioned if the students in future carried out the writing of the second draft as homework.

Overall, formative assessment carried out in the classroom, which entailed the use of various tools described in this study, was embedded in students' learning process, as a natural element, as advocated by Cope and Kalatziz (personal communication, December, 2021) and it aimed at enhancing students' writing proficiency, which entailed the ability to use the written language effectively, and in agreement with the official documents referred to earlier in this study. Also, Chappuis (2014) suggests that, if students have attained the goals set for their level there could be a shift from an intended formative assessment to summative assessment.

The use of success criteria guidelines and error correction codes was favoured by both age-group students, in comparison with the use of the success criteria checklists. The success criteria checklist may have been considered redundant to some students, especially to those who used the success criteria guidelines to check their work throughout the writing process. In fact, results indicated that students achieving the same results may have different strategies to keep on task.

By the end of the action research, both groups of learners felt competent in the writing of the written tasks proposed, and felt their writing in general had improved.

## **2. The importance of the action research for my own professional development**

The development of my action research required taking into account my specific context, and meticulous preparation of the tasks, which included first of all selection of the writing tasks, taking into account the year plan and the official documents. Then, it involved the adaptation of rubrics, success criteria guidelines and success criteria checklists, and accuracy and promptness in the delivery of class feedback and personalised feedback to students. Furthermore, no less challenging due to the students' high rate of absences related to the pandemic, time management was needed so that all the students would be given the opportunity to accomplish all stages of writing and self-assessing their work before their summative assessment. Aiming to raise my students' writing proficiency also entailed fostering a positive and safe learning environment, where students felt at ease to seek



clarification from their peers or from their teacher. In addition, a trusting learning environment was promoted, which allowed students to use their mobile phones as a means to access information. Thus the study was relevant for my own development as a teacher who shared the learning responsibility with the students, in a positive learning and teaching environment, in which the challenges were overcome in a smooth manner. Lastly, I learned that once AfL is implemented in class, the focus for both the students and for the teacher becomes the process rather than the product because students keep on trying to improve their work, and the teacher is part of that process.

### **3. Relevance of the study for other teaching contexts and suggestions for future research**

The practices described in the present study could be implemented in different English teaching contexts, as recommended by policies referred to in chapter one of the present study. The strategies were congruent with AfL, in which the teacher and students shared the responsibility in the students' learning process. Time is a common concern among language teachers, when they are faced with hundreds of written tasks from different classes to correct. However, the marking tends to be carried out in the texts written in the students' summative assessment, which is often the only one they are awarded a mark for. As such, students are not given the chance to develop their writing as a process, in which students go through a thinking process, or through the three sequential steps, which are pre-writing, drafting, and revising, as suggested by Onozawa (2010), aimed at the final written product. Why not anticipate the fatiguing correction process, so that its aim is no longer simply attributing a grade, but rather better preparing students for their summative assessment? Or maybe just formatively assess, and it becomes summative assessment?

It could be argued that AfL is too time consuming. Assessment for learning can, nevertheless, include a variety of tools and strategies that can be easily used in class and shared with other classes of the same level and thus promote cooperative work among English teachers. Furthermore, bearing in mind that by the time students write the texts in their summative test, this will be their third version, correction is likely to be less time consuming, and the previous corrections will have helped the students to improve learners' writing. In addition, corrections will have helped them gain autonomy through self-assessing their work followed by the correction of their mistakes. Assessment will then have been embedded in the classroom practices and will have contributed for the students' progress.

In future research, and taking into account that time management is problematic, namely because different students need different lengths of time to revise their work, students could be given the task of rewriting their texts as homework. In order to ensure efficient work,

namely an effective use of the error correction codes, collaboration among peers, maybe through a forum could be set. Besides that, future study could involve students and the English teacher in collaborative co-construction of the writing rubrics as suggested by Ghaffar et al. (2020), and giving learners guided practice in using the rubrics on pieces of writing before they do their own writing. This could lead to students' better understanding of the rubrics, and thus greater adherence to the rubrics as advocated by the same authors. The use of rubrics could, in turn, help students setting their own goals.

#### **4. Final conclusion**

In a time when communication is vitally maintained through the internet between people from different parts of the world, writing in English, using language accurately, while taking into account the rules of netiquette is relevant. The purpose of this study was to promote students' writing proficiency through AfL. The study involved a group of ninth-grade students and a group of eleventh-grade students. Two written tasks were proposed to each group, and various assessment tools used were described, and students' responses to the tasks, as well as to the questionnaires were analysed.

The data collected confirmed the students' reflection during their learning process and the development of their writing proficiency. The students' learning process entailed students knowing where they were in their learning stage, where they were going and what they needed to do to reach their goals. In the final stage of the action research students' written texts revealed significantly fewer language problems and the acquisition of the correct requirements for each task. In all, ninth-grade students' ability in writing film or book reviews and blog comments was greatly enhanced, and the eleventh-grade students' competency in writing an opinion essay and a letter of application considerably increased. In addition, my learners' increased writing proficiency, through the strategies they learnt to use, may, I believe, have led them to be better equipped to accomplish other written tasks at school or needed in the outside world. Assessment for learning implemented during my practicum, which involved the use of various assessment tools, described in this study, promoted students' writing proficiency of specific written tasks.

## REFERENCES

- Andrade, H. G. (1996). Understanding rubrics. *Educational leadership*, 14-17.  
[https://knilt.arcc.albany.edu/images/6/63/Andrade\\_Rubrics.pdf](https://knilt.arcc.albany.edu/images/6/63/Andrade_Rubrics.pdf)
- Andrade, H. (2005). Teaching with rubrics: the good, the bad, and the ugly. *College Teaching*, 1 (53), 27-29.
- Andrade, H.G., & Boulay, B.A. (2003). Role of rubric-referenced self-assessment in learning to write. *The Journal of Education Research*, 97(1), 21-30.
- Bajrami, L. (2015). Teacher's new role in language learning and in promoting learner autonomy. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 199, 423-427.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.07.528>
- Benson, P. (2013). Learner autonomy. *TESOL Quarterly*, 47 (4), 839-843.
- Bosher, S. (1990). The role of error correction in the process-oriented ESL composition classroom. *MinneTESOL Journal*, 8, 89-101.
- Black, P., Harrison C., Lee, C. Marshall, B., & Wiliam, D. (2003). *Assessment for learning*. Open University Press.
- Black, P., & William, D. (2009). Developing the theory of formative assessment. *Educational Assessment, Evaluation and Accountability*, 1(1), 5-31.
- Burns, A. (2010). *Doing action research in English language teaching*. Routledge.
- British Council (n.d.). Writing skills practice: A cover letter-exercises. *Learn English Teens*.  
[https://learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/sites/teens/files/a\\_cover\\_letter\\_-\\_exercises.pdf](https://learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/sites/teens/files/a_cover_letter_-_exercises.pdf)
- Bruno, I., Santos, L., & Costa, N. (2016). The way students internalize assessment criteria on inquiry reports. *Studies in Educational Evaluation*, 51, 55-66.
- Cambridge (n.d.) *B2 first for schools writing part 1 (an opinion essay)*.  
<https://www.cambridgeenglish.org/Images/581163-b2-first-for-schools-preparing-for-exam-success-self-study-writing-activities-part-1.pdf>
- Cambridge English Language Assessment (2022a). *B2 first exam format*. Cambridge University Press & Assessment. <https://www.cambridgeenglish.org/exams-and-tests/first/exam-format/>
- Cambridge English Language Assessment (2022b). *B1 Preliminary exam format*. Cambridge University Press & Assessment. <https://www.cambridgeenglish.org/exams-and-tests/preliminary/exam-format/>
- Chappuis, J. (2014). *Seven strategies of assessment for learning* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Pearson.

- Chowdhury, F. (2018). Application of rubrics in the classroom: A vital tool for improvement in assessment, feedback and learning. *International Education Studies*, 1 (12), 61-68.
- Cohen, L. Manion, L., & Morrison K. (2007). *Research methods in education*. (6<sup>th</sup> ed.) Routledge.
- Cope, W., & Kalantziz, M. (2021) Assessment for learning. Coursera. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.
- Council of Europe. (2020). *Common European framework of reference for languages: learning, teaching, assessment. Companion volume*. Council of Europe.
- Dam, L. (2004). *From theory to classroom practice*. Dublin: Authentik.
- Diede, M., Bennett, N., Harrington, L., & Sanguiliano, A. (2019). *Rubric roadmap: A guide for creating rubrics*. Syracuse University.
- Direção Geral da Educação (2018a). *Aprendizagens essenciais / articulação com o perfil dos alunos, 9º ano inglês*.  
[http://www.dge.mec.pt/sites/default/files/Curriculo/Aprendizagens\\_Essenciais/3\\_ciclo/ingles\\_3c\\_9a\\_ff.pdf](http://www.dge.mec.pt/sites/default/files/Curriculo/Aprendizagens_Essenciais/3_ciclo/ingles_3c_9a_ff.pdf)
- Direção Geral da Educação (2018b) *Aprendizagens essenciais / articulação com o perfil dos alunos, 11º ano inglês* (Agosto, 2018).  
[http://www.dge.mec.pt/sites/default/files/Curriculo/Aprendizagens\\_Essenciais/11\\_ingles\\_f\\_geral\\_cont.pdf](http://www.dge.mec.pt/sites/default/files/Curriculo/Aprendizagens_Essenciais/11_ingles_f_geral_cont.pdf)
- Ekinci, M., & Ekinci E. (2020). Using error correction codes to improve writing success of EFL learners. *International Journal of Language Academy*, (4), 282-293.  
[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/344381083\\_Using\\_Error\\_Correction\\_Codes\\_to\\_Improve\\_Writing\\_Success\\_of\\_EFL\\_Learners](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/344381083_Using_Error_Correction_Codes_to_Improve_Writing_Success_of_EFL_Learners)
- English-practice.net (2022). *English writing exercises for B1-Article: A film review*.  
<https://english-practice.net/english-writing-exercises-for-b1-article-a-film-review/>
- Esfandiari, R., & Myford, C.M. (2013). Severity differences among self-assessors, peer-assessors, and teacher assessors rating EFL essays. *Assessing Writing*, 18 (2), 111-131.
- Fernandes, D., Machado, E.A., & Candeias, F. (2020). *Para uma avaliação pedagógica: Processos e dinâmicas de formação no projecto MAIA (2019-2020)*. Ministério da Educação/Direção-Geral de Educação.
- Ghaffar, M.A., Khairallah, M., & Salloum, S. (2020). Co-constructed rubrics and assessment for learning: The impact on middle school students' attitudes and writing skills. *Assessing writing* (45), 100468.

- Gonçalves, M.E., Coelho, M., & Gonçalves, A. (2021a) *iTeen 9*. Areal.
- Gonçalves, M.E, Coelho, M., & Gonçalves, A. (2021b) *iTeen 11*. Areal.
- Hadsell, B. (2022). Rubric for movie review. *Teachers Pay Teachers*.  
<https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Rubric-for-Movie-Review-877672>
- Kim, J. (2019) Effects of rubric-referenced self-assessment training on Korean high school students' English writing. *English Teaching*, 3(74), 79-111.
- Kellogg, R.T. (1990). Effectiveness of pre-writing strategies as a function of task demands. *The American Journal of Psychology*, 103(3), 327-342.
- McDowell, L., Sambell, K., & Davison, G. (2009). Assessment for learning: A brief history and review of terminology. In C. Rust (Ed.), *Improving student learning through the curriculum*, 56-64. Oxford Centre for Staff and Learning Development.
- Milhinhos de Assis, B. (2012). *Self-assessment of writing skills: A reliable and valid tool in an EFL classroom*. Trabalho de Projecto de Mestrado em Ensino da Língua Inglesa. Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas Universidade Nova de Lisboa.
- Moreira, A., Moreira, G., Roberto, M., Howcroft, S., & Almeida, T. (2001/2003). *Programa de inglês-10º, 11º e 12º anos- Nível de continuação*. Ministério da Educação. Departamento do Ensino Secundário.
- Onozawa, C. (2010). *A study of the process writing approach- A suggestion for an Eclectic writing approach*. Gunma University Academic Information Repository, 153-162.  
<https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/141876629.pdf>
- Oscarson, A. (2009). *Self-assessment of writing in learning English as a foreign language*. Goteborgs Universitet.
- Panadero, E., Alonso-Tapia, J., & Reche, E. (2013). Self-assessment vs. rubric effect on self-regulation, performance and self-efficacy in university students. *Department of Educational Sciences and Teacher Education, Learning and Educational Technology Research Unit*.
- Rowlands, K. D. (2007). Check it out! Using checklists to support student learning. *The English Journal*, 96 (6), 61-66.
- Rubistar. (2000). ALTEC, University of Kansas. <http://rubistar.4teachers.org/index.php>
- Siarova, H., Sternadel, D., & Masidlauskaite, R. (2017). Assessment practices for 21<sup>st</sup> century learning: Review of evidence, *Neset II report*. Publications Office of the European Union.

- Skimins, D. (2022). Essay-examples of model answers / B2 First (FCE). *Engxam*.  
<https://engxam.com/handbook/essays-sample-answers-comments-b2-first-fce/#fce-essay-examples-topic-fashion>
- Tomal, D. (2010). *Action research for educators*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) Rowman & Littlefield Education.
- Tsagari, D., Vogt, K., Froehlich, V., Csépes, I., Fekete, A., Green, A., Hamp-Lyons, L, Sifakis, N., & Kordia, S. (2018). *Handbook of assessment for language teachers*. Tale Project.
- Vance, N. (2021a). Four languages skills. *Salem Press Encyclopedia*, 7.
- Vance, N. (2021b). Writing assessment for second language learners. *Salem Press Encyclopedia*, 6.
- Wollenschlager, M., Hattie, J., Machts, N., Moller, J., & Harms, U. (2016). What makes rubrics effective in teacher-feedback? Transparency of learning goals is not enough. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 1-11.
- Wong, C. (2012). *Why rubric and what is that?* [video]. Youtube.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RRSVXbD4gEs>

## **APPENDICES**



## Appendix A.1

### The CEFR illustrative descriptor scales: communicative language competences for B1 level (selection from CEFR, chapter 5 (2020))

Linguistic competence		<b>General linguistic range</b>
	B1	Has a sufficient range of language to describe unpredictable situations, explain the main points in an idea or problem with reasonable precision and express thoughts on abstract or cultural topics such as music and film.
		Has enough language to get by, with sufficient vocabulary to express themselves with some hesitation and circumlocutions on topics such as family, hobbies and interests, work, travel and current events, but lexical limitations cause repetition and even difficulty with formulation at times.
		<b>Vocabulary range</b>
	B1	Has a good range of vocabulary related to familiar topics and everyday situations.
		Has sufficient vocabulary to express themselves with some circumlocutions on most topics pertinent to their everyday life such as family, hobbies and interests, work, travel and current events.
		<b>Grammatical accuracy</b>
	B1	Communicates with reasonable accuracy in familiar contexts; generally good control, though with noticeable mother-tongue influence. Errors occur, but it is clear what they are trying to express.
		Uses reasonably accurately a repertoire of frequently used "routines" and patterns associated with more predictable situations.
		<b>Vocabulary control</b>
B1	Shows good control of elementary vocabulary but major errors still occur when expressing more complex thoughts or handling unfamiliar topics and situations.	
	Uses a wide range of simple vocabulary appropriately when discussing familiar topics.	
	<b>Orthographic control</b>	
B1	Can produce continuous writing which is generally intelligible throughout.	
	Spelling, punctuation and layout are accurate enough to be followed most of the time.	
Sociolinguistic competence		<b>Sociolinguistic appropriateness</b>
	B1	Can perform and respond to a wide range of language functions, using their most common exponents in a neutral register.
Is aware of the salient politeness conventions and acts appropriately.		
Is aware of, and looks out for signs of, the most significant differences between the customs, usages, attitudes, values and beliefs prevalent in the community concerned and those of their own community.		
Pragmatic competence		<b>Coherence and cohesion</b>
	B1	Can introduce a counter-argument in a simple discursive text (e.g. with "however").
		Can link a series of shorter, discrete simple elements into a connected, linear sequence of points.
Can form longer sentences and link them together using a limited number of cohesive devices, e.g. in a story.		
		Can make simple, logical paragraph breaks in a longer text.



## Appendix A.2

### The CEFR illustrative descriptor scales: communicative language competences for B2 level (selection from CEFR, chapter 5 (2020))

Linguistic competence	<b>General linguistic range</b>	
	B2	Can express themselves clearly without much sign of having to restrict what they want to say. Has a sufficient range of language to be able to give clear descriptions, express viewpoints and develop arguments without much conspicuous searching for words/signs, using some complex sentence forms to do so.
	<b>Vocabulary range</b>	
	B2	Can understand and use the main technical terminology of their field, when discussing their area of specialisation with other specialists. Has a good range of vocabulary for matters connected to their field and most general topics. Can vary formulation to avoid frequent repetition, but lexical gaps can still cause hesitation and circumlocution. Can produce appropriate collocations of many words/signs in most contexts fairly systematically. Can understand and use much of the specialist vocabulary of their field but has problems with specialist terminology outside it.
	<b>Grammatical accuracy</b>	
	B2	Good grammatical control; occasional "slips" or non-systematic errors and minor flaws in sentence structure may still occur, but they are rare and can often be corrected in retrospect. Shows a relatively high degree of grammatical control. Does not make mistakes which lead to misunderstanding. Has a good command of simple language structures and some complex grammatical forms, although they tend to use complex structures rigidly with some inaccuracy.
	<b>Vocabulary control</b>	
	B2	Lexical accuracy is generally high, though some confusion and incorrect word/sign choice does occur without hindering communication.
	<b>Orthographic control</b>	
	B2	Can produce clearly intelligible, continuous writing which follows standard layout and paragraphing conventions. Spelling and punctuation are reasonably accurate but may show signs of mother-tongue influence.
Sociolinguistic competence	<b>Sociolinguistic appropriateness</b>	
	B2	Can with some effort keep up with and contribute to group discussions even when talk is fast and colloquial. Can recognise and interpret sociocultural/sociolinguistic cues and consciously modify their linguistic forms of expression in order to express themselves appropriately in the situation. Can express themselves confidently, clearly and politely in a formal or informal register, appropriate to the situation and person(s) concerned. Can adjust their expression to make some distinction between formal and informal registers but may not always do so appropriately. Can sustain relationships with users of the target language without unintentionally amusing or irritating them or requiring them to behave other than they would with another proficient user. Can express themselves appropriately in situations and avoid crass errors of formulation.
Pragmatic competence	<b>Coherence and cohesion</b>	
	B2	Can use a variety of linking expressions efficiently to mark clearly the relationships between ideas. Can use a limited number of cohesive devices to link their utterances into clear, coherent discourse, though there may be some "jumpiness" in a long contribution. Can produce text that is generally well-organised and coherent, using a range of linking expressions and cohesive devices. Can structure longer texts in clear, logical paragraphs.

## Appendix B.1

### Questionnaire 1 – part A

Olá! Gostaria de vos pedir para responder ao questionário que se segue. Este é aplicado aos alunos do 3º ciclo e ensino secundário, no âmbito do meu relatório final de estágio do Mestrado em Ensino de Inglês no 3º ciclo e no Ensino Secundário, durante o ano lectivo 2021-22, pela Universidade Nova intitulado *Assessment for learning as a means to promote students' writing proficiency (Avaliação para a aprendizagem como meio para promover o desenvolvimento da escrita)*.

Isto não é um teste! Não há respostas certas ou erradas. A informação recolhida fará parte do meu relatório final de estágio do mestrado em ensino, sendo os resultados obtidos divulgados no respectivo relatório. A instituição e os alunos permanecerão anónimos em qualquer circunstância.

Muito obrigada!

Paula Katchi Cravo

### QUESTIONNAIRE 1

#### PART 1

Tick (✓) the right option for you.

	agree	neither agree nor disagree	disagree
Speaking in English is more important than writing.			
Speaking in English is as important as writing.			
More writing should be done in class.			
More writing should be done as homework.			
More speaking should be done in class.			
I think it is important that the teacher corrects me when I speak.			
I think it is important that the teacher corrects me when I write.			
I think it is important that my peers correct me when I talk.			

#### PART 2

What type of texts do you find more important to be able to write in English?

Indicate your priorities by placing numbers in the boxes to indicate the ordering of your views,

**1- the highest priority, 2- the second highest, and so on (don't exclude any).**

	Being able to write letters of complaint (to companies when the item I bought has a problem)
	Being able to write stories.
	Being able to write emails to friends.
	Being able to write a postcard.
	Being able to write a book review in a blog.
	Being able to interact through social media

### PART 3

What's your opinion on writing in English? Put a tick (✓) in the right space.

**Difficult** \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / **easy**

**Useless** \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / **useful**

### PART 4

Complete the sentence.

I can improve my writing if I

\_\_\_\_\_

### PART 5

Think about written tasks carried out in the class and indicate your priorities by placing numbers in the boxes to indicate the ordering of your views, **1- the highest priority, 2- the second highest, and so on. (don't exclude any).**

**Written tasks in the English class should be:**

	fun to do.
	varied.
	useful outside school.
	challenging.
	facilitate developing writing also in Portuguese.
	done on regular basis
	corrected by the teacher.

### PART 6

Circle the right one for you, from **1 to 5**.

<b>not true</b>	<b>somewhat true</b>	<b>neutral</b>	<b>true</b>	<b>very true</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>

#### Writing process

1. I practise writing in English before the summative test.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I read the tips for writing the texts before the summative test.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I read the instructions provided before starting to write my texts.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I plan the structure on paper of my texts before starting to write.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I check the instructions while I am writing the texts.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I use a variety of words, even if I'm not sure about their meaning.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I use a variety of words, even if I'm not sure about their spelling.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I reread my text in the summative test before handing it to the teacher.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I write a second draft of the same text after having been corrected.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Writing in English is something I enjoy doing.	1	2	3	4	5
11. I feel confident about my writing in English.	1	2	3	4	5

## Appendix B.2

### Questionnaire 1 – part B

Olá! Gostaria de vos pedir para responder ao questionário que se segue, em continuação do anterior (questionnaire 1), no âmbito do meu relatório final de estágio do Mestrado em Ensino de Inglês no 3º ciclo e no Ensino Secundário, durante o ano lectivo 2021-22, pela Universidade Nova intitulado *Assessment for learning as a means to promote students' writing proficiency* (Avaliação para a aprendizagem como meio para promover o desenvolvimento da escrita. A instituição e os alunos permanecerão anónimos em qualquer circunstância.

Muito obrigada!  
Paula Katchi Cravo

#### PART 7

Circle the right one for you, from 1 to 5.

<b>not true</b>	<b>somewhat true</b>	<b>neutral</b>	<b>true</b>	<b>very true</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>

#### Feedback

1. I am interested in checking my teachers' corrections in my texts.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I am interested in reading my teachers' comments in my texts.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I can understand my teachers' corrections.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I take into account my teachers' corrections when I write another text.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I feel nervous when I see the teachers' corrections.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I seek the teacher's clarification when I don't understand the corrections in my texts.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I compare my text with my peers' texts.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I write a second draft after receiving the teacher's feedback.	1	2	3	4	5

#### Expectations

1. I expect my writing will improve over time.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I expect I'll write in English in future in my studies abroad.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I expect I'll write in English in my job in the future.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I expect I'll write formal texts, such as letters of complaint.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I expect I'll write informal texts, such as email for friends in future.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I expect writing in English will become easy for me.	1	2	3	4	5

#### Assessment of writing

Tick (✓) Yes, No or Not sure.

	Yes	No	Not sure
1. Are you used to correcting your colleagues' writing?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Do you think correcting colleagues' writing is useful? Why? Why not? _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Are you used to self-assess written work? If yes, how do you do this? _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. What type of feedback do you get on your written work? Tick the boxes.			
correction of spelling mistakes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
correction of grammar mistakes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
correction of punctuation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
correction of words	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
a numerical grade	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
a one-sentence comment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
several comments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Which is most useful? _____			





## Appendix C.1

### Pre-writing activity – writing a review

#### D WRITING



- 1 Read the paragraph and complete the table below.

### My favourite film ever

My favourite film ever is definitely *The Matrix*. Even though it was made back in 1999, it still feels really modern. It's about an ordinary man, Neo, played by Keanu Reeves, who works as a computer programmer during the day and is a hacker at night. One day he is contacted by a woman who introduces him to a very strange man called Morpheus. Morpheus explains to Neo that what he thinks of as real is actually fiction and the world is run by evil machines who have imprisoned and tricked the human race. The film is an example of the cyberpunk science fiction genre, a subgenre of science fiction in a future setting, noted for its focus on "high tech and low life". Laurence Fishburne is terrific as Morpheus and Keanu Reeves is excellent, but the best thing about the film is its special effects. I can watch it again and again without getting bored.



#### Film fact file

a) Film title	
b) Release date	
c) Main actors' names	
d) Main actors' performances	
e) Film genre	
f) Best thing about the film	

- 2 Answer the questions with your own ideas to describe your favourite film.

- a) What is your favourite film? \_\_\_\_\_
- b) What type of film is it? \_\_\_\_\_
- c) When and where did you see it for the first time? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- d) Who are the stars in this film? What role do they play? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- e) Why do you like it? \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix C.2

### Pre-writing activity – writing a review

8



- 1** Abby is looking for a book. Read the information about each book below and decide which one she should read.

*I'm keen on contemporary romance books, especially novels for young people. They normally focus on the relationship and romantic love between two people and have an emotionally satisfying and optimistic ending.*

- A** The story of the strong-willed, intelligent, young Jane Eyre, escaping a horrid childhood and entering into an intense, but problematic romance with the enigmatic Mr Rochester, has shocked and captivated readers for **more than 160** years. It's **one of the** books that **you will** never forget.



- B** For Macallan and Levi, it was friendship at first sight. Everyone says boys and girls can't be just friends, but these two are. They hang out after school, share tons of inside jokes, their families are super close, and Levi even starts dating one of Macallan's friends. Eventually they realize they're **best friends** – or are they **more than** friends? This is **one of the** recently published books you may enjoy reading.



Early Start 33

## Appendix C.3

### Pre-writing activity – writing a review

Let's get ready to write a review!

Your teacher has asked you to write a film review for the school magazine. Write your review describing the film and say what you liked and didn't like about it.

**1. Read the task above. Then read Writing Strategy 1 and the review below. Answer the questions.**

a Where does each paragraph end?

Paragraph 1: A  or B

Paragraph 2: C  or D

Paragraph 3: E  or F

b Has the writer followed the second piece of advice in the Strategy? Yes  No

#### Writing Strategy 1

1 Give your review a logical structure. Divide it into paragraphs, each with its own topic or focus.

1 The conclusion should restate the main idea given in the introduction, but using different words. It should also include the writer's opinion and, if appropriate, a recommendation.

---

An extraordinary film about an extraordinary man!

If you're looking for a film that has romance and drama and makes you think, this is the one for you! I loved *The Theory of Everything*, from start to finish. [A] And I have no doubt that it'll remain one of my favourite films for many years to come! I'd definitely recommend it. [B] It is mostly set in Cambridge, England, and it tells the story of Stephen Hawking, a physicist at Cambridge University, who was diagnosed with motor neurone disease while still in his early twenties. We see how, with the help of Jane – his girlfriend and then wife – he overcame great physical disabilities to become probably the world's most famous scientists. [C] What I really loved about the film is the way it involves you in the characters. I felt that I really got to know them, and found their story incredibly moving. [D] I thought the acting was first-class, with superb performances from Eddie Redmayne and Felicity Jones. The film was also beautifully filmed, with lots of atmospheric shots of Cambridge. [E] I have only one small criticism. We learn a lot about Jane and Stephen's relationship, but we learn nothing about Stephen Hawking the scientist, and what motivates him. [F] Overall, however, this is a fantastic film. If you haven't seen it yet, get the DVD. You won't be disappointed! I guarantee it.

## Writing Strategy 2

- 1 Choose a good title for your review.
  - 2 In the first paragraph, attract the reader's attention. You can do this by addressing him / her directly, especially with questions.
  - 2 Use an appropriate style and register for the target audience.
- 

### 2. Read Writing Strategy 2 and answer questions 1-3 below.

- 1 Underline the sentence that attracts the reader's attention in the first paragraph.
  - 2 Is the overall style formal  or informal  ?
  - 3 Has the writer addressed both elements of the task?  
Yes  No
- 

### 3. Tick the phrases for describing stories that the writer uses in the review. Which phrase cannot be used to describe a film?

- 1 It's set in (place and / or time).
- 2 There are lots of twists and turns.
- 3 It tells the story of (character).
- 4 I would definitely recommend it.
- 5 It's a real page-turner.

Phrase  can't be used for films.

---

## Writing Guide

### 4. You are going to do the task in exercise 1. Make notes about a film of your choice.

What I liked: .....

What I didn't like: .....

Overall opinion: .....

Adapted from: <https://english-practice.net/english-writing-exercises-for-b1-article-a-film-review/>



## Appendix D


### Pre-writing activity – writing a blog comment

UNIT 3 TECHNOLOGY IS GREAT!

**WRITING**


# BLOG comment



 Video

*Researchers have found out that keeping a blog is a good therapy for the stressed out teenagers just like Thomas said in his post.*

Reply to Thomas's post, answering his question. Here's an example to help you start.



mail about info video news more

**Alice says:**  
22nd January at 15:30

Hi,

I was browsing the web when I came across your blog. I found your post very informative. I can relate to it because I've recently created my own blog and I'm truly enjoying it. Blogging is really a good way to express your feelings and thoughts. I've also been into blogging and I find it to be a great relief if you want to say something but don't have the courage to say it verbally. There's really no doubt that blogging works wonders not only because there's a chance to socialize with other bloggers, but because you can also say whatever you want as long as you're polite.

Cheers :)

[Reply](#)

**WRITING TIPS**

**Content**

- Include a greeting and closing.
- Be brief and specific (if you liked someone's post, say which parts).
- Add more information to the topic or ask a question.

**Starters**

- *I can relate to it...*
- *This makes me think about...*
- *I don't understand...*
- *I found your blog interesting, but I can't agree with your opinion about... I think...*

### Netiquette

- Don't use capital letters on any website. **IT LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE SHOUTING!**
- Be polite, even if you disagree strongly with some opinion.
- To express a particular emotion, use smileys/emoticons. :-)
- Acronyms can be used to abbreviate when possible:
  - BRB = Be right back
  - BTW = By the way
  - LOL = Laughing out loud
- Remember: everything you post stays online, and all can see it.

96 ninety-six

85

## Appendix E

### Pre-writing activity – writing an opinion essay

#### FCE Essay Example: Topic (Environment)

##### Question:

In your English class you have been talking about the environment. Write an essay using all the notes and give reasons for your point of view.

*Every country in the world has problems with pollution and damage to the environment. Do you think these problems can be solved?*

##### Answer:

#### DEVELOPMENT VS ENVIRONMENT

If we surf the web looking for pollution and environmental catastrophes, we will find out that every country in the world suffers them. This is a natural consequence of the struggle between development and environment.

If a country decided to live isolated from the rest of the world, living on what it can naturally grow and produce, it surely wouldn't be highly polluted. But we all want exotic food and technological items from all over the world, so we have to pay the price.

Investing on electrical transport would benefit the environment a lot. Even more if this electricity came from a natural source of energy like wind, rivers and solar boards. It's difficult to achieve this because petrol companies will fight against these actions.

We also have to take care of our rivers and seas. We all have heard about factories throwing highly toxic substances to rivers, without minimizing their poisoning effects. A really strict law should be applied to fine these factories and make them change their policy.



But what about ourselves? We also can do a lot! If, when possible, we bought larger packs of food, we would be producing less rubbish. And this is only an example!

Adapted from: <https://engxam.com/handbook/essays-sample-answers-comments-b2-first-fce/#fce-essay-examples-topic-fashion>

## Appendix F



### Pre-writing activity – writing a letter of application

156 **reading | writing**

Exclusivo do Professor  Solução  Link

Read the email cover letter and complete the template below. Write the salutation and complimentary close and indicate the paragraphs where you can find the other parts.

# Graduate Editor Position



**To:** CGP@47publishing.com  
**Cc:**  
**Subject:** Graduate Editor Position – Jane Jones

Dear Sir/Madam,

I would like to express my interest in a position as graduate editor for your publishing company.

As a recent graduate with a Master's degree in Modern Foreign Languages and with writing, editing, and administrative experience, I believe I am a strong candidate for a position at the Coordination Group Publications.

You specify that you are looking for talented, bright graduates. As an English major, a writing tutor, and an editorial intern for both a government magazine and a college marketing office, I have become a skilled writer with a variety of experience. Therefore, I think I meet the requirements for the job.

My maturity, practical experience, and eagerness to enter the publishing business will make me an excellent editor. I would love to begin my career with your company, and am confident that I would be a beneficial addition to your publishing team.

I have attached my CV, and will call within the next week to see if we might arrange a time to speak together.

Thank you so much for your time and consideration.

Yours faithfully,  
Jane Jones

**Jane Jones**  
111 High Street  
Someton  
Sometonshire, S025AB  
Email: janejones@gmail.com

Subject Line	Job Title – Your Name
Salutation	
(1)	Reason for writing
(2)	Abilities, skills, experience
(3)	Mention CV if attached and information on how you will follow-up.
(4)	Thank the employer.
Complimentary close	
Signature	(Include your name, full address, phone number, etc. so it is easy for hiring managers, recruiters, and contacts to get in touch.)

**Appendix G.1**

**Written Task 1 for ninth-grade: a book /film review & success criteria success criteria guidelines and success criteria checklist**

**ENGLISH YEAR 9**

**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_ **NO.** \_\_\_\_\_ **CLASS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**WRITE A BOOK REVIEW**

**Success criteria guidelines on how to structure your review:**

Paragraph 1	General information about the book: title, author, genre, publication date	
Paragraph 2	Brief summary of the story. Include a description of the book's setting, the main characters, and a summary of the plot	Don't give away the whole story.
Paragraph 3	Form an opinion. It can explore both aspects: the positive and the negative ones.	Don't write only the negative aspects.
Paragraph 4	Provide recommendations (or not). Justify.	

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### **Review success criteria checklist**

- It includes general information, summary of the story, opinion and recommendation.
  
- It includes major points of the story. It doesn't give away the ending.
  
- It includes details to emphasize my point.

## Appendix G.2

### Written task 2 for the ninth-grade: a blog comment & success criteria guidelines and success

#### ENGLISH YEAR 9

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ NO. \_\_\_\_\_ CLASS: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Blog comment

Do you agree with Sam's opinion about social networking sites? In about 100 words, write a text to be sent to a students' blog.

#### Success criteria guidelines on how to structure your blog comment:

Include a greeting and closing

---

Be brief and specific (if you liked someone's post, say which parts).

Language you can use:

- I can relate to it...
- This makes me think about...
- I don't understand...
- I found your blog interesting, but I can't agree with your opinion about.... I think....

---

Add more information to the topic or ask a question.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---





### Appendix G.3

#### Written task 1 for eleventh-grade: an opinion essay & success criteria guidelines and success criteria

ENGLISH YEAR 11

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ NO. \_\_\_\_\_ CLASS: \_\_\_\_\_

#### WRITE AN OPINION ESSAY

*Global environmental issues are the responsibility of richer nations, not poorer ones. To what extent do you agree or disagree?*

#### Success criteria guidelines on how to structure your opinion essay:

Paragraph 1	Introduce the topic using a general statement and give your opinion. Say whether you agree or disagree with the statement. Never copy the task directly but only <b>use synonyms</b> if you are sure they are appropriate.	<b>Don't</b> repeat the words in the question.*
<b>Paragraph 2</b>	Give the first reason to support your opinion. Provide specific justifications for your opinion, using examples if necessary.	<b>Don't</b> make vague or inconsistent statements.
Paragraph 3	Give the second reason to support your opinion. Provide specific justifications for your opinion, using examples if necessary.	
Paragraph 4	Give the third reason OR a contrasting view and <b>refute it</b> to support your opinion. Provide specific justifications for your opinion, using examples if necessary.	<b>Don't</b> focus on a contrasting view too much.
Paragraph 5	Summarise your ideas and repeat your opinion <b>using different words</b> to provide a strong conclusion.	<b>Don't</b> introduce new ideas.

\*Try to think of some synonyms for the keywords in the task. For example, "global" → "worldwide" or "around the world", "issues" → "problems", "richer" → "wealthier". Never copy the task directly but only use synonyms if you are sure they are appropriate.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Opinion essay success criteria checklist

- My position statement is clear.
- I give first reason to support my opinion and provide specific justifications / examples
- I give second reason to support my opinion and provide specific justifications/examples
- I give third reason / contrasting view to refute to support my opinion and provide specific justifications/examples
- I summarise main ideas, restate my opinion.
- I use well structured sentences, with varied structures.

## Appendix G.4

### Written task 2 for eleventh-grade: a letter of application & success criteria guidelines and success criteria

#### Success criteria guidelines on how to write a letter of application

##### 1- Greeting

There are several ways to begin a formal email/letter. For example:

- Dear Sir / Madam, (if you don't know the name)
- Dear Mr. or Mrs. X (if you do know the name)
- To whom it may concern

##### 2- Opening paragraph

When beginning your formal email/letter, it's essential that you explain to your reader your reasons for writing. Here are some ways to do that:

- I am writing to apply for the position / role of summer camp leader.
- I am writing in reference to your recent advertisement.

##### 3- Main body

This is where you want to give the details of your application or your complaint. Keep referring back to the question, and remember to keep it formal:

- I think I am suitable for the role because...
- I have X years experience working as a X.
- My qualifications include...
- In my spare time I enjoy...
- I am an avid basketball player/cricketer/volleyball player...

##### 4- Final Paragraph

Here is where you want to create a **lasting** impression on your reader. You also want to highlight some form of action you want them to take. Take a look at these different ways to do that:

- I very much hope you will...
- I look forward to hearing from you soon.
- I would appreciate it/ be grateful if...
- I trust you will...

##### 5- Closing

- Yours sincerely, (if you know the name of the recipient)
- Yours faithfully, (if you don't know the name of the recipient)
- Thank you for your consideration, (for a letter of application)
- I trust you will...

You should then write your full name beneath your sign-off.

Adapted from: <https://oxfordhousebcn.com/en/how-to-write-a-b2-first-formal-email-letter/>

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

You see this advert on a newspaper website:

**Summer camp leaders required**

We are looking for friendly and enthusiastic workers to join us from June to September at our fun and dynamic summer camp. No previous experience is needed. However, you should enjoy working with young people. Speakers of a second language are required. Creative or athletic hobbies are desirable.

- Paragraph 1 – State why you’re writing
- Paragraph 2 – Relevant experience
- Paragraph 3 – Creative and athletic hobbies and interests
- Paragraph 4 – Action you want them to take
- Closing

---



---



---



---



---



---



---



---



---



---



---



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Letter of application success criteria checklist**

- Did you use formal language?
- Did you use the structure suggested?
- Did you write coherent sentences?
- Did you use the appropriate expressions?

## Appendix H.1

### Class feedback to book reviews (PowerPoint slides)

#### Some suggestions: Make it personal!

“One of my favourite things about the book, is that it made me empathise with Bruno and root for him. I got so connected to him, that when I finished, my room had become an ocean of tears.”

(A)

“The story made me smile, cry, feel excited and heartbroken, and I think that’s what makes this book so fabulous!”

#### Some suggestions: Don’t write long sentences

This film is about Heron, who goes to high school for the first time, and is warned not to join “the plastics”, a group led by Regina George, but she gets friends with them and the things get worse when she falls in love with Regina’s ex-boyfriend.

This film is about Heron, who goes to high school for the first time. Soon, she is warned not to join “the plastics”, a group led by Regina George. But she gets friends with them, and when she falls in love with Regina’s ex-boyfriend things get worse .

## Appendix H.2

### Class feedback to book reviews (PowerPoint slides)

#### Some suggestions:

#### Be consistent with the verb tense

The story **starts** when he **turned** 11 and discovered he wasn't like the other kids around him – he was a wizard. Harry **goes** to a magic school...

**The whole plot should be written in the present.**

#### Some suggestions:

#### Use a variety of adjectives

If you have the chance, you should watch this movie because it's a **good** film.

If you have the chance, you should watch this movie because it's **great!**

**Remember: you are convincing the reader to watch the film/ read the book!**

#### Some suggestions:

#### Think about the target reader

"I highly recommend this book if you like suspense, action and fiction".

**(c)**

## Appendix I

### Class feedback to blog comments (PowerPoint slide)

#### Good samples

- “I found this blog interesting, but I can’t relate with his opinion because I think that through the internet you can make new friends, play with them, and then meet them face-to-face. Also, the internet is really helpful for introverts to make new friends” **D**
- “I found your blog interesting, but I think that social media networks, like facebook are not the problem. The problem is how people use them” **E**
- “I’ve always liked social media in general, but recently I’ve been wondering a lot whether I should delete all my social media”. **F**



## Appendix J.1

### Class feedback to opinion essays (PowerPoint slides)

# General feedback Successful areas

CATEGORY	Sophisticated	Competent	Partly competent	Not yet competent
<b>Position Statement</b>	The position statement provides a clear, strong statement of the author's position on the topic.	The position statement provides a clear statement of the author's position on the topic.	A position statement is present, but does not make the author's position clear.	There is no position statement.
<b>Grammar &amp; Spelling</b>	Author makes just some errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.	Author makes a few errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.	Author makes many errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.	Author makes many in grammar or spelling that hinder the reader's comprehension.

# General feedback Areas to be improved

CATEGORY	Sophisticated	Competent	Partly competent	Not yet competent
<b>Sentence Structure</b>	All sentences are well-constructed with varied structure.	Most sentences are well-constructed and there is some varied sentence structure in the essay.	Most sentences are well constructed, but there is no variation in structure.	Most sentences are not well-constructed or varied.
<b>Closing paragraph</b>	The conclusion is strong and leaves the reader solidly understanding the writer's position. Effective restatement of the position statement begins the closing paragraph.	The conclusion is recognizable. The author's position is restated within the first two sentences of the closing paragraph.	The author's position is restated within the closing paragraph, but not near the beginning.	There is no conclusion - the paper just ends.

<b>Register</b>	The authors uses long forms and formal words/ expressions consistently.	The authors uses mostly long forms and formal words/ expressions.	The authors uses mostly long forms.	Author uses short forms.
-----------------	---	---	-------------------------------------	--------------------------

## Appendix J.2

### Class feedback to opinion essays (PowerPoint slides)

#### General feedback

Good example: **closing paragraph** (sample)

However, the environment is a worldwide problem and the poorest countries should also contribute to avoid further damage to the environment. Having the richer countries better means to overcome the greatest environmental challenges faced at present, they should lead the way in preserving the environment.

**G**

#### General feedback

Areas to be improved: **sentence structure** (sample)

Normally, wealthier countries are only worried about getting richer, that worry is what made them so rich, nations where the population already has everything are normally the ones that pollute the most, because only want to make more money and if the country is developed that can do by the construction of factories.

#### How can we improve this?

- 1- Fragment into several sentences.
- 2- Use connectors.
- 3- Don't repeat words.
- 4- Use more complex words.

### Appendix J.3

#### Class feedback to opinion essays (PowerPoint slides)

##### General feedback

Areas to be improved: **closing paragraph**(sample)

In conclusion,  
agree with the  
sentence because  
developed  
countries affect the  
planet.

##### How can we improve this?

- 1- Restate the position statement.
- 2- Make this a strong sentence /paragraph.

##### General feedback

Areas to be improved: **register** (sample)

“**The thing is that** there  
are many countries that  
...”

“The levels of pollution  
are **way** higher than in  
poor countries”

“Environmental issues  
are caused by **a lot of**  
reasons”

##### How can we write more formal texts?

- 1- Remember to use long forms.
- 2- Don't use phrasal verbs.
- 3- Think about the complex words /sentences  
that can replace the less complex ones.
- 4- Think about the most formal connectors  
that substitute the non- formal ones.
- 5- Use passive voice.

## Appendix K

### Class feedback to letter of application (PowerPoint slides)

## Salutation

### Greeting

There are several ways to begin a formal email/letter. For example:

- Dear Sir / Madam, (if you don't know the name)
- Dear Mr. or Mrs. X (if you know the name)
- To whom it may concern

## Closing



- Yours sincerely, (if you know the name of the recipient)
- Yours faithfully, (if you don't know the name of the recipient)
- Thank you for your consideration, (for a letter of application)
- I trust you will...
- Write your full name beneath your sign-off.

## General feedback

### Good arguments

- "I am writing in reference to your recent advertisement on the newspaper. It sparked my interest as I have worked in a similar position before" . **H**
- "I like working with young people because we can always learn from them" . **I**
- I have two years of experience working as a volunteer in a childrens' summer camp, and I believe I would be a good asset to your summer camp" . **J**

**Appendix L**  
**Error correction code**

Error correction codes	
sp	spelling
V	verb tense / verb form
prep	incorrect preposition
pl	singular/plural
ww	wrong word
G	grammar mistake
wo	wrong word order
pro	incorrect pronoun
frag	fragment (incomplete sentence)
ns/	start a new sentence here
?	unclear
Λ	add word/s
del	delete
0	problem with punctuation
	use a better word
H	messy handwriting
rep	repetition
	the sentence is confusing

## Appendix M.1

### Rubric for written task 1 for the ninth-grade: book/film

#### Rubric for Film/book Review

Adapted from Hadsell, B. (2022) *Teachers Pay Teachers*

	<b>Structure</b>	<b>Summary</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Grammar/Spelling</b>
<b>Sophisticated</b>	Your paper includes general information, summary, opinion and recommendation. The contents are organized.	Summary lists major points in the movie/book, in a coherent way but does not give away ending.	You give details about the movie/book. You use examples from the book/movie to emphasize your point.	Just minor spelling or grammar mistakes. Sentences are all structured correctly.
<b>Competent</b>	Your paper includes general information, summary, opinion and recommendation. The contents are mostly organized	Summary lists the major points in the movie/book, mostly in a coherent way, does not give away ending.	You give some details about the movie/book. You don't use examples to emphasize your point.	Some mistakes. Sentences are all structured correctly.
<b>Partly competent</b>	Your paper includes general information, summary, opinion and recommendation. The contents are disorganized.	Summary lists some of the major points in the movie/book, lacks coherence, may or may not give away ending.	You don't give details or examples, but you do reference to the movie/book in your support.	Many grammar or spelling mistakes which don't hinder the reader's understanding. Sentences might not be structure correctly.
<b>Not yet competent</b>	Your does not include all the content: general info, summary, opinion and recommendation.	Summary lists a few of the major points in the movie/book, in a confused way, gives away ending.	You don't support your point. (This movie/book was good because I liked it.)	Many spelling and grammar mistakes that hinder the reader's comprehension, Sentences are not structured correctly.



## Appendix M.2

### Rubric for written task 2 for the ninth-grade: blog comment

## RUBRIC FOR BLOG COMMENT

Generated by *Rubistar* and adapted

CATEGORY	Sophisticated	Competent	Partly competent	Not yet competent
<b>Salutation and Closing</b>	Salutation and closing have no errors in capitalization and punctuation.	Salutation and closing have 1-2 errors in capitalization and punctuation.	Salutation and closing have 3 or more errors in capitalization and punctuation.	Salutation and/or closing are missing.
<b>Grammar &amp; spelling (conventions)</b>	Writer makes just minor errors in grammar or spelling.	Writer makes less than 5 errors in grammar and/or spelling.	Writer makes 6-7 errors in grammar and/or spelling	Writer makes more than 10 errors in grammar and/or spelling.
<b>Ideas</b>	Ideas were expressed in a clear and organized fashion. It was easy to figure out what the letter was about. More relevant information was added to the topic.	Ideas were expressed in a pretty clear manner, but the organization could have been better. More information was added to the topic.	Ideas were somewhat organized, but were not very clear. It took more than one reading to figure out what the letter was about. Some information was added to the topic.	The letter seemed to be a collection of unrelated sentences. It was very difficult to figure out what the letter was about. No information was added to the topic
<b>Sentences &amp; Paragraphs</b>	Sentences and paragraphs are complete, well-constructed and of varied structure.	All sentences are complete and well-constructed (no fragments, no run-ons). Paragraphing is generally done well.	Most sentences are complete and well-constructed. Paragraphing needs some work.	Many sentence fragments or run-on sentences OR paragraphing needs lots of work.



### Appendix M.3

#### Rubric for written task 1 for the eleventh-grade: opinion

#### RUBRIC FOR OPINION ESSAY

Generated by *Rubistar* and adapted

CATEGORY	Sophisticated	Competent	Partly competent	Not yet competent
<b>Position Statement</b>	The position statement provides a clear, strong statement of the author's position on the topic.	The position statement provides a clear statement of the author's position on the topic.	A position statement is present, but does not make the author's position clear.	There is no position statement.
<b>Evidence and Examples</b>	All of the evidence and examples are specific, relevant and explanations are given that show how each piece of evidence supports the author's position.	Most of the evidence and examples are specific, relevant and explanations are given that show how each piece of evidence supports the author's position.	At least one of the pieces of evidence and examples is relevant and has an explanation that shows how that piece of evidence supports the author's position.	Evidence and examples are NOT relevant AND/OR are not explained.
<b>Sentence Structure</b>	All sentences are well-constructed with varied structure.	Most sentences are well-constructed and there is some varied sentence structure in the essay.	Most sentences are well constructed, but there is no variation in structure.	Most sentences are not well-constructed or varied.
<b>Grammar &amp; Spelling</b>	Author makes just some errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.	Author makes a few errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.	Author makes many errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.	Author makes many errors in grammar or spelling that hinder the reader's comprehension
<b>Closing paragraph</b>	The conclusion is strong and leaves the reader solidly understanding the writer's position. Effective restatement of the position statement begins the closing paragraph.	The conclusion is recognizable. The author's position is restated within the first two sentences of the closing paragraph.	The author's position is restated within the closing paragraph, but not near the beginning.	There is no conclusion - the paper just ends.

## Appendix M.4

### Rubric for written task 2 for the eleventh-grade: letter of application

#### RUBRIC FOR LETTER OF APPLICATION

Generated by *Rubistar* and adapted

CATEGORY	Sophisticated	Competent	Partly competent	Not yet competent
<b>Salutation and Closing</b>	Salutation and closing have no errors in capitalization and punctuation.	Salutation and closing have 1-2 errors in capitalization and punctuation.	Salutation and closing have 3 or more errors in capitalization and punctuation.	Salutation and/or closing are missing.
<b>Grammar &amp; spelling (conventions)</b>	Writer makes minor errors in grammar or spelling that don't distract the reader from the content	Writer makes some errors in grammar and/or spelling that don't distract the reader from the content	Writer makes many errors in grammar and/or spelling that don't distract the reader from the content	Writer makes many errors in grammar and/or spelling that hinder the reader's understanding.
<b>Sentences &amp; Paragraphs</b>	Sentences and paragraphs are complete, well-constructed and of varied structure.	All sentences are complete and well-constructed (no fragments, no run-ons). Paragraphing is generally done well.	Most sentences are complete and well-constructed. Paragraphing needs some work.	Many sentence fragments or run-on sentences OR paragraphing needs lots of work.
<b>Format</b>	Complies with all the requirements for an application letter.	Complies with almost all the requirements for an application letter.	Complies with several of the requirements for an application letter.	Complies with less than 50% of the requirements for an application letter.
<b>Register</b>	The author uses long forms and formal words/expressions consistently.	The author uses mostly long forms and formal words/expressions.	The author uses mostly long forms.	The author uses short forms-

## Appendix N

Lead-in: image used to foster students' understanding of rubric

# WHY?



## Appendix O.1

### Questionnaire II – for 9<sup>th</sup> grade students

Olá! Gostaria de vos pedir para responder ao questionário 2 que se segue, no âmbito do meu relatório final de estágio do Mestrado em Ensino de Inglês no 3º ciclo e no Ensino Secundário, durante o ano lectivo 2021-22, pela Universidade Nova intitulado *Assessment for learning as a means to promote students' writing proficiency* (Avaliação para a aprendizagem como meio para promover o desenvolvimento da escrita).

Lembro-vos que isto não é um teste! Não há respostas certas ou erradas. A informação recolhida fará parte do meu relatório final de estágio do mestrado em ensino, sendo os resultados obtidos divulgados no respectivo relatório. A instituição e os alunos permanecerão anónimos em qualquer circunstância.

Muito obrigada!

Paula Katchi Cravo

### QUESTIONNAIRE 2

Circle the right one for you, from 1 to 5.

not true	somewhat true	neutral	true	very true
1	2	3	4	5

#### Writing process

1. The success criteria guidelines helped me stay focused on my writing task.	1	2	3	4	5
2. The success criteria guidelines limited my ideas in my writing task.	1	2	3	4	5
3. The success criteria guidelines helped me plan my writing task.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I read the success criteria guidelines before starting to write.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I read the success criteria guidelines several times throughout my writing.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I read the success criteria guidelines when I finished writing.	1	2	3	4	5
7. The checklist helped me to revise my work.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I ticked the items in the checklist while I was writing.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I ticked the items in the checklist after finishing writing.	1	2	3	4	5

Which of the above: success criteria guidelines or checklist helped you the most? Why?

---

### Feedback

1. Class feedback helped me understand how to improve writing reviews.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Individual feedback helped me understand how to improve writing reviews.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Individual feedback makes me to feel anxious about my mistakes.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Correction codes helped me to understand my mistakes.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Correction codes helped me to look for information.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Correction codes made me confused.	1	2	3	4	5

**Which of the above: class feedback, individual feedback or correction codes do you prefer? Why?**

---

### The use of rubrics

1. Rubrics helped me to self-assess my review.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Rubrics helped me to understand what I need to do to improve when I write reviews.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Rubrics are useful to understand what grade I will get in a review	1	2	3	4	5
4. Rubrics make me anxious about my performance.	1	2	3	4	5

**Will you use the rubrics next time you write a review? How will you use it?**

---

**What's your view on writing reviews in English? Put a tick (✓) in the right space**

**Difficult**    \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / **easy**

**Useless**    \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / **useful**

**I like doing**    \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / **I don't like doing**



## Appendix O.2

### Questionnaire II – for 11<sup>th</sup> grade students

Olá! Gostaria de vos pedir para responder ao questionário 2 que se segue, no âmbito do meu relatório final de estágio do Mestrado em Ensino de Inglês no 3º ciclo e no Ensino Secundário, durante o ano lectivo 2021-22, pela Universidade Nova intitulado *Assessment for learning as a means to promote students' writing proficiency* (Avaliação para a aprendizagem como meio para promover o desenvolvimento da escrita).

Lembro-vos que isto não é um teste! Não há respostas certas ou erradas. A informação recolhida fará parte do meu relatório final de estágio do mestrado em ensino, sendo os resultados obtidos divulgados no respectivo relatório. A instituição e os alunos permanecerão anónimos em qualquer circunstância.

Muito obrigada!

Paula Katchi Cravo

### QUESTIONNAIRE 2

Circle the right one for you, from 1 to 5.

not true	somewhat true	neutral	true	very true
1	2	3	4	5

#### Writing process

1. The success criteria guidelines helped me stay focused on my writing task.	1	2	3	4	5
2. The success criteria guidelines limited my ideas in my writing task.	1	2	3	4	5
3. The success criteria guidelines helped me plan my writing task.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I read the success criteria guidelines before starting to write.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I read the success criteria guidelines several times throughout my writing.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I read the success criteria guidelines when I finished writing.	1	2	3	4	5
7. The checklist helped me to revise my work.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I ticked the items in the checklist while I was writing.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I ticked the items in the checklist after finishing writing.	1	2	3	4	5

Which of the above: success criteria guidelines or checklist helped you the most? Why?

---

### Feedback

1. Class feedback helped me understand how to improve writing essays.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Individual feedback helped me understand how to improve writing essays.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Individual feedback makes me to feel anxious about my mistakes.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Correction codes helped me to understand my mistakes.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Correction codes helped me to look for information.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Correction codes made me confused.	1	2	3	4	5

**Which of the above: class feedback, individual feedback or correction codes do you prefer? Why?**

---

### The use of rubrics

1. Rubrics helped me to self-assess my opinion essay.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Rubrics helped me to understand what I need to do to improve when I write essays.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Rubrics are useful to understand what grade I will get in an opinion essay.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Rubrics make me anxious about my performance.	1	2	3	4	5

**Will you use the rubrics next time you write an opinion essay? How will you use it?**

---

**What's your view on writing opinion essays in English? Put a tick ( ✓ ) in the right space.**

**Difficult** \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / **easy**

**Useless** \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / **useful**

**I like doing** \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / **I don't like doing**





## Appendix P.1

### Questionnaire III – 9<sup>th</sup> grade students

Olá! Gostaria de vos pedir para responder ao questionário 3 que se segue, no âmbito do meu relatório final de estágio do Mestrado em Ensino de Inglês no 3º ciclo e no Ensino Secundário, durante o ano lectivo 2021-22, pela Universidade Nova intitulado *Assessment for learning as a means to promote students' writing proficiency* (Avaliação para a aprendizagem como meio para promover o desenvolvimento da escrita).

Lembro-vos que isto não é um teste! Não há respostas certas ou erradas. A informação recolhida fará parte do meu relatório final de estágio do mestrado em ensino, sendo os resultados obtidos divulgados no respectivo relatório. A instituição e os alunos permanecerão anónimos em qualquer circunstância.

Muito obrigada!

Paula Katchi Cravo

#### QUESTIONNAIRE 3

Circle the right one for you, from 1 to 5.

not true	somewhat true	neutral	true	very true
1	2	3	4	5

#### Writing process

1. The success criteria guidelines helped me stay focused on my writing task.	1	2	3	4	5
2. The success criteria guidelines limited my ideas in my writing task.	1	2	3	4	5
3. The success criteria guidelines helped me plan my writing task.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I read the success criteria guidelines before starting to write.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I read the success criteria guidelines several times throughout my writing.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I read the success criteria guidelines when I finished writing.	1	2	3	4	5
7. The checklist helped me to revise my work.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I ticked the items in the checklist while I was writing.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I ticked the items in the checklist after finishing writing.	1	2	3	4	5

#### Feedback

1. Class feedback helped me understand how to improve writing blog comments.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Individual feedback helped me understand how to improve blog comments.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Individual feedback makes me to feel anxious about my mistakes.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Correction codes helped me to understand my mistakes.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Correction codes helped me to look for information.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Correction codes made me confused.	1	2	3	4	5

#### The use of rubrics

1. Rubrics helped me to self-assess my blog comment as a written task.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Rubrics helped me to understand what I need to do to improve when I write a blog comment as a written task.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Rubrics are useful to understand what grade I will get in a blog comment, as a written task.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Rubrics make me anxious about my performance.	1	2	3	4	5

What's your view on writing blog comments in English? Put a tick ( ✓ ) in the right space.

Difficult \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / easy

Useless \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / useful

I like doing \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / I don't like doing

### Book or film reviews vs blog comments

Tick ( ✓ ) the right ones for you.

	Yes	No	Not sure
1. I feel more competent at writing blog comments than book or film reviews.			
2. I feel equally competent at writing both the above.			
3. I don't feel competent at writing any of the above.			
4. I think that writing blog comments will be more useful than writing film or book reviews.			
5. I think both the above will be useful.			
6. I feel that rubrics helped me improve my writing in general.			
7. I feel that the feedback helped me improve my writing in general.			



## Appendix P.2

### Questionnaire III – 11<sup>th</sup> grade students

Olá! Gostaria de vos pedir para responder ao questionário 3 que se segue, no âmbito do meu relatório final de estágio do Mestrado em Ensino de Inglês no 3º ciclo e no Ensino Secundário, durante o ano lectivo 2021-22, pela Universidade Nova intitulado *Assessment for learning as a means to promote students' writing proficiency* (Avaliação para a aprendizagem como meio para promover o desenvolvimento da escrita).

Lembro-vos que isto não é um teste! Não há respostas certas ou erradas. A informação recolhida fará parte do meu relatório final de estágio do mestrado em ensino, sendo os resultados obtidos divulgados no respectivo relatório. A instituição e os alunos permanecerão anónimos em qualquer circunstância.

Muito obrigada!

Paula Katchi Cravo

### QUESTIONNAIRE 3

Circle the right one for you, from 1 to 5.

not true	somewhat true	neutral	true	very true
1	2	3	4	5

#### Writing process

1. The success criteria guidelines helped me stay focused in my writing task.	1	2	3	4	5
2. The success criteria guidelines limited my ideas in my writing task.	1	2	3	4	5
3. The success criteria guidelines helped me plan my writing task.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I read the success criteria guidelines before starting to write.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I read the success criteria guidelines several times throughout my writing.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I read the success criteria guidelines when I finished writing.	1	2	3	4	5
7. The checklist helped me to revise my work.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I ticked the items in the checklist while I was writing.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I ticked the items in the checklist after finishing writing.	1	2	3	4	5

#### Feedback

1. Class feedback helped me understand how to improve writing letters of application.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Individual feedback helped me understand how to improve letters of application.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Individual feedback makes me to feel anxious about my mistakes.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Correction codes helped me to understand my mistakes.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Correction codes helped me to look for information.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Correction codes made me confused.	1	2	3	4	5

### The use of rubrics

1. Rubrics helped me to self-assess my letter of application.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Rubrics helped me to understand what I need to do to improve when I write letters of application.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Rubrics are useful to understand what grade I will get in a letter of applications.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Rubrics make me anxious about my performance.	1	2	3	4	5

**Will you use the rubrics next time you write a letter of application? How will you use it?**

---

**What's your view on writing letters of application in English? Put a tick (✓) in the right space.**

**Difficult**    \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / **easy**  
**Useless**     \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / **useful**  
**I like doing**    \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / **I don't like doing**

### Opinion essays vs Letters of application

**Tick (✓) the right ones for you.**

	Yes	No	Not sure
1. I feel more competent at writing letters of application than opinion essays.			
2. I feel equally competent at writing both the above.			
3. I don't feel competent at writing any of the above.			
4. I think that writing opinion essays will be more useful than writing letters of application.			
5. I think both the above will be useful.			
6. I feel that rubrics helped me improve my writing in general.			
7. I feel that the feedback helped me improve my writing in general.			



## Appendix Q.1

### Sample 1 of a film review

#### Draft 1

"Midnight Sun" is an American romantic drama film that was directed by Scott Speer and written by Eric Krister, and it was released on the 23 of March of 2018 / US, and it was based on the Japanese film "A Song to the Sun".

The main characters are Bella Thorne, representing the paper of Katie, Patrick Schwarzenegger, doing Charlie, and Rob Riggle, representing Jack, Katie's father.

#### Draft 2

"Midnight Sun" is an American romantic and drama film, that was directed by Scott Speer and written by Eric Krister. This film was based on the Japanese film "A Song to the Sun".

The main characters are Bella Thorne & representing Katie, Patrick Schwarzenegger representing Charlie, and Rob Riggle representing Jack, Katie's father.

## Appendix Q.2

### Sample 2 of a film review

#### Draft 1

*Not exactly! check this and correct it*

"10 Things I Hate About You" is a typical teen <sup>pt</sup> campus romantic comedy, written by William Shakespeare, in which he describes a good friendship between <sup>sp</sup> sister and a romance of one of them, because her other sister can't be in a relationship if the oldest sister it isn't.

*} unclear*

#### Draft 2

"10 Things I Hate About You" is a typical Teen campus romantic comedy, based on a book written by William Shakespeare, in which he describes a good friendship between two sisters, and their romances.



## Appendix R.1

### Sample 1 of blog comment

#### Draft 1

Social media brought a lot of cool stuff, but I agree with him, the <sup>sp</sup>mystery is gone and that is terrible.

The real problem is that <sup>sp</sup>everything is handled in Facebook and Instagram when it shouldn't.

<sup>Overall</sup> So I totally agree with Sam and I think social media <sup>sp</sup>are changing the way people talk and <sup>sp</sup>relate to each other.

Closing

It's fine that you agree, as you justified well, but I suggest you add more information.

#### Draft 2

Social media brought a lot of cool stuff, but I agree with him, the <sup>4</sup>mystery is gone and that is terrible.

The real problem with social media is that things that should be handled in real life are handled in social media, <sup>and other</sup> ~~but the~~ problem is the people who use it in an inappropriate way.

Overall, I agree with Sam and I think social media is changing the way that people talk to each other.

Bye!



Appendix S.1

Sample 1 of an opinion essay

Draft 1

From my point of view, nations <sup>too informal</sup> that have more money are usually the ones involved in worldwide problems, so in general I agree <sup>that . . .</sup> with this ~~statement~~ <sub>rephrase the given sentence</sub> statement.

Draft 2

From my point of view, wealthier nations are the ones involved in worldwide problems, so in general I agree that richer nations are the ones responsible for ~~problems~~ problems around the world.

## Appendix S.2

### Sample 2 of an opinion essay

#### Draft 1

A study <sup>made</sup> in 2016 by EDGAR (Emission Database for Global Atmospheric Research) <sup>showed</sup> informed us that the top 3 countries that pollute the most are China, the USA and India, two of them being poor countries. ~~China~~ In 2016, China had approximately 1.4 billion people and it emitted ~~the~~ approximately 10 billion tons of CO<sub>2</sub>. India, another <sup>st</sup> big country, emitted 2 billion<sup>3</sup> tons of CO<sub>2</sub> to the atmosphere. Don't India and China produce goods to be sent to wealthy countries?

#### Draft 2

A study made in 2016 by EDGAR (Emission Database for Global Atmospheric Research) showed us that the top 3 countries that pollute the most are China, the USA and India, two of these being poor countries. Although these two countries export products to richer countries, they are still producing tons of trash that pollute our planet every day.

## Appendix T.1

### Sample 1 of a letter of application

#### Draft 1

I think I am suitable for the role because I can speak three different languages and I can play many sports, including swimming, and even swim if necessary. [I enjoy working with young people and if possible I could introduce ideas for new activities in the camp.] ~~move this part~~

As said before I am capable to play many different sports. For example, football, basketball, water polo, handball and volleyball. In addition, I can play ~~move this part~~.

#### Draft 2

I am writing to apply for the role of summer camp leader.

I think I am suitable for the role because I have worked as a camp leader before in my home country.

Not only ~~that~~ <sup>can I</sup> I can speak three different languages: . . . ., but also ~~and~~ I can ~~play~~ many sports ~~(As)~~ for example, football, swimming, basketball, water polo, handball and volleyball. In addition, I can play the guitar.

I look forward to hearing from you soon,

## Appendix T.2

### Sample 2 of a letter of application

#### Draft 1

Dear Sir,<sup>1</sup>  
I'm writtting to apply for the role of summer  
camp leader.<sup>v</sup> <sup>sp</sup>  
I would like to join it and I think I  
am suitable for that because I'm a  
lovely person and I like to have time <sup>with younger children</sup>  
~~to have time~~ I have 2 years  
experience working as a summer camp leader.  
I very much hope you will accept me  
and I will enjoy it so much the camp.  
~~to have~~  
Yours sincerely,

#### Draft 2

Dear Mr. Marco,  
I am writing to apply for the role of summer  
camp leader.  
I would like to participate and I think I am  
suitable for that role because I am an athletic  
man and I would like to play with younger  
children. I have 2 years experience working  
as a summer camp leader. I very much  
hope you will accept me  
myself.  
Yours sincerely,