

Switching to Online and its Impact on Feedback Processes: A Case Study of Seven L2 English Writing Teachers

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ARTICLE INFORMATION

Received: July 14, 2021

Accepted: August 20, 2021

Volume: 3

Issue: 9

DOI: 10.32996/jeltal.2021.3.9.3

KEYWORDS

Corrective Feedback, Online
Corrective Feedback, Approaches
to Assessment, L2 Writing
Assessment, Education Lebanon

ABSTRACT

This case study explored how the sudden switch from face-to-face to online teaching/learning has impacted the corrective feedback strategies of 7 middle and high school L2 English language writing teachers in a private school in Lebanon. The aim of the study was to investigate how these teachers adapted or altered their feedback processes in the assessment of writing. Teachers' assessment identities are dynamic constructs composed of assessment knowledge and skills, which are impacted by social, personal, and contextual experiences. Through a feedback assessment survey, an online feedback assessment survey and an open-ended interview, the teachers critically reflected on their former corrective feedback practices as a way to unpack their current online approaches to writing assessment. This study explored the shift to online teaching, the impact on corrective feedback processes and assessment strategies, and professional development needs. Findings indicate that the teachers applied feedback formatively, used feedback to re-teach concepts, and encouraged self-assessment in their practices. However, in most instances, their varied feedback processes declined with the advent of online teaching, and they could not clearly articulate how their assessment practices altered with the adoption of online instruction. Most stated that they would go back to their original practices as soon as they were back face-to-face in the classroom. Finally, some teachers agreed that professional development would have helped them with the switch to online learning, but they adapted to this environment on their own.

1. Introduction

With the advent of the Covid-19 pandemic, education from kindergarten to tertiary has been disrupted, disjointed, or reinvented to suit online environments. Directed by the pandemic, educational institutions have turned to hybrid or fully online formats. In some contexts, online teaching methodologies and assessment practices have been spontaneously planned or dictated, with little discussion or forethought of teachers' professional development needs (Mishra, Gupta & Shree, 2020). When new approaches or policies are introduced or mandated, teachers may face major challenges integrating new practices in their teaching (Gudmundsdottir, 2020; Sokal, Trudel, & Babb, 2020) and especially assessment practices (Coombs, DeLuca, LaPointe-McEwan, & Chalas, 2018; DeLuca, Valiquette, Coombs, LaPointe-McEwan, & Luhanga, 2018).

In Lebanon, recent circumstances, including the Covid-19 pandemic and the political October Revolution have disrupted education at all levels, where teaching/learning has shifted to differing online platforms (Khaddage, Fayad, & Moussallem, 2020). Studies have explored student or teacher online readiness at the tertiary level (El-Turk, 2015; Hazaymeh, 2021; Khaddage, et al. 2020; Melki, Nicolas, Khairallah, & Adra, 2017; Nenakhova, 2021; Zgheib, Al Daia, Serhan, & Melki, 2020), but further research is needed to explore how the shift to online contexts impacts assessment in general and how these shifts in assessment purposes and processes (Coombs et al., 2018) impact teachers' professional development needs, in specific.

While some teachers were online-ready, more needs to be understood on how teachers have contended with this shift (Gudmundsdottir, 2020) in their classroom and assessment practices. How do teachers articulate the changes in their assessment practices in the switch from face-to-face to online learning? How do they articulate the changes to their corrective feedback practices in teaching writing? This study explored how 7 middle and high school L2 writing teachers reflect on how the shift to online teaching has impacted their corrective feedback processes, assessment strategies, and professional development needs.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Approaches to Assessment

At different stages in their careers, teachers may be asked to enhance or adapt their assessment practices in order to implement research-based policies on assessment and other recommended or mandated assessment practices. When new approaches or policies are introduced or even forced upon by unprecedented circumstances, teachers may face major challenges to integrate new practices in their teaching methodology (Sokal et al., 2020), and especially in their assessment practices (Coombs et al., 2018; DeLuca et al., 2018). Some teachers may struggle adapting to changing assessment landscapes, while some may continue to rely on previously tried-and-tested practices and may resist changes.

As assessment policies and priorities change, teachers should be provided with professional learning opportunities that account for the variability in teachers' approaches to assessment, as well as allow teachers to explore areas that grow from current priorities or unique approaches (Coombs et al., 2018). Teachers' varying understandings and approaches to assessment depend on their conceptual and practical experiences situated within their teaching contexts (Combs et al., 2018; Shepard, 2000). Teachers' understandings of assessment come from varied and different orientations (DeLucas et al., 2018), which are affected by social, personal, and contextual functions and values (Coombs et al., 2018).

Pastore and Andrade (2019) define "*assessment literacy* as an adaptive competence that requires the ability to apply knowledge and skills in flexible, creative, and responsive ways in different educational contexts" (p.1). Teachers should be adaptive and flexible when they respond to changes in assessment landscapes. Teachers' professional development should support teachers in becoming authentic, critical, and reflective role models (Cercone, 2008; Cranton & King, 2003) and encourage teachers to reflect on their teaching practices to question and challenge their positions within their educational setting as catalysts of change (Cranton & King, 2003; Lysaker & Furuness, 2011). Professional development should also support teacher agency where teachers are given spaces to navigate the given resources and limitations in conjunction with their personal beliefs, values, and attributes (Gudmundsdottir, 2020). Reflective approaches to professional development allow teachers to better understand their beliefs and re-conceptualize their teaching practices (Ashraf & Zolfaghari, 2018).

With the sudden shift to online teaching during the pandemic, many teachers have been isolated at home and unprepared for the challenges of teaching online (Trikoilis, & Papanastasiou, 2020). More studies should examine teacher agency, professional practice, and the shift to online teaching during the Covid-10 pandemic (Gudmundsdottir, 2020). As the contexts or situations change, such as during the pandemic, research is needed to see exactly how these changes impact teachers' assessment practices: what they bring in from previous practice and how they adapt.

2.2 Types and Purposes of Feedback in the Writing Process

Second language writing teachers who promote formative assessment use corrective feedback as a key assessment practice to encourage their students to critically engage in writing to improve their writing skills. Language teachers in L2 contexts stress the importance of written expression as one of the main competencies, especially in middle and high school where critical analysis is taught (Bacha & Bahous, 2011; Ghaffar, Khairallah, & Salloum, 2019). Writing coherently, cohesively, and critically is difficult for L2 learners (Bostanci & Çavuşoğlu, 2018; Ghaffar, Khairallah, & Salloum, 2020; Tangpermpoon, 2008) where only summative assessment practices are used. Corrective feedback strategies that incorporate formative assessment practices can motivate and encourage students and improve learning outcomes (Ali, 2016; Hyland & Hyland, 2006).

Socio-cultural theories pose that engagement in corrective feedback offers L2-writers chances to collaborate with their teachers to respond to the corrections and identify errors. Corrective feedback offers scaffolding where the L2 learner can achieve higher levels of linguistic knowledge (Bitchener, 2012). In meta-analysis comparing the impact of direct and indirect WCF on learners' accuracy, the findings are inconclusive (Crosthwaite, Storch, & Schweinberger, 2020; Elfiyanto & Fukazawa, 2021). While there is debate on the benefits, uses, and functions of corrective feedback in the literature (*for a concise history of this debate consult* Mujtaba, Parkash, & Nawaz, 2020), many teachers view corrective feedback as an essential element for writing development in L2 contexts (Crosthwaite, et al., 2020). Corrective feedback gives students insight on revising and improving their writing, enhances their aptitude (Hyland & Hyland, 2006), and is a fundamental factor that guides the teaching/learning process of writing (Ellis, 2009; Ene & Kosobucki, 2016; Ferris, 1995; Hawk & Shah, 2008; Loan, 2017; Mujtaba et al., 2020). Corrective feedback given by the teacher to the students has the potential to yield positive results in students' performance (Ellis, 2009; Ferris, 1995). The provision of feedback on students' writing is

regarded as an important pedagogical practice for teachers, who hope that the feedback will help their students improve their writing skills and language accuracy (Bitchener, 2012; Hyland & Hyland, 2006).

Different types of feedback serve different purposes and can be divided into two categories: Direct/Indirect and Focused/Unfocused corrective feedback. Direct (also known as explicit) feedback identifies the errors and provides the learners with the correction of their own mistakes; however, Indirect (known as implicit) feedback identifies the error(s) using a certain code without providing a correction of the error(s) (Bitchener, 2008; 2012; Bitchener & Knoch, 2008; Bitchener, Young, & Cameron, 2005; Ene & Kosobucki, 2016; Ferris, 2006; Mujtaba et al., 2020; Van Beuningen, 2010; Widyaningsih, 2018). Focused feedback concentrates on a certain category of grammatical errors, ignoring other types of errors, whereas unfocused feedback targets of all errors (Van Beuningen, 2010).

According to Gibbs & Simpson (2004), there are seven conditions for feedback to be successful; it should be (1) appropriate and adequate in terms of quality and quantity, (2) objective (based on students' performance and not on their personalities), (3) related to students' learning, (4) based on the purpose of assessment and criteria of evaluation, (5) clear so that students are able to correct their errors, (6) accessible to students, and (7) beneficial so that students make use of it in future assignments and assessments. Furthermore, Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick (2006) emphasize that effective feedback should shed light on a good performance, allow self-evaluation and reflection, encourage interaction and initiate discussion between the teacher and the students and among the students, increase self-esteem, build a positive and safe learning context, and guide teacher's teaching methods and strategies.

2.3 Incorporating Online Corrective Feedback to Assess Writing for Hybrid/Online Instruction

Technology has become a vital part of our daily life, and in the switch to online learning, it has become the lifeline between teachers and their students. Incorporating educational technology into the language classroom has gained popularity to help students benefit from current modes of language instruction (Al-Olimat, & AbuSeileek, 2015), and the integration of technology in the learning process equips language learners with the skills needed for the 21st century preparing them to meet the demands of the work-market (Papanis, Giavrimis, & Papani, 2010; Widyaningsih, 2018).

Bostanci & Çavuşoğlu (2018) outline how blended and/or online learning engages both teachers and learners in the education process. It has the potential to offer individualized learning experiences, encourages independent and collaborative learning, engages students in the teaching/learning experience, increases their motivation, offers numerous learning styles, provides a less stressful environment, gives the learner the chance to practice the target language beyond the classroom, present a flexible study program, and helps learners master basic concepts and skills and develop the 21st century skills (Marsh, 2012; Stepp-greany, 2002; Widyaningsih, 2018). Similarly, other researchers argue that blended learning in L2 classrooms improves pedagogy, offers more flexibility, where one works at his/her convenience, time, and pace, and increases motivation, autonomy, and collaboration (Aborisade, 2013; Bo & O'Hare, 2013; Dudeney & Hockley, 2013; Eydelman, 2013).

3. The Study

3.1 Purpose of the Study

Lee, Mak & Burns (2016) state that there is a need for teachers' professional development on enhancing formative feedback processes in writing, especially in L2 writing contexts, which recognizes the specific and broader context of the teachers, as well as how they navigate assessment in their specific teaching contexts. Lee (2007) states that more research is needed on teachers' perception on their practices to ascertain the functions of using corrective feedback within an assessment for learning framework. Institutional context and values affect teachers' assessment strategies, specifically their feedback practices. In order to capture teachers' perceptions regarding their assessment practices, more specifically feedback practices in an L2 context, it is important to questions both their preparedness coupled with their actual practices (Mao & Crosthwaite, 2019) in order to give teachers chances to reflect on their beliefs and maybe become their own agents for change. The purpose of this study was to create spaces that allow both teachers and researchers to explore the impact of these changes to practice. In light of the current situation and the forced and abrupt adoption of a new learning instruction, philosophies, and policies, this study explored how online teaching has impacted teachers' assessment practices and how these practices have impacted their assessment identity.

3.2 Research Questions

The questions guiding the study are:

1. How have the corrective feedback and assessment practices of seven language teachers been impacted in the switch to online teaching?
2. How do these teachers reflect on this paradigm shift?
3. To what extent are these teachers aware of their professional development needs? How do teachers articulate their professional development needs?

4. Research Methodology

This case study was composed of two diagnostic surveys and an open ended interview. The surveys were designed based on the literature review of feedback types and qualities. The first diagnostic survey was distributed with exploratory questions on the types of feedback the participants use when assessing writing. A week later, the same survey was distributed to the same population with an additional element of a phrase 'in an online environment' added to each question. The two surveys were compared and analyzed, and from the results, the interview questions were created and the interviews conducted.

4.1 Participants and Context

This case study was implemented in an English-medium large private school located in the suburbs of Beirut. The school has multi-sectioned grades (3–4 sections per grade) from KG to Grade 12 with around 4000 students, reflecting a large diversity of religious and socio-economic backgrounds. It mostly serves middle class students who may display different English Language proficiency levels. This private school follows the official Lebanese core curriculum and attempts to promote a lively and inspiring learning atmosphere and is open to adopting current teaching strategies, as reflected by their professional development vision.

The case study focused on 7 intermediate and secondary teachers who teach English to L2 students, outlined in Table 1. IRB was granted to the researchers and the participants gave their consent to participate in the study. Most participants had taken one previous course in assessment, either in their initial teacher education or afterwards.

Table 1: Participants

Participants	Gender	Age	School System	Career Stage	Teaching Division	Assessment Course(s)
Teacher 1	Female	30→35	Independent/Private	10 yrs.	Intermediate/Secondary	One course
Teacher 2	Female	35→40	Independent/Private	16 yrs.	Secondary	None
Teacher 3	Female	35→40	Independent/Private	14 yrs.	Intermediate	One course
Teacher 4	Female	45→50	Independent/Private	27 yrs.	Intermediate/Secondary	One course
Teacher 5	Female	40→45	Independent/Private	15 yrs.	Intermediate	One course
Teacher 6	Female	30→35	Independent/Private	12 yrs.	Intermediate	None
Teacher 7	Female	30→35	Independent/Private	11 yrs.	Intermediate	One course

4.2 Data Sources and Analysis

Data sources were varied and analyzed based on concepts in the research questions to determine the findings of the study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The two surveys and interviews were designed to address Research Question 1 and 2 on whether teachers' practices in the assessment of writing altered with the advent of online teaching. To address Research Question 3, findings were triangulated.

4.3 Teacher Assessment Survey (TAS) and Teacher Online Assessment Survey (TOAS)

The Teacher Assessment Survey (TAS) (Appendix 1) was administered a week before the Teacher Online Assessment Survey (TOAS) (Appendix 2). Both surveys were identical except for the inclusion of the term 'in an online environment' to each question in TAOS. For example, in TAOS the first question was "In an on-line environment, how often do you use direct feedback when assessing writing?", where in the TAS the question directly started with "How often...?" Both surveys contained questions that were answered based on the levels of frequency or agreement of the types and use of corrective feedback adopted in the writing process. Responses were given in a five-part Likert scale ranging from *Never* to *Always* or *Strongly Disagree* to *Strongly Agree*. TAS and TOAS consisted of five parts: Part one outlined the consent form, which delineated the objectives of the study and terms of agreement. Part two contained questions on *types of feedback* and part three covered the *role of feedback*, marked by frequency of occurrence. Part four covered the *benefits of feedback* and part five covered questions on the *habits of giving feedback*, marked by levels of agreement. All 7 participants filled out both surveys on the day it was administered. The purpose of administering a nearly identical survey a week apart was to allow for reflective moments between the two surveys. Both surveys were administered on Google Forms.

The Surveys were analyzed using descriptive comparison (Esser & Vliegthart, 2017). For the purpose of generalization, a rough differentiation was made between the two surveys where *Never* was interpreted on its own, *Rarely* and *Sometimes* were interpreted together, and *Nearly always* and *Always* were interpreted together.

4.4 Teacher Interview

Semi-structured interviews (Appendix 3) were conducted with the teachers a week after the TOAS was administered. The interview questions progressively asked the teachers about how they perceived changes to practice and feedback techniques with the advent of online learning. Questions 1 and 2 of the interview reflected TOS and asked teachers to clarify types of feedback and practices. Questions 3 to 5 asked the teachers to clarify different aspects of the shift to online learning. Question 6 and 7 asked the teachers to articulate the professional development needs to help in this transition.

The interviews were open-ended. In some cases, the interviewee was asked by the participants to clarify certain terms, before responding. Each interview took roughly 15 minutes, and at the end teachers were asked to derive 5 professional development-training topics on writing assessment. The interviews were analyzed through an iterative process (Brinkmann, 2018). The interviews were read, transcribed and summarized by the two researchers. Pseudonyms were attached to each teacher to ensure anonymity. Both researchers thoroughly read the transcriptions and initial coding was marked. Certain reoccurring phrases and patterns of articulated practices were coded and placed together to create larger themes.

5. Findings

Findings from TAS and TAOS

TAS and TOAS yielded the following themes, which were derived from the different parts of the survey: consent form (part 1), types and role of feedback (part 2&3), benefits of feedback (part 4), and habits of giving feedback (part 5).

Types and Role of Feedback

Part 2 dealt with the types of feedback: direct, indirect, focused, and unfocussed that teachers used in face-to-face teaching (TAS) and then in online teaching (TAOS). All the teachers have used *direct feedback*, while in an online environment this radically decreased. Three quarters of the teachers use *indirect feedback*, and *focused feedback* while in an online environment this dropped to half. Three-quarters used *unfocused feedback*, while in an online environment the percentages decreased to less than half. For all four types of feedback, there was a decline in the use of these types of feedback in online teaching.

Part 3 dealt with the role that feedback played during the assessment process. In an online environment, most of the teachers spent less time with their students to *explain* and give *feedback*. In a face-to-face environment, all the teachers let their students *re-write the assignments* according to the feedback given, while in an online environment, the occurrences dropped. The occurrences of incorporating *self-assessment strategies* in the feedback process nearly remained the same for both face-to-face and online environments. Similarly, most of the teachers believed that their feedback built a *positive and safe learning environment*, in both contexts. The occurrences of incorporating *peer-assessment* in the feedback process increased in an online environment.

Table 2: Role of Feedback

	Face-to-face			Online		
	Always/often	Sometimes	Rarely/never	Always/often	Sometimes	Rarely/never
Spending time and explaining the feedback	75%	25%	0%	12.5%	50%	37.5%
Rewriting the assignment	100%	0%	0%	37.5%	25%	37.5%
Incorporating self-assessment	37.5%	37.5%	25%	25%	37.5%	37.5%
Incorporating peer-assessment	12.5%	63%	12.5%	25%	37.5%	37.5%

Benefits of Feedback

Part 4 dealt with rate of agreement concerning the benefits of feedback processes for students. All of the teachers agreed that feedback is *beneficial* to the students, while in an online environment the rate slightly declined. Most agreed that their students *engage* in the feedback process, while in an online environment only half agreed. Three-fourths of the teachers strongly agreed that their *students consider the suggestions* given in the feedback, while in an online environment, this rate declined. Most of the teachers agreed that the feedback process encourages *collaboration*, and in an online environment, this remained the same. All of the teachers agreed that the feedback they give *encourages interaction* and *initiates discussion* between the teacher and the student, as well as *guides their teaching methods and strategies*, while in an online environment rates for all decreased.

Table 3: Benefits of Feedback

	Face-to-face			Online		
	Strongly agree/ agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly agree/ agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree
Feedback being beneficial for students	100%	0%	0%	75%	25%	0%
Students engaging in the feedback process	75%	25%	0%	50%	12.5%	37.5%
Students considering the suggestions given in the feedback	75%	25%	0%	62.5%	25%	12.5%
Feedback encouraging collaboration	87.5%	12.5%	0%	75%	12.5%	12.5%
Feedback encouraging interaction and initiating discussion	100%	0%	0%	62.5%	25%	12.5%
Feedback guiding teachers' teaching methods	100%	0%	0%	62.5%	0%	37.5%

Habits of giving feedback

Part 5 dealt with teachers' habits of giving feedback. All of the teachers agreed that their feedback is *appropriate* to the given task in face-to-face and online environments. Three-fourths of the teachers agreed that the feedback they give is *beneficial so that students make use of it in future assignments and assessments*, where the rest were neutral, and these percentages remained consistent online. Most of the teachers agreed that the feedback they give helps *increase students' self-esteem* and this remained consistent online.

Most agreed that their feedback is *based on the evaluation criteria*, while in an online environment there was a slight decline in agreement. Most also agreed that their feedback is *formative*, while in an online environment, the percentage decreased. Most agreed that their feedback is *ongoing and consistent*, while in an online environment, this decreased slightly. Half of the teachers agreed that their feedback is *given in a timely manner*, and this rate slightly decreased in an online environment.

Three-fourth of the teachers agreed that the *feedback is accessible to students*, and allows students to *self-evaluate and reflect*, while this rate increased for all in an online environment.

Table 4: Benefits of Feedback

	Face-to-face			Online		
	Strongly agree/ agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly agree/ agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree
Feedback being appropriate for the given task	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%
Feedback being beneficial for future assignments and assessments	75%	25%	0%	75%	25%	0%
Feedback increasing students' self-esteem	87.5%	12.5%	0%	75%	25%	0%
Feedback being based on the criteria of assessment	87.5%	12.5%	0%	75%	12.5%	12.5%
Feedback being formative	87.5%	12.5%	0%	50%	37.5%	12.5%
Feedback being ongoing	87.5%	12.5%	0%	75%	25%	0%

Feedback given in a timely manner	50%	37.5%	12.5%	62.5%	37.5%	0%
Feedback being accessible to students	75%	25%	0%	100%	0%	0%
Feedback allowing self-evaluation and reflection	62.5%	37.5%	0%	75%	25%	0%

Findings from Teachers’ Interviews

A semi-structured interview was conducted with the teachers. These interviews were designed to elucidate description on teaching approaches, assessment practices, and their use and understanding of the different types of corrective feedback. The transcriptions were placed into the chart and similar codes were placed under three general themes: types and purposes of feedback, feedback influence on students’ writing skills, and shift to online and teachers’ practices.

Types of Feedback Used

When asked about the types of feedback used and which type was the most beneficial, the teachers varied in their responses. Four teachers were not sure of the exact definitions of the four types, and the interviewer had to intercede and clarify the terms used. Once the terms were clarified, the four were clear in the application of these types of feedback; in other words, they used the feedback, but did not understand the terminology. However, the other three teachers were clear on the terminology and applied these types of feedback.

Four of the seven teachers used all four types of feedback. Olivia adopted a process; she first used direct to evaluate the students’ writings, and then she used indirect so that the students could self-asses their own writing. She stated that she used unfocussed feedback *“to trigger students’ curiosity and if it doesn’t work, we try the second one (focused).”* She stated that it depended on the students’ individual application for it to be the most beneficial. Roba used unfocused and indirect because it allowed the students to be more autonomous. She stated that focused feedback was the most beneficial because it addressed the mistakes of every single student.

Feedback Types to Re-teach Concepts

Mary and Rachel used feedback to re-teach elements in the writing process. Mary used direct feedback to re-teach a concept or element in the writing process, giving the following example: *“When I want to teach my students the thesis statement, I use direct feedback because the thesis statement is an essential element in the introduction; I need them to focus on it.”* However, Rachel used both direct and indirect feedback depending on the type of writing and types of ‘mistakes’ (errors) that she was focusing on. She said: *“It is really important to focus on the gap or the mistake each student makes, so s/he practices how to write it in a better form.”*

Feedback as Self-assessment to Enhance Student Learning

Five of the seven teachers allowed for moments of student application/interaction with the feedback and self-assessment. Angela stated, *“The student has to depend on him/herself to correct his/her own mistakes, but of course s/he needs some guidance.”* While Mary believed that indirect feedback was the most beneficial because it *“gives students space to realize their mistakes and to edit them.”* Similarly, Monica felt that indirect feedback was the most beneficial because *“When students do self-evaluation, they will get it more. They learn from their mistakes”.* Olivia said that she started with indirect feedback for students to correct their mistakes, but then she provided them with direct feedback in case they were not able to do it independently. Olivia and Roba used indirect to give general comments and asked students to correct their own mistakes.

Feedback Influence on Students’ Writing Skills

All seven teachers declared that feedback was very beneficial to the students, but it depended on how the students made use of the feedback. The teachers stated that they needed to be met half-way by the students in the feedback process and that it varied depending on the degree to how the students used the feedback and what stages, especially stage of autonomy, the students were at.

Monica believed that feedback positively influenced students’ writing because it allowed them to improve their writing skills, but it depended on the students as it differed from one student to another. She stated, *“Actually it depends on the students who are good writers. But basically, it should improve their writing skills. Students are going to improve sooner or later, but it may take time with some students more than the others.”* For Olivia, feedback also influenced student’s writing skills. She said, *“It depends on the students actually. Some students really benefit from the feedback, while others need more support and more direct guidance and follow up. They*

cannot figure their mistakes on their own. They need individualized support, but the feedback can at least improve their ability to abide by the lay-out of the type of writing." For Roba, "Feedback definitely enhances students' writing skills. Feedback provides them with further knowledge regarding sentence structure and the different types of grammatical mistakes." The extent to which feedback could help students improve their writing skills depended on the students themselves. She said, "It honestly depends on the student himself/herself. Generally speaking when students take it into consideration, it does affect them rather largely." Similarly, Jane stated adamantly that all feedback affected the students positively, but it "also depends on the students. Some students care enough to discuss the feedback with their teacher in case they have questions. They want to learn and understand, so in this case they benefit."

Shift to Online and Impact on Teachers Practices

All seven teachers admitted that their teaching practices have changed, but they differed on the degree of that change.

No Difference between Face to Face and Online

Three of the teachers stated there was no difference between the way they gave the feedback. Monica, for example, stated that it has changed but not very much. For Olivia, "Online feedback is not different because we are asking the students to type their pieces of writing, and then we can add our comments." She followed the same strategy, but "instead of correcting their papers; now, we are correcting on the word document and adding our comments."

Online Has Lost the Personal Touch

Most of the teachers stated that online has lost the 'personal' touch – it was not real. For Mary, online feedback "is not similar to what we used to do in a regular classroom. Having that direct interaction with my students is really effective. In a regular classroom, I get to listen to them. I get to see them; I get to know their reactions; they get the chance to ask me questions. However, in an online class since there is a limited time, students don't have the chance to ask or question their mistakes. It is not similar in any way. Students benefited more when they were actually in class." For Roba, what was missing in online feedback process was that she could not see the facial expressions of the students. However, in both cases, she pushed the students "Whether it is beneficial as in the output of the students is sadly undetermined at this point." Angela explained that when it came to online feedback, "it depends in the first place if the student is even listening. In most cases, students are not even listening. Students have to be good listeners, but most of them are not. The teacher cannot guarantee that students are listening to her." However, she insisted that students had no choice but to benefit from the online feedback because for the moment, it was the only option they had. "Most of the time we go by sharing the screen. When we share the screen, it is really beneficial because students learn from each other's mistakes. But it also depends on other aspects. We have many other obstacles especially the Internet access." Rachel stated that her students benefited between 50 to 60% from online feedback. She was not sure if this was 'good' enough because it was the first time she taught online. "We still have many problems and gaps which we need to work on, so I can't really tell."

Teaching Methodology Changed with Assessment Practices

Most of the teachers stated that their teaching and assessment practices changed to a certain extent with the advent of online teaching. For Jane, her assessment practices changed because her teaching methodology also changed. However, she hoped to go back to the old ways of assessment used before online assessment. Olivia also altered her teaching and assessment practices "In the classroom, students stop the teacher and ask her saying I didn't really understand this comment for example. What do you mean here? Maybe in an online class, students do not have the same access, so this would be challenging for them. Thus, the teacher has to alter her practices." Similarly, Mary adapted her practices. "Yes, yes. I did; it is really hectic to stay working on the laptop all day. That is why it is not the same. The moment students get back to class, I will definitely go back to the old ways." For Mary, her assessment practices have changed in that "I am not following the same rubrics anymore; plus I lack interaction with my students. That is why my practices are altered. When I am using online sessions, I am actually using the direct method, and I am correcting their mistakes and at the end I am giving them general feedback. That is it."

6. Discussion

The findings indicate that while some of the teachers were not exactly clear on the exact definitions of the types of feedback they used, they were all clear on the application in their practice. They used feedback to re-teach concepts and encouraged self-assessment in their practices. While they articulated that feedback could enhance student learning, they also all agreed that it was up to the students to take their advice and apply the feedback they were provided with to improve their work. However, they did not vocalize specific strategies, such as peer feedback or process writing, which they implemented to support the feedback given. In most instances, these varied feedback processes declined with the advent of online teaching. Most of the teachers could not clearly articulate how their assessment practices had altered with the adoption of online instruction and some even stated that they would go back to their original practices as soon as they were back in the classroom. Finally, some teachers agreed that PD or workshops would help them with online, but their responses were ambivalent. The discussion below triangulates the TAS, TOAS, and the teachers' interviews in order to answer the three research questions.

How Have the Corrective Feedback and Assessment Practices of Seven Language Teachers Been Impacted in the Switch to Online Teaching?

Most of the teachers could articulate the types of feedback they used, but some were more confident in their expression of how they used each specific type of feedback. Most teachers used feedback as part of the writing process as feedback encouraged interaction, collaboration and initiated discussion between the teacher and the student. They also agreed that the feedback they gave guided their teaching methods and strategies. However, in an online environment, there was a general decrease in both the occurrences of the types of feedback given and in the instances in which feedback was given. Nevertheless, two teachers stated that online feedback has encouraged collaborative techniques and one claimed, *"other than sending or writing feedback to each student (individual), the common mistakes are discussed with the students in the class."*

Most of the teachers stated that they used self and peer assessment within the feedback process to enhance students' learning and collaboration. However, TOAS findings indicated that instances of both slightly increased with online teaching. All teachers agreed that their feedback was *appropriate* to the given task, and the percentages remained consistent in an online environment. In face to face, the majority agreed that their feedback was based on criteria of evaluation, formative, ongoing, and consistent, but this decreased in an online environment. All the teachers stated that their teaching practices changed with the advent of online teaching.

TAS indicated that most of the teachers spent time with their students to explain the feedback given, and all let their students re-write the assignments according to the feedback given. The interviews also showed this especially for Mary and Rachel who used feedback to re-teach grammar or steps in the writing process. TOAS, however, showed that in an online environment the time spent with the students to explain feedback, as well as allowing the students to re-write dropped dramatically. Olivia, for instance, admitted that she would spend time after class *"like 10-15 minutes to ask their questions and to provide them with the clarifications needed."* but stated that she could not do this all the time.

Teachers discussed the impact of feedback on students' writing skills and students' readiness by differentiating how their students receive and use feedback. They two surveys echoed this point when all the teachers agreed that feedback was beneficial to students in both teaching environments, yet it was less in an online environment. Some students took their teachers' suggestions into consideration, while other did not depending on their willingness to engage. In the interviews, the teachers corroborated that feedback was beneficial and taken into consideration depending on the students themselves. For example, Rachel stated, *"It depends on the students. I do my part as a teacher and provide them with the needed feedback, but it depends on how ready they are."*

How Do These Teachers Reflect on This Paradigm Shift?

The teachers agree that the feedback process itself does not differ between online and 'pen and paper feedback' and their actual practices did not change. For Jane though in a face-to-face setting, *"teachers are able to read faces. Facial expressions help teachers realize whether students understand or not,"* Monica echoed the same point stating, *"Online feedback does not differ from face to face but it is harder since students are not able to see you. It is a virtual class, so we as teachers are going to try our best to make it similar but basically it is not the same."*

In both environments, the teachers claimed that they tried to make their feedback accessible and beneficial to students, and this increased in an online environment. The teachers also stated that an online environment encouraged them to return feedback in a timely manner and encouraged them to take their students' individual needs into account. They stated that an online environment built a positive and safe learning environment, for it enhanced students' self-esteem and allowed students moments for self-reflection. However, Rachel stated, *"Online feedback is less effective. Online feedback does not reach them as fast as when students are interacting with you. In online classes, mostly students are not with you. The teacher cannot really tell if students are focused or if they are listening, and if they are taking into consideration everything I say, so it is a challenge. We can't tell if it works or not."*

Most teachers agreed that online teaching required more time. One stated, *"Please take notice that online-sessions are being bounded/limited by time, and that is why giving feedback to students and peer evaluation is rarely given some space. Otherwise, if time was given to such sessions, many answers would vary."* One teacher went on to say that they were giving fewer assessments in the online environment, *"Since the assessments are less while having on-line sessions. I feel an accurate evaluation cannot be confirmed."* On the other hand, two teachers stated that online feedback encouraged collaborative techniques.

In classroom, the assessment was more individualized and accurately targeted the gaps of each student. For Roba, online teaching altered her assessment practices because as she said, *"You have to take into consideration that these students do have further resources at home. You have to take into consideration that they have an ample of time to fulfill the requirements, so because of that you have to be a bit less direct in order to give them more space to illustrate in order to give them more space to express their thoughts and ideas."* She felt she would not go back to her old ways. She would adopt methods that were a combination of both. *"A combination of the old and new methods would be beneficial,"* she said. Rachel altered her practices. The *"first assessment is divided*

into parts: the formative and the summative. Formative assessment, if I can say, is used on daily basis, but I can't target 36 students in an online class. Again, it is very challenging. So, I don't know."

All the teachers agreed that they would like to go back to face to face teaching, as it is more effective. Jane claimed that face to face was the 'real process'. This seemed to echo all the teachers' views that teaching online is a temporary state and they were just filling in the gaps with online until they return to face to face

To What Extent Are These Teachers Aware of Their Professional Development Needs?

The teachers were able to articulate some of their professional development needs that would support in the transition to teaching online. Many of the teachers stated that smaller class sizes would help in online teaching.

They also articulated that better support from parents and better autonomy of students would help them. Angela and Monica would like more input from the parents and better autonomy from the students. Monica, for example, stated that *"basically, it is the students' responsibility and how much they are self-conscious. Parents also have a role."* She would like better parents support. *"I am sure the intimacy you have with your students is very important."* Jane stated that students were not responsible at all and did not take online learning seriously. Angela added that what could ease in the transition is students' interaction. *"Students should interact more. Parents should encourage their children more. We as teachers are doing our best behind the screen but they have to be interactive more,"* she said. Some teachers, such as Monica and Mary, asked for training workshops.

Another item was better infrastructure and connection. All of the teachers emphasized the point of poor Internet connection in Lebanon. They all suffer from Internet connection, and for online teaching to be more effective, better infrastructure is highly needed. Jane claims that in Lebanon the infrastructure problems hinder smooth online learning. *"Laughingly, actually because of the problems we face here in Lebanon, such as electricity Wi-Fi"* However, other than the infrastructure problems, so many other factors are needed to improve online teaching and learning. Roba admits that there are infrastructure problems, such as poor Wi-Fi access. Other than infrastructure issues, there are no issues. In the secondary school, her students are interactive and she is able to deal with them.

Based on the teachers' responses, it was obvious that teachers were not aware of what they really needed to make online teaching more feasible. They did not even realize if a workshop would benefit them or how it would benefit them. Monica says, *"As I told you before, we didn't change the way, but a workshop won't hurt."* However, Olivia states, *"For me, I do not think that I need training sessions. I am fine. I have been into courses of integrating technology. I am with it. I feel I need nothing. I just need better connection. That is it."* Mary laughingly asks *"How can online teaching become feasible? I don't really know how you can make things easier. We need someone to help you and teach you some strategies to make things easier. Definitely, definitely."*

In Survey 1, one teacher commented that "other than sending or writing feedback to each student (individual), the common mistakes are discussed with the students in the class" and another teacher said that she uses more 'collaborative techniques'. In Survey 2, which dealt with online methods of feedback, one teacher commented, "Please take notice that online-sessions are being bounded/limited by time and that is why giving feedback to students and peer evaluation is rarely given some space. Otherwise, if time were given to such sessions, many answers would vary." Another teacher commented, "Since the assessments are less while having on-line session, I feel an accurate evaluation cannot be confirmed." While the third stated, "in classroom, the assessment was more individualized and targeted the gaps of each student more accurately."

7. Conclusion

The seven instructors in this study adapted and altered their assessment practices with little time to reflect on their professional development needs. This study explored how teachers' assessment strategies were shaped by the sudden changes brought on by a sudden shift to online learning. While the teachers were able to transfer their assessment practices to an online context, they found it difficult at times and were not fully convinced that they were 'doing the same job' as face-to-face teaching. In terms of situated practice, the feedback these teachers gave was based on assessment practices as a complex interplay of social, cultural, policy, professional, and experiential factors. In order to support these changes in assessment practices, studies such as ours can inform policies which support teachers' professional development needs.

Lee (2007) states that future research should look into the problems and constraints teachers face in their work context to implement assessment *for learning* so that teachers' experiences and views can be meaningfully used to realize the potential of formative assessment. He outlines six points for successful feedback strategies: assessment as prospective, clear line of communication to students, opportunities for students to act on feedback, an active role in students managing their own learning, enhanced motivation for students to learn, and feedback used to improve teaching. In order to harness the potential of teacher feedback to improve teaching and learning, there are important implications for teacher professional development. Teachers can be helped to re-examine

the goals of writing instruction, how writing is taught, and how assessment should reflect the instructional goals and link to the pedagogical activities, especially in the shift to online.

Our study explores how the switch to online learning impacted teachers feedback processes, but there is much room for further studies on both teachers practices and students perception (Hazaymeh, 2021; Mulyadi, Wijayatiningsih, Singh, & Prastikawati, 2021). Indeed research on teacher/student interactions could explore how the switch to online can offer individualized learning experiences, engage and encourage students in the feedback process, and increase motivation or provide a less stressful and more flexible learning environment. The Covid-19 pandemic has altered the educational landscape and its impact will be felt for many years to come.

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APPENDIX 1: TEACHER ASSESSMENT SURVEY

Type of Feedback

1. How often do you use direct feedback? (Direct Feedback is explicit feedback where the error is identified and corrected)
2. How often do you use indirect feedback? (Indirect Feedback is implicit where codes or symbols mark the error but no correction is provided)
3. How often do you use global feedback? (Focused Feedback concentrates on and corrects a certain element in writing that is being targeted during the teaching)
4. How often do you use local feedback? (Unfocused Feedback corrects all errors)

Role of Feedback

1. How often do you explain the feedback you give?
2. How often do you let your students re-write according to the feedback?
3. How often do you let your students self-assess?
4. How often do they peer assess?
5. How often does your feedback build a positive and safe learning environment?

Benefits of Feedback

1. Is your feedback beneficial to your students?
2. Do your students engage in the feedback process?
3. Do they apply the suggestions given in the feedback?
4. Does your feedback encourage interaction and initiate discussions between the teacher and the students and among the students?
5. Does your feedback encourage collaboration?
6. Does your feedback guide your teaching methods and strategies?

Habits of Giving Feedback

1. Is your feedback appropriate to the given task?
2. Is your feedback adequate enough for further improvement?
3. Is your feedback objective based on the criteria of the evaluation?
4. Is your feedback formative?
5. Is your feedback ongoing?
6. Is your feedback consistent?
7. Is your feedback timely?
8. Is your feedback accessible to students?
9. Is your feedback beneficial so that students make use of it in future assignments and assessments?
10. Does your feedback allow for self-evaluation and reflection?
11. Does your feedback increase students' self-esteem?

APPENDIX 2: TEACHER ONLINE ASSESSMENT SURVEY

Type of Feedback

1. In an online environment, how often do you use direct feedback? (Direct Feedback is explicit feedback where the error is identified and corrected)
2. In an online environment, how often do you use indirect feedback? (Indirect Feedback is implicit where codes or symbols mark the error but no correction is provided)
3. In an online environment, how often do you use global feedback? (Focused Feedback concentrates on and corrects a certain element in writing that is being targeted during the teaching)
4. In an online environment, how often do you use local feedback? (Unfocused Feedback corrects all errors)

Role of Feedback

1. In an online environment, how often do you explain the feedback you give?
2. In an online environment, how often do you let your students re-write according to the feedback?
3. In an online environment, how often do you let your students self-assess?
4. In an online environment, how often do they peer assess?
5. In an online environment, how often does your feedback build a positive and safe learning environment?

Benefits of Feedback

1. Is your feedback beneficial to your students?

2. Do your students engage in the feedback process?
3. Do they apply the suggestions given in the feedback?
4. Does your feedback encourage interaction and initiate discussions between the teacher and the students and among the students?
5. Does your feedback encourage collaboration?
6. Does your feedback guide your teaching methods and strategies?

Habits of Giving Feedback

1. In an online environment, is your feedback appropriate to the given task?
2. In an online environment, is your feedback adequate enough for further improvement?
3. In an online environment, is your feedback objective based on the criteria of the evaluation?
4. In an online environment, is your feedback formative?
5. In an online environment, is your feedback ongoing?
6. In an online environment, is your feedback consistent?
7. In an online environment, is your feedback timely?
8. In an online environment, is your feedback accessible to students?
9. In an online environment, is your feedback beneficial so that students make use of it in future assignments and assessments?
10. In an online environment, does your feedback allow for self-evaluation and reflection?
11. In an online environment, does your feedback increase students' self-esteem?

APPENDIX 3: TEACHER INTERVIEW

1. What types of feedback do you use when you evaluate your students' writing pieces? Why? Direct, indirect, focused, unfocused. Which is most beneficial?
2. How does the feedback influence students' writing skills? To what extent do you think corrective feedback can improve students' writing skills?
3. To what extent do you feel on-line feedback is similar to the way you used to give feedback directly on the paper?
4. With the adoption of online teaching strategies, to what extent do you think students can benefit from on-line feedback?
5. With the advent of online teaching, have you altered, adapted, or changed your assessment practices? Do you feel they have changed for good or will you go back to the old ways? How have they changed?
6. What support do you need to ease the transition to on-line learning?
7. Homework: Try to come up with 5 professional development training topics on writing assessment.