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EFL Tertiary Learners' Perceptions of Self-Assessment on Writing in English

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Abstract

Self-assessment (SA) allows students to evaluate their language performance, as well as encourage and stimulate their language learning. However, only a few studies have been conducted on self-assessment in EFL contexts, particularly in Thailand. Among these studies, they have rarely focused on students' perceptions and how they use self-assessment to improve their writing ability. Thus, this study explored university EFL students' perceptions and reflections on the use of self-assessment in English writing in Thailand. A mixed-methods research design was used to explore a total of 41 students in two classes (18 and 23 students). Questionnaires, self-assessment forms, and reflective journals were used to collect data from two groups of students enrolling in writing courses at two universities. Mean, S.D., and dependent t-test were used for the analysis of quantitative data, while content analysis was used for the analysis of qualitative data. The results revealed that these students perceived self-assessment as a tool for writing

development (self-monitoring), a means of improving their attitudes about writing, and a means of developing their self-confidence. The results suggest that using self-assessment can help students become independent learners and improve their performance in English writing.

Introduction

Nowadays, English is a very important tool for communication in Thailand due to globalization and the fact that Thailand is a member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) community, which has designated English as the sole working language of the ASEAN region. In the past, writing in English received less attention than other language skills from both teachers and students as writing is rarely used in everyday life. It is also considered the most difficult language skill to learn and develop (Huang & Zhang, 2020; Zhang, 2021) "because writing is commonly understood as the most demanding language skill among the language skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing" (Cheng & Zhang, 2022, p. 1). However, writing in English has recently gained more attention in language education and in career path as we now live in a digital era in which texting is a common communication tool.

In the past, writing in English was not the focus of the skills taught at schools in Thailand, which were based on the Basic Education Curriculum 2008 (Ministry of Education, 2008). Writing was only considered a part of the English subject for non-English majors. Writing in English was rarely taught at the school level. This resulted in Thai students having limited proficiency in writing at basic as well as higher education levels (Thongpai & Deerajviset, 2017). Moreover, most of the Thai teachers responsible for teaching writing in English were familiar with the product-based approach as it had been used for a long time and did not require much time for preparation or grading. As it focuses on the final product, the traditional writing approach does not teach students how to write or revise their written work. To solve this issue, the process-based approach was introduced more recently and has attracted more attention. The reason is that this approach, which focuses on teaching students how to write, has been found to be a more effective method to enhance the writing performance of Thai students (Dhanarattigannon, 2010; Dokchandra, 2018; Puengpipattrakul, 2014).

While the process-based approach has now become widely practiced in English writing classrooms, the focus of writing assessment has also shifted to focus on students' writing process to help them become life-long learners and independent writers. Self-assessment (SA) is considered one of the tools that can help students develop as independent writers (Andrade, 2019; Panadero et al., 2016; Ratminingsih et al., 2018; Wong & Mak, 2018). Studies on self-assessment in EFL writing contexts reveal that self-assessment can help EFL learners to improve their writing performance via revision. This promotes their awareness of their own writing process and performance, changing their perceptions of learning how to write in English and on writing assessment (Bing, 2016; Bowman, 2017; Elgadal, 2017; Herayati, 2020; Wong & Mak, 2018).

In Thailand, self-assessment has only recently been implemented in English writing classrooms. Although the process-based approach can help students engage more in their writing process, leading them to become better writers, the marking of students' writing remains questionable as it tends to be subjective. For marking to be made more reliable, students' self-assessment has been introduced into the writing classroom. With self-assessment, students will have the opportunity to evaluate their own written work by using the same rubric used by the teacher. As a result, they will better understand how the teacher marks their written work. As mentioned above, even though studies on self-assessment in EFL contexts provide convincing results, showing that it can help students to improve their writing performance and become autonomous learners, studies in the Thai context are quite rare (Sapsirin, 2014; Suwanarak, 2018; Thongpai & Deerajviset, 2017). All these studies appear to apply a quantitative approach, focusing on comparing students' self-assessments and teachers' assessments with students' actual improvements in writing. The results from these studies show only the consistency of students' and teachers' assessments, not how students can learn and develop their writing in English by using the self-assessment process on their writing. Therefore, this study aimed to explore Thai students' perceptions of self-assessment in the writing of English to understand how they learn, engage, and develop their writing performance via a self-assessment process.

Self-Assessment in EFL Writing

Over the years, several attempts have been made to define the term "self-assessment". Among those attempts, Bachman (2000) defined self-assessment in terms of using certain criteria to evaluate assignments. Recently, Panadero et al. (2016) viewed self-assessment as a technique used to evaluate and reflect on learning processes and products. From these points of view, self-assessment is a way for students to evaluate and reflect on their learning process and their performance in written products based on certain criteria. In the context of EFL writing, self-assessment is used to promote students' autonomous learning and improve their writing ability (Bing, 2016; Huda, 2020).

Over the last decade, self-assessment has gained attention in the EFL writing classroom. Attempts have been made, for example, by Bing (2016) and Belachew et al. (2015), to examine the implementation and use of self-assessment in classrooms. The main instruments used in their studies were questionnaires on self-assessment, writing assignments, and semi-structured interviews that focused on groups of students. Besides these instruments, Belachew et al. (2015) also interviewed 10 EFL teachers to investigate their perceptions of self-assessment, while Bing (2016) used an analytic scoring rubric as a supplementary instrument for students to conduct self-assessment. Their results were congruent, confirming that self-assessment could enhance the development of writing in English, promote self-awareness and self-evaluation, and lead to a positive attitude towards writing in English.

Self-Assessment of Writing in English in the Thai Context

A few research studies (Sapsirin, 2014; Suwanarak, 2018; Thongpai & Deerajviset, 2017) have been conducted on the self-assessment of writing in English in Thailand. The researchers studied self-assessment in classrooms with adult Thai learners. As in the studies in EFL contexts, they employed three main instruments in their studies: questionnaires on self-assessment, writing assignments, and semi-structured interviews with students. Their findings supported the findings in EFL contexts concerning students' writing in English development as well as their growth as independent learners. Furthermore, the studies explored other factors related to self-assessment, such as learning styles (Thongpai & Deerajviset, 2017) and gender (Sapsirin, 2014). Thongpai and Deerajviset (2017) concluded that the learning style that best promoted the use of self-

assessment was the reflective learning style. Sapsirin (2014) found that male and female students performed self-assessment in the same way. However, these studies focused mainly on the product rather than the process of self-assessment and investigated only one group of students. Their results may not reflect the actual performance of students' self-assessment in different contexts. Therefore, the current study aimed to explore students' perceptions and evaluations of the use of self-assessment and its effects on their writing ability. More interestingly, this study was conducted in two different settings, with the cross-case study investigated to gain insight into students' perceptions of self-assessment in Thailand. Based on the purposes of the study, the following research questions were proposed.

Research Questions

1. How did the students perceive self-assessment?
2. How did the students perceive their ability to improve their writing through the process of self-assessment?

Research Methodology

This research was conducted with the approval of the Institutional Review Board (IRB), and was approved on 20 September 2018 (COA No. COA61/069) by the Kasetsart University Research Ethics Committee, Thailand.

Research Design

This study used a convergent mixed-methods approach (Creswell, 2012). The research settings were two writing classrooms at two public universities in Thailand. The study used the purposive sampling technique. The selection criteria were that the teachers selected in these two writing classrooms 1) implemented a process-based approach in their writing classroom, and 2) employed self-assessment in their writing classes to help students learn how to revise and become independent learners.

Participants

Two groups of student participants were involved in the study. The first group comprised students who enrolled in an English Writing course at a university in Bangkok (U1), while the other group consisted of students enrolling in an English Writing course at a university in Nakhon Pathom (U2) during the first semester of the 2018 academic year. A total of 41 students from both classes participated in this study. The students who took the English Writing course in Bangkok were sophomore English majors, while the students in the other course were seniors in the Faculty of Education, majoring in English. None had previous experience in doing self-assessments in any English writing classroom before this study was conducted.

Settings

The classrooms were two writing classes taught by different teachers for one semester (15 weeks). Both classes employed a process-based approach. The participants in one class were assigned to write four individual writing assignments and one pair-work writing project, while those in the other class wrote five individual writing assignments.

In terms of the teachers, one was a teacher-researcher who obtained her doctoral degree in the field of English language teaching and had been teaching English at the university level for more than 20 years. In addition, she has used a process-based approach since 2009 to teaching writing in English. She first implemented self-assessment for her English Writing class in 2017 as a trial. The current study involved her second writing class, in which self-assessment was being used to help students improve their writing in the 2018 academic year. The teacher of the other class was from Sri Lanka and obtained his doctoral degree in Linguistics and a Master of Arts (MA) in TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages). He had more than 20 years of language teaching experience. This study involved his first writing class using self-assessment.

The assessment used in writing classes before conducting this study was teacher-based evaluation only. At one university, the students' writing assignments were graded using the analytical rubrics adapted from 40 Reproducible Forms for the Writing Traits Classroom Scholastic

Teaching Resources of Culham and Wheeler (2003), while the other teacher graded students' written work based on Jacobs et al. (1981).

Research Instruments

Based on the purposes of this study, a mixed-methods approach with three instruments was used to collect the data as follows:

1. Self-assessment forms were used for self-assessing writing assignments and portfolio assessments. The information from self-assessment forms was used to see how the students assessed their writing performance.

2. Pre- and post-questionnaires on self-assessment of writing in English were used to investigate changes in students' perceptions towards doing self-assessment before and after using self-assessment.

3. Students' reflective journals on self-assessment, written before the mid-term examination and before the final examination, were used. Information from the journals was qualitative, which was used to reveal the students' perceptions concerning the use of self-assessment.

Self-Assessment Forms

Two self-assessment forms were created, comprising a Self-reflection Assignment and Portfolio Assignment. Content validity was investigated by experts based on the definitions and purposes of self-assessment. The experts approved both forms without any critical comments. The forms were then piloted by one of the researchers in 2017 in an English Writing class. Students did not report any negative comments or any problems when they used the forms. The forms were revised to add ranking, with the last question also revised to better suit the purposes of this study. See Appendix A and Appendix B.

Pre- and Post-Questionnaires

The 23-item questionnaires on writing self-assessment used in this study were adapted from Bing's (2016) Academic Writing Self-Assessment Instrument by taking out Item 9 (My typing and computer skills have become more efficient). The questionnaire asked about students' perceptions of their writing skills. The questionnaire was administered to

student participants at the beginning of the course and at the end of the course to explore improvement in their writing during the semester.

Students' Reflective Journals

The students were asked to write a journal on the topic "Use of self-assessment", and freely give their opinions on using self-assessment to help them improve their writing ability. They were asked to do this twice: before the mid-term and final examinations.

Data Collection and Analysis

To investigate Thai students' perceptions of self-assessment concerning their English writing at the university level and to answer the research questions, the study used the three data sources described above. The questionnaires were distributed to the students at the beginning of the semester and the end of the semester, after the use of self-assessment. The quantitative data gained from the questionnaires were statistically analyzed with the help of MS Excel for the arithmetic mean, standard deviation (SD), and paired samples t-test.

For qualitative data, the students were asked to complete the self-assessment forms for each writing assignment. They were also asked to write a portfolio assessment at the end of the semester to reflect on their opinions concerning the use of self-assessment and how it enhanced their writing performance. For the reflective journals, the students wrote two journals on the topic "Use of self-assessment" before the mid-term and final examinations.

The qualitative data from the students' completed self-assessments and reflective journals were qualitatively analyzed using content analysis to gain insight into how the students perceived the use of self-assessment and how their writing performance improved while using self-assessment. The analyzed data were cross-checked between the researchers.

Findings

This study aimed to explore the impact of self-assessment on students' writing in English through their perceptions and reflections. The results are presented in two parts based on the research questions.

The data from the self-assessment questionnaires, the students' self-assessments, and their reflections on the use of self-assessment show that the students perceived self-assessment from three aspects:

1. Self-assessment as a tool for writing development (self-monitoring)
2. Self-assessment as a means of enhancing their attitudes towards writing in English
3. Self-assessment as a means of building self-confidence

Self-Assessment as a Tool for Writing Development

The quantitative data from the self-assessment questionnaires were analyzed by using a *t*-test, as shown in Table 1. The results revealed that the students in both groups used self-assessment to revise their writing. The findings showed that their overall writing performance improved significantly at a significance level of 0.05 (t = 2.11 and 2.07).

Table 1

Results of T-Test from Pre- and Post self-Assessment Questionnaires for U1 and U2

Group	Pre-SA		Post-SA		*t*-test	*p*-value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
U1	55.11	5.09	67.89	8.84	2.11	0.00*
U2	59.67	7.35	71.83	7.25	2.07	0.00*

Looking at the statement categories from the questionnaires, as shown in Table 2, the U1 students' perceptions of the use of self-assessment showed that their writing performance improved significantly for most of the categories, except for language use at a significance level of 0.05. Likewise, Table 3 reveals that the U2 students found their writing

performance improved significantly in every aspect at a significance level of 0.05.

Table 2

Results of T-Test from Pre- and Post-Self-Assessment Questionnaires for U1

Categories	Pre-SA		Post-SA		*t*-test	*p*-value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
1. Content (Items 3, 4, 12, 16, 20)	12.11	1.71	14.22	2.16	3.22	0.003*
2. Organization (Items 5, 6, 7, 8, 13, 14, 15)	16.33	2.81	21.0	3.18	4.61	0.000*
3. Vocabulary (Item 18)	2.22	0.43	2.89	0.58	4.12	0.000*
4. Language use (Item 17)	2.61	0.69	2.94	1.03	1.38	0.094
5. Mechanics (Items 19, 21, 23)	6.83	0.99	8.78	2.07	3.53	0.001*
6. Overall confidence (Items 1, 2)	4.06	1.30	5.56	1.15	3.55	0.001*
7. Attitude toward revising essays (Items 9, 10, 11, 22)	10.94	1.26	12.67	1.37	4.46	0.000*

N = 18, *$p<0.05$

Table 3

Results of T-Test from Pre- and Post-Self-Assessment Questionnaires for U2

Categories	Pre-SA		Post-SA		*t*-test	*p*-value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
1. Content (Items 3, 4, 12, 16, 20)	12.50	1.47	15.13	0.62	7.73	0.000*
2. Organization (Items 5, 6, 7, 8, 13, 14, 15)	16.29	3.36	21.63	0.65	7.44	0.000*
3. Vocabulary (Item 18)	2.63	0.54	3.08	0.58	2.00	0.028*

4. Language use (Item 17)	2.29	0.66	3.13	0.74	3.33	0.000*
5. Mechanics (Items 19, 21, 23)	7.67	1.81	9.33	1.17	4.14	0.000*
6. Overall confidence (Items 1, 2)	5.25	0.59	6.25	0.99	3.89	0.000*
7. Attitude toward revising essays (Items 9, 10, 11, 22)	10.96	0.58	13.29	0.61	6.25	0.000*

N = 23, *$p<0.05$

The results from qualitative data support those of the questionnaires in that the students were aware of and developed their writing ability, to a certain extent, in each category. The results are described next.

The students at U1 reported that self-assessment helped them to improve their writing ability in three areas: ideas and content, organization, and voice. To illustrate, the students in this group ranked ideas and content, and organization as the most improved domains, with voice ranked second, and conventions ranked last. This is congruent with the results from the questionnaires. However, the students showed their awareness of language conventions in their self-assessment reports. The following extracts are from some of the students' reports in their portfolio self-assessments:

> For the compare and contrast essay, I have to differentiate the differences more clearly and give readers more accurate details.
>
> RF-U1.p-S1

> I need to be more open-minded to receive new organization and write better.
>
> RF- U1.p-S2

> I think if I can add tone to my writing, it will make my writing stronger so the audience will believe and understand what I'm trying to say.
>
> RF- U1.p-S4

> I always make many mistakes using grammar in my assignments, especially the basic grammar that I should be careful of.
>
> RF- U1.p-S5

> I need to be more careful of my grammar points. I always [make] mistakes without noticing them. To solve this, I should practice more writing and learn more grammar usage.
>
> RF- U1.p-S6

The results from students at U2 also supported their questionnaire results. They reported their awareness and writing improvement in terms of ideas and content, organization, convention, and voice. The following extracts are from some of the students' reports in their portfolio self-assessments:

> Self-assessment helps me organize my ideas in the essays.
>
> RF-U2.p-S1

> I need to do [a] mind map or first drafting to help me manage the content and protect me from the repetition of point[s].
>
> RF-U2.p-S2

> I have to think more about content. Some parts are not related to the topic.
>
> RF-U2.p-S3

> I have to improve my grammar.
>
> RF-U2.p-S4

> To attract readers' interest/ ... by using attraction words.
>
> RF-U2.p-S5

In accordance with the quantitative data, the qualitative data from the students' written reflections on self-assessment reveal that the use of self-assessment enhances their self-evaluation and writing development. To illustrate this, they learned how to evaluate their writing assignments via the self-assessment forms and improve their writing performance, as described below.

Self-Evaluation

Using the rubric as a benchmark, the students learned how to use the self-assessment forms as a guideline to evaluate their writing assignments. This also helped them to better understand the rubric. They evaluated their writing by using the rubric scores. In this way, they could use the rubric descriptors to monitor and revise their own writing.

> It [SA] helps me to review what I've learned after doing each assignment, which gives me a better understanding of the writing process. When I evaluate the work by myself, I can see my strengths and weaknesses clearly. I will realize which part I have trouble with or what skills I need to improve. Writing it down creates the motivation to practice more and get rid of the weaknesses to improve my writing. For me, self-assessment is a significant tool that reflects my writing skills, and I can improve my ability by knowing the weaknesses in my previous work.
>
> RF-U1.f-S6

> When I fill out my self-assessment form, I feel like I am a judge of myself. It gives me a chance to look back [at] what I've written and I try to figure out what I did [well] or what I need to improve. Another thing I love is the public table [the rubric] because it includes every detail of what good writing should be. This table [rubric] is very useful for me. It always reminds me what I should do and what not [to do]. It is the best writing guide. Self-assessment is very new to me because I'd never scored my own writing after I finished it. In high school or even my freshman year, I'd never assessed my own work thoroughly. I just checked my spelling and my grammar before I turned it in to my teachers, so this self-assessment is a new way to improve my writing ability.
>
> RF-U1.f-S5

> Because of self-assessment, I have to analyze my writing and identify my strengths and weaknesses, which means I have to read my writing again and again. I think it is a great way to find mistakes. Doing self-assessment helps me to know what I should focus on and be more careful about before I start to write the next assignment. In the analysis part, it made me realize what I did and what was wrong with my writing.
>
> RF- U1.f-S3

Reading good examples and scoring rubric makes my writing better.

> RF- U2.f-S1

[Self-assessment] makes me see my weakness. My weakness is grammar, so I want to improve it.

> RF- U2.f-S2

Self-Reflection on How to Improve their Writing

Besides judging their own writing, the students used the self-assessment forms to reflect on their writing feedback and how to change or make their writing better. The qualitative results of this study supported Panadero et al. (2016) in that self-assessment helped the students to reflect on their learning process and product to find ways to make their writing essays better. In the self-assessment forms, they were asked to give their opinions on how to improve their writing. After spotting their strengths and weaknesses, the students were able to see their writing problems. They could then reflect on the best way to correct their weaknesses to write better. Alternatively, they noted how to ensure, in their next writing assignment, that they would not make the same mistakes or they applied the learned strategy to the next assignment. The following extracts are some of the students' reflections.

> When I assessed my writing, I found that my thoughts were not clear at all, so it caused unclear writing. I could not find my strengths in my 1st work … Everything changed when I finished [my] 2nd writing assignment. I think I understand self-assessment better maybe because I wrote clearer and had experience from [my] 1st work. I can evaluate my writing work better than [in my] 1st work. I know my strengths and weaknesses. Self-assessment makes me know my writing skills better by myself, [how] what I did in the past affected my work, and what I should do to improve my writing skills in the future.
>
> RF-U1.b-S7

> When I did the self-assessment, it was a time [when] I could think by myself about what I got from this writing and what I should improve. Consequently, I would know the mistakes in my writing and could find a way to improve them. This self-assessment could be a method to make me a better writer in the future.

RF-U1.b-S8

I think good writing comes from knowing the skills that we have and realizing the weakness in our writing. Self-assessment allows me to do that because I can evaluate each work by myself. So, I can see my strengths and weaknesses clearly. For example, I learned that my strength in my writing is organization. It is what I should maintain in future works. However, after doing a self-assessment twice, I see that a weakness in my writing is always lacking a voice. This is a problem that I have to fix if I want to improve my writing. I can understand my skill and my development through the process of self-assessment. It is very useful since no one can actually know my strengths and weaknesses better than I can. Doing self-assessment enables me to be sincere with myself and accept my weaknesses to make my writing better.

RF-U1.b-S6

I could say that self-assessment helps me improve my writing ability. It makes me reflect on myself from the 1st draft to the final draft. It makes me revise what I wrote myself in terms of what I did well, what I should improve, and how I [can] improve it. I feel it is critical thinking that I never learned before in my life.

RF-U1.f-S7

Self-Assessment as a Means of Attitude Enhancement

In the beginning, the students had no experience with self-assessment, especially in writing. This caused them some doubts and uneasiness. Some students expressed their doubts about self-assessment in terms of being able to improve their writing ability. However, the students started to feel more relaxed with the activity after using the self-assessment forms to evaluate their first writing assignment, along with the teachers' clear explanation of the rubric used for self-assessment. Later, their attitudes towards self-assessment changed positively as they became familiar with the format and rubric, and learned its value, so they could effectively use it to evaluate their writing in terms of weaknesses and strengths in each of the aforementioned domains. Below are extracts from the students' reflections.

On the first day of writing class, my teacher gave me some papers, one of which was a self-assessment. In the first place, I thought "I don't want to fill out any forms." It's kind of [a] boring task, but my teacher said that the students from a previous year did self-assessment and it helped them improve their writing skills, so I told myself "hope it can help." By now, I've already finished two writing assignments and realized that self-assessment is very useful. It made me see my weak and strong points from each work, and it's even more useful when I do self-assessment along with [the] 5-Point Scoring Rubric because they show the weak and strong points clearly. The questions on self-assessment also help me assess my writing skill, what I should improve, and what I did well. Now, I think that filling out forms is not boring, especially ones that help you improve yourself.

RF-U1.b-S5

After I finish my final draft of the writing, I have to write the self-assessment, which is [the] estimation that I give to my writing. The first time I heard about this, I suddenly wondered why we had to do it. After I listened to the explanation from Ajarn [teacher] … and did the self-assessment for my writing, however, I understood it more. When I wrote the self-assessment, it was time that I could use to think about what I got from this writing as well as what I should improve. So, I will know the mistakes in my writing and can find a way to improve them. This self-assessment could be one method to make me [do] good writing in the future.

RF-U1.b-S8

I can understand my skills and development through the process of self-assessment. It [SA] is very useful. Doing self-assessment enables me to be sincere with myself and accept my weaknesses to make my writing better.

RF-U2.b-S5

I enjoy doing self-assessments after my writing assignment so I do better in my next assignment and examination.

RF-U1.f-S4

Self-Assessment as a Means of Building Self-Confidence

Through self-assessment, the students learned how to sincerely evaluate their work and how to use it to improve subsequent writing

assignments. After improving their writing performance and receiving positive feedback from the teachers in later writing assignments, the students felt more confident about their writing. The students expressed their confidence in the use of self-assessment to help improve their writing skills in their reflections:

> The self-assessment makes me see my writing skills better by myself, what I did in the past that affected my work, and what I should do to improve my writing skills in the future.
>
> RF-U1.b-S7

> This self-assessment could be one method to make me [produce] good writing in the future.
>
> RF-U2.f-S6

> For me, self-assessment helps me to analyze my writing skills. Even though it is the last process of my writing, I think it helps me to look at my work more and think more about what I have written. I think self-assessment is also one of the tools that help students to improve their writing skills. It also helps students to do better in their next assessments because the students will know their strengths and weaknesses, so they can use their strengths in writing and fix their weaknesses to do better writing.
>
> RF-U1.b-S4

> Thanks to these assignments [SA], I can improve my skills step by step.
>
> RF-U1.b-S9

> My improvement might not be that great, but I can feel it changing me into a better writer. I'm sure that after this course, I will continue to assess myself to try to be a better writer.
>
> RF-U1.f-S2

> I think self-assessment can help my writing so I can become a better writer in the future.
>
> RF-U1.f-S8

The quantitative and qualitative data show that self-assessment is a promising tool to help EFL students learn how to evaluate their writing and, at the same time, it helps them to improve their writing ability. Besides, the students, via the self-assessment process, gained more

confidence in their writing ability and had a better attitude towards the use of self-assessment. This made them willing to judge their future written work constructively.

Discussion

This study aimed to investigate the students' perceptions of the use of self-assessment when writing in English. The results reveal that the students found self-assessment very useful because it helped them improve their writing performance. Besides, self-assessment made the students more confident in their writing, so their attitudes towards self-assessment changed positively. The results of this study can be justified by the previous studies as follows.

Self-Assessment and Students' Writing Improvements

It appears from this study that self-assessment, to a certain level, influences students to change their behavior while writing and revising their essays. The students in both groups monitored themselves and tried the new strategies learned in their writing class to revise their essays. The results of this study are comparable to those of previous studies (Bing, 2016; Elgadal, 2017; Herayati, 2020; Panadero et al., 2016; Wong & Mak, 2018). Based on the quantitative analysis of self-assessment in Tables 2 and 3 as well as the students' reflections, the students in both groups reported progress in their writing performance in terms of content, organization, vocabulary, mechanics, overall confidence, and attitude towards revising their essays. However, students at U1 in this study did not find that self-assessment helped to improve their language use, whereas students at U2 found that their language use also improved through using self-assessment. This can be explained in terms of the students' language experiences. The students at U1 were sophomores who were English majors, while the students at U2 were seniors in an English language teaching program. Thus, the students at U1 had studied their curriculum for a shorter time, thus explaining why they had less knowledge and experience in English grammar, language use, and English writing practice. This is corroborated by Bing's (2016) statement:

> Since linguistic proficiency is linked to the implementation of self-assessment, one of the focuses in language instruction

should be on the improvement of students' linguistic proficiency. Students may not make a significant improvement in vocabulary and language use within a short period of time. (p. 97)

The students' progress in content, organization, vocabulary, and mechanics is the result of using a clear and comprehensible rubric along with the teachers' explicit explanations about the rubric and its descriptors. As the self-assessment process involves self-monitoring and self-correction, the students need to learn how to revise their work. Using the rubric with concrete descriptors enables them to learn how to improve their standard of writing. In other words, using the rubric as a guideline for revising their essays encourages the students to identify their strengths and weaknesses. Using the precise keywords in the descriptors that describe and differentiate each band, the students were able to assess the quality of their first draft and improve it to reach the next level. Therefore, using a clear rubric to carry out self-assessment, along with the guideline questions on the self-assessment form, enhanced the ability of the students in this study to effectively evaluate their writing, which led to improvements in their writing, as corroborated by previous studies (e.g. Belachew et al., 2015; Bing, 2016; Herayati, 2020; Sapsirin, 2014; Suwanarak, 2018; Thongpai & Deerajviset, 2017).

Self-Assessment and Students' Attitudes and Self-Confidence

The students in this study became more confident and developed a more positive attitude towards the use of self-assessment to improve their writing during the revision process. These results are in line with those of Belachew et al. (2015), Bowman (2017), and Elgadal (2017) in that self-assessment seems to promote students' self-confidence in writing. To further illustrate this point, many students tended to receive more positive feedback from the teachers as well as better scores for their final drafts after using the rubric to revise them. This boosted their confidence in the use of self-assessment to improve their writing performance. In turn, greater confidence led to a more positive attitude towards revising their essays.

Conclusion

To conclude, the results from this study suggest that self-assessment can be a useful tool for EFL students, particularly, as in this case, Thai university students, to evaluate their writing in English and help them improve their writing ability. Therefore, these results confirm that self-assessment can be applied to the teaching and learning of English writing in an EFL context. To implement self-assessment in writing classes, teachers should provide students with 1) clear and explicit explanations of self-assessment, its importance, and how to use it, 2) a clear and comprehensible writing rubric, 3) a user-friendly form for self-assessment as a guideline, and 4) a teacher's support throughout the process. Further study should include an analysis of students' essays to identify how their writing improved.

For further studies, the results from this study suggest the following:

1) Further studies should include an analysis of students' written work to have concrete evidence of writing development to support the students' perceptions.

2) To gain insights, interviews of focal group students should be conducted for in-depth information on how students used self-assessment to help improve their writing performance.

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Appendix A

Assignment Self-Reflection Form 2018

Name _____ Assignment Title _____

Course _____ Section _____ Date _____

Short Description of Work:
What have I learned from this work?

What does this assignment show the writing skills I have learned? What are my strengths and weaknesses?

What is/are the domain(s) that you did very well in this piece of writing?
Rank 1 – 4 (1 = the most; 4 = the least)

_____   Ideas and content   _____   Organization
_____   Voice   _____   Convention

What does this assignment show I need to improve? You can choose more than on

☐   Ideas and content: Explain
_____
_____

☐   Organization: Explain
_____
_____

☐   Voice: Explain
_____
_____

☐   Convention: Explain
_____
_____

What am I going to do to improve my writing?
_____
_____

Appendix B
Portfolio Assignment Form 2018

Name _____ Assignment Title _____
Course _____ Section _____ Date _____

Short Description of Work Samples:

Why have I chosen this work sample for my portfolio? How do these works   sho
my writing development?

What does this assignment show the writing skills I have learned? What are my strengths?

What is/are the domain(s) that you did very well in this piece of writing?
Rank 1 – 4 (1 = the most; 4 = the least)

_____ Ideas and content	_____ Organization
_____ Voice	_____ Convention

What activities help you improve your writing skills? You can choose more than o[n]

☐ First drafting   ☐ Journal writing   ☐ Portfolio Assessment
☐ Peer response   ☐ Teacher-student conference
☐ Pre-writing modeling

What does this assignment show I need to improve? You can choose more than one.

☐ Ideas and content: Explain
_____
_____

☐ Organization: Explain
_____
_____

☐ Voice: Explain
_____
_____

☐ Convention: Explain
_____
_____

To what extend does self-assessment help me improve my writing ability?
Circle the number on the scale below.

Least   1   2   3   4   Most

Other comments, plan for improving your writing, or suggestions (You can write more on the other site)

_____
_____
_____