Designing curriculum for student feedback literacy: Student appreciation for and engagement with teacher feedback

Abstract

Recent research has argued for curriculum design that promotes student feedback literacy (SFL), taking focus away from the quality and timeliness of teacher comments and toward student engagement with feedback. There is little empirical research, however, on how specific curriculum designs impact SFL. Our study found that a curriculum that allowed students to receive feedback from teacher comments and a consultation during the drafting process in an assignment sequence helped students to appreciate and engage with feedback, cultivating a primary trait of feedback literacy. Focus group discussions with students revealed that feedback was appreciated when it was personalized and strategically timed. We also found that feedback during the drafting process fostered an understanding of writing as a process. As students grappled with how to evaluate and utilize teacher feedback, they practiced self-regulation and took ownership of their writing, a trait that we add to the current model of SFL. Moreover, our findings indicate that teacher feedback literacy is of equal importance to SFL, as student appreciation for feedback declined when comments focused only on lower order issues. As this study took place in a first-year academic writing course, we conclude that such courses have the potential to offer students a foundation in SFL that they can carry with them into their academic careers.

Keywords: feedback; student feedback literacy; teacher feedback literacy; academic writing

Introduction

The vital role feedback plays in improving student learning is well known (Hattie and Timperley, 2007; Wang and Zhang, 2020). Yet, surveys in the UK and Australia (Higher Education Funding Council for England, 2011; Krause et al., 2005) have indicated dissatisfaction among students in the quality of feedback received. These surveys have sparked research in feedback practices, highlighting challenges such as student difficulties in understanding and utilizing feedback (Carless et al., 2011; Dawson et al., 2019), the timeliness and quality of teacher feedback (Court, 2014; Henderson et al., 2019), and the strain of work it puts on teachers (Bailey and Garner, 2010).

Focusing on the difficulties students have utilizing feedback, recent research has called for the cultivation of student feedback literacy (SFL). Building on Sutton's (2012) research, Carless and Boud (2018) argued that SFL entails students learning to appreciate teacher feedback, assess their own work, manage their emotional responses to feedback, and act on feedback. Moreover, SFL requires a curriculum that fosters self-assessment through activities such as reflective writing, peer review, and the analysis of exemplars, as well as assignment sequencing, which gives students opportunities to process and act on teacher feedback. There has been little research, however, that examines if such curriculum design actually results in students valuing feedback.

Our project addresses this gap by assessing if SFL could be developed through a curriculum with sequenced assignments that allow for teacher written and oral feedback

throughout the writing process. To gauge SFL, we focus on the first main feature of SFL listed by Carless and Boud (2018), student appreciation of feedback, as well as student engagement with feedback more generally. This study thus questions if assignment sequencing that gives students the opportunity to receive frequent instructor feedback on their drafts, discuss the feedback in a face-to-face consultation, and revise before the written assignment is marked, could foster SFL.

Student feedback literacy (SFL)

Research on feedback has shifted from a focus on the genre of the teacher comment (Smith, 1997; Straub and Lunsford, 1995) to considering student responses to feedback (Carless and Boud, 2018). Sutton (2012) established a foundation for SFL by arguing that students should: understand what can be learned by engaging with feedback; regulate their emotions and improve self-confidence as learners; and act on feedback. Self-regulation, an essential aspect of SFL, is learned through various channels such as: peer review (Man et al., 2022), analysis of exemplars (Carless and Boud, 2018), cover sheets that allow students to ask specific questions of teachers (Malecka et al., 2022), reflective writing (Yu and Liu, 2021), and giving students the opportunity to revise and resubmit work after receiving feedback (Sutton, 2012; Malecka et al., 2022).

Overall, studies on SFL demonstrate that curriculum design that encourages active learner responses to feedback cultivates feedback literacy. For this to take place, students first need a deeper appreciation for and engagement with feedback processes. Appreciation of feedback requires that students not see themselves as consumers waiting to be told what they need to do to achieve a higher grade. Instead, students must "understand and appreciate the role of feedback in improving work and the active learner role in these processes" (Carless and Boud, 2018:1319). Appreciation of feedback encourages engagement with feedback, which is seen in how students understand, judge, respond, and act on the feedback received (Carles and Boud, 2018). Thus, a curriculum that gives students opportunities to regulate their own learning by appreciating and meaningfully engaging with feedback is an essential step toward SFL (Chong, 2021).

As studies moved to a student-centered approach to feedback, they explored the variables that impact how students perceive and apply feedback. For instance, Molloy et al. (2020) surveyed student perceptions of feedback across the university and specified seven general categories of SFL traits: students understanding feedback as a means to improvement; students actively engaging with feedback; students seeking information to improve their learning; students processing feedback; students recognizing and managing their emotions; students understanding the dialogic nature of feedback; and students taking action based on feedback (Molly et al., 2020). Building on an ecological model, Chong (2021) added to the dimension of student engagement by considering contextual and individual factors such as feedback delivery, teacher-student relations, and a student's beliefs, abilities, and goals. While Molly et al. (2020) examined student traits for SFL across subjects and Chong's (2021) research was conceptual, our study narrows their research by focusing specifically on student appreciation of and engagement with formative teacher feedback within the context of an academic writing course.

SFL in academic writing

While feedback practices have been thoroughly researched in the context of academic writing courses (Hattie and Timperley, 2007; Sommers, 2006), such research has rarely been related to SFL within an L1 academic writing context. In their longitudinal study of 3 EFL students in an online academic writing course, Zhang et al. (2023) found that peer feedback and student reflections over a 16-week semester had a positive impact on SFL. Particularly, student agency was found to be an essential factor affecting the development of SFL. Examining teacher feedback on peer feedback within an L2 academic writing course, Han and Xu (2020) found that while this practice could enhance SFL, developing SFL must be a sustained effort approached through various pedagogical practices. Yu and Liu (2021) reinforce this claim, as they argued that SFL can be cultivated through multiple channels such as educational technology, student knowledge of assessment rubrics, teacher-student dialogue, and respect for learner autonomy. Our study adds to the above research by focusing specifically on one of these pedagogical practices: written and oral teacher feedback given during the drafting process in an L1 academic writing course. Because SFL is impacted by a student's familiarity with the language used within the academic writing course (Li & Han, 2022), studies on English in an L2 context may not be directly relevant to the L1 context. This study differs from the above in that its participants are in an English L1 context, where "pragmatic competence of English" (p.11) may not play a major role in impacting SFL.

Research on feedback given to written assignments has shown that if feedback is given during (rather than after) the writing process, students are more motivated to engage with a teacher's comments (Carless et al., 2011; Court, 2014; Wingate, 2010). In a study of 12 L2 learners in an academic writing class, Ma (2021) found that learning-oriented assessment, which entailed peer and teacher feedback throughout the drafting process, increased student appreciation for feedback. While Ma (2021) examined the impact of multiple learning assessment activities (e.g. exemplar analysis, peer and teacher feedback, teacher consultations) to gauge a more extensive framework of SFL (appreciating feedback, developing judgements, managing affect, and taking actions), our study targets just the first step of SFL, student appreciation for teacher oral and written feedback. By coaching students on how to revise through feedback given during the drafting process, teachers give students the opportunity to learn self-regulating skills, as students must engage with feedback and decide how to implement it. The evaluative and self-directed aspect of revision based on teacher comments during the drafting process guides students to become active learners, as they make decisions about which comments to focus on and how much effort to put into revision.

Much of the current research on SFL offers frameworks for student and teacher feedback literacy but do not draw specifically on data from students (Carless and Boud, 2018; Carless and Winstone, 2023; Malecka, 2022; Yu and Liu, 2021; Chong, 2021; de Kleijn, 2021). Some SFL studies have surveyed or interviewed teachers for their perspectives on feedback (Carless et al., 2011; Chan and Luo, 2022), and a few have surveyed or interviewed students to begin to understand their perceptions of feedback across the university more generally (Ma, 2021; Molloy et al., 2020; Winstone and Carless, 2019). Our study contributes to the above by presenting data

from students of an L1 academic writing course that reveals their perceptions of teacher written and oral feedback.

SFL research often aims to reduce the central role of teacher feedback to foster self-regulation in students, a necessary goal for large classes and to push experienced students to adopt an active role in their learning. Yet, academic writing classes tend to be within the first year of a student's academic journey and tend to be small classes. Therefore, we suggest that they present an opportunity for students to develop the first step of SFL, an appreciation for feedback that shows them that writing is not solely about the end product but about the process of drafting and revising. We thus propose that SFL frameworks that emphasize a lessened teacher role may not always fit academic writing courses, where teacher feedback plays a pivotal role in the revision process. This is specifically relevant for L1 academic writing courses, where quality teacher feedback tends not to be corrective of language and conventional competence but geared toward developing student critical thinking and argumentation. As our findings will show, such feedback can be given without compromising student agency.

For the purposes of our study, we looked for appreciation and engagement in student perceptions of teacher feedback by examining closely how students characterized feedback that they felt was helpful and how such feedback made them think about the writing process. We aimed to understand:

> How might sequenced assignments, with formative teacher feedback throughout the writing process and a face-to-face consultation, impact student appreciation for and engagement with feedback?

Methodology

Study design and context

The study was approved by the Institutional Review Board of the authors' university. Data were collected from focus-group discussions (FGDs). This qualitative approach was chosen as student responses from such discussions offer a rich source of information, bringing out not merely a variety of perspectives but "rationalizations, explicit reasoning, and focused examples" (Hennink, 2014: 3). Importantly, unlike one-to-one interviews, where the researcher controls the direction of the discussion and the exchange is restricted to only the interviewee and researcher, FGDs permit participants to interact with each other, thus allowing the discussion to be less constrained and more participant-centered (Nyumba et al., 2018).

Written consent was obtained from all participants prior to the FGDs; the participants were assured that their responses would be anonymized. Each focus group, conducted via Zoom and recorded with the respondents' permission, comprised three to five respondents and lasted 60 to 75 minutes. Each discussion session was moderated by a member of the core research team and a research assistant and were completed within two months.

The study involved a first-level academic writing course offered to freshmen majoring in the humanities at a Singaporean university. This course was designed to equip students with the skills to analyze texts, develop compelling research questions, and do research to create their

own arguments. The 12-week course included two graded written assignments, which ranged from 1,200 to 2,300 words. For each assignment, students submitted two scaffolded writing exercises, ranging from 400 to 1,000 words, each of which was given feedback by the teacher. These writing exercises were then compiled into a draft, and revised after an analysis of exemplars and peer review. Afterwards, the teacher provided written feedback on the revised draft and conducted a half-hour consultation with each student to discuss their writing. The purpose of the sequenced assignment design is for the teacher to monitor the progress of the writing, and more crucially, for students to actively seek and engage in feedback at different stages of the writing process.

Participants

An email invitation to participate in the FGDs was sent to students who had completed the writing course a semester ago. Thirty students, aged 18 to 22 years, responded to our invitation and received gift vouchers as a token of appreciation. All the students were Singaporeans and had received at least 12 years of schooling with English as the medium of instruction (L1 learners). As English is used as the working language in the country, proficiency in the language among Singaporeans is high. The country was ranked second out of 113 countries in the English Proficiency Index compiled by Education First (2023).

Basic details regarding the majors and gender of the participants are provided in Table 1.

Table 1. Participants by gender and discipline.

	History	**Literature**	**Philosophy**	**Total**
Male	4	2	4	10
Female	3	9	8	20
Total	7	11	12	30

Data collection and analysis

The in-depth FGDs followed a semi-structured format. Students were asked about their experiences attending the course, including aspects that they liked or disliked. Particular attention was paid to their feedback experience and the perceived effects of the feedback they received, whether it helped them to think critically and form arguments. The broad interview questions are listed in Appendix A.

Content analysis was performed using a ‘discovery’ approach (Author X, 2013), where recurring themes in the transcripts were inductively coded. The codes and coding process were checked and reviewed by each member of the research team independently. The codes included “personalized feedback,” “feedback effect,” “grammar,” among others. This coding scheme is provided in Appendix B.

Results

Overall, positive experiences were reported by the participants. Four salient themes were identified and are presented with relevant quotations. All student respondents cited in this paper are coded, with the prefix "M" for male respondents and "F" for female respondents.

Impact of formative feedback given on sequenced assignments on SFL

(A) Positive impact through personal feedback and dialogue

24 of the 30 FGD participants mentioned that the formative feedback given throughout the writing process, along with the face-to-face consultation, made them feel that the feedback they received was "personal," "specific," and "detailed." Most of these students explained that this personal feedback motivated them to improve their style, argumentation, source usage, and structure. As one student sums up: "I wanted to improve my essay" (F4). This consequently caused students to appreciate and engage with the feedback, as the student below clarifies.

> I think that she [the teacher] did me a real help by telling me how to improve the essay because I remember for my essay […], I think I spoke too long on a secondary source, and she was like oh actually you don't need to speak so long about it […] Then she told me about the function of a secondary source and stuff like that […]. So I thought that was a really, really good point on her part for my consultation. That's why I preferred the personal feedback […] (M4)

In M4's comment, the teacher shifted from showing the student how a source summary was longer than needed, to explaining a general principle in writing ("the function of a secondary source"). This explanation allowed the student to understand a principle and apply it to his writing. Thus, personal feedback does not have to be limited to just helping a student improve a particular course assignment but can lead to a deeper understanding that transfers to future assignments.

Students' positivity toward "personal" feedback often referred not just to the written draft feedback but also to the half-hour consultation that accompanied the written comments. 6 of the 24 students specifically remarked that they appreciated how they could ask questions and negotiate meanings in their face-to-face consultation, revealing a deeper sense of agency. As one student explained: the consultation was "an open-minded conversation about your essay," where she learned the importance of "receiving and giving constructive criticism," which can "challenge your beliefs" (F10).

(B) Writing as a process

Through interacting with feedback at different stages of completing the assignments, students came to realize that writing is by no means a one-time achievement. It is a reiterative process, which requires students' constant interactions with and evaluation of feedback at different writing stages, in order to improve the quality of their writing. 11 of the 30 FGD participants mentioned that they found the drafting and revision to be a "process" where they could "build" their arguments and learn from their mistakes. M5 noted:

> […] the first half of the course especially was this whole process of revision, your edits and all that, and I think it's good that it teaches people that essays and your papers are meant to be a process that you go through, hopefully within a few weeks rather than rushing it 2 days before the deadline (M5)

Students reflected that the tendency to complete a writing task immediately before the deadline was a common habit. The sequenced assignment design encouraged students to take ownership of their writing by actively planning their ideas, rather than hastily drafting their essays shortly before the deadline. Student F7 pointed out the 'takeaway' from such a revision process:

> I feel that for me, it's actually a process, like what is it, like a journey to actually finish that final essay instead of, […] just finish it in 3 days, so it kind of ... prepped me in a sense, like, I should actually […] try and... consult my tutor about it […] And I think that's one of the biggest takeaways I took from that module, because most of the time I'll just write my essay in just, 2 days, 3 days (F7)

As remarked, the abundant opportunities to seek feedback prompts students to think about what questions to ask to improve their writing, and the concept of writing as a process creates space for them to clarify doubts along the way.

(C) Negative impact with over-emphasis on grammar

3 student participants explained that the teacher feedback they received focused excessively on grammatical issues and neglected to address macro concerns regarding idea development. As one student noted, this made the writing course feel like "it was just another English lesson" (M6). Another student explained:

> [The teacher] didn't actually ... focus much, content-wise. […] I actually needed more comments on how I articulate my ideas, and the content that I'm actually putting into my essay. Because I feel like grammar is really important, yes, but it's not the only focus in a complete essay. (F7)

Teachers are tempted to focus on grammatical issues because they are easy to spot and correct (Lee, 2009; Stern and Solomon, 2006). Problems with argumentation and idea development, by contrast, are less easy to pick out since they require the teacher to read drafts carefully, which may not be easy to do with a full class and multiple drafts from each student.

(D) Negative impact of feedback fatigue

As outlined in the methodology section, the writing course required teachers to provide feedback on two short writing exercises and one draft leading to the final version of the assignment. This sequence was followed for two written assignments. As the course ran for 12 weeks, this required students to produce a piece of writing once every fortnight, and teachers were likewise required to provide feedback accordingly.

While this constant writing might appear beneficial to students, improvements are possible only when there is time for students to engage with feedback. As one student remarked, "It's not like you can improve your writing instantly when you do those exercises, you need time to improve writing" (F11).

6 participants found this scaffolded writing to be "draggy" or "repetitive." F6, for instance, noticed a dip in the quality of the feedback received toward the end of the course:

> I guess towards the end some of the feedback that my prof gave was like … it started to be more general, like not as constructive as before. (F6)

This problem of feedback fatigue, where the teacher finds it increasingly difficult to provide constructive feedback, is attributed directly to the number of students and the writing pieces that need to be read. The consensus among the students was that the writing exercises in the course should be reduced:

> […] if we had fewer drafts, then her feedback could be more focused and actually be more comprehensive instead of being just a touch and go kind of feedback. (M6)

These comments underlie the need for curriculum developers to consider a balance between the amount of writing to be done and the feedback to be provided. While the design of sequenced assignments allowed students to approach writing as a process and to seek personal feedback, a hidden cost was the instructor's investment of time and energy, which may lead to a compromise in the quality of teacher feedback, especially in large classes.

Discussion

Our study examines how the design of sequenced assignments impacts SFL, focusing on student appreciation and engagement with feedback. We found that student appreciation and engagement with feedback improved most often when students noted that the teacher was giving *personalized* feedback. This finding coheres with much research in the field, in which students state that they prefer feedback that specifically addresses the content of their writing, thus making it personal (Dawson et al., 2019; Henderson et al., 2019; Sommers, 2006; Stern and Solomon, 2006). Although time-consuming, personalized feedback signals to students that their teacher is engaging with their ideas, caring about the quality of their work, initiating students into academia, and encouraging them to contribute to scholarly conversations. When teacher comments address the content of a written assignment, students are more likely to identify as "apprentice scholars" (Sommers, 2006) and take up the challenge of revision.

Students perceived feedback not just as "input" but as a form of dialogue that could improve their writing (Molloy et al., 2020: 534). Consultations ensured that a student was not being "a passive receiver of feedback" (Winstone et al. 2017: 2039), as dialogue allowed the reflective process to happen for students. Such dialogue gave students a chance to "talk out" their ideas, clarify their thinking, and, crucially, to actively ask "good" questions to improve their writing (e.g., questions on clarity and argumentation, rather than general questions like "how do

you think my work is?"). SFL was thus nurtured as students appreciated the feedback and perceived the importance of taking the initiative to revise.

Yet, personalized feedback also comes with challenges. First, teachers must be trained to give effective feedback. If they only comment on grammar or superficial changes, students will not feel as if the personal interaction and uptake of feedback is worth their time. Second, teachers must give personal suggestions for revision, without appeasing a student's desire to be told how to "fix" an essay. Educators are understandably concerned that giving students feedback that is too specific during the writing process may be "spoon-feeding" students rather than giving them the tools to revise their writing on their own (Boud and Molloy, 2013; Carless, 2019). Yet our data suggests that if the feedback addresses higher-order issues such as argument, logic, and source usage, students will appreciate and engage with the feedback, taking up the role of an active learner as they make decisions about how to revise. Third, giving consultations and written feedback is labor-intensive. Such work can only be accomplished when tertiary institutions allow for smaller class sizes and teaching loads.

Such engagement with feedback and the development of students' ownership of their writing prompted students to see writing as a *process* rather than merely a product. This is a transformative change of mindset, as students realize that the quality of writing is largely determined by the *process* of interpreting and interacting with feedback throughout the writing process. Writing primarily comprises three recursive stages: planning (formulation and organization of ideas), drafting, and revising. At each stage, learners set specific goals to achieve to proceed to the next stage (Flower and Hayes, 1981; Krashen, 2014). Our curriculum design required students to (re-)draft, and the ongoing assessment of their work allowed students to generate "internal feedback" (the evaluation of their work) (Carless and Boud, 2018: 1317). Consequently, external feedback from instructors in the consultation helped to refine a student's internal feedback at the revising stage, engendering informed judgements to achieve the evolving goals during revisions (Author Y, 2022). When a teacher "challenges [student] beliefs" (F10) and negotiates meanings through dialogue, students re-evaluate their perspectives and revise to address specific goals. This process, termed "evaluative thinking" (Author Y, 2022: 1052), could be repeated multiple times before students submit their final drafts. Thus, we argue that understanding the nature of writing as a *process* is essential in developing students' SFL.

Thus, formative feedback from a teacher promotes evaluative thinking that is essential to 'flip' students' mindset that their teacher is the 'authority,' and that the teacher's feedback should be adopted unconditionally. With an assignment sequence that provides feedback and encourages students to voice, elaborate, and evaluate their thoughts ("an open-minded conversation about your essay"), students could build stronger ownership of their writing, knowing that they are allowed the important space for negotiation. This, we argue, sustains student engagement in the course of writing. With this, we propose to add an important element to the development of SFL, which is the cultivation of students' ownership of their work. Considering the number of students who reported that feedback prompted them to "improve [their] argument" (F12), we conclude that if feedback is given during the drafting process and addresses higher order issues, it can potentially encourage students to return to their writing with a renewed attention and sense of ownership.

Aspects that compromise feedback appreciation—over-emphasis on grammar and feedback fatigue—also need to be carefully considered. As remarked, grammatical issues are easy to spot and correct, but the overall quality of the writing involves more than mere grammatical correctness. This is not to say that grammar, spelling, and punctuation are unimportant in the writing process. As Graham et al. (2016) note, however, they form just one part of a larger group of features that characterize effective essays; crucially, students need to pay attention to a range of other aspects, including organization, content development, and authorial voice. Indeed, in a recent study involving high-school students who drafted essays and received feedback on an automated writing evaluation and tutoring system, McCarthy et al. (2022) found only "modest or minimal benefits of spelling and grammar feedback" (p. 12).

The concern raised by students regarding grammar also highlights the importance of teacher feedback literacy. In their framework for teacher feedback literacy, Carless and Winstone (2023) proposed that a teacher must understand best feedback practices, draw on current research to design curricula that enable feedback literacy, and maintain a willingness to develop feedback processes that work for students and teachers alike. De Kleijn (2021) likewise focused on the interplay of student and teacher feedback literacy by providing prompts and questions that direct students on how to seek, make sense of, use, and respond to feedback. Just as de Kleijn (2021) emphasized the importance of, for example, cover letters that allow students to respond to teacher feedback, we see, in the context of our study, the importance of consultations, which allow students to ask teachers questions about feedback and foster dialogue so that students can clarify their ideas and make choices about what revisions are meaningful to them. This helps instructors to avoid relying on preconceived ideas about what is important—e.g., grammatical correctness—and missing out on what students really need.

Even if teachers take active steps to avoid focusing on technical issues, workload may still compromise the value of the feedback. The students' concern about 'feedback fatigue' requires attention, particularly in terms of curriculum design. An obvious solution to this issue is the reduction of class sizes and the number of writing pieces that need to be produced. The latter, in particular, underscores the need to consider when feedback should be provided. The students in this present study have shown that feedback should be provided at *strategic* points in the drafting; providing feedback too frequently need not be beneficial.

This issue of feedback fatigue, unfortunately, is not often discussed in the literature. While there have been some recent proposals on minimizing instructor fatigue by using artificial intelligence to reduce marking workload (Wang et al., 2021; Weegar and Idestam-Almquist, 2023), we should bear in mind that technology has limitations. Mizumoto and Eguchi (2023) cautioned that automated essay score system (AES) such as GPT should only be utilized as a supplementary tool rather than a substitute for instructors in marking essays, as they have limitations in capturing nuanced aspects such as overall structure, content, and writing strategies. Students still rely on instructor's personalized and targeted feedback to enhance the quality of their essay. This issue deserves fuller attention, particularly the strategic points at which feedback should be provided for it to be useful to the student writer. We leave this concern as an area for further investigation.

Limitations

While this study has provided valuable insights into how a sequenced assignment curriculum can enhance SFL, we are mindful of its limitations. The greatest limitation is that the study involved only first-year humanities students. The views of students from other disciplines and years of study could be different, highlighting the need for curriculum designers to take into account the feedback needs of different students.

The data here also relied on self-reporting by the students. This naturally raises questions about whether their observations and reactions translated into actual improvement in their writing. We did not examine revisions made by the students in response to the feedback they received on their drafts, as this lay outside the scope of this study. A future study resembling the work of Song et al. (2017), which investigated the extent to which the students made revisions based on the feedback they received on their drafts, is therefore needed. While we may not be able to generalize the findings from the small group of respondents to other contexts, the study results still provide insights into developing a process-based writing curriculum that possibly fosters SFL.

Conclusion

Our study revealed that students tend to appreciate and engage with feedback more if it personally addresses the content of their writing. This finding highlights the importance of teacher training that emphasizes the benefits of focusing on higher-order problems related to argumentation, ideation, and organization, before turning to lower-order problems of grammar and mechanics. In addition to prioritizing such teacher feedback literacy, teachers in academic writing programs need to be supported with reduced class sizes and teaching loads, which can empower teachers to feel more confident in their ability to engage with student ideas and help students improve their writing.

Although SFL encourages students to actively ask questions and self-direct their revision process, our study found that receiving feedback while drafting engendered an appreciation of writing as a process in students. This consistent attention to revision, which required that students dialogue with teachers and make decisions about their writing, cultivated a sense of ownership of their work, a trait that we add to the profile for SFL. Such insights suggest that academic writing programs play an essential role in developing a foundation for SFL. While larger classes in the university may not be able to offer sequenced assignments with formative feedback throughout the writing process, first-year academic writing courses can foster an appreciation of and engagement with feedback in students that can then carry into their later academic careers.

Disclosure statement

The authors declared no conflicts of interest with respect to this research.

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Appendix A

FGD Questions

1. Describe your experiences with the course.
    - What went well in the module? Can you give an example?
    - What did not go so well? Can you give an example?

2. Describe your writing process for this course

3. What was the process you engaged in to formulate ideas and arguments to complete your assignments?

4. Did the structure allow you to gain an insight with regard to your work?

5. Do you remember when you received feedback for your writing in this course?

6. How do you feel about this? Was it adequate?

7. What skills did this course teach you?

8. Are there any skills you feel you should have been taught but were not covered?

Appendix B

Coding scheme

Code	
Course design	The course curriculum, including assignment requirements.
Feedback effect	Skills learned and changes made to the writing based on the feedback received.
Feedback fatigue	The difficulty in providing constructive feedback arising from the teacher having to read multiple versions of a student's draft.
Feedback quality	Student’s evaluation of the overall usefulness of the feedback on her/his writing.
Grammar	Accuracy in the use of language.
Personalized feedback	Feedback that is tailored to the individual needs of the student.
Writing as a process	Writing seen not as a linear production of text, but a juggling of various constraints and re-writing.