

Student perceptions of the effectiveness of self-editing on their writing: towards a self-regulated approach

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Abstract

A number of studies have highlighted the importance of teaching students to self-edit their work. Self-editing within higher education has been demonstrated to support students' academic writing skills. It also capitalises on lecturers' written corrective feedback on students' essay-based assignments making it more effective and meaningful. Utilising a collaborative approach between the Study Support and the School of Health Sciences at a UK-based university, this research evaluated the usefulness of a self-editing worksheet based on the perspectives of students, writing tutors, and the subject lecturer (staff) feedback. Students' perspectives were investigated by content analysing their responses provided in the reflection section of the self-editing worksheet. Qualitative analysis of staff feedback on pre- and post-edit writing was also evaluated. The results show that 65% of students' found the worksheet useful and the worksheet helped them make some positive changes to their essays. Evidence would suggest that this pedagogical model is effective in improving levels of academic writing. Implications and suggestions for effective teaching practice and future research are provided in this paper.

Keywords: self-editing; independent learning; self-regulated approach; academic writing.

Introduction

Academic writing is one of the cornerstones of university study as it is a crucial means of assessment with students being expected to write analytically and critically across all

disciplines (QAA, 2016). Students' success is therefore partially dependent on their competence in writing (Borg and Deane, 2009; Gopee and Deane, 2013). Various types of written assessments, such as reports, reflective essays, and dissertations, are often assigned at universities in the UK, and students' performance is assessed based on criteria such as the format, language use, organisation of ideas, critical analysis, and incorporation of other sources (Gopee and Deane, 2013). A number of students, however, from undergraduate to postgraduate level, are reported to find conventions of academic writing challenging to understand or implement (Gopee and Deane, 2013; Rickard et al., 2009; Jackson, 2009; Borg and Deane, 2011). Several authors report the quality of students' writing in higher education is one of academics' major concerns (Borg and Dean, 2009; Dann, 2009; Lamb, 2009). This could be due to a number of reasons, namely, students' limited academic background; cultural differences (for non-native speakers, specifically); and generally limited writing experience.

Enhancing students' learning experiences is one of the UK universities' key strategic aims (QAA, 2016) highlighting the importance of providing support for students to overcome the barriers to their academic success. Gopee and Deane (2013) suggest that it is inadequate to expect students to pick up writing skills by trial and error. Consequently, a number of UK-based universities provide support for students' writing (Wingate, 2006) with support varying from one-to-one tuition, group sessions, short courses, or online self-study resources.

A number of studies have highlighted the importance of teaching students to self-edit, so that lecturers' corrective feedback on students' assignments become more effective and meaningful (Truscott, 1999, 2007; Ferris, 2004; Bruton, 2009). Self-editing has also been recognised as a self-regulated learning strategy. Through self-editing, students navigate their learning experience independently by learning to self-evaluate their writing through a systematic identification of their strengths and weaknesses (Gopee and Deane, 2013; Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick, 2006). However, these studies have only been undertaken with students for whom English is a second language (Khaki and Biria, 2016; Oshima and Hogue, 2006; Tsai and Lin, 2012; Diab, 2010).

In their recent study, Khaki and Biria (2016) investigated the effectiveness of self and peer-editing on 100 Iranian students undertaking a Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) programme. The category of errors in the self-editing exercise included

punctuation, coherence and cohesion, as well as grammar and vocabulary. In this study, self-editing instructions resulted in significant improvements in postgraduate TEFL students' writing. The authors claimed that self-evaluation help students develop explicit awareness of their writing quality by looking at their work from the reader's perspective (Cho et al., 2010; Li and Hegelheimer, 2013).

Ferris (1995) also assessed the effectiveness of self-editing on non-native speakers' essays at university. Their self-editing worksheet was based on five categories of grammatical errors often notified in students' writing: noun errors; verb errors; punctuation and sentence errors; word form errors; and preposition errors. Ferris (1995) introduced patterns of frequent and stigmatising errors to students and provided a checklist to help them identify these errors in sample essays. This approach resulted in significant progress in students' quality of work, with fewer errors in each category over the course of a semester. These findings are supported by others (Truscott 1999, 2007; Ferris, 2004; and Li and Hegelheimer, 2013).

There is, however, limited research that evaluates the effectiveness of self-editing worksheets on the writing of English-speaking students studying in UK-based universities. In addition, previous research has rarely focused on student perspectives of the effectiveness of self-editing which would provide an in-sight into the appropriateness of such a worksheet. Consequently, this project set out to examine the following questions with a group of English speaking students:

1. Did the students believe that the worksheet supported them in evaluating and editing their work?
2. What were the students' perceived areas of improvement after using the self-editing worksheet?
3. How useful did the students find the worksheet?

Methods

The self-editing worksheet was being introduced with the aim of enhancing the students' academic writing skills. As with any enhancement, it is essential to evaluate the impact to establish if benefit is gained (QAA, 2016). Consequently, an action research approach was

undertaken (Mitchell et al., 2009). As this was an enhancement activity, no ethical approval was required. The study protocol was, however, peer reviewed for error, bias and ethical issues prior to commencement.

This enhancement was piloted on a convenience sample of MSc Physiotherapy (pre-registration) students. It was important to establish if students perceived the self-editing worksheet as beneficial as if they did not value the worksheet they are unlikely to use it. The self-editing worksheet required students to reflect on areas they needed to develop after using the prompts included in the worksheet (Appendix 2). Qualitative data from these reflections was gathered and analysed along with quantitative data from one Likert Scale question.

Sample

A convenience sample of 29 postgraduate MSc Physiotherapy (pre-registration) were invited to participate. Students were native English speakers from Ireland, North America, and Great Britain. They were in their first semester of study and preparing to submit their first summative assessment requiring academic writing at Master's level. From experience, these students frequently require feedback on their writing style and guidance to ensure that appropriate levels of grammar and critical discussion are utilised. Working at Master's level requires a significant level of autonomy and self-regulation in learning, which is why this group were selected as the pilot for the worksheet. Consent forms were signed by the participants prior to the research.

Procedure

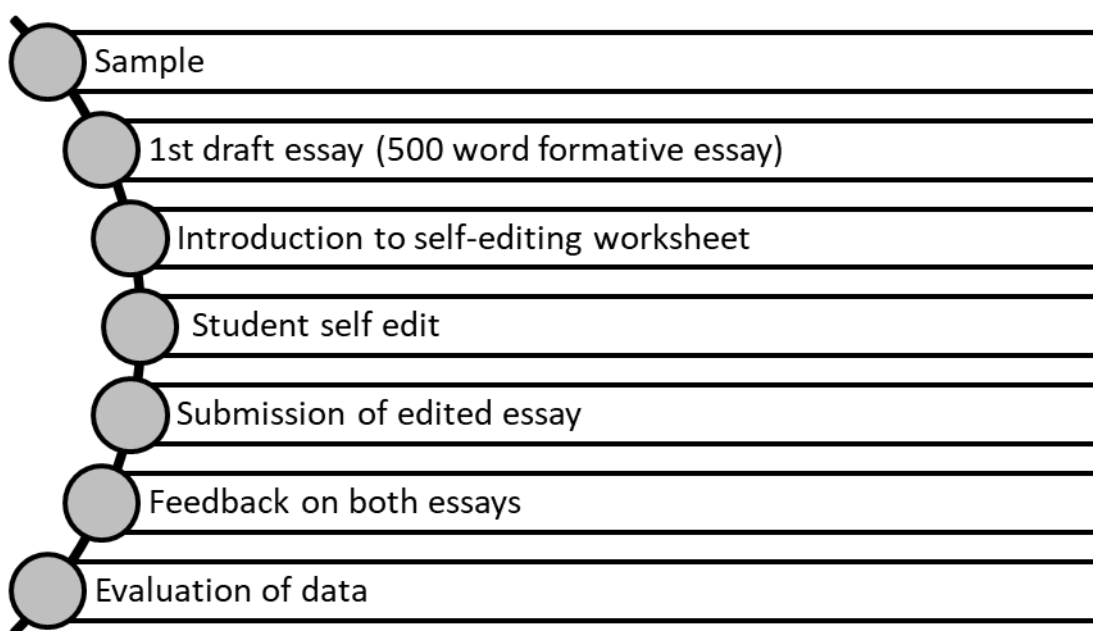
All students were given the opportunity to undertake a formative piece of work to help them develop their writing skills to the required level. The task required students to write a 500-word essay. Once the essay was completed and submitted, the students were offered a workshop that introduced them to the self-editing worksheet. This workshop aimed to support students in the completion of their academic writing exercise, by helping them understand the conventions of academic writing, and the use of the self-editing worksheet. After this workshop, students were given 10 days to revise their essays using the self-editing worksheet and resubmit their work. Figure 1 gives an overview of the order of events.

Students' essays were independently reviewed before and after using the self-editing worksheet by two writing tutors and their subject lecturer (henceforth staff) using a marking grid and a bank of comments that focused on the following criteria:

- Content and organisation
- Language use
- Punctuation
- Using other sources;
- Format (presentation, i.e. font, spacing, referencing style).

The second workshop was delivered after the data collection time period and aimed to provide students with some feedback on their results and further advice on areas to improve.

Figure 1. Overview of study.



Self-editing worksheet

The self-editing worksheet (Appendix 1) consists of six sections: content and organisation; language use; punctuation; using other sources; format; and reflections. Each section contains a checklist, which aims to help students ensure that they have incorporated all the required components for each part of their essays, and they have adhered to the conventions of academic writing. The items in each checklist are followed by an example or instructions aiming to help students' self-study and develop their understanding of

different writing skills independently (Appendix 2). The final section of the worksheet includes a reflection form.

Data collection

Data was collected from the reflective section of the self-editing worksheet that students completed. Students' comments were collated and categorised in a database, and the responses to the final Likert scale question were collected. For anonymity and ease of reference, each student was given a code: S1, S2, etc. (See Table 1).

Copies of the feedback provided by different staff was retained, consolidated and related to the student's reflections.

Data analysis

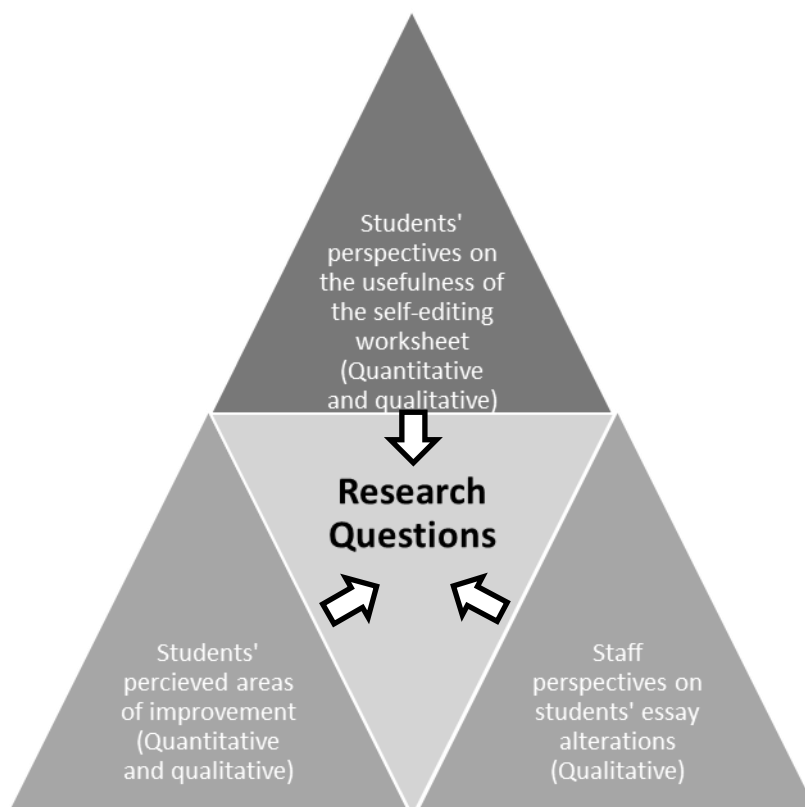
Students' responses to the questions were organised into common themes. Where appropriate, data was triangulated by cross checking the students' comments with that of the staff feedback. To do so, key words were identified in both the student and staff responses, resulting in the emergence of common themes (Table 1).

Quantitatively, the number of times students had mentioned changes in the areas of referencing, paragraphing, organisation, introduction, conclusion and grammar was identified and counted. This along with the results of the Likert scale question is reported in descriptive format.

Results

All 29 students submitted the first and second version of the formative essay. One student did not make changes to their second submission. Five students did not submit the self-editing worksheet. Consequently, full data was available for 23 students.

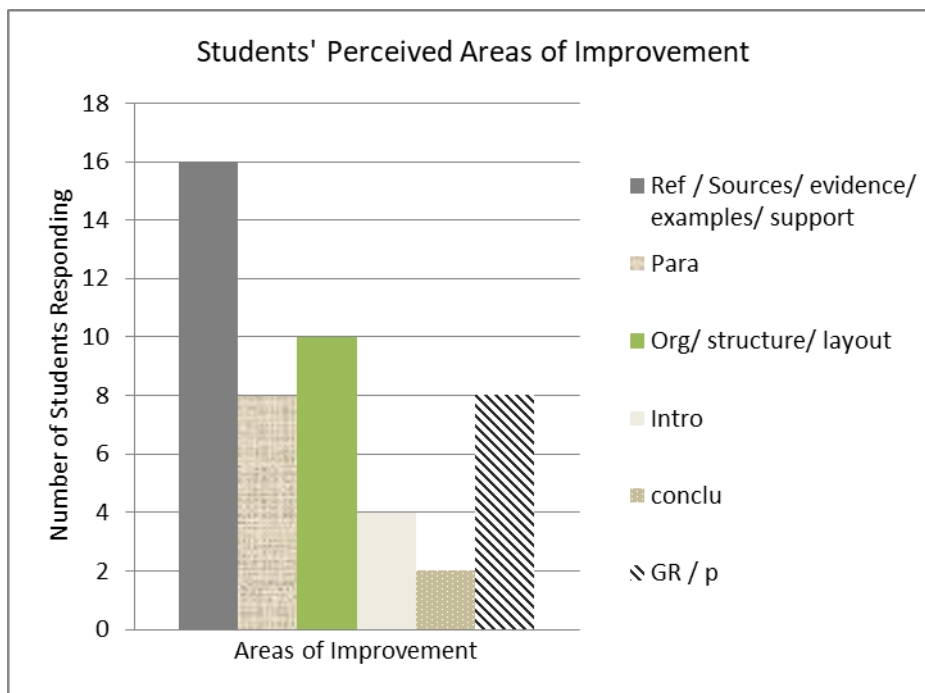
Data provided information about the student's perspectives of the usefulness of the self-editing worksheet, in addition to their perceived areas of improvement based on the weaknesses identified, improvements made, and strengths; this was triangulated with the staff feedback (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Triangulation of data.

Students' perceived areas of improvement

In response to the question, 'what part(s) of your paper are you most proud of and why?', students used words and phrases including 'proud of', 'better', 'after using this worksheet I was able to', 'improve', 'improvement', and 'I was able to competently integrate the recommended guidelines for'. These words and phrases appeared with terms such as referencing (or sources, evidence, examples, support); paragraphing; organisation (or structure, layout, construct); introduction; conclusion; grammar; and punctuation, which frequently appeared in students' responses. These words were highlighted and the number of occurrences in all the responses is reported in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Students’ Perceived Areas of Improvement.



Abbreviations: Ref- Referencing, Para – Paragraphing, Org – Organisation, Intro – Introduction, Conclu – Conclusion, GR/p – Grammar and punctuation.

Data in Table 1 suggests what amendments students believed they made to their essays as a consequence of using the self-editing worksheet. All 23 students who submitted their self-editing worksheet reported perceived benefit from it (this is shown in Table 1).

Perceived areas for development

Students’ perceptions of their weaknesses in essay writing and their responses to ‘What errors or weaknesses did the worksheet help you to identify?’ are shown in Table 1.

Phrases such as, ‘needed to work further on’..., ‘weakness’, ‘needed to focus’..., ‘major concerns’..., ‘error’, and ‘revision’ directed the researchers to the students’ perceived areas of weakness.

Staff feedback on the revised essays are also presented in Table 1. Adjectives, such as good, much better, improved, well, and clear, which signposted particular strengths in the student’s work were used. These are underlined and illustrated in Table 1. Phrases in **bold**, **well-structured**, **paragraphing**, or **references**, followed or preceded by the positive adjectives, highlight the positive changes the staff agree that the students made in

the revised version of their paper. The second column summarises the staff's suggestions for further improvement.

Apart from student 2, who did not make any amendments to her/ his essay, all other students believed they made positive changes to their work. This is verified by the staff's comments.

Table 1. Student perception and staff feedback.

Key

S= Student

Underlined comments = perceived weaknesses

Bold comments = strengths/improvements

| | Perceived weaknesses Student view | Areas to develop from staff | Perceived strengths after editing Student view | Positive changes from staff |
|-----------|---|---|--|--|
| S1 | Finding <u>evidence</u> to support/referencing correctly. Avoiding combining too many ideas and making sure the reader is able to identify each idea | Need to develop your critical writing further; limited support for your discussion | [I am <u>proud of</u>] organisation and transition between paragraphs | shows the beginning of critical thinking |
| S2 | Grammar skill; Formatting and referencing. | Sources not used well to support/refute your discussion. Mainly descriptive; include additional sources to support the points | my content, valid points about the health promotion role a physiotherapist plays. | Nothing additional [] on second submission |
| S3 | My thesis statement [] <u>needed work</u> . [] One of my body paragraphs didn't really back up my thesis points ; needed to back up and use examples for my topic sentences ; <u>Needed</u> a concluding remarks | Needs to aim for more balanced critique ; needs a few more sources to support your discussion | After editing, I think my introduction flows better []. My body paragraphs support my points/topic sentence better . Reworked conclusion. | Intro looks <u>much better</u> ; <u>good coherence</u> and organisation ; some sources [] used <u>appropriately</u> to support [] discussion |
| S4 | Proper referencing and punctuation | Need more development from a critical perspective . need to question evidence and weigh arguments more | Construct | The organisation and structure <u>has improved</u> . |
| S5 | In my <u>revisions</u> , I <u>focused</u> on the organization of my introduction, main points and conclusion , the flow of my sentences, and the tenses used throughout the paper. My <u>major concern</u> was the formatting/organization of my main points. | occasional sweeping sentences ; Critical thinking and analysis is an area that could be developed further | [This worksheet] helped to identify how my paper should be organized , I am <u>most proud of my introduction, main points, and references used.</u> | Formatting <u>improved</u> from first draft. <u>Improvements</u> in layout and referencing ; a <u>good intro</u> and [] coherence . Irrelevant parts removed . Aims of the paragraphs are <u>clearer</u> . |
| S6 | lack of structure in conclusion , The formatting/ referencing | Critical evaluation is lacking; avoid first person forms | <u>after using this worksheet I was able to organize the paragraphs</u> into topics | <u>has improved</u> from the first attempt with some restricting of paragraphs |

| | | | | |
|-----|--|---|--|--|
| S7 | This worksheet <u>helped</u> me <u>identify my weaknesses</u> with developing concise conclusion sentences for each paragraph . | Beginning to consider some critical evaluation but this needs to be developed. Utilise a wider variety of literature ; avoid sweeping statements , | The opening paragraph and the closing paragraph are <u>really good</u> | A <u>cohesive</u> piece that flows from introduction to conclusion . |
| S8 | It helped <u>identify weaknesses</u> in the organization of my essay, specifically, what is required in the introductory paragraph ; My biggest <u>concern</u> is my grammar , [] and punctuation . <u>My secondary focus will be on</u> using more advanced vocabulary | Some counter argument ; try to develop this further; avoid first person forms . Some changes [] have affected the grammar and flow . | I am most <u>proud of my</u> introduction | These are <u>good</u> points. You <u>begin to offer</u> some counter argument ; a good range of sentence structures |
| S9 | I feel like I <u>need to concentrate</u> most on my comma use, and ensuring I use proper structure . | needs some work to build on effective critical use of the literature | The <u>worksheet helped</u> me to identify my <u>wrongful use</u> of commas , my <u>inadequate structure</u> and many other aspects. I was most <u>proud of</u> construction , as I feel my formatting and structure <u>improved</u> | <u>Refs updated</u> and <u>now correctly formatted</u> . A <u>coherent message</u> ; <u>clear introduction</u> |
| S10 | Some <u>errors with flow</u> and going off topic ; have lots of ideas but <u>struggle</u> to put them down in a coherent manner . my reference was <u>not even close to how it was supposed to be</u> on my first submission . | need to work more effectively to provide a more balanced opinion ; demonstrate some analysis , though this could be further developed; | I am most <u>proud of the</u> changes I made from my first version to my second. | <u>Intro improved</u> . <u>Paragraph structure, body para 2</u> specifically, <u>improved</u> : a <u>better topic sentence</u> and <u>concluding remarks</u> ; <u>focus</u> is <u>clear</u> . Some <u>improvement</u> in sentence structure |
| S11 | Grammar, lay-out, appropriate use of sources and referencing. | No negative comments | [<u>proud of</u>] the structure and organization of the paper. The use of a wide variety of sources and research. | <u>Utilised a wide variety of literature</u> ; <u>well structured</u> . Small <u>changes</u> made have <u>helped</u> with the flow . |
| S12 | my <u>major concern</u> is repeating myself | critical writing style requires some work so that you provided a balanced opinion ; Reporting verbs should be used | [<u>this worksheet</u>] <u>helped</u> create a skeleton to work off when constructing a paragraph . The body as i feel i could get my point across <u>clearly</u> | <u>have used</u> the worksheet well to <u>help you identify long sentences</u> and some grammatical issues . This second version <u>reads better</u> than the first. <u>Clear</u> and <u>well-structured</u> Introduction |
| S13 | <u>Concern</u> : trying to fit more sources into the body of the text to compare against each other; <u>found it difficult</u> to comment and make suggestions at the end of paragraphs | Lacking detail ! Ideas could be more fully developed; make use of more sources , use a wider range of sentence structures and linking words . | I think the introduction was <u>quite strong</u> and the use of the case study was <u>good to</u> back up evidence. | <u>Improve[d]</u> this from original draft; now the introduction gives a <u>clearer outline</u> ; have used the self-editing worksheet well |
| S14 | major <u>concern</u> is that I was unable to stay within the word | need to build on using that literature in a more | thought the 2nd draft was <u>100x better than the 1st</u> | <u>better</u> than the first attempt. <u>Better</u> use of references ; |

| | | | | |
|-----|--|--|---|---|
| | count | critical way; use appropriate reporting verbs ; avoid informal language | | have <u>corrected</u> the formatting issues in the first draft. |
| S15 | <u>worksheet helped</u> to <u>identify</u> places where I was using words that were not supporting the topic of my paper. | Some sections(paragraph 3) are more descriptive and you should work on building a more balanced and critical argument on the whole | The conclusion and the second paragraph of the body | <u>worked</u> on the structure ; <u>improvements</u> in the structure of introduction and sentences ; <u>utilised</u> the <u>self-editing worksheet</u> effectively; |
| S16 | <u>Concern</u> : finding sources and being able to critically think | You do still need to work on a more balanced approach to this that offers different perspectives on the topic; do not overuse quotes; make use of a variety of reporting verbs . | Intro and Conclusion and my 3rd body paragraph | Some <u>improvements</u> made to the first draft. <u>Some additions</u> to sources . |
| S17 | My conclusion was <u>weak</u> . Also, I had a couple of sentences that needed adjustment because they made the flow of my paper choppy and inconsistent I would like to <u>focus</u> on [] using references <u>appropriately</u> and effectively. | doesn't really answer the question appropriately; not really a critical evaluation | I am most proud of the body of my paper. I feel as if I bring my points together , and <u>provide good examples</u> to support my points. | <u>good examples</u> of different exercise interventions. Ideas well supported ; link together your themes quite well from introduction to conclusion ; some <u>positive changes</u> made to the <u>structure</u> following self-editing. |
| S18 | This worksheet <u>helped me</u> <u>identify weaknesses</u> in the structure of my paper as well as choppiness ; I will <u>focus</u> my <u>revision</u> on the cohesion of thought within the paper as well as <u>eliminating</u> any unnecessary or unrelated content | Build on your critical evaluation . | I am most proud of my conclusion | A relatively <u>cohesive</u> piece; the <u>changes</u> made <u>aided</u> in the flow . The introduction and conclusion offer <u>clear indication</u> as to what is covered and evaluated; <u>used the worksheet</u> quite <u>effectively</u> to make positive changes to your work. |
| S19 | <u>Concern</u> : flow and connection between sentences and paragraphs ; Overall structure | just make sure you don't go off track and keep focused; some sections become somewhat descriptive ; Make use of precise reporting verbs | Body paragraphs . I believe that I <u>was able to competently integrate</u> the <u>recommended guidelines</u> for paragraph structure | presentation and cohesion have improved <u>significantly</u> from your first draft; <u>good</u> use of subheadings ; <u>improvements</u> in formatting of refs ; <u>used</u> the self-editing <u>worksheet</u> to make some <u>effective changes</u> . |
| S20 | This worksheet helped me to identify: - <u>Incorrect verb tenses</u> I used - <u>Incorrect formatting</u> -In <u>text citation error</u> <u>need</u> to concentrate the most on the formatting of my paper | there is an over reliance on some sources ; more work is required on using your literature critically | I think the flow of my paper is relatively <u>decent</u> | Sources well presented. <u>Improved formatting</u> from the original draft; added <u>better linking sentences</u> . Well-org ; <u>Clearer thesis</u> |

| | | | | |
|-----|--|---|--|--|
| S21 | Concerns: <u>avoiding run-on sentences</u> . Making sure each paragraph is complete and statements are supported . Making sure I am using the Harvard referencing correctly | Good number of sources are used, but views not compared or evaluated . | [This worksheet helped me] <u>make sure</u> my paragraph structure is complete , and fully supported with two different evidence sources . communication of my point through concise sentences , while providing sufficient evidence | <u>Good</u> number of sources are used, <u>Good Intro</u> . <u>Relevant thesis statement</u> Generally well-structured . Coherent in general |
| S22 | <u>Weakness</u> : content and layout of each section; critical analysis . Comparison of sources not just using one source to back a point | Paragraph 4 offers some critical discussion . The other sections are less well written and somewhat descriptive . | Introduction - <u>most improvement</u> . | You have worked on providing <u>better linking</u> and summarising statements in your introduction and conclusion . A great deal of <u>improvement</u> in organising ideas . |
| S23 | Paragraph structure ; organisation of ideas; and being specific | additional analysis needed; errors in reference format ; informal language and 1st person need to be avoided | No positive comments | Good Intro and Conclusion |

The usefulness of the self-editing worksheet

Twenty of the 23 students completed the Likert question ‘usefulness of the worksheet’. On a scale of 1 to 5, 65% of the participants (13/20) rated the usefulness as 4 or 5. Only one student rated the usefulness as 2.

Students’ reflections contained key phrases, such as ‘this worksheet helped me’, or ‘was helpful for’, indicating that students’ interpreted the Likert scale as 1 not useful and 5 very useful.

The following qualitative data indicate how students benefited from the worksheet:

1. It helped to identify **how my paper should be organized**. (S5)
2. This worksheet helped me to identify **my weaknesses with developing concise conclusion sentences for each paragraph**. (S7)
3. The worksheet helped me to identify my **wrongful use of commas**, my **inadequate structure** and many other issues. (S9)
4. It helped **create a skeleton** to work off when **constructing a paragraph**. (S12)

5. I think the worksheet helped to identify places where I was **using words that were not supporting the topic of my paper**. The check points are helpful for **staying on track** and determining what should be included in each section. (S15)
6. This worksheet helped me to identify, **incorrect verb tenses** I used, **incorrect formatting**, and in **text citation** error. (S20)

Few students' comments suggested some possible shortcomings in the design of the worksheet based on their perspectives:

1. Worksheet could be more effective with **more examples**. (S8)
2. I am **not knowledgeable enough**. [Referring to the checklist for Language use] (S1)
3. This was helpful but can be **overwhelming**. (S15)

Discussion and implications

This data is promising and indicates students found the self-editing worksheet useful, and they perceived that generally they made positive changes to their work as a consequence of using the worksheet. This was corroborated by the staff feedback. These findings are in line with those from previous research with those for whom English is a second language (Truscott, 1999, 2007; Ferris, 2004; Li and Hegelheimer, 2013).

While some students made major amendments to their work, others made only minor changes. Only one student made no changes at all. The subject lecturer indicated the majority of students made positive changes in their second submission. Also, the content analysis (Bryman, 2009) showed how each student identified their own specific weaknesses and used the worksheet to address those weaknesses to make improvements. None of the work evaluated was negatively impacted upon by the use of the worksheet.

Most studies on self-editing exercises in higher education have focused on the effectiveness of the approach for non-native speakers and in terms of grammar and punctuation (Ferris, 2004; Li and Hegelheimer, 2013). In addition to demonstrating these benefits, this study suggests the worksheet also facilitated students to develop the

structure of their academic writing (i.e. overall structure and paragraphing) and the incorporation of literature. A significant number of students referred to the corrections they made in terms of referencing, or use of other sources in their work; also recognised in the staff comments. This suggests that the self-editing worksheet helped students to identify where and how they needed to develop their use of supporting literature.

While enhancing the use of referencing, staff's comments in areas for further improvements involve the word 'criticality' in relation to most students' work (Table 1.) This suggests the self-editing worksheet may require enhancement to help students reach their potential in terms of critical writing. Currently, the prompts in the worksheet refer to structural and grammatical/punctuation issues in relation to writing. They do not encourage students to consider their content and critical writing skills. This is perhaps less important at lower undergraduate level but remains a key issue in terms of honours level and postgraduate work (SQA, 2015). In this study, staff feedback encouraged students to consider the criticality of their writing but the impact of this was not evaluated. Further investigation would be valuable to determine if this is the most appropriate method for helping students develop these critical writing and thinking skills.

The student comments indicate that the self-editing worksheet was useful at helping them identify where they needed to develop their academic writing skills. Overall, they were positive that the worksheet was beneficial. However, although the negative comments were limited, they could inform the development of the self-editing worksheet. It may be helpful to have direction in the worksheet to more detailed learning resources relating to the aspect of writing the student is finding challenging, thus providing further 'scaffolding' to enable writing development (Vygotsky, 1987). This would enable them to consolidate and develop their understanding of that area before then modifying their work.

Results suggest the number of prompts may be overwhelming for some students. It may be appropriate to break the worksheet into several separate worksheets that could be introduced to students at the start of their undergraduate degrees. Consequently, by the time they reach postgraduate study, these basic structural issues should no longer be problematic, enabling the focus to shift to critical thinking and writing aspects. For other students, it may be that they need a more supportive mechanism of meeting with a tutor to discuss areas requiring development. This may be influenced by how the student has been taught in the past, their level of autonomy or their learning style. However, at

postgraduate level, students should be autonomous and reflection is required as a graduate skill (QAA, 2009). Consequently, the use of a self-editing worksheet encourages the appropriate level of graduate skills.

Limitations and further research

What has not been established is whether students have transferred learning from this piece of work to subsequent written assessments. It would be of benefit to assess the quality of the changes applied from the first to second formative submissions of this work and then to evaluate the quality of the summative assessment that these students would complete.

This study was carried out with a limited number of students from several countries and therefore replication of the study with a wider population is required to enable generalisability of the results. Further investigation into whether the worksheet assists those from the USA/Canada to adapt to British writing conventions would be valuable. This self-regulated approach has potential to be further developed and used by a wider number of students at university, while the theme of independent learning is at the core of all UK-based universities' pedagogical approaches (QAA, 2016). Introducing the worksheet to students in year one of their undergraduate studies may therefore be beneficial and worthy of investigation.

Methods of data collection in this study were limited as they focused on collecting data only from the worksheet and student work. They could not provide the rich data that ethnographic methods such as interviews or focus groups could have provided about student perspectives of the intervention. However, the informal nature of the data collection may have enabled students to be more honest about their actual use of the worksheet.

Future studies should focus on marking students' essays before and after the intervention to assess whether the use of a self-editing worksheet impacts on students' grades due to improvements in their academic writing. It would also be of use to investigate if ongoing use of the worksheet provides additional and sustained benefits. Furthermore, future research could be strengthened by means of language-based methods of analysis, such as discourse analysis or text analysis (Ritchie and Lewis, 2014), to closely assess the

changes made in students' sentence structure, paragraphing, punctuation, etc. before and after self-editing. Effective approaches have been suggested by Borg and Deane (2011) in this regard.

Conclusions

Despite its limitations, this study has shown that the students had positive perceptions of a self-editing approach. It helped them not only to evaluate and address their weaknesses in writing independently, but also to identify their strengths. These preliminary results suggest improvements to the overall student learning experience. Moreover, this study extended the results of previous studies by confirming the usefulness of this self-regulated learning strategy for native English speaking students. However, further research aiming to develop this worksheet to support students' analytical writing skills more effectively is required.

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Appendix 1. Overview of self-editing worksheet.

| | Sections | Subsections | Content |
|------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| Section 1 | Content and organisation | Introduction Body Conclusions | Prompts Examples Self-evaluation of confidence Comments or questions – free text box |
| Section 2 | Language | Verbs Sentence structure | |
| Section 3 | Punctuation | Commas Semi-colons Colons | |
| Section 4 | Using other sources | | |
| Section 5 | Format | | |
| Section 6 | Reflections | | |

Appendix 2. Self-editing worksheet.

SELF EDITING WORK SHEET

Your Name:

Your Student Number:

This self-editing worksheet will enable you to **proofread / evaluate** your work and identify areas you need further help with. As shown, the document includes 6 categories. We recommend that you focus on one of the categories below every time you read your work; however, you do not have to follow the menu in any particular order.

Process:

- Tick the box after checking each item in your work
- Add any comments / questions
- Rate your confidence for each section as shown

Content and Organisation

Language

Punctuation

Using Sources

Format

Reflection

Each paragraph discusses only one main idea, and there are no sentences off the topic

If an idea is developed into two or more paragraphs (e.g. advantages and disadvantages of social networks), the paragraphs are linked with appropriate linking words (e.g. *however*, *on the other hand*)

Each paragraph starts with a topic sentence, which introduces the focus and the aim of the paragraph.

Ideas inside the paragraph expand on the topic sentence and support it with examples or evidence from other sources. View Example

Each paragraph has a concluding remark

The paragraphs do not start with a topic sentence

Cohesion within and between paragraphs

All the key points in the essay are covered

[online guide](#)

Comments or Questions
Type your comments here...

Overall, I feel:

Completely confident...

Partially confident...

Not at all confident...

...about the quality of my assignment's body

View Paragraph Example

What is this?

A concluding remark could be one of the followings:

- summary of the main ideas;
- predicting the future;
- transition to the following paragraph;
- implication (i.e. consequences that may happen in the future; suggestions for what can be done in the future)

This button provides additional explanations for the 5th item in the list

SECTION 4 - USING OTHER SOURCES

| | | |
|----------------------------|--|---|
| USING OTHER SOURCES | <input type="checkbox"/> All quotes are explained, evaluated or commented on (to avoid descriptive writing). | Overall, I feel: <input checked="" type="radio"/> Completely confident... <input type="radio"/> Partially confident... <input type="radio"/> Not at all confident... ...about how I used other sources |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Paraphrases and summaries are not too similar to the original text. | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> The author's voice is distinguished from that of other sources. | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> A clear sequence of the followings is found in most paragraphs (Synthesis, analysis and critique): <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The author's interpretation of what he/she has read• Evidence to support the interpretations• Exemplification to clarify the author's point• Comparison of sources and, where appropriate, discussion of areas of consensus or contradictions• A conclusion drawn from the discussion View Example | |

Comments or Questions

Type your comments here...

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SECTION 2 - LANGUAGE

| | | |
|---------------------------|---|---|
| VERBS | <input type="checkbox"/> Verbs agree with their subjects in number | Overall, I feel: <input checked="" type="radio"/> Completely confident... <input type="radio"/> Partially confident... <input type="radio"/> Not at all confident... ...about the quality of the language I used |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Verb tense (they are used accurately and there are no inconsistencies) | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Verb forms are correct | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Appropriate voice (active or passive) is used | |
| SENTENCE STRUCTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> All items in a list are written in matching forms (Parallelism) | Example of shift in tense: The beginning of the course is designed to ensure a common basis for qualitative research. The main large group sessions (lectures) with compulsory attendance and the more extended required readings *were the methodological basis of this initial part (two weeks). A first assessment based on an initial memo about students' interests aims to consolidate this common knowledge basis. |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> There are no sentence fragments | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> There are no run-on sentences | |

Comments or Questions

Type your comments here...

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Next

As shown, every item is followed by a tap button, where additional explanations or examples are provided

SECTION 6 - REFLECTION

What part(s) of your paper are you most proud of and why?

Type your answer here...

What areas of your writing will you concentrate on the most in your revision to improve? What is your major concern?

Type your answer here...

What errors or weaknesses did the worksheet help to identify?

Type your answer here...

On a scale of 1 to 5, how useful did you find the worksheet?

- 1 2 3 4 5

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