Using Rubrics to Assess Writing: Pros and Cons in Pakistani Teachers' Opinions

Asifa Qasim
PhD Candidate, the University of Memphis, TN, USA

Zareena Qasim
Assistant Professor, Department of English, University of Sargodha, Pakistan

Abstract
Rubrics are commonly used by writing teachers to grade writing. Rubrics consist of a set criteria and guidelines that determine the grade obtained by a student. Rubrics are meant to neutralize the grading of writing and provide effective feedback to the students for improvement. However, some English teachers have diverse opinions about the advantages of using rubrics for writing assessment. For instance, they do not agree that the criteria in the rubrics are really significant. This case study examines the viewpoints of Pakistani university teachers on the effectiveness of rubrics to access their students' writing. Extensive interviews with six respondents featured the perceived advantages and disadvantages of use of rubrics. Findings indicate that the university teachers, who teach literature, give significant importance to detail and elaboration. Four respondents, out of six, agree that rubrics are effective for grading writing and should be used to address mechanical errors in students' work. They perceived rubric as an effective tool to assess students' progress and teachers' practices. The study suggests that the rubrics should embrace authentic criteria for writing assessment so that they leave space for self-reflection and autonomous learning for students. Moreover, there should be open collaboration between language teachers, content teachers, and literature teachers to extend to professionally critical areas of teaching.
Keywords: Rubrics, Writing, Assessment, Perspectives

Introduction

In Pakistan, teachers generally tend to keep assessment criteria to themselves. They do not share with their students what counts when they grade their students' work. As students are, traditionally, expected to know what qualifies as good academic writing (Andrade, 2000). On the other hand, some researchers (Yurekli, Ustunluoglu, 2007) argue that the writing assessment should include students as equally important stakeholders as are the teachers. Stiggins (2001) maintains that "the students are the key assessment users" (p.17) so they should have an access to the assessment criteria. Teachers can make use of rubrics to provide information to students about the expectations for an assignment and the assessment process. Rubrics are an effective tool to provide focused feedback and to assess performance of the students (Andrade, 2000; Goodrich, 1997).

For several years, writing has been the center of concern in English Language Teaching worldwide and attracted a number of researchers, specifically in the area of assessment. Research shows that writing assessment is complex and may be problematic (Yurekli & Ustunluoglu, 2007). Advocates of rubrics contend that assessment rubrics not only enable instructors to make focused and impartial judgments on students' work but also help them effectively track the progress of students over time (Stevens & Levi, 2005; Peat, 2006). However, the critics of rubrics argue that rubrics produce "vacuous writing" (Kohn, 2006). They are concerned that rubrics are standardized assessment tools that conflict with reflective self-expression. Students become dependent on rubrics which deprives writing of its true essence (Mabry, 1999; Kohn, 2006; Wilson, 2007). Rubrics, opponents maintain, are not effective assessment tool as they still possess an element of subjectivity. The research on inter-rater reliability proves that the same essay graded by different people, making use of the same rubric, often times do not agree with the scores.

Although the opposing viewpoints of the debate on rubrics offer compelling arguments, particularly among English instructors in English as the first language context, the opinions and experiences of teachers in EFL context pertaining the use of rubrics as assessment tools still remain under explored. Because of the impact of grader and student on writing assessment and due to the fact that the use of rubrics is tendentious in grading of writing, it is important to explore EFL teachers' points of view on emlploying rubrics to assess writing in EFL classrooms. This study attempts to bring the voices of Pakistani EFL teachers into the canon.

Throughout the exhaustive review of literature, I could hardly find any research study that has examined the use of rubrics for assessment of written assignments in Pakistani classrooms. This study investigates the perspectives of Pakistani instructors in regards to the use of rubrics at university level. The underlying assumption behind investigation of teachers' perspectives is that it is viable to find the source of problem with the writing inadequacies of students and develop a useful tool to maintain students' accountability for mechanics and content of writing.

Rubrics can assist teachers provide the specialized feedback which the students need to improve writing. The feedback enables students in writing meaningfully and effectively. Unarguably, most teachers in Pakistan want to help students in the area of writing. However, they might hold contradictory perceptions on the definition of good writing, ways to teach writing, and how to assess student writing. This study aims to attempt to discover meaningful writing assessment tools in Pakistani context that can result into more autonomous and proficient writers. Moreover, the findings of the study would assist to promote the effective use of rubrics amongst teachers for subjective and reliable writing assessment.

The following research questions were proposed, in order to explore the perspectives of Pakistani teachers on the use of rubrics to assess writing:

1. What are the perspectives of the teachers pertaining good writing?
2. How do the teachers evaluate writing?
3. How do teachers perceive the use of rubrics for the writing assessment?

Literature Review

The first definition of the term rubric had almost no connection to the grading of students' work (Popham, 1997). In any case, about 20 years after the fact, instructors have received new meanings for the word. At first, rubrics were employed to score students' compositions and the expression "rubric" was used to reflect the arrangement of tenets or criteria that guided the scoring (Popham, 1997). Despite the fact that these scales were being utilized to guide assessment, it is very important to recollect that first and foremost, these tools were not intended to enhance writing skills (Turley & Gallagher, 2008). By and by, since instructors instituted the term rubric as an appraisal apparatus, its motivation has tackled numerous parts in the domain of instruction. Application of rubrics for assessment permits learners and educators to concentrate on the imperative components of learning while likewise promising mindfulness and self-evaluation among the learners (Broad, 2000). Brualdi (1998) characterizes rubrics as a scoring framework utilized by instructors to focus the level of capability of the learners.

Purpose of Rubrics

As indicated by Brualdi's (1998) definition, the basic role of rubrics is to gauge how well the learners know the instructional material. Popham (1997) credits a comparable reason to rubrics, showing its motivation is to assess quality. As it were, great rubrics measure how much the learners know, as well as how well they exhibits their insight. At the point when great rubrics are utilized accurately, the learners not only get feedback from the instructor but they also receive training in self-assessment (Broad, 2000).

As indicated by Broad (2000), rubrics should take the speculating out of assessment, giving learners clear and brief logic for their assessments. Subjectivity is a noteworthy concern among teachers, along these lines; rubrics help decrease the partiality of more customary reviewing techniques (Broad, 2000).

A large portion of the research on rubrics concurs that one fundamental reason rubrics serve is to give criticism. Andrade (2007) explains that the motivation behind rubrics is to give learners feedback on their performance as developmental criticism amid the written work process, and to give comprehensive input on completion of the task. As Kist (2001) points out, the learners are frequently left thinking about how their teachers interpret their obscure assessments that neglect to elucidate the contrasts between Excellent, good, and satisfactory. Particular criticism permits not just the instructor to offer recommendations for development, yet urges learners to wind up self-assessors (Kist & Kent State Univ, 2001). Andrade (2007) shows that rubrics can be exceptionally compelling self-evaluation tools when utilized with the right input. She recommends that rubrics can fill another need in controlling students in self-appraisal through on-going assessment and discovering open doors for further development.

Attitudes Regarding Rubrics

The literature affirms that instructors frequently hold contradictory opinions about utilizing rubrics to assess writing. The advocates of rubrics assert that they are less subjective; they adequately characterize the goals and criteria of writing assessment; and they give specialized input to the students. In any case, there is a contradiction as to the quality put upon the adequacy of rubrics. Regardless of the component of obscurity, rubrics appear to be the favored strategy for evaluating written assignments in the most of the previous research studies. Turley and Gallagher (2008) in deliberating over the discussion among users of rubrics, summed up: "As opposed to pronouncing all rubrics "good" or "bad," we have to inspect what is their purpose, why do we use them, and in whose interests"(92).

Positive Attitudes

The positive outlook of the teachers who support that rubrics help focus the nature of rubrics instructors favor, the purpose rubrics serve, and the reasons they utilize them. Spandel (2006), writer of many books on the teaching of writing, justify her support of rubrics. She demonstrates that all instructors evaluate writing in

accordance with particular criteria, regardless of the fact that they are never composed down and the students never see them. As indicated by Spandel, rubrics help ensure that the reviewing procedure is onjective. She clarifies that acquainting the rubric with the students before assigning the task permits the students to self-evaluate and overhaul as per the rubric amid the writing process. Elbow (1997) concurs with this idea of telling the students early:

"When we delineate our criteria in broad daylight we are making our levels convey more data or importance than they normally do, regardless of the possibility that we don't give anything however a negligible level. All too often grading criteria are left tacit and mysterious. Also, when we spell out criteria in public, we usually grade more fairly. That is, when we lay out our criteria, we are not so likely to be unduly swayed if one particular feature of the writing is terribly weak or strong." (p.137)

Kutlu, et all. (2010) analyzed instructor perspectives of rubrics against specific variables. Their reviews of instructors indicates that educators with positive disposition had more noteworthy knowledge of rubrics; they utilized rubrics from a mixture of sources instead of simply the course book; and utilized them to offer criticism to students over time. Additionally, those with positive disposition introduced the rubric to their students before assignments, contrary to the negative disposition who just utilized them for post-task grading (Kutlu, 2010). Another study (Enos, 2010) was done to gauge the level of retention and editing skills of specialized students who depended vigorously on the utilization of rubrics in pre and post evaluation. The outcomes demonstrate that "instructional intervention aimed at particular writing shortcomings can be fruitful particularly when keyed to particular criteria, for example, those found on evaluating rubrics." (p. 278) Fanning and Schmidt (2007) prove that English educators have had positive encounters with rubrics, and that some are rather interested to let their learners in on the development of rubrics.

Negative Attitudes

While there is prevalent positive attitude with respect to utilizing rubrics, there are additionally numerous negative attitudes too. Despite the fact that Andrade (2000) characterizes rubrics as an apparatus that educators utilize to justify their expectations, she brings up in a later study that rubrics are not essentially self-explanatory. All students are not acquainted with rubrics, and as teachers we must be cautious in our assumptions. As indicated by Andrade (2005), even a well-crafted rubric does not represent the way that learners need models, criticism, and chances to be curious. Kist (2001) summed up that rubrics kept us reasonable. In any case, issues of legitimacy, unwavering quality, and reasonableness apply to rubrics also (Andrade, 2005). Dependability and legitimacy compare to the consistency and precision of the assessments we provide for learners and their work. Andrade (2005) alerts that rubrics must pass a test of unwavering quality, demonstrating that if another instructor utilizes the same rubric to review the same paper, their results ought to have negligible difference.

Not just does utilizing rubrics as a writing evaluation tool raise issues of dependability, but also issues with creativity. Kohn (2006) contends that rubrics urge students to think less profoundly, abstain from being imaginative in their writing, and essentially withdraw from learning itself. In a similar contention, Wilson (2007) states that making rubrics to incorporate innovation was almost out of question on the grounds that not every paper involves risk-taking. Alluding back to the motivation behind rubrics, Andrade (2000) states that rubrics should offer an input. Then again, as indicated by Wilson (2007) the input rubrics offered her students had a tendency to be non-specific and had little relevance with what the students needed to say. Wilson (2007) alludes to rubrics as a menu of trite and generic remarks that are practically conveying nothing to the students. While a few opponents recognize rubrics for their assumed end of subjectivity, others, for example, Alfie Kohn (2006) criticize them for their tendency to exclude the subjectivity from claiming human judgment. By denying subjectivity among educators, rubrics institutionalize the way they think when evaluating students' written work (Kohn, 2006). This brings up the issues, "do we need them writing for the rubric, or do we need them writing for themselves, for us, and for a group of people that acknowledges originality?" (Wilson, 2007) An issue that emerges when learners quit writing for a live audience, and begin writing for a rubric, is that the learner resorts to a reliance on the rubric. Studies have demonstrated that an excessive amount of consideration regarding the nature of work causes the students to think externally and lose enthusiasm for whatever he or she is doing (Kohn, 2006). All things considered, the motivation behind writing is to produce a response to words in the reader's mind (Wilson, 2007). Hence, while rubrics may offer a faster, objective, and alternative option for the tedious and outdated evaluation process, we should likewise recollect that alongside the great, comes the terrible and the revolting sides of utilizing rubrics (Andrade, 2005).

Methods

"Writing is vital to students' achievement in school, the working environment, and society at large"(Burke, 2009). Since the voices of all educators and students ought to be valued, particularly in the zone of evaluating students' writing, this study investigates the perspectives of EFL instructors toward rubrics to develop insights into the reasons behind such dispositions. Including the voices of EFL instructors to the rubric debate will help

teachers, educational planners, and policy makers to better understand how to enhance the writing evaluation of students through a more extensive feeling of the diverse needs of diverse societies.

Participants

The research was conducted at a public sector university in Pakistan. To conveniently access the participants, the researchers selected the university where one of the researchers worked. The participants consist of three language teachers and three literature teachers. All the teachers teach English language and literature at both undergraduate and graduate level as a foreign language. Three participant teachers had taught English for 1-10 years while the other three participants had 10-15 years of English teaching experience. The participants had a semester long experience in utilizing rubrics to evaluate the students' writing performance. Use of rubrics was made obligatory after an in-service teacher training workshop by education department of the university in spring 2014 term. The data were collected in Fall 2014 term. The sampling was purposive and convenient (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2010; Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011). Cohen et al. (2011) clarify that a convenient sample may be the desired examining procedure for a case study or a set of case studies. Additionally, the sample is purposive on the grounds that it has been decided for a particular reason which is the past experience in writing instruction as the new and old teachers may have fundamentally distinctive points of view toward writing assessment. Three early career instructors (5-10 years of teaching experience) and three mid-career instructors (10-15) years of teaching experience) consented to take part in the study. The names of the participant teachers and university have not been uncovered at any phase of the study. Chime (2005) expressed that secrecy and confidentiality are a crucial part of ethical considerations in any research study.

Research Design

The study adopted a case study research resign. A case study normally includes the perception of an individual element, for example, an individual, a class, a circumstance, a school or even a group (Burns, 2000; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2010). Cohen et al. (2011) further clarify that a case study focuses on people or groups and intends to comprehend their perceptions of the events. It gives an exhaustive portrayal of respondents' lived encounters, contemplations and emotions around a situation. Along these lines, this study researched instructors' opinions on utilizing rubrics as an assessment tool in writing classroom in a specific department (English) situated in one of the state funded universities in Pakistan.

There are three primary kinds of case studies; intrinsic, instrumental and collective case studies (Cohen et al., 2011; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2010). An intrinsic case study mainly aims at understanding a specific individual or situation (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2010). In terms of outcomes, the case studies can be exploratory, descriptive or explanatory. Descriptive case studies provide narrative account of the respondents' perceptions (Cohen et al., 2011). This intrinsic case study is descriptive in nature as it utilized different methods to portray the particulars of the case and subsequently give itemized story portrayals of what is going on in the area of writing assessment. Data were collected from the university teachers and then analyzed to explore the impacts of utilizing rubrics on teachers' opinions and their effectiveness in the writing classroom.

A case study deals with the examination of a case or situation in real life. The data for a case study should be detailed and descriptive, with a narrowed focus, 'blending subjective and objective data' (Cohen et al., 2011). Thus, a questionnaire was designed and administered that would give considerable insight into the respondents' perspectives and experiences in utilizing rubrics. The survey comprised of five open-ended and five close-ended questions. Close-ended questions are valuable on the grounds that they can yield to frequencies of responses and allow correlations to be made across groups in the data sample. In any case, they do not permit respondents to include any comments and clarifications (Cohen et al., 2011). Consequently, the study incorporated five open-ended inquiries to illuminate the respondents' attitudes towards utilizing rubrics as a part of the writing classroom. Blazes (2000) clarifies that open ended questions permit the respondents to legitimize and elucidate their decisions and reactions. They ensure the restrictions of preset decisions of reaction to a question. Henceforth, the researchers designed appropriate open-ended questions that target the same variables as were the focus of the research. They unveil the reason for utilizing rubrics, the positive effects of utilizing rubrics and the challenges confronted after utilizing rubrics as a part of the writing classroom.

The concepts of the questions were clear and did not require any type of clarification upon administration. They coordinated the goals and the variables allocated for the study, and they didn't require more than ten to fifteen minutes to be finished. Moreover, the survey gave the structure desired to the respondents to answer their own applicable circumstances and arrive at accurate responses.

Data and Results

Even though the data represent only a small group of respondents from only one Pakistani university which may not offer absolutely generalizable answers, it brings out some serious points of considerations for the application of assessment tools in diverse cultural contexts. The data collection instrument, questionnaire, provided

sufficient quantitative and qualitative data to answer the proposed research questions of the study:

1. What are the perspectives of the teachers pertaining good writing?

2. How do the teachers evaluate writing?

3. How do the teachers perceive the use of rubrics for the writing assessment?

The questionnaire was distributed to the six participants of the study to explore their perceptions and experiences in using rubrics for writing assessment. The respondents answered all the questions and returned the questionnaires to the researcher. The data were summarized and categorized into the following three themes:

Teacher Perception of

1) Use of Rubric (Quantitative Data)

2) Writing/Grading of Writing (Qualitative Data)

3) Mechanics (Qualitative Data)

Quantitative Data

Questions	Yes	No
1. Do you use a rubric to assess your students' writing?	100%	
2. Do you agree that rubrics provide the students a clear idea of your assessment criteria?	100%	
3. Do you use one specific rubric to grade every writing assignment?	50%	50%
4. Do you feel that students generally write better, if the teacher provides them a grading rubric ahead of time	66%	33%
5. Does students' performance reflect their understanding of your expectation from their work?	83%	17%

The data displayed in table above shows how the respondents use rubric for writing assessment. All the teachers (100%) reported that they used rubric for assessment. However, half of the respondents (50%) declared that they did not use rubric to grade every writing assignment. This indicates that the results of questions 1 and 3 are inconsistent. It is evident that most of the teachers (83%) agreed that the students' performance reflected their understanding of teachers' expectation from their work. The percentage of teachers that affirmed effectiveness of rubrics in improving student writing amounts to 66%. Still 33 % of the respondents disagreed that students, generally, wrote better if they were informed about the assessment criteria. So they assert that rubrics do not essentially guide students to perform better on their writing assignments.

Discussion

Some results, related to the teachers' use of rubrics, are inconsistent because all the respondents acknowledge that they use rubrics for grading whereas 50% of them concur that they did not use rubrics to grade every writing assignment. Besides, most of the teachers opine that rubrics helped students know how to perform well on the writing task. This shows that rubrics provide the students effective feedback to enable them to recognize their strengths and shortcomings (Saddler & Andrade, 2004; Andrade, 2000; Peat, 2006). The contradiction on the part of rubrics in improving students' writing abilities demonstrates that a rubric can neither clarify the desires and criteria of a teacher to the students by itself nor trigger improvement in the students' performance. These results are concurrent with past studies that emphasize the significance of clarifying the evaluation criteria at the onset of a written assignment (Speck, 2002; Andrade, 2005). Finally, the quantitative data analysis reveals that the use of rubrics helps students perform better on their writing tasks. A plausible justification for this finding is that rubrics convey the assessment criteria to the students. Therefore, the students' knowledge about the teacher's expectations helps them develop self-regulation skills to identify their strengths and weaknesses (Saddler & Andrade, 2004; Andrade, 2000; Peat, 2006).

Qualitative Data and Discussion

This study attempted to open the door for dialogue for teachers to find a common ground concerning the application of rubrics to grade writing in Pakistani context. The six respondents of the study were eager to share their perspectives and experiences regarding the use of rubrics. The respondents had recently started using grading rubrics for writing assessments. According to the results of qualitative data, most of the respondents were unanimous that rubrics gave students a better idea about teachers' expectations and that student writing reflected their understanding of the assessment criteria. The teachers also acknowledged that rubrics made the grading process simple and easy.

Most teachers included mechanics as the most important feature of good writing. When they were asked to identify the most common writing errors, they identified spelling, grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and handwriting as the most prevalent errors. Even though six respondents assert that they would like their students to improve in mechanics of writing such as spelling, verb and pronoun usage, and punctuation, two of the

language teachers emphasized on process writing and writing fluency with a comparatively flexible stance on mechanics being a critical part of the rubric grade. Whereas, one of the senior literature teachers summed up his sentiment in this way, "I instantly notice misspelt words and incorrect verb tense, but I don't feel it's my job to teach them mechanics of writing. Someone must have taught them before they came to college." A language teacher made a generic comment, to emphasize the need to use rubrics for writing assessment, "I know teachers, including myself, find it easy to point out spelling and grammar errors simply because such errors can be recognized easily, but for elements like coherence and organization, we definitely need grading rubrics."

The most agreed upon positive aspect of rubrics was that rubrics act as a guideline for students to know what is grading criteria in order to get a good grade. Most teachers also agreed that they were more consistent in grading ever since they started using rubrics. On the other hand, a senior literature teacher disclosed that even with a rubric "I judge all of the following paragraphs by that first one," thus setting aside the purpose of using a rubric to ensure consistency in grading. The teacher did not consider rubrics significant to grading process, rather he thought of them as "a set of instructions, to help students write accordingly." A comparatively junior teacher, however, counts heavily on the rubric as "rubrics make my grading transparent instead of the old, unsteady grading system. The well-defined grading criteria make things clear and understandable for my students." Another early-career literature teacher feels positive about rubrics as they "provide the students an opportunity to write by following clear guidelines and also expect them to have to creatively present information instead of repeating the memorized information. The students can be held accountable for their performance as they already knew what was expected from them."

The teachers mostly agreed on the purpose and usage of rubrics, but two literature teachers showed disagreement in their disposition towards the elements of the rubric and of good writing. One of the literature teachers reflected that, "It's difficult for students to follow a standard guide to write their assignments, we should give them freedom to express themselves. I am sure, you will be surprised by the quality of work, they produce." She also asserted that students are not always able to understand terminology used in rubrics. It makes them perform even worse than if they were allowed to write following their instincts."

In general, the literature teachers feel that it was not feasible to negotiate too many variables to effectively implement rubrics for writing assessment. The opinions of language and literature teachers narrowed down the rubric to just mechanics. While the literature teachers felt that rubrics usually do not provide room for flexibility and creativity, the language teacher felt that rubrics did not impede creativity rather they assisted students to get things done in an organized and relevant manner. One of the literature teachers suggested that creativity should be included as one of the assessment criteria in the rubrics, thus necessitating the need for creative thinking. Overall, the few disadvantages of rubrics are not serious enough to stop teachers from using rubrics in the future. Instead, all the respondents acknowledge that the rubrics, they use, should undergo more flexibility and adjustment to address the weaknesses.

The responses from teachers revealed that they did not find the same rubric suitable for all assignments. They felt a need for a different; some said a new rubric, for a specific assignment. One of the literature teachers said that "rubric are advantageous for new faculty members who grade written work under immense pressure, but rubrics can save their time while providing meaningful feedback." A language teacher suggested that "department rubrics for different subject areas would work probably better since right answer matters more than mechanical errors in certain subjects."

Conclusion

The application of rubrics for writing assessment, sometime, frustrates the teachers. This study reveals that most of the teachers have common concerns and working together could enable them to work through the problems rather than just complaining about the rubrics. The teachers were eager to share their perceptions and offered some sound suggestions to improve and embrace the change in assessment practices.

This study gives a voice to teachers in the rubric debate. The literature and language teachers have some of the same positive feelings about rubrics. They acknowledge that rubrics inform students about teachers' expectations from writing assignments. Rubrics comprehend and justify the grade to their students. Some teachers feel that rubrics simplify the grading process, while others acknowledge that rigidity of the rubrics may limit the creativity.

Some of the literature teachers, in this study, feel that the grading rubrics do not suit the way they teach and what they want to assess. The language teachers, however, make adjustments to fit the assessment criteria closely. While most teachers value mechanics as the main criteria for good writing and do want their students to improve their writing, they also value process writing, fluency, and elaboration. Some university teachers feel it is not their place to fix mechanical errors, but expect school teachers to teach grammar and prepare students for advance writing.

Even though the responses of language and literature teachers reveal some of the disadvantages of rubrics for writing assessment, they acknowledge that use of rubrics for grading is a valuable practice. Rubrics

not only help teachers improve their grading practices but they also assist students to in overcoming their shortcoming through meaningful feedback. So teaching writing is no more the sole responsibility of teachers. Students are also being pushed and held responsible for improving different aspects of writing.

While this study consists of a very small sample of teachers in one university, it was obvious that teachers wanted to be asked about their opinions about topics that matter to them and to their students. Writing assessment is a challenging job and the teachers invest a lot of time and effort to help their students improve their writing. They might not value the same aspects of writing as the other teachers do but they are determined to work collaboratively to discover the most effective method of writing assessment.

Limitations

The study was limited to a small group of respondents, as only six faculty members agreed to take part in the study. The teachers, in general, had a heavy work load with very little time to spare for the study. Detailed interviews with the respondents would have shed more light on the rubric debate but they could not be arranged due to shortage of time.

Even though the findings of this study cannot be generalized, it brings out some serious considerations concerning the application of rubrics as writing assessment tools in an EFL context. This study necessitates the need for a longitudinal study to tract progress in student writing through different stages of learning, across subjects, and different grade levels. The scope of study could be enhanced through output from students.

Implications for Further Research

We need to focus on the opinions of students about the pros and cons of rubrics as writing assessment tools. What do the students view as good writing and what do they expect from their teachers? Further longitudinal study needs to be done to track student performance over time, especially in the area of writing to measure the efficacy of rubrics. In addition, the data shows that language teachers were willing to work on a collaborative project to develop and implement an improved rubric, whereas the literature teachers did not take any such project into consideration. Is it because literature teachers have been focused only on their subject and language teachers are trained to teach across subject fields like ESP? Are literature teachers too specialized to work with other teachers? Do literature teachers value the subject matte over the learning process?

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Appendix
Using Rubrics for Writing Assessment

1. Do you use a rubric to assess your students' writing?

2. Do you think that rubrics give your students a better idea of your assessment criteria?

3. Do you use one specific rubric to grade every writing assignment?

4. Do you feel that students generally write better, if the teacher provides them a grading rubric ahead of time?

5. Does students' performance reflect their understanding of your expectation from their work?

6. What particular types of assignments do you grade using a rubric?

7. What are the most common errors in your students' writing?

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8. What are the advantages of using a rubric?

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9. What are some of the disadvantages of using rubrics for writing assessment?

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10. What would be your suggestions for improvement of rubrics for writing assessment?