Faculty Instructors' Perceptions of and Support for International Students' Academic Writing

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Abstract

With the increasing enrollment of international students in Canadian higher education, international students' life and academic experience has become an important consideration. Most studies attempt to determine the discrepancy between the requirements of English-speaking institutions and international students' perspectives or behaviors (Hughes, 2013; Rienties et al., 2012; Singh, 2017). Especially in academic writing, previous research (Newton & McCunn, 2015; Neumann, Padden & McDonough, 2019) emphasized the importance of modifying students' writing performances in order to better adapt to the new academic environment. However, what writing support that international students can receive also plays an important role to help improve their writing abilities (Sharma, 2018). Even though specific writing courses or service offered by English-speaking institutions can address students' writing techniques, they cannot help students acquire disciplinary conventions and employ those conventions effectively in academic discourse (Leki & Carson,1997; Wingate, 2018). Therefore, the support from faculty instructors who teach students' academic courses is crucial for international students' success. However, there has been little research investigating the writing support instructors provide for their international students. Thus, this study which deploys focus groups and a survey, is a mixed methods approach to investigate, firstly, the faculty instructors' ($N = 67$) perceptions of international students' writing performance in Canadian universities and, secondly, what they do to support these students' writing. This study identifies the challenges that instructors face, such as a heavy workload and a lack of sufficient time, when providing academic writing support, and thus suggests that institutions should offer appropriate and sufficient support for their instructors.

Key words: Faculty Instructors, Academic Writing Support, International Students

Résumé

Avec l'augmentation des inscriptions d'étudiants internationaux dans l'enseignement supérieur

canadien, la vie et l'expérience universitaire des étudiants internationaux sont devenues des

aspects importants à considérer. La plupart des études portant sur ce sujet tentent de déterminer

l'écart entre les exigences des établissements anglophones et les perspectives ou les

comportements des étudiants internationaux (Hughes, 2013 ; Rienties et al., 2012 ; Singh, 2017).

Particulièrement dans le domaine de la rédaction académique, les recherches antérieures

(Newton & McCunn, 2015 ; Neumann, Padden & McDonough, 2019) ont souligné l'importance

de modifier la rédaction des étudiants internationaux afin de mieux s'adapter à l'environnement

académique. Cependant, le soutien à la rédaction académique que les étudiants internationaux

peuvent recevoir joue un rôle important pour les aider à améliorer leurs capacités de rédaction

(Sharma, 2018). Même si les cours ou les services de rédaction spécifiques offerts par des

établissements anglophones peuvent aborder les techniques de rédaction des étudiants, ils ne

peuvent pas les aider à acquérir des conventions disciplinaires et à employer efficacement ces

conventions dans le discours académique (Leki & Carson,1997 ; Wingate, 2018). Par

conséquent, le soutien des instructeurs du corps professoral qui enseignent les cours

universitaires est crucial pour la réussite des étudiants internationaux. Cependant, peu de

recherches ont été menées sur le soutien à la rédaction académique que les instructeurs

fournissent à leurs étudiants internationaux. Ainsi, cette étude, qui déploie des groupes de

discussion et un sondage, est une approche à méthodes mixtes pour enquêter, premièrement, sur

les perspectives des enseignants (N = 67) concernant la performance en rédaction des étudiants

internationaux dans les universités canadiennes et, deuxièmement, sur ce qu'ils font pour soutenir

la rédaction de ces étudiants. Cette étude identifie les défis auxquels les enseignants sont

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confrontés, tels qu'une charge de travail considérable et un manque de temps, lorsqu'ils

fournissent du soutien à la rédaction académique, suggérant ainsi que les établissements

devraient offrir un soutien approprié et suffisant à leurs enseignants.

Mots clés: enseignants du corps professoral, soutien à la rédaction académique, étudiants

internationaux

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

From 2013 to 2018, based on data from Statistics Canada (2020), the enrollment of

international students in Canadian postsecondary institutions increased from 199,000 to 296,000.

This presents 48.7% growth in the numbers of international students over 5 years. In 2017, the

Canadian Bureau for International Education (CBIE, 2018) reported that Canada has one of the

most diverse international student populations representing 186 nations. Thus, their enrolment

not only brings sufficient funds for Canadian institutions, but also expands cultural diversity in

Canadian higher education.

The majority of international students coming to study in Canada are originally from non-

English speaking countries, with the top three home countries being China, India, and South

Korea (CBIE, 2020). They have chosen English-medium education in Canada to acquire

proficient English and advanced knowledge to conduct research in the future because English is

the international language in many disciplines. Since they come from different cultural contexts,

international students have to adjust their learning to keep up with the academic requirements of

different English-speaking institutions; thus, they face many challenges while learning in Canada

(Guo & Chase, 2011). Therefore, research pertaining the international students' learning and life

experience at English-speaking institutions is correspondingly increasing. In order to help

international students better adapt to their new academic environment, most research focuses on

students' performance and attempts to analyze the discrepancy between students' learning and

the requirements of their instructors. Generally, research proposes suggestions for international

students, including how they can seek assistance or employ resources to improve academic

learning (Hughes, 2013), how they can shift from their previous culture to a new culture and pedagogy (Rienties et al., 2012), and how they can develop strategies to overcome academic difficulties (Singh, 2017).

Only a limited amount of research discusses what kinds of academic support international students can receive from their universities and from their instructors. The current research aims to fill this important gap, for if research only focuses on modifying the students, it can be depressing for these students because the focus on students' problems takes an assimilationist standpoint rather than looking into how the universities, who have sought out these students, can accommodate them and also recognize the expertise and resources that these students bring. Therefore, it is important to focus on the institutions themselves and particularly on the course instructors. It is worth noting that English-speaking institutions generally provide diversified academic services or activities for international students; meanwhile, instructors who directly guide international students can provide specific support in different academic aspects, such as disciplinary learning, conducting research, or academic writing. This study will focus on the academic writing support that faculty instructors provided for international students at Canadian English-speaking institutions.

I concentrate on academic writing because writing is a common practice that all university students should master, and it is always used as an assessment tool for English-speaking institutions to decide if students meet the academic requirements in different subjects (Tran, 2013). Research also reflects the important role of academic writing in students' academic success and has demonstrated that international students who speak English as a second language and come from different cultures experience additional challenges in academic writing in comparison with domestic students (Cumming, Lai & Cho, 2016; You & You, 2018). Even

though English-speaking institutions generally offer different writing services, such as writing tutorials or writing courses, these services may not effectively address the students' disciplinary-specific needs (Keefe & Shi, 2017; Leki & Carson,1997; Wingate, 2018). To fill this gap, disciplinary instructors can guide them in the conventions of their respective academic areas (Spack, 1997; Tran, 2008). Before understanding what kinds of support faculty instructors have provided for students' writing, it is important to know the perspectives of faculty instructors on students' writing because they can better explain the reasons behind instructors' supporting practices. Therefore, this study investigates the perspectives of faculty instructors in Canadian universities on international students' academic writing and their writing support for these students.

Although students from English-majority-language countries such as the UK, the US, or Australia are also international students, they are not the focus of this study because they have experienced English-language schooling prior to university and because the culture surrounding academic writing is similar to that in Canada. Thus, international students in this study refer to students who speak English as a second language and come from distinct cultures from their host institutions. Moving forward, I will use international EL2 students to refer to these students. Their counterparts in this study are domestic EL1 students who speak English as their first language and who are more likely to have been raised in the same academic culture as their host institution.

1.2 Outline of the Thesis

This thesis contains six chapters. **Chapter one, Introduction,** demonstrates the background of the study. **Chapter two, Literature Review**, presents academic writing in higher

education, international EL2 students' challenges in academic writing, and writing support for international EL2 students. **Chapter three, Methodology**, explains the design of this study, the recruitment of participants, and data analysis. **Chapter four**, **Results**, reports both the quantitative and qualitative findings of this study. **Chapter five, Discussion**, addresses the research questions by explaining the results from the data analysis. Lastly, **Chapter six** is the conclusion, involving the limitations and contribution of this present study, and the suggestions for future research. Overall, in order to stress the importance of faculty instructors' support, this study attempts to determine what faculty instructors' perspective on international EL2 students' writing and what writing support they provided for these students in Canadian universities.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

In this chapter, I will demonstrate the general characteristics of academic writing and the significance and requirement of academic writing for students in higher education. Research (Andrade, 2006; Cennetkuşu, 2017) has shown that international university students who speak English as a second language (international EL2 students) face additional challenges in academic writing in comparison to domestic EL1 students. Here, I will discuss these students' linguistic challenges in academic writing, the influence of their previous cultural and educational context on their writing, and the support they receive from specialists in writing centers and courses. By illustrating the disadvantages of the writing specialists' support, this section argues that the writing support of faculty instructors in academic courses is more important and beneficial for international EL2 students.

2.1. Academic Writing in Higher Education

Academic writing is a crucially important way for academics to disseminate disciplinary knowledge (Strongman, 2013). Whereas scholars rely on writing to communicate research in their academic fields, students need to use writing to demonstrate their understanding of disciplinary content. However, academic writing is not simple; it is a complex process involving audience, purpose, organization, style, flow, and presentation (Swales & Feak, 1994). Specifically, academic writers need to relate their purposes, such as convincing readers of their opinions, defending against dissenters, or summarizing papers, to their target audience; this need can only be met in an academic community where academics reach consensus about knowledge through the discourses of their academic fields (Hyland, 2009). The distinct conventions of each

discipline require writers not only to present academic style and register in language expression, but also to follow the disciplinary conventions demanded in different subjects. However, the rules governing disciplinary conventions are generally implicit and often unspoken; academic writers are expected to intuit them in order to be accepted by the community of readers they are targeting (Miller, 2018).

Academic writing is significant for students in tertiary education because writing competence can directly influence university students' academic success (Defazio et al., 2010). Generally, students take different academic courses, some of which require a significant amount of writing. Academic writing serves the function of assessment since students use writing to present their understanding of disciplinary knowledge, complete required assignments, pass exams or publish their research (Coffin, 2003). To successfully complete their courses, students have to demonstrate their content understanding, persuade the reader, and adapt their arguments to the conventions of their disciplines (Hyland, 2013a). To demonstrate these abilities, students are expected to employ many skills involving organizing, analyzing, and evaluating various sources as well as appropriately deploying discipline-specific rhetorical and linguistic conventions (Zhu, 2004). This is not easy for English native students, and even more difficult for international EL2 students (Hyland, 2009). Research has investigated and reported international EL2 students may encounter different challenges while learning at English institutions, and these challenges would affect their academic writing performance.

2.2. International EL2 Students' Challenges in Academic Writing

Compared with domestic EL1 students, international EL2 students have additional challenges in writing because they have to meet both the English proficiency requirement and the

standards for academic writing in English institutions, despite speaking English as an additional language and coming from differentiated academic contexts (Andrade, 2006). Naturally, since English is not their L1, international EL2 students face unique linguistic challenges in academic writing. Sometimes, if the linguistic characteristics of their L1 differ greatly from those of English, they may have more difficulty applying standard grammar in writing (Cennetkuşu, 2017). In addition, the cultural and educational background international EL2 students experienced in their prior learning context may differently impact their academic writing, because international EL2 students tend to acquire additional languages through relying on their L1 resources and previous learning experience (Casanave, 2004). Thus, in this section, I will discuss research examining how international EL2 students' linguistic challenges, previous cultural and educational context influence their academic writing.

2.2.1. Linguistic Challenges for International EL2 students

Many university students face challenges in acquiring academic writing (Fallahi et al., 2006). As the following research demonstrates, however, some international EL2 students may face additional challenges in writing because they are still developing English language skills. Huang (2010) assessed undergraduates and graduate students' language-learning needs at a Canadian university. By administering questionnaires to 432 non-native English students and 93 instructors, Huang (2010) indicated that both undergraduate and postgraduate students perceive academic writing as a major problem in their academic learning. When evaluating their academic skills status, undergraduate students especially asked for more support with English grammar, phrasing, effective sentence structures, spelling, and punctuation. Even though graduate students regarded the competence in discipline-specific writing tasks as an important issue, they believed

a command of academic writing conventions, including punctuation, effective grammatical and lexical use, and appropriate sentence structures, was crucial to complete writing tasks.

Students' language proficiency presents some of the clearest difficulties for international EL2 students because instructors may view their writing as inferior if their form of expression blocks the cohesion of sentences and the coherence of the overall text. When instructors have difficulty understanding the students' meaning, they may evaluate their work and their understanding of the material as ineffective. Even though these students may possess critical and impressive thinking in their subject content, language may become an obstacle to their ability to demonstrate this.

Research has also shown that, in comparison with domestic EL1 students, international EL2 students have additional difficulties in paraphrasing ideas and synthesizing information from diversified references in academic writing when students are asked to integrate different sources to support their claims or rebut others' arguments. A specific study from Plakans and Gebril (2012) investigated L2 students' source use in academic writing. They asked 145 students who speak Arabic as their first language to work on a reading-to-write task, complete a questionnaire, and participate in a follow-up interview with nine participants. They applied the rating scale for the TOEFL integrated writing to examine participants' reading-to-write task, and discovered that participants with lower scores in the task found it difficult to paraphrase the ideas in the reading. This difficulty prevented students from effectively synthesizing the source information and influenced their writing quality (Plakans & Gebril, 2012).

Similar studies (Giridharan & Robson, 2011; Cennetkuşu, 2017) using surveys and interviews with international EL2 students or instructors have also revealed that students are not confident in their grammar skills, and they feel they have limited vocabulary and expression in

writing. Based on these results, it seems that a lower language proficiency can create a barrier to effective synthesizing and paraphrasing ideas from other text sources.

In addition, the degree of commonality between a students' L1 and English is another factor that may impact international EL2 students' academic writing. Students draw on their L1 to learn additional languages; if their L1 and L2 possess many common linguistic characteristics involving similar grammar and sentence structures, students will have more opportunities to draw on their L1 resources (Odlin, 2004; Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2008). On the contrary, if learners' L1 and L2 have greater linguistic distance, learners will have fewer opportunities to effectively draw on their prior linguistic knowledge in understanding course material and interpreting it through their writing. For instance, the linguistic difference between Chinese and English is extensive. English has inflections to indicate tense, plural, or part of speech, whereas Chinese does not have such inflection changes (Li & Luk, 2017). Furthermore, English uses conjunctions or subordinations in different clauses, while Chinese favors short, simple sentences without conjunctions or subordinating (Fish, 2011). Thus, for Chinese international students, grammatical usage of English is distinguished from the counterpart in their L1, which may set obstacles for them to compose clear and effective sentences in writing if they rely on the knowledge of the L1 to compose their writing in English (Wu & Garza, 2014). Specifically, some studies illustrate the common errors that Chinese students feel difficult to master because of the linguistic differences. Wang (2015) examined 63 Chinese students' writing at universities to investigate their grammatical use. This study found that students produced more errors in attributive clauses, such as misusing relative pronouns and antecedents. Li (2014) conducted a study revealing that Chinese students either overused or underused passive voice in writing because the passive voice in English is very different from the counterpart grammar in Chinese.

Therefore, it is challenging for Chinese international students to compose clear writing if they transfer their L1 syntax to their English writing. Since Chinese students make up a large group of Canadian international students, understanding the linguistic difference between Chinese and English is important for course instructors. This difference would impact the syntactical complexity of Chinese students' English sentences, possibly leading course instructors to judge students' work as being less complex and less cohesive.

2.2.2. The Influence of Previous Cultural Context for International EL2 Students

Apart from the linguistic differences described above, international EL2 students may also experience a transition period from their previous cultural context to the Canadian academic environment. International EL2 students who have pre-established notions of conventions, discourse, and communication values may discover these notions to be different in the Canadian academic environment, and this too may have an impact on their Canadian course instructors' perception of their work.

For example, there are many stylistic differences between academic writing in English and German. In a paper detailing the differences between English and German texts, Mauranen (1993) states that English readers expect the writer to explain with total clarity and simplicity, but German readers have more responsibility to understand the writer's intention. This can cause a difference in a course instructors' perception of the coherence of their student's writing: English texts generally demonstrate explicit coherence through a linear structure and tend to propose the main point at the very beginning of the main body, while German texts present implicit coherence with a spiral structure and make the main point at the end of writers' argument, thus asking readers to possess sufficient knowledge to interpret (Blumenthal, 1997).

Because these two languages have different cultures and emphasize different aspects in writing, international students who speak German as their first language may have difficulty composing acceptable writing within the English writing expectation (Scott, 2015). To illustrate the cultural differences between German and English, Scott (2015) staged an experiment for 22 German-speaking Austrian students. He provided the students with a systemic analysis of German-language discourse structures, and compared them to English structures. Scott compared students' writing from before and after the analysis instruction, evaluating on ten criteria (linearity, continuity, symmetry, paragraph structure, text structure, definitions, data integration, personal constructions, and advance organisers). Scott found that by explicit exploration of language-specific discourse structures, participants reduced the influence of German-language culture on their English writing style after this intervention, and they could compose writing which was more likely to meet expectations within the English culture. This study indicates the culture-specific language influence can be challenging for international EL2 students to compose acceptable writing in the English-speaking environment. While this particular study focused on an intervention to help students adjust to English-language writing expectations, it also suggests that instructors need to be aware of this cultural difference so that they do not view their students' writing as deficient and that they need to explain what the culture is in English. In this case, instructors may change the way that they read and evaluate students' writing while they are helping students understand how to reflect cultural differences in their writing.

2.2.3. The Influence of Previous Educational Context for International EL2 Students

International EL2 students' writing is not only affected by their L1, but also influenced by the educational context in which they learned how to write (Rinnert & Kobayashi, 2009)—yet

furthermore, students' previous educational experience constructs their beliefs about writing, namely, what they regard as the most important in writing, how to view the audience, and how to achieve their writing purpose (Rinnert & Kobayashi, 2009). Sawir (2005) studied the effect of Asian students' prior learning experience on their academic learning at an Australian university. The participants included five undergraduate international students from Indonesia, China, Thailand, Vietnam, and Japan. Participants were asked to comment on their previous English learning and classroom practices in their home countries and their current learning difficulties in Australia during the interviews. This empirical study found that international EL2 students' previous educational experience plays an important role in their academic learning at English-speaking institutions. For the participants in this study, the teacher-centered instruction to which they were accustomed focused more on using proper grammar in their writing; this convinced students that grammar learning was the most important, and avoiding grammar mistakes in writing became their concentration instead of paying the same attention to other writing components such as textual structure and fluidity.

Casanave (2004) observed that Chinese students compose English writing in a test-orientated context since the target audience for their writing is exclusively either their teachers or examiners who emphasized the importance of sentence-level grammar instead of discourse-level arguments. However, the test-orientated characteristic, in fact, contradicts the principle of reader-based coherence in academic writing because a text cannot be separated from the reader, and coherence demands effective interactions between the reader and writer (Carrell, 1982). Chinese students who applied their previous educational experience to their current learning context might have a difficult time composing effective and critical texts in their current academic

contexts and writing diverse types of assignments to meet the requirements of different courses (Schneider, 2018).

2.3. Writing Support for International EL2 Students

Since academic writing is both significant and important for all university students, English-speaking universities have established writing centres to support students' writing. Particularly, the writing centres offer specific academic writing courses to help international EL2 students with their writing challenges described in the previous section. International EL2 students can also receive writing support from writing specialists at the English department or within other departments. Writing specialists provide writing support through writing tutorial services or specific writing courses, such as English for Academic Purposes (EAP) courses. Even though these services and courses address the linguistic challenges of international EL2 students, they may not help students understand disciplinary conventions in writing since the writing specialists come from different disciplinary backgrounds from their students. Therefore, compared with writing specialists' support at writing centers and in writing courses, the writing support from faculty instructors can be more beneficial for international EL2 students (Arkoudis & Tran, 2010; Tran, 2008). Faculty instructors support international EL2 students' writing through providing feedback on students' written assignments, explanation of appropriate writing during the course delivery and individual office meeting. However, less is known about faculty instructors' perspectives and practices in writing support at Canadian universities.

2.3.1. Writing Support from Writing Specialists: Tutorial Services and Writing Courses

Writing specialists at the English institutions provide international EL2 students with academic writing support in the form of one-on-one tutorial sessions, group writing workshops or presentations, and specially designed writing curriculum. The writing center is a place where international students can have access to support offered by writing specialists, and it has become a part of academic learning support at most North American universities (Driscoll & Perdue, 2012). The services and support of writing centers varies greatly between different universities in Canada. Generally, writing centers hold workshops or presentations and offer writing tutorial services for students who need academic writing support involving grammatical correction, idea expression, and guidance on coherent writing. Some writing centers also provide writing courses to different groups of students including undergraduate, graduate, and L2 students. For example, the writing center at University of Toronto not only offers a writing tutor service, but also sets up both credit and non-credit courses in English language for international EL2 students. The writing center at the University of Ottawa, on the other hand, offers only a writing tutorial without providing writing courses; it has another dedicated team in its Official Languages and Bilingualism Institute to offer writing courses for international EL2 students. Finally, the writing center at McGill University provides tutorial services and courses for credit. Though many Canadian universities establish writing centers to support students, these universities vary in whether they provide specific writing courses and whether the courses have credit.

The services provided by writing centers are all voluntary for all university students. In other words, students must seek out these services on their own. However, even though these services may address students' written language (e.g., grammar, idea expression, and punctuation), it is still difficult for the centres to offer students' effective feedback on the writing

conventions expected in their own discipline. These conventions vary between disciplines and most writing tutors are only aware of those conventions expected in their own discipline. Since it is not guaranteed that students can receive the writing support from the tutors who share the same disciplinary background with them, international EL2 students may not fully benefit from the writing tutors.

In addition to the writing tutorial support, universities provide writing courses at writing centers, in English departments, or in other disciplinary departments for students to enhance their writing techniques. However, not all writing courses are established to meet the needs of international EL2 students; some target general students no matter what academic fields and cultural backgrounds they come from. With the increasing enrollment of international students at English-speaking institutions, specific writing curriculum or programs are also designed to support international EL2 students, such as English for Academic Purposes (EAP) courses.

EAP courses are well-known at universities with an aim to improve international EL2 students' academic writing. EAP is a program designed to increase international students' academic literacy, which is broadly defined as the competence of making meaning and interacting within an academic context (McWilliams & Allan, 2014). Even though academic literacy includes "critical thinking, database searching, familiarity with academic conventions such as referencing, use of formal register and the ability to manipulate a range of academic genres" (McWilliams & Allan, 2014, p.1), many EAP courses mainly focus on reading and writing competence in English, to support them in an English-medium academic setting (Hyland & Hamp-Lyons, 2002). The development of writing skills is always a primary focus in EAP courses (Bruce, 2008); specifically, EAP writing courses try to assess and meet students'

academic needs and deploy effective teaching methods, such as the process writing approach and genre pedagogy, to prepare students for writing in their own disciplines.

By satisfying students' needs and implementing different methods, the goal of an EAP writing course is to help international students employ their enhanced writing competence to different disciplinary courses. However, students still face writing challenges when transferring the writing techniques acquired in EAP courses to their academic courses since EAP writing courses tend to focus on language forms instead of content. Therefore, the writing that students engage in these courses may be decontextualized and irrelevant to their area of study. Wingate (2018) argues that EAP courses have less possibility to prepare students to write effectively in their academic subjects since the writing courses mainly focus on grammar, structure and writing styles. Appropriate use of linguistic features is indeed crucial for international EL2 students, but as they begin to write in their own disciplines, they still face difficulty when composing effective writing in their academic content courses as illustrated in a study by Leki and Carson (1997).

Leki and Carson (1997) investigated 27 international EL2 students' writing experience in EAP and academic content courses. Interview participants identified the writing differences between EAP and disciplinary courses: the instructors of academic courses concentrate more on the importance of content in disciplinary writing, while EAP stresses language forms and styles in written assignments; disciplinary writing requires students to use more source texts as scaffold than EAP writing, which poses more challenges of synthesizing various information into writing than that in EAP courses. The inconsistency of different writing tasks between EAP and disciplinary courses is also confirmed in another study (Keefe & Shi, 2017). By following and interviewing eight international EL2 students who first took EAP and then studied in their disciplinary courses at a Canadian university, Keefe and Shi (2017) found these students still

faced challenges in completing writing tasks in their disciplines. Participants reported the disciplinary courses not only asked them to compose longer pieces of writing, but they also required them to demonstrate their understanding of disciplinary sources, in comparison with the requirements in EAP courses.

Some EAP courses also investigate the commonly used genres in students' academic courses and in order to meet students' writing needs in their academic courses, they attempt to teach the genres that students will write in their academic courses (Molle & Prior, 2008). Even though the basic structures of one genre in different contexts may be similar, detailed disciplinary conventions can allow genre variation to occur across different subjects (Samraj, 2002). In this case, writing instructors in EAP courses who are engaged in different academic fields from their students are unlikely to address genre variation in students' disciplines and the genre conventions students acquired in EAP writing courses may not work in their disciplinary writing.

Hyland (2008) conducted a study based on a 1.5-million-word corpus of 240 articles from eight disciplines and interviews with 30 academics to compare the variations in genres across disciplines. He found that humanities and social science papers tend to use hedges (e.g., possible, might, likely) and booster devices (e.g., certainly, definitely) two-and-a -half times more than the hard sciences. By analyzing the reason for the different frequencies of hedges and boosters across distinct disciplines, Hyland (2008) claims that humanities and social science experience more difficulties in controlling variables in studies and possess more various research findings than hard sciences. Also, researchers in humanities and social science might deploy different research methods, and they are less positivistic than those in hard science. These differences restrict humanities and social science writers from making strong statements. Meanwhile, since

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there are diversified research outcomes in humanities and social science, these writers need to work hard to demonstrate the importance of their studies in order to defend themselves or even rebut other researchers' opinions; the way to strengthen their arguments is to deploy boosters. Thus, this explains why although different disciplines use the same genre (e.g., a research report), their word choices and rhetorical styles can vary.

Even in related fields, genres and linguistic choices also vary because of the differences between disciplinary conventions. For example, Samraj (2002) explores the genre of the research abstract in two related disciplines—Wildlife Behaviours and Conservation Biology. Based on the perspective of genre analysis, Samraj (2002) assigned each sentence in an abstract to a move serving rhetorical functions. She explains that both disciplines have a similar linear sequence of moves, which are (1) situating the research, (2) purpose, (3) methods, (4) results, and (5) conclusions. However, tense choices are more stable in Wildlife Behaviours than in Conservation Biology. Specifically, the purpose, methods, and results in Wildlife Biology abstracts tend to be in the past tense while situating the research and conclusion are in the present tense. In contrast, Conservative Biology abstracts have greater variation in the tenses used. Furthermore, the abstracts from Conservation Biology often outline problems and seek solutions to environmental crises. However, in Wildlife Behaviour, most writers aim to situate their study within the context of relevant animal behaviour and theoretical considerations. This disciplinary convention explains why Wildlife Behaviour abstracts tend to maintain a more neutral position when introducing the research background, while Conservation Biology abstracts problematize the crisis that different animals are facing currently.

If the genre variation brings such a difference in disciplinary writing, students in distinct academic fields should be instructed differently instead of being treated in the same teaching

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mode. The genre variation issue makes us reconsider the effect of EAP writing courses on supporting international EL2 students and bring the faculty instructors' writing support into light since they are capable to scaffold students with their disciplinary conventions in academic writing.

2.3.2. Writing Support from Faculty Instructors

Different from writing specialists, faculty instructors are capable of helping with disciplinary conventions in writing because they instruct international EL2 students' academic courses. Research (Spack, 1997; Tran, 2008) has found that faculty instructors' additional support for students' writing through feedback on students' written assignments and course delivery are essential; this additional support seems crucial to addressing the challenge that students transfer writing techniques from an EAP writing course to writing for their academic courses. Studies involving surveys or interviews of both students and faculty instructors have proved the effectiveness of faculty instructors' additional support for academic writing.

Tran (2008) interviewed four Chinese international students from two faculties (Education and Commerce) at an Australian university. Tran focused on their struggle to interpret different disciplinary requirements, and based on these interviews concluded that there were five important areas students need to address in order to advance their writing competence: (1) understanding the writing guidelines, (2) interacting with lecturers (face-to-face discussion with instructors about feedback on written tasks, emails to the lecturers and discussion with the lecturers in class), (3) gaining support services at the university and faculty level, (4) understanding writing models, and (5) knowing lecturers' personal preferences. Among these areas, Tran (2008) notes that students' interactions with their instructors, such as discussing the feedback on written assignments, is valuable to unpacking academic writing requirements and

enhancing students' writing abilities. The study concludes that the lecturers' support impacts students' success in disciplinary courses, because the interaction between students and instructors provides more explicit support by offering individualized writing instructions for students, as well as allowing instructors to reflect on how to refine their teaching.

Unlike Tran (2008), Spack (1997) presents a case study investigating a Japanese international student's learning experience within the North American context. This case study shows that international students' distinct cultural and academic backgrounds can lead to unequal starting points for them to make an achievement in academic learning within the North American context in comparison to their North American classmates. The participant in this study experienced difficulty in academic reading and writing at first. She attributed her writing struggle to her effort to overcome a Japanese style which trained her to write in a more indirect way, whereas in English, it is important to be more direct. After three years at this North American university, the participant developed an awareness of difference between distinct genres, cultivated a good understanding of critical thinking in writing, and improved her reading ability. Spack (1997) attributes these changes to the strategies the student employed in academic learning as well as to her constant discussions on assignments with instructors outside of the classroom. Thus, Spack (2007) suggests that the most crucial component of acquiring academic literacy including academic writing is to get disciplinary instructors' support involving explicit guidance for different assignments in courses and feedback on writing. This indicates that instructors' support is an essential way to scaffold international EL2 students and help them adapt to the new academic context.

These two studies indicate the crucial role of faculty instructors in enhancing students' writing ability, while other studies specifically illustrate faculty instructors' teaching practices

that effectively improve international EL2 students' writing. Wingate, Andon and Cogo (2011) conducted an intervention for international undergraduate students in the applied linguistic program to illustrate the effectiveness of integrating writing into content instruction by faculty instructors. Sixty-eight students participated in the study and received a two-hour lecture for ten weeks. Students were first asked to complete reading tasks, then discuss the reading with their peers, and finally submit the assignment after listening to instructors' explanation of both content and writing knowledge. The instructors provided each student with specific feedback on their submitted assignments. According to students' reflection on this intervention, they appreciated the instructors' explicit explanation of writing techniques and the rubric of assessment during the class because this helped students clearly understand how to establish their own voices and build strong arguments in writing. Students also commented on the feedback method as the most helpful one because students noticed their individual writing problems through the teachers' feedback and improved their writing based on the teachers' advice.

On the other hand, Schneider and Jin (2020) explore faculty instructors' perspectives on international EL2 students' academic difficulties. Schneider and Jin (2020) carried out one-on-one interviews with 15 faculty members from 13 academic disciplines at an American institution to investigate faculty instructors' awareness and practices of providing linguistic support for international students in disciplinary courses. They revealed that most instructors agree that faculty and institutions have the responsibility of developing international students' linguistic competence. Some added that international students' challenges are not merely confined to language, but also cultural differences students encountered when learning. Not all respondents agreed, however: four instructors rarely recognized international EL2 students' linguistic challenges and expressed the opinion that students themselves should be fully responsible for

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their own language competence. Some instructors in the interviews also presented their specific practices of scaffolding international EL2 students' academic learning: explain values behind academic practices, illustrate expectations in terms of different writing purposes and contexts, and provide critical feedback on students' writing. This study concludes that faculty across the disciplines are accountable for international EL2 students' linguistic challenge and implies faculty should offer more writing support for international EL2 students.

Though studies propose faculty instructors implement sufficient and effective support for their international EL2 students, the reality is that instructors may not provide support because they face many challenges and some even have no idea of how to support. Hyland (2013b) draws on interviews with 20 teachers at a university in Hong Kong to investigate faculty teachers' feedback on their L2 students' assignments. Based on a qualitative analysis of teachers' interviews, instructors provided less sufficient feedback to support students' writing because most faculty teachers were occupied by heavy workload, making it difficult to offer detailed feedback on students' writing when the number of students is large, such as 300 or 400 students (Hyland, 2013b). Most teachers focused more on content feedback rather than language because they did not regard assisting with students' language difficulties as their job (Hyland, 2013b). However, the feedback on content was not always effective for students because the teachers' expression of their feedback is, in fact, affected by their ideologies, and unfortunately, most teachers are often unaware of their underlying ideologies related to disciplines and academic discourses as researchers (Hyland, 2013b). They largely believed students would learn the subject and its conventional discourse at the same time, thus they rarely explained the reasoning behind their feedback (Hyland, 2013b)

Arkoudis and Tran (2010) examined the effectiveness of faculty instructors' support for academic writing from the instructors' point of view. They interviewed ten instructors in different disciplines to investigate lecturers' views and reflections on their own practices to help academic writing. They concluded that instructors struggled with how to best assist international students. Even though the instructors deployed different strategies, such as outlining the criteria for assessment, they focused mainly on whether students met their expectations and requirements, rather than on advice to develop the students' writing. In addition, the lecturers appeared to struggle with explaining what good academic writing involves within their discipline, and they lacked a community where they could discuss their teaching effectiveness with colleagues. Therefore, they were isolated in their work and lacked advice and support (Arkoudis & Tran, 2010).

The existing research into faculty instructors' academic writing support for students raises an important question. Perhaps the key to facilitating international EL2 students' academic writing is support by and for faculty instructors. However, to effectively support these students, instructors must equip themselves with sufficient knowledge of how to scaffold international EL2 students in academic writing. Equipping instructors with these skills requires an adequate understanding of their current practice of facilitating academic writing.

Specifically, we need to understand what faculty instructors are currently doing to offer academic writing support (such as written or oral feedback on writing assignments, explicit explanation during the instruction, or interacting with students during office hours) for international EL2 students. Before understanding their writing support practices, it is important to know the instructors' perspective on their students' writing practices. Ruiz (1984) summarized three attitudes on L2 students' language: language as a problem, language as a right and

language as a resource. The orientation means "a complex of dispositions toward language and its role, and toward languages and their roles in society" (Ruiz, 1984, p.16). Faculty instructors' orientations regarding students' writing is significant; if they stand on the attitude of language as a problem, that means international EL2 students should adjust to the western norms and change their previous culture and languages which are inconsistent with the English-speaking institutions. However, if faculty instructors believe the idea of language as a resource, that means the university or these instructors themselves should take other cultural approaches into account in the way that they handle students' writing issues. Therefore, focusing on the instructors' perspectives allows us to take the responsibility off the shoulders of the students. Many other studies (Rienties et al., 2012; Hughes, 2013; Singh, 2017) have adapted the approach that students need to adjust to the values and expectations of English-speaking universities. However, to truly invite these students to enrich classes through sharing differing values, we must also focus on how course instructors and other university actors can accommodate perspectives and practices that differ from North American, English-speaking academic writing norms.

Moreover, sometimes even though faculty instructors know that they need to offer writing help for international EL2 students and understand how they might do so, difficulties, such as not having enough time or instructors' research pressure may prevent them from doing so. In this case, it is necessary to figure out what obstacles instructors face in offering this support. Therefore, the answers to the questions of what challenges they have when providing writing support will facilitate teacher training in providing appropriate help on academic writing to international EL2 students.

Based on the studies described above, we can see that researchers have conducted surveys or interviews on faculty instructors or international EL2 students and tried to find out

what they are doing to support academic writing and their struggles in offering this help. However, most surveys or interviews focus on international EL2 students' writing challenges instead of stressing the perspectives and practices of faculty instructors in providing academic writing support. Additionally, research generally concentrates on one aspect of instructors' support, such as feedback or explicit teaching, but lacks a full view of instructors' help with academic writing. Therefore, in this current study, I administered a survey to a broad cross-section of Canadian faculty instructors ($N = 67$) from different universities and fields and selected a smaller number of instructors ($N = 11$) for focus groups regarding instructors' current academic writing support. This study is a part of a larger study looking at instructors' perspectives and practice regarding supporting international students' academic literacy. The study aims to investigate these research questions:

1. What do faculty instructors at Canadian universities think of their international EL2 students' academic writing performance, and what writing challenges do faculty instructors think their students have?

2. Do the faculty instructors at Canadian universities provide academic writing support to international EL2 students? If they do, how do they support international EL2 students? What challenges do they face in providing writing support?

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Chapter 3

Methodology

This present study deployed a mixed methods approach to investigating faculty instructors' understanding of international EL2 students' academic writing, the writing support they provided for students, and any obstacles that prevented them from supporting their students. This chapter will specifically explain how the mixed methods approach was applied in this study, the recruitment process of the participants, how the survey and focus group methods were conducted, and the data analysis.

3.1. Research Design

As established in the literature review chapter, the purpose of the current study is to investigate and reveal Canadian faculty instructors' perspectives on their international EL2 students' writing and the instructors' practices of supporting their international EL2 students in academic writing. To accomplish this, data focusing on academic writing was selected from a larger project that targeted faculty instructors' general academic literacy support at Canadian universities. Data collection methods included an on-line survey and on-line focus groups with faculty instructors. The two research questions guiding this study were:

1. What do faculty instructors at Canadian universities think of their international EL2 students' academic writing performance and what writing challenges do faculty instructors think their students have?

2. Do the faculty instructors at Canadian universities provide academic writing support to international EL2 students? If they do, how do they support international EL2 students? What challenges do they face in providing writing support?

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This study employed both quantitative and qualitative methods (a mixed methods approach) to collect and analyze the data. This type of approach is beneficial for social science studies because mixed methods research intentionally often uses both quantitative and qualitative methods and sources of data in order to obtain different perspectives on the same research questions; it puts forth the idea that both types of methods offer a valuable perspective on the data (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

Quantitative research "use[s] numbers to describe what exists" (Gray, 2007, p.42). Collecting numeric information through instruments, such as surveys or questionnaires, is a deductive approach involving hypothesis testing and statistical inferencing to analyze data (Meadow, 2003). On the other hand, rather than focusing on numbers, qualitative research concentrates on "the meaning people attach to things in their lives" (Taylor, Bogdan & DeVault, 2016, p.18); it interprets participants' experience and help better understand participants' perceptions (Taylor, Bogdan & DeVault, 2016). While quantitative data addresses the what, qualitative can also address the why. Unlike quantitative research, the qualitative method can be inductive, since researchers can gain new ideas or conclusions after coding and analyzing the data (Meadow, 2003). The mixed methods approach includes both quantitative and qualitative research methods (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie & Turner, 2007). Greene, Caracelli and Graham (1989) identified many benefits of adopting a mixed methods approach, such as triangulation from different data sources and completeness. Triangulation means adopting different approaches or data sources to assess the results in a single study (Patton, 1999). The collaboration of distinct methods can give research a greater validity since the results are tested from different angles. In addition, completeness means that the combination of both quantitative and qualitative analysis can supplement the results with each other, thereby providing "a more

comprehensive picture of the study phenomenon" (Doyle, Brady & Byrne, 2009, p.178).

Applying quantitative analysis does provide solid evidence to demonstrate valid results, but the

qualitative analysis can reveal more details or insightful reasons that the quantitative data are

unable to help, since the qualitative data gives research a context and allows researchers to better

interpret the rationale behind. Therefore, the mixed methods approach provides multiple lenses

for researchers to obtain deep insights into the research results and enhance the study with

different strengths (Russek & Weinberg, 1993).

The mixed methods design in the present study works in this way: the quantitative

(descriptive) analysis for survey responses from participants will reflect the overall situation of

faculty instructors' attitudes and behaviors with regard to helping improve international students'

academic writing. The qualitative methods used to analyse focus groups brings more in-depth

information of how participants think about international EL2 students' writing and how they

offer academic writing support, thereby revealing detailed content of Canadian faculty

instructors' perspectives on students' writing and reasoning of their practices in academic writing

support.

Creswell, Fetters and Ivankova (2004) identifies various models of mixed methods

designs, including the convergence parallel model, sequential model, and instrument-building

model. Different models have distinct purposes and functions for social science research.

Investigating both quantitative and qualitative data, the convergent parallel model emphasizes

the use of different methods simultaneously and intends to merge findings from these methods;

this can reduce biased perspectives received only from one method, thereby enhancing the

conclusions analyzed from the research (Creswell, 1999). Inspired by the benefits of the

convergent parallel model, the present study deploys this model in the form of a survey and

focus groups. That is, the survey and focus groups were administered simultaneously to reveal

faculty instructors' perspectives and practices in relation to academic writing support for

international EL2 students; findings from the survey and focus groups were then compared and

finally merged to better understand Canadian faculty instructors' academic writing support for

their international EL2 students.

3.2. Participant Recruitment

After receiving the Certificate of Ethical Acceptability of Research Involving Humans

from the Research Ethics Board Office at McGill and other participating universities, I used both

purposive and snowball sampling to recruit faculty instructors ($N = 67$) who teach academic

courses at Canadian English-speaking universities and have teaching experience working with

international EL2 students. To determine which universities to target in the recruitment stage, I

consulted statistics on enrolment of international students in Canadian universities. The Canadian

Bureau for International Education reports that Ontario, British Columbia, and Quebec are the

most popular provinces for international students; particularly, the University of British

Columbia, McGill University, Concordia University, Simon Fraser University, Western

University, the University of Waterloo, and the University of Toronto in these provinces have

become desirable destinations for international students (Dwyer, 2017). Other popular

universities outside of Ontario, British Columbia, and Quebec were also considered, including

the University of Alberta, the University of Manitoba, the University of New Brunswick, the

University of Regina, the University of Prince Edward Island, the Memorial University of

Newfoundland, and Dalhousie University. I thus deployed purposive sampling in order to select

universities, yet I also used it to target course instructors in faculties that tend to have the highest

enrolment of international students. However, because universities do not keep detailed records of international student enrolment in specific departments, decisions on which faculties to target were based on the researchers' own knowledge of enrolment patterns. Therefore, this study attempted to search for faculty instructors in popular programs from Canadian universities with the highest enrollment of international students to participate in the survey and focus groups.

To recruit participants, the research assistant advertised on four universities' Listservs focusing on course instructors at different faculties, including the University of Toronto, the University of British Columbia, Simon Fraser University, and Concordia University. Meanwhile, based on the researchers' own knowledge of programs that are popular among international students, emails were sent to the individual instructors at the departments of Science, Business, Medicine, and Nursing from the University of Alberta, the University of Waterloo, the University of Manitoba, the University of New Brunswick, and the University of Regina. I also used snowball sampling, asking contacts to share with their colleagues. Moreover, the recruitment information was shared on the social media platforms Facebook and Twitter. Therefore, the participants came from different universities in distinct academic programs from all over Canada.

I first put out a call for participation in the on-line survey, and participants were asked if they would like to join in the focus groups. Faculty instructors ($N = 67$) participated in the survey, and some of them ($N = 11$) agreed to participate in the focus groups. The survey did not ask the participants which university or universities they worked at for confidentiality reasons. In this case, I only know that participants came from the universities we targeted in the recruitment and the provinces where they taught. On the other hand, the focus group participants often stated which universities they worked at, though the names of those universities are not reported here

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for reasons of confidentiality. The survey asked the participants about the faculty or faculties

they taught in (see Table 1), but it was an open-ended question to which the participants

responded differently: some clearly wrote their specific academic directions, such as business or

medicine, while others generally illustrated their faculties without specifically demonstrating

what academic fields they were engaged in. For example, one instructor stated that he or she

came from the faculty of "test", a typo, perhaps, which of course made it impossible to discern

this instructor's actual faculty. Moreover, some instructors wrote that they taught in the faculty

of Arts and Science without specifying the actual field. This meant that some of the faculties

summarized from the answers were overlapping.

	Frequency	Percent
Arts and Humanities	9	13.40%
Economics and business	10	14.90%
Arts and Science	5	7.60%
Education	17	25.40%
Medicine and Nursing	9	13.40%
Science	6	8.90%
Engineering	6	8.90%
Applied sciences	4	6.00%
Test	1	1.50%
Total	67	100.00%

Table 1: "In what faculty or faculties do you teach?"

3.3. Survey Methods

The survey for the academic literacy support project included 26 questions (see Appendix C). However, data for this study focused on 11 of the 26 questions regarding academic writing issues, and they were drawn from three subsections: 1). questions 1 to 3 asked about participants' background information (e.g., their years of teaching, the faculties they work in, and the percentages of international students in their academic courses), 2). questions 9 to 14 focused on instructors' opinion of their international EL2 students' academic writing performance, and 3). questions 17, 20 and 21 investigated instructors' academic writing support and challenges when providing this support.

This study used these selected 11 questions for the following reasons. Specifically, the background information questions are important to know, since this information helps interpret the participants' opinions and practices. For example, faculty instructors from different disciplines may provide varied writing support for international students because instructors have their own perceptions on the importance of academic writing in their disciplines. Moreover, figuring out the instructors' perspectives on their international EL2 students' writing performance is significant to better understand the rationale of their practices of academic writing support for their students. Since international EL2 students do not speak English as their L1, language proficiency presents an additional challenge for these students in academic writing in comparison to students whose L1 is English (Ghabool, Edwina & Kashef, 2012); this is why we designed question 10 in the survey to figure out faculty instructors' thoughts on their international EL2 students' grammatical and lexical usage in writing. Also, as illustrated in the literature review chapter, academic writers are expected to demonstrate their familiarity with academic conventions in specific disciplines (Miller, 2018); this makes conforming to the academic conventions become an important component of effective writing, which explains why

we proposed this question related to disciplinary conventions in the survey. Furthermore, since research related to L2 writing in higher education emphasizes the importance of citing and synthesizing different sources into a cohesive writing (Connor, 1984; Yang & Sun, 2012; Grabe & Zhang, 2013; Cumming, Lai, & Cho, 2016), we put forward three questions asking instructors' opinions on their international EL2 students' performance of constructing cohesive arguments (question 11), synthesizing source information (question 12), and citing references (question 13). Finally, question 17 was the general one asking if the instructors intentionally provide writing support; different responses to this question guided participants to answer different follow-up questions (questions 20 or 21) asking them what writing support they provided and why they had challenges in providing this support.

In addition, different types of questions (Likert scale, multiple-choice, and open-ended questions) were designed in this study. Specifically, they were:

(1) Questions 1 to 3 revealed the participants' professional background information regarding their years of teaching experience, the faculty or faculties they worked in, and the approximate percentages of international students in the courses they have taught. Two of the questions were multiple-choice questions regarding their years of teaching and the approximate percentages of international students they teach in their courses; one of the questions was an open-ended question about their faculties.

(2) Questions 9 to 14 aimed to find out faculty instructors' perspectives on their international EL2 students' academic writing in terms of grammar, vocabulary, text coherence, synthesizing reading sources into writing, and citation and disciplinary conventions in comparison to domestic L1 students. They were made up of six multiple-choice questions.

 (3) Questions 17, 20 and 21 intended to explore if and how faculty instructors provided

academic writing supports for their international EL2 students and to reveal the challenges that

they faced during the process of supporting their international students' writing. This part

comprised one Likert scale question and two check-all questions.

3.4. Focus groups methods

Though the survey allowed us to see general patterns, most of the questions were not

open-ended. This prevented participants from expressing their own opinions, particularly when

they were different from the answers that were provided. That is, the survey alone could not

allow for an in-depth understanding of these faculty instructors' perspectives and practices of

offering academic writing support for their international EL2 students. Thus, four focus groups

were conducted in this study to gain a richer understanding of the instructors' perspectives on

students' academic writing, their support of responding to students' writing difficulties, and the

challenges they face in offering writing support to their international EL2 students. Each focus

group lasted from 60 minutes to 90 minutes.

The focus groups contained questions involving faculty instructors' support for

international students both in academic literacy and academic writing with a total of 15 questions

(see appendix D). Seven of the questions dealt explicitly with academic writing. This thesis

draws on data from two questions of demographic and professional background information and

seven questions regarding students' writing issues and instructors' support in academic writing

as well as other references to students' academic writing and instructors' perspectives on support

for that writing. For each focus group, two or three participants from different universities in

different provinces across Canada were grouped to discuss the questions regarding academic

writing support for international students (see Table 2). For reasons of confidentiality, the

universities that these participants worked at were unrevealed. The researchers in the project

asked each participant in one focus group to answer the questions one by one. They were both

allowed to express their opinions on each question and told that they could refuse to answer

questions that they did not want to talk about. They were also encouraged to spontaneously

respond to other participants' comments. After each focus group, the audio-video recordings

were transcribed, and I conducted a thematic analysis regarding the issue of academic writing

support that emerged from the focus group.

	Instructor Code	Faculty or departments	Province
Group 1	FG1	Modern Language	Ontario
	FG3	Education	Prince Edward Island
	FG8	Social Work	Ontario
Group 2	FG2	Education	Alberta
	FG4	Second Language Teaching	Nova Scotia
	FG9	Education	Quebec
Group 3	FG6	Education	Quebec
	FG10	Nursing	Manitoba
Group 4	FG5	Education	Quebec
	FG7	Education	Quebec
	FG11	Nursing	Manitoba

Table2: Faculties and provinces of focus group participants

3.5. Data Analysis

For the survey responses, I used descriptive statistics to present the general trend of faculty instructors' views of their international EL2 students' writing and behaviors of supporting students' writing. These descriptive statistics drew from the data generated by questions asking for the participants' backgrounds, their perspectives on their international EL2 students' writing, their practices of supporting students' writing, and their challenges of providing this support. I deployed the software SPSS to code and report their answers. By exporting the data from the Sogo Survey to SPSS, I selected the data from questions1 to 3, questions 9 to 14, questions 17, 20 and 21, and set the numeric and string variables for these questions. Then I created frequency tables and bar charts for these nominal and ordinal data.

For focus group responses, I used the thematic analysis to find out the in-depth information of faculty instructors' academic writing support for their international EL2 students. "Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (themes) within data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.79). In thematic analysis, in order to answer research questions, qualitative data is coded and different themes emerge from the data through the process of coding (Clarke & Braun, 2017). "A theme refers to a specific pattern of meaning found in the data." (Joffe, 2012, p.209). Themes are used to address research questions and they are summarized from the repetitive answers that participants covered. A theme "contains codes that have a common point of reference and has a high degree of generality that unifies ideas regarding the subject of inquiry" (Vaismoradi, et al., p.101). Therefore, themes manifest the participants' experience or perspectives in the qualitative data and address the core of research questions.

In this study, the qualitative data concerning international EL2 students' academic writing were colour coded and analyzed. The two research questions guided the analysis of the

qualitative data. I firstly read through the focus group transcripts and colour coded and grouped

relevant information under each research question in a Word document. I re-read these

transcripts multiple times in order to ensure an effective analysis. Themes were inductively

summarized from the participants' responses regarding the academic writing issues. I generated

themes based on two standards: the first was that a theme had to be spoken about by multiple

participants. Secondly, a deep analysis of the transcript's content was required in order to avoid

incorrect or surface-level themes: the frequent use of a particular word across participants did not

necessarily constitute a theme. For example, in the focus groups, "plagiarism" was frequently

discussed, but it was not a theme because participants further explained the reason behind

plagiarism; that is, the pattern that emerged was that instructors believed that plagiarism was

strongly influenced by culture, which demonstrated their understanding of students' writing

difficulties. In this case, the theme was not "plagiarism" but instead "faculty instructors'

sympathetic attitude to international EL2 students' writing difficulties".

This chapter introduced how the participants were recruited and how this study used

mixed methods approach to analyze the data regarding international EL2 students' academic

writing issues. It also explained the rationale behind the survey questions and how thematic

analysis was employed to interpret the focus group responses. Finally, the focus group responses

were compared to and merged with relevant survey responses. The findings will be summarized

in the next chapter, Results.

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Chapter 4

Results

This chapter first introduces the participants' background information, then reports on the quantitative and qualitative analysis based on the participants' responses to the survey and focus group questions. Aside from the background information presented in 4.1, results are organized according to the two research questions which addressed (1) faculty instructors' perspectives on international EL2 students' academic writing, (2) faculty instructors' academic writing support for international EL2 students, and (3) their challenges in providing this writing support. These three headings include results from both the survey and focus group responses. For each heading, survey responses are presented first, followed by a presentation of themes that emerged from the focus group analysis.

4.1. Background Information of the Participants

Survey Responses

In the survey, three questions addressed the instructors' profiles including how long they had been teaching, what faculties they taught in, and what percentage of their students were international EL2 students. Question 1 was a multiple-choice question asking the number of years that the faculty instructors had taught (see Table 3). The largest group was made up of instructors who had been teaching for more than ten years at universities, covering 50.70% of the total 67 instructors. The second largest group, 1-5 years' teaching experience, represented 22.4% of participants followed by instructors who had 5-10 years' experience (17.9%), and instructors who had been teaching for 0 to one year at universities (9%).

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Number of Years Teaching	Frequency	Percent
0-1 year	6	9.00%
1-5 years	15	22.40%
5-10 years	12	17.90%
more than 10 years	34	50.70%
Total	67	100.00%

Table 3: "How long have you been teaching university courses?"

Question 2 was an open-ended question about faculty instructors' academic field (see Table 1). A total of 67 faculty instructors answered this question, but the participants responded to this question differently: some of the participants clearly wrote their specific academic fields, such as business or medicine, while others referred to their faculties (e.g., Arts and Sciences) without specifically demonstrating what academic fields they worked in. This generated a problem in that some of the faculties summarized from the answers were overlapping. Based on the data, instructors from Education departments accounted for the largest percentage (25.40%), followed by instructors who taught in the faculties of Economics and Business, taking up 14.90%. Instructors from the faculty of Medicine and Nursing had the same percentage of representation as the ones from the faculty of Arts and Humanities, at 13.40% each. Moreover, instructors coming from the faculties of Science and Engineering each constituted 8.90%.

	Frequency	Percent
Arts and Humanities	9	13.40%
Economics and business	10	14.90%
Arts and Science	5	7.60%
Education	17	25.40%
Medicine and Nursing	9	13.40%
Science	6	8.90%
Engineering	6	8.90%
Applied sciences	4	6.00%
Test	1	1.50%
Total	67	100.00%

Table 1: "In what faculty or faculties do you teach?"

Question 3 was a multiple-choice question asking the percentage of international EL2 students enrolled in their academic courses (see Table 4). Sixty-six participants answered this question, and 18 (27.30%), responded that the number of international EL2 students in their courses varied by course or by year. Another two large groups of the instructors reported that the percentage of their international EL2 students in their classes ranged from 11-25% or 26-50%. Only nine instructors reported that international EL2 students took up more than 50% in the total number of their students, three of which claimed 76-100%.

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	Frequency	Percent
1-10%	10	15.20%
11-25%	15	22.70%
26-50%	14	21.20%
51-75%	6	9.10%
76-100%	3	4.50%
It depends on the class	18	27.30%
Total	66	100.00%

Table 4: The average percentage of international EL2 students in the classes that faculty instructors teach.

Focus Group Responses

In the qualitative data, 11 instructors from different universities across Canada working in the faculties of Education, Social Work, Modern Language, and Nursing participated in the focus groups. The universities where they taught were not presented here to maintain confidentiality. The participants' names were coded as FG1 to FG11(see Table 2).

	Instructor Code	Faculty or departments	Province
Group 1	FG1	Modern Language	Ontario
	FG3	Education	Prince Edward Island
	FG8	Social Work	Ontario
Group 2	FG2	Education	Alberta
	FG4	Second Language Teaching	Nova Scotia
	FG9	Education	Quebec
Group 3	FG6	Education	Quebec
	FG10	Nursing	Manitoba
Group 4	FG5	Education	Quebec
	FG7	Education	Quebec
	FG11	Nursing	Manitoba

Table2: Faculties and universities of focus group participants

The instructors' background information is important to consider in relation to their opinions on their students' writing performance and their practices of writing support. The focus groups also asked how long the course instructors had been teaching and the average percentage of international EL2 students in their academic courses (see Table 5). Overall, these instructors' teaching experience ranged from one to thirty years. Five of these 11 instructors (FG1, FG4, FG5, FG6, and FG7) reported they had been teaching for 10 or more than 10 years, while three of them (FG2, FG8, and FG11) had been teaching for one to two years. Finally, two instructors (FG9 and FG10) demonstrated they had three to four years' university teaching, and one instructor (FG3) did not directly answer. In addition, international EL2 students made up

different percentages of the total students in these instructors' courses, but three of them did not

indicate the specific percentage of the international students in their academic courses.

	Instructor	Years of teaching	Percentage of international students
Group1	FG1	More than 10 years	Not indicated
	FG3	Not indicated	95%
	FG8	2 years	Not indicated
Group 2	FG2	1 year	20%
	FG4	More than 10 years	30%
	FG9	4 years	80%
Group 3	FG6	30 years	10-15%
	FG10	3 years	50%
Group 4	FG5	10 years	50%
	FG7	More than 10 years	Not indicated
	FG11	1.5 years	20%

Table 5: Years of teaching and the percentage of international students in the instructors'
academic courses

4.2. Faculty Instructors' Perspectives on International EL2 Students' Writing Performance

Survey Responses

Survey items from 9 to 14 asked participants how they rated their international EL2

students' writing in comparison with domestic EL1 students.

Item 9 sought instructors' opinions on international EL2 students' overall writing

performance compared with domestic EL1 students in their academic courses (see Figure 1).

Among the total 67 participants, 65 responded to this 5-scale Likert item: international EL2

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students have 1) a lot more difficulty, 2) more difficulty, 3) a similar amount of difficulty, 4) less

difficulty, and 5) a lot less difficulty with academic writing. Thirty-three participants or 49.30%

of the responses, thought their international EL2 students have more difficulty with academic

writing. 23.90% stated that their EL2 students have a lot more difficulty, and 22.40% of these

instructors stated that their international EL2 students have a similar amount of difficulty with

academic writing respectively. Only one participant, accounting for 1.50% of responses, thought

international students have less difficulty with academic writing. No one chose the last option

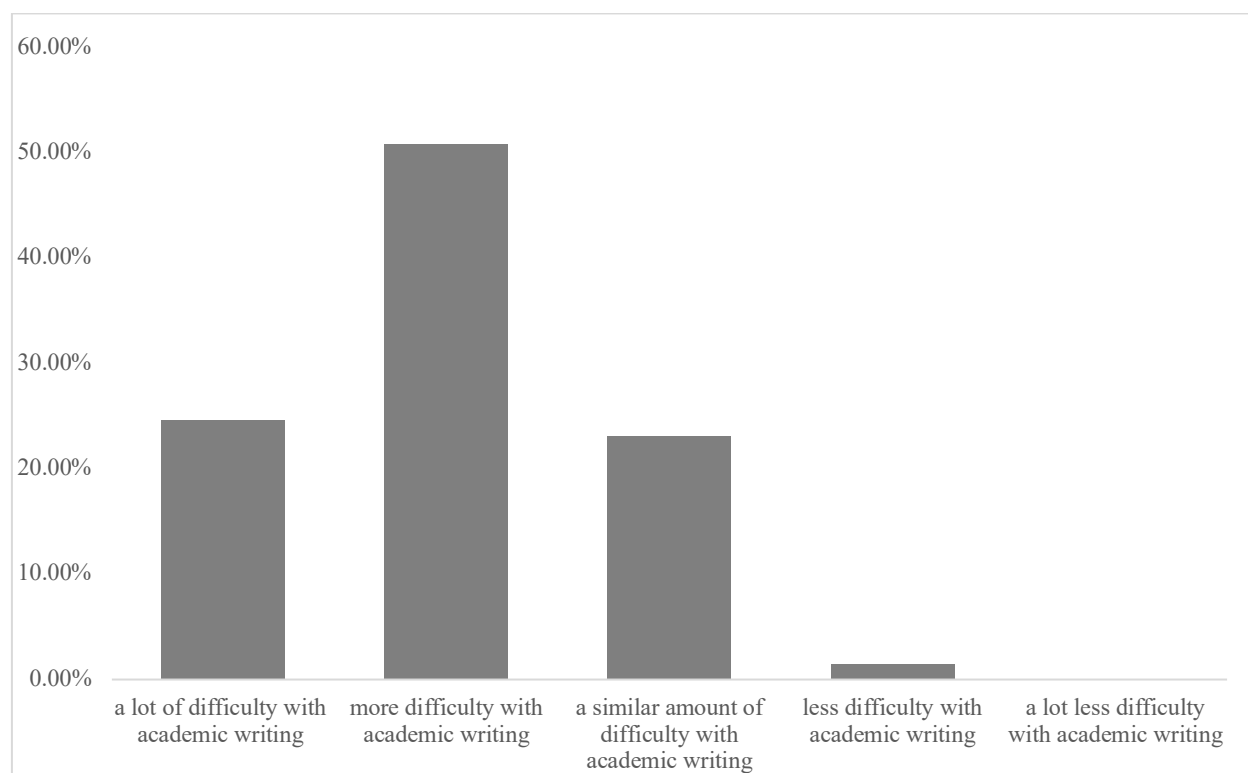that international EL2 students have a lot less difficulty with academic writing.

Figure 1: Comparison of international EL2 and domestic EL1 students' academic writing
difficulties

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Second, survey items 10 to 14 asked instructors how much difficulty their international students had with specific aspects of academic writing in terms of grammar and vocabulary, constructing cohesive arguments, synthesizing information, conforming to disciplinary conventions and citing appropriately.

In item 10, 46% of these instructors stated that their international students made more grammar and vocabulary mistakes on written assignments when compared with English native students. The second largest percentage (35.80%) demonstrated that international EL2 students made a lot more grammar and vocabulary mistakes. In contrast, 14.9% of the participants indicated that these students made a similar amount of mistakes in grammar and vocabulary, and 1.50% believed these students made fewer mistakes in grammar and vocabulary (see Figure 2). Even though this question contains five options, none of these instructors selected the fifth option (international EL2 students have far fewer mistakes in grammar/vocabulary on their written assignments).
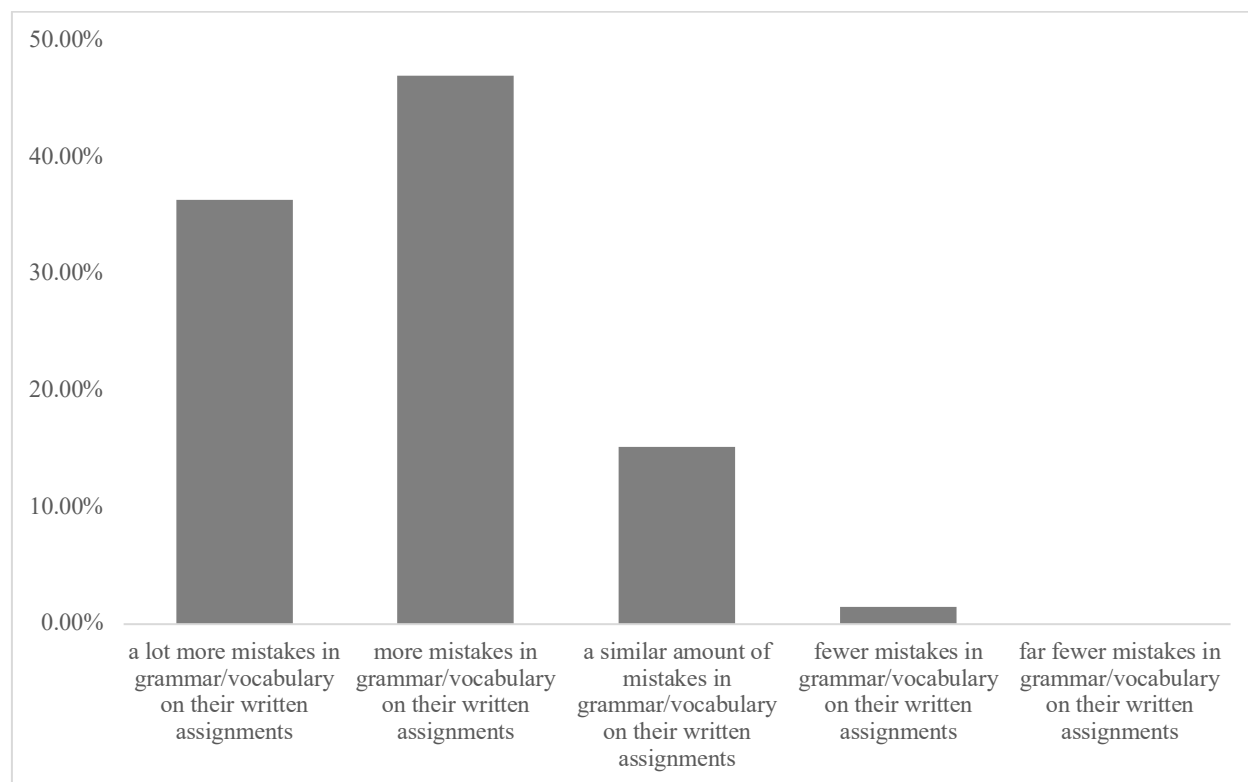
Figure 2: Comparison of grammar and vocabulary errors: international EL2 students versus domestic EL1 students

Moreover, items 11 to 14 concerned the issues of establishing cohesive arguments, synthesizing information, conforming to academic conventions and citing sources appropriately in academic writing, as the Figure 3 to 6 showed.

Specifically, question 11 asked instructors' opinions on whether their international EL2 students did well in cohesive writing (see Figure 3). 7.50% and 35.8% of the 66 instructors reported international EL2 students had a lot more and more difficulty creating cohesive arguments in writing respectively when compared with domestic EL1 students. The majority, taking up 53.70% of 66 answered instructors, believed international EL2 students had a similar amount of difficulty with cohesive writing. 35.80% of the total number reported international EL2 students had more difficulty with coherence, while only 1.50% responded that international

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EL2 students had less difficulty. Finally, no one chose the fifth choice, my international EL2

students have a lot less difficulty creating cohesive arguments when compared to students whose
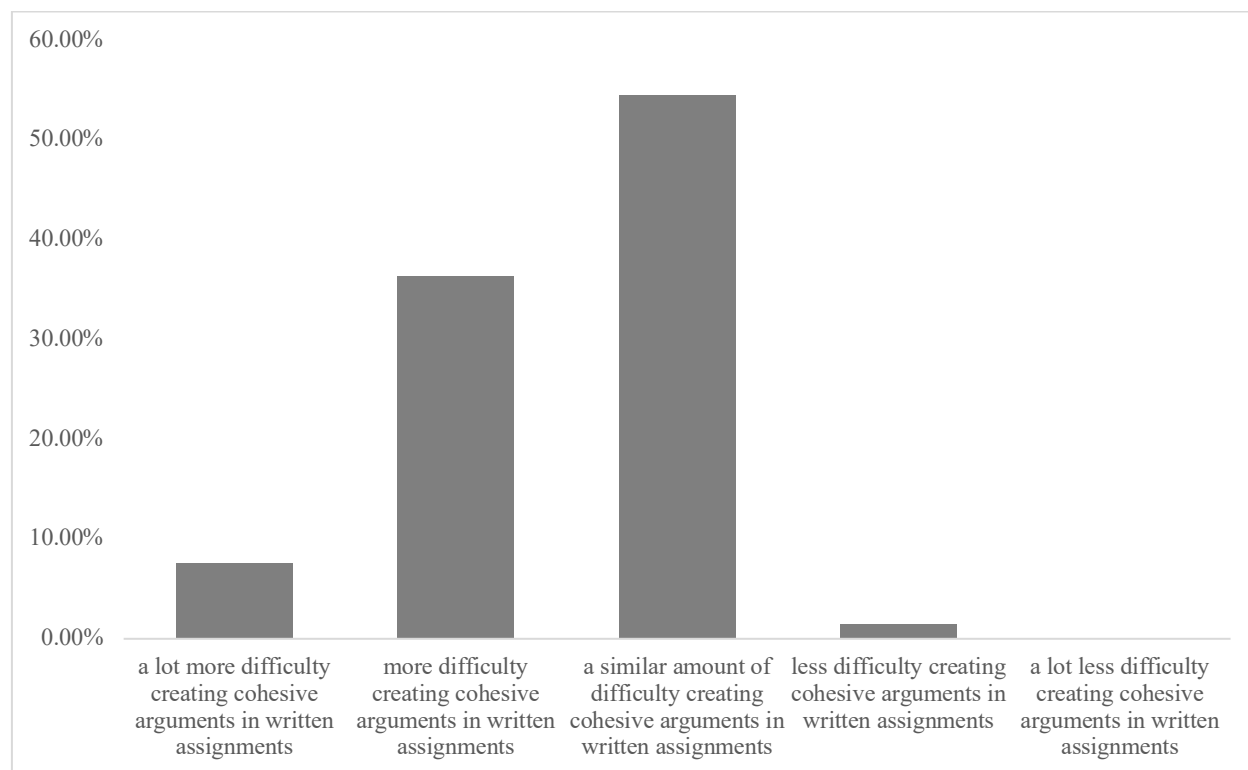
L1 is English.

Figure 3: Cohesive writing: International EL2 versus domestic EL1 students

Question 12 revealed the instructors' perspectives on their international EL2 students'

ability to synthesize different references in writing (see Figure 4). The largest percentage,

covering 50.70% of 66 responses, is the group reporting their international EL2 students have a

similar amount of difficulty synthesizing information from different sources. The second and

third largest percentages are the groups who thought international students had more difficulty

and a lot more difficulty synthesizing information from different sources, taking up 31.30% and

13.40% respectively. Only one instructor thought international students had less difficulty and

another one thought they had a lot less difficulty synthesizing information in assignments, both
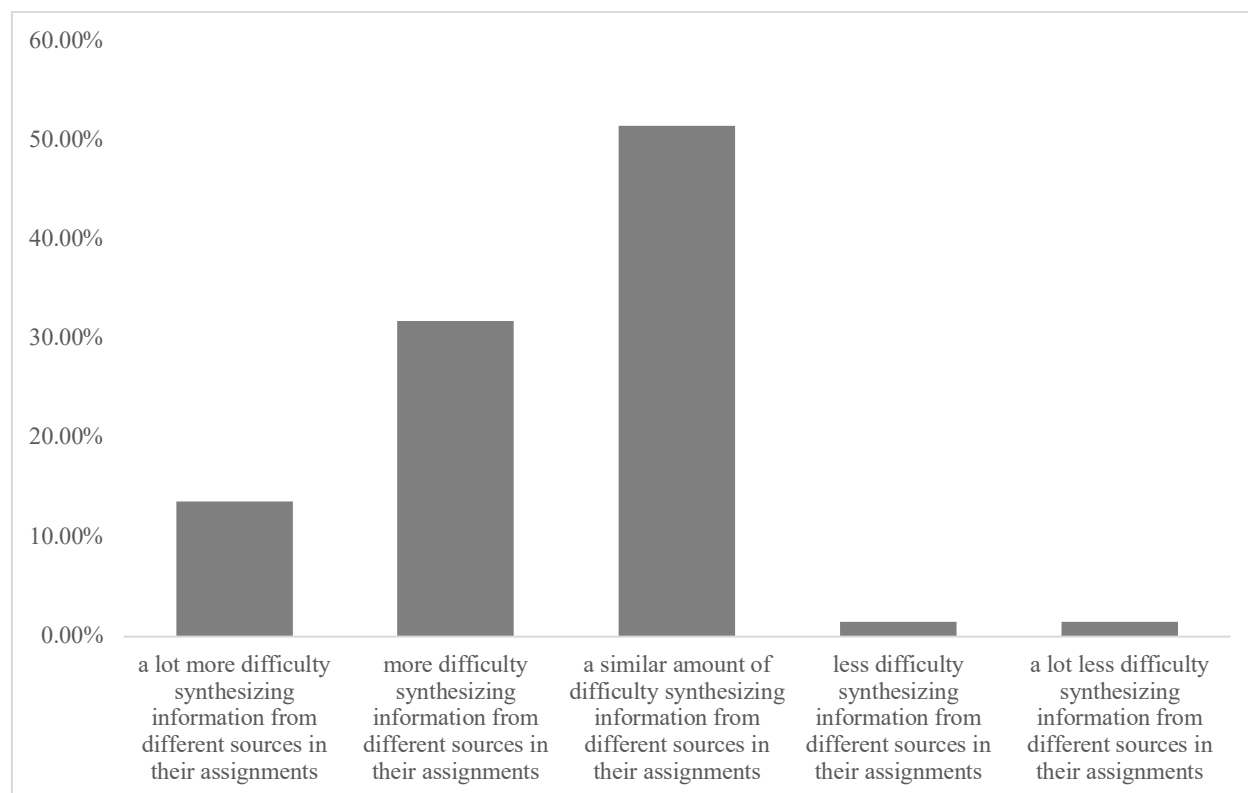
making up 1.50% each.

Figure 4: Synthesizing information: international EL2 versus domestic EL1 students

Question 13 disclosed the instructors' perspectives on their international EL2 students'

performance in following the academic writing conventions (see Figure 5). In the total 65

answers, the group of instructors who reported international EL2 students had a similar amount

of difficulty conforming to their disciplinary conventions constituted the largest percentage, at

44.08% of the total answers. 35.80% of the participants indicated that international EL2 students

had more difficulty conforming to the conventions of academic writing in their fields, and

10.40 % of the stated that these students had a lot more difficulty doing so. Only 4 instructors,

consisting of 6.00%, believed international EL2 students had less difficulty conforming to their

disciplinary conventions in writing. However, no one chose the last option, "In comparison with

students whose L1 is English, international EL2 students have a lot less difficulty conforming to

the conventions of academic writing in my field."
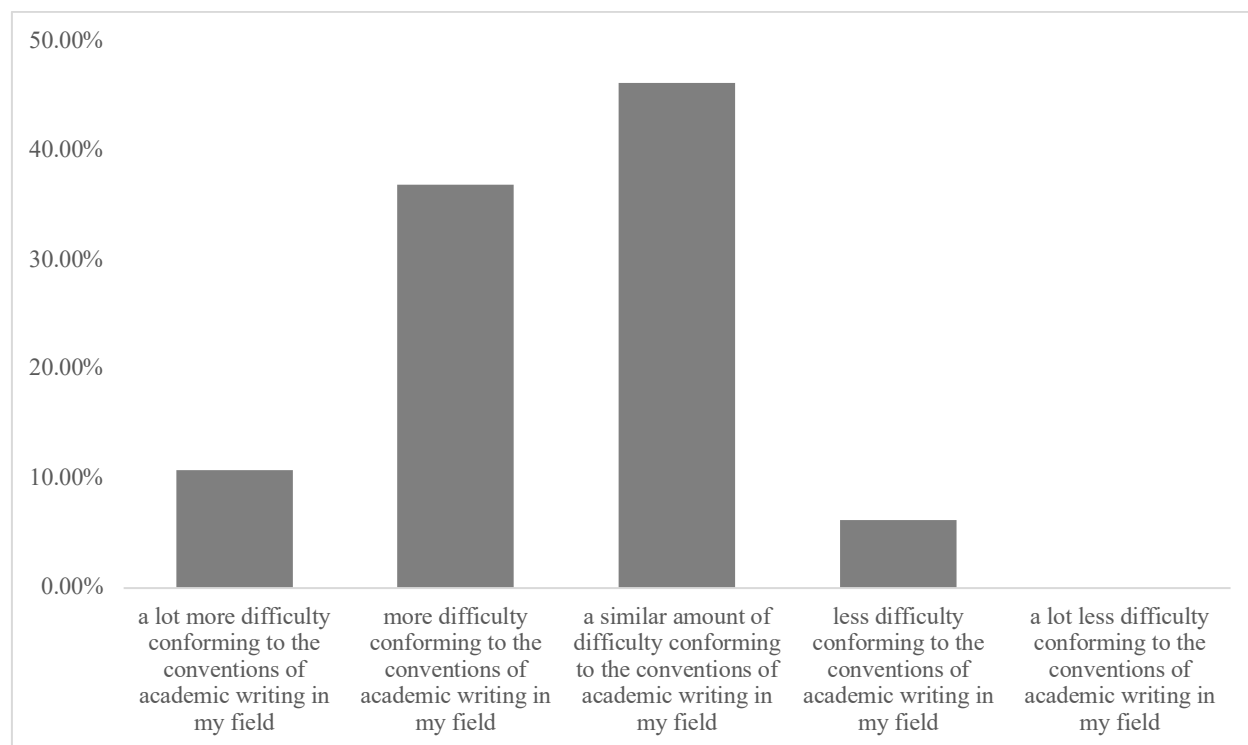
Figure 5: Conforming to the conventions of disciplinary writing: international EL2 students versus domestic EL1 students.

Question 14 asked instructors to reflect on their international EL2 students' ability to use

and cite sources in writing (see Figure 6). More than half of 65 instructors, covering 53.70%,

claimed that their international EL2 students had a similar amount of difficulty using and citing

sources appropriately in their writing in comparison with students whose L1 was English.

31.30% and 11.90% of the participants responded that international EL2 student have more

difficulty and a lot more difficulty with appropriate citation respectively. However, no one chose

the fourth and fifth choice, international EL2 students have less difficulty and a lot less difficulty

using and citing sources appropriately in their own writing.
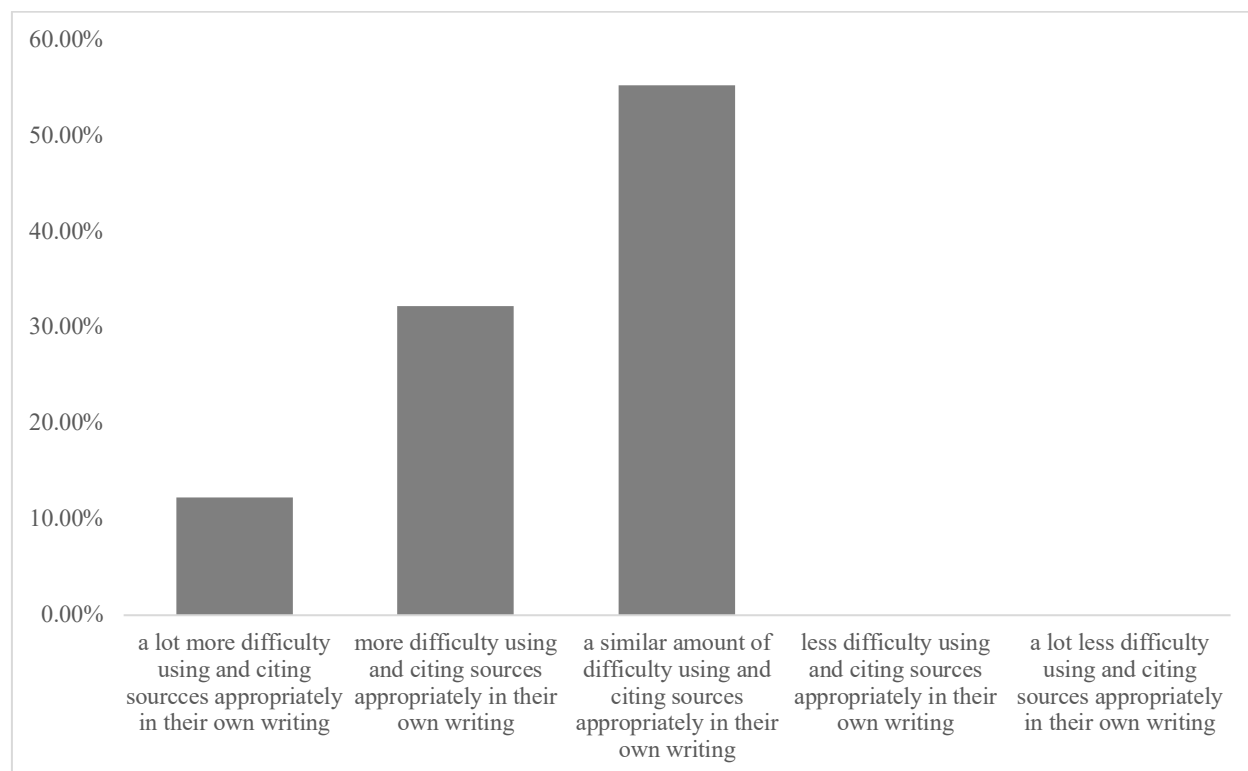
Figure 6: Using and citing sources appropriately in writing: international EL2 students versus domestic EL1 students

In summary, in questions 11 to 14, the majority chose the third option indicating international EL2 students have comparable performance in cohesive writing, synthesizing information, conforming to the disciplinary conventions, and using sources. Moreover, these questions all contained the fifth choice indicating their international students have far less difficulty with these issues in writing compared with domestic EL1 students, but no one selected this option in questions 11 to 13. Especially in question 14, no participants chose the last two options (international EL2 students have less difficulty and far less difficulty using and citing sources appropriately), which means their international EL2 students have more or a similar amount of difficulty with appropriately using and citing references in writing.

Focus Group Responses

By asking the instructors to describe their international EL2 students' overall performance, academic writing practices and writing challenges, I figured out detailed information about their perspectives on international EL2 students' writing. Three themes emerged from the group discussion: writing as a distinct area of academic literacy for international EL2 students, faculty instructors' sympathetic attitude toward students' situations, and their problem-focused perspective on international EL2 students' writing.

4.2.1. Writing as a Distinct Area of Academic Literacy for International EL2 Students.

Since writing is a part of academic literacy and this current study draw the data from a larger project related to the issue of academic literacy, the instructors cannot comment on their students' writing without mentioning their students' overall performance. Thus, when answering the questions of international EL2 students' writing practice, the instructors first expressed their opinions on the students' overall academic performance and then specifically reported the students' writing issues. Most of the participants in the focus groups stated that international EL2 students perform well in their academic courses, including their writing performance. Overall, instructors demonstrated positive attitudes towards their international EL2 students and confirmed their engagement and contribution in courses.

> FG2: … I felt the students that were more vocal, like, some of the strongest students in the class and the most engaged ones were those students from abroad. And so for those ones, I feel like those students had learned strategies or had a personality or whatever that made them very confident and able to seek resources that they needed, and they were not shy to ask me for extra help or come up to me after class to ask questions about the assignments.

> FG3: The students' performance in the class... They all did fairly well.

> FG6: Yes, the performance of international students is comparable to all students. They do well on written assignments.

FG8: So I would describe their performance as above the average.

However, some instructors pointed out that their international EL2 students' writing

performance is varied.

FG4: In terms of the students' performance, I suppose generally speaking, I find that depends on the content knowledge and the background knowledge the students are coming in with. So regardless of whether they're international or domestic, if they don't have a lot of background knowledge of the subject that they're studying, then they tend to have a very superficial kind of answer, whether they're writing, presenting, or anything.

FG5: I think it's varied in terms of their language, like depending on their language level, but also how implicated they are in their work, how they respond to feedback. I've had students who I've given feedback or given suggestions, and we've worked back and forth, and they've done really well and other students who weren't able to do that, and weren't able to do as well. So I find it very varied at that level as well.

FG7: And their, their writing is a different story. But it depends on a lot on their previous background.

In summary, many instructors recognized their international EL2 students' effort in

academic learning, but some thought their students' writing performance was varied because

these students have different previous educational backgrounds.

4.2.2. Faculty Instructors' Sympathetic Attitude to International EL2 Students'

Writing Difficulties

Even though the majority of participants pointed out that international EL2 students

experience a diverse range of challenges in writing, three of them (FG3, FG4, FG6) showed they

understood their students' situation. One instructor (FG3) discussed her respect for what the

students were doing, and she emphasized their pre-existing linguistic knowledge rather than

focusing on their lack of competence in English.

FG3: I had students apologizing to me for their English, for their written English, when English was their fourth and fifth language. And it is mind boggling that they feel the need to apologize when they're already picking up a fifth language.

In addition, some instructors attempted to put themselves in the place of their international EL2 students and identified some reasons behind these students' writing difficulties. They named the students' different cultural and educational backgrounds as the main causes for their academic writing challenges. Specifically, instructor FG6 pointed out that the content in some academic courses has little to do with international EL2 students' own culture, meaning that it's difficult for them to make connections with their previous experiences when integrating their own opinions into their writing. FG6 took one of his courses, Education Policy, as an example: the policies he instructed in the course are mostly related to the Canadian education system involving local history and political development in Quebec. He argued that international EL2 students who did not grow up in this context feel little connection to the content.

> FG6: Sometimes international students find cultural differences to be challenging. And allow me briefly to elaborate. The courses I teach mostly, well, the educational policy focuses on Quebec educational policy. And it goes without saying that in many ways, we do things very differently, very uniquely in Quebec. So this poses a bit of a challenge, because most of our students, they're either from Quebec, or they're from Canada. So you know, there's, there's, there's some cultural connection to their educational experience in what they're learning. The courses that I teach on pedagogy, again, it's pedagogy based on the Quebec education program. So again, the focus tends to be Quebec, and there they find some difficulty because they're trying to make sense of a system that is relatively foreign to them.

In addition, two instructors (FG3, FG4) claimed that cultural differences are related to students plagiarising. They reflected that students may not realize that they are plagiarizing because, in their culture, the way of borrowing, referring to or citing a text is distinct from conventions used in western academic culture.

> FG3: … we did notice a lot of the plagiarism like had been mentioned. But what we found was it was coming from certain areas. And when we asked about it, we were told it was considered a compliment and not plagiarism.

> FG4: Um, I suppose generally speaking, it's something that we're more conscious of because plagiarism tends to be a bit more cultural experience. Well, should I say, not necessarily but referencing and citations tend to be way more cultural? ......What they're taught in their home institutions, what's considered to be okay practice is not necessarily how we would see it in the western side.

Apart from cultural issues, FG4 pointed out that international EL2 students' writing performance also depends on their previous content knowledge and prior backgrounds. This idea was extended by another instructor FG7 who thought that international EL2 students' previous educational or social backgrounds impacted their writing quality. For example, some students had less exposure to English when they studied in their own countries and grew up with learning styles that were different. She further added that in her program the knowledge that some students had previously acquired did not support the knowledge targeted in the programs.

> FG7: …… they have more difficulties just because of the nature of their exposure to English and the fact that they have usually, unless they've had the opportunity to travel, which is not everybody, they've usually been in, in English speaking environments, where everybody was a Chinese first language speaker……. They've, I mean, some of them, you know, have done kind of mini theses on Shakespeare and Milton and stuff like that, but that doesn't help them with Applied Linguistics literature.

4.2.3 Faculty instructors' Problem-Focused Perspective on International EL2 Students' Writing.

As discussed above, the instructors frequently made general positive or at least neutral statements about their international EL2 students' writing, and also demonstrated their sympathetic understanding of these students' situation. However, when questioned further about specific aspects of the writing (e.g., citing sources or cohesiveness), they shifted towards a problem orientation and did not mention the positive aspects of international EL2 student writers. This implies that the instructors may have viewed their international EL2 students' writing performance as mainly problematic. The instructors presented many writing issues that

international EL2 students face, including their linguistic errors, textual organization and citing

sources.

Regarding the language proficiency issue, four instructors (FG5, FG11, FG2, FG9)

reported that their students' L2 proficiency levels were linked to a greater amount of grammar

mistakes (FG2), disorganized sentence structures (FG11), and problems with paraphrasing in

writing (FG9).

> FG5: …many of them who struggle with the language. It's basic writing skills, basic writing of an essay that they have a hard time with.

> FG11: …I do notice as well, the written structure of essays lacks a little bit sometimes. And you know, I don't know if it's because I teach in the undergraduate program….

> FG2: I think that I would have seen it the most in writing, that written assignments, I would see grammar mistakes, but or, but I mean, yeah, some, a lot of undergrad work has grammar mistakes, even if it's not from an international student.

> FG9: And in terms of the assignments, maybe it's related, …, is they use more quotations than paraphrasing the quotations, whereas domestic students are good at paraphrasing the quotes.

In terms of textual issues in writing, one instructor (FG1) revealed international EL2

students had problems in supporting arguments with sources, and three (FG3, FG4, FG8) showed

these students had the problem of plagiarism.

> FG1: …the idea of making a claim and then supporting that claim with some sort of outside research, to give it a little bit more substance, that's one area of it and then also, the, the formatting piece too, so correctly formatting and integrating research into a report. And, and also on a higher at a higher level, like extending those ideas.

> FG8: I don't know why, but there's a lot of plagiarism in the class.

In addition, one instructor pointed out that international EL2 students had difficulty

composing critical writing.

> FG9: …one difficulty that they face is how to critically involve the content of the material that we studied together.

4.3 Faculty Instructors' Academic Writing Support

Survey Responses

Before understanding what writing support faculty instructors provided to their international EL2 students, we wanted to know whether they would like to provide that support in the first place. Question17 was a Likert scale item in which faculty instructors were asked to respond to the statement, "I intentionally provide additional academic support to my international EL2 students." (see Figure 7).

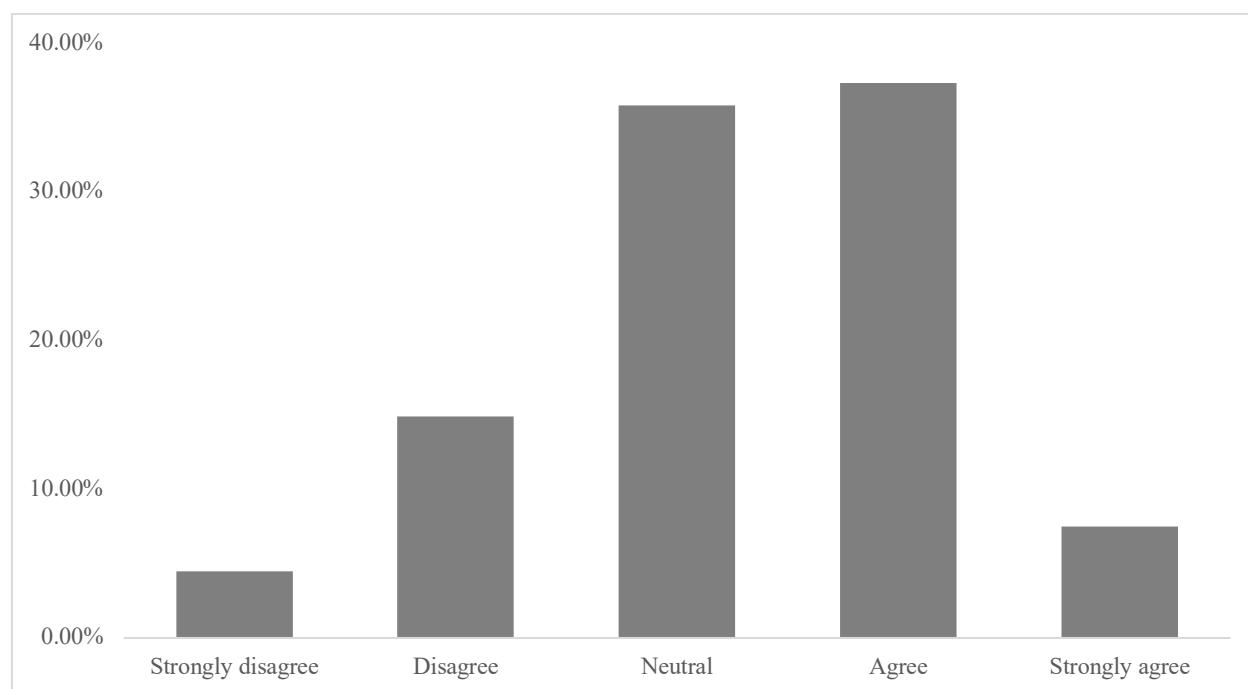*Figure 7:* "I intentionally provide international EL2 students with additional academic support."

44.80% of 67 responses showed instructors agreed (37.30%) and strongly agreed (7.50%) with the statement that they intentionally provide additional academic support, while 19.40% of them disagreed (14.90%) and strongly disagreed (4.50%). Still, 35.80% of the instructors answered neutral to this statement.

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Participants who replied neutral, agree or strongly agree in question 17 were asked to answer question 20, a check-all question with 7 choices asking participants what kind of academic support they provided for their international EL2 students on written assignments (see Figure 8). The most popular choice was "I offer corrections and explanations of the content knowledge students have misunderstood" accounting for 19.40%. The second most widely selected, taking up 18.90%, was that instructors explained their expectations and offered examples before assigning their students written tasks. The next most widely selected choice, taking up 17%, was "I offer help on how to properly cite academic sources". Two choices possessed the same percentage (16%) among different kinds of academic support; that is, instructors helped their students compose cohesive writing and corrected their students' errors in grammar and vocabulary. The least frequently selected answer for instructors was "I offer suggestions on how to summarize and criticize academic references." According to the data, instructors emphasized the importance of the content knowledge in students' writing as well as explaining expectations on students' written assignments.
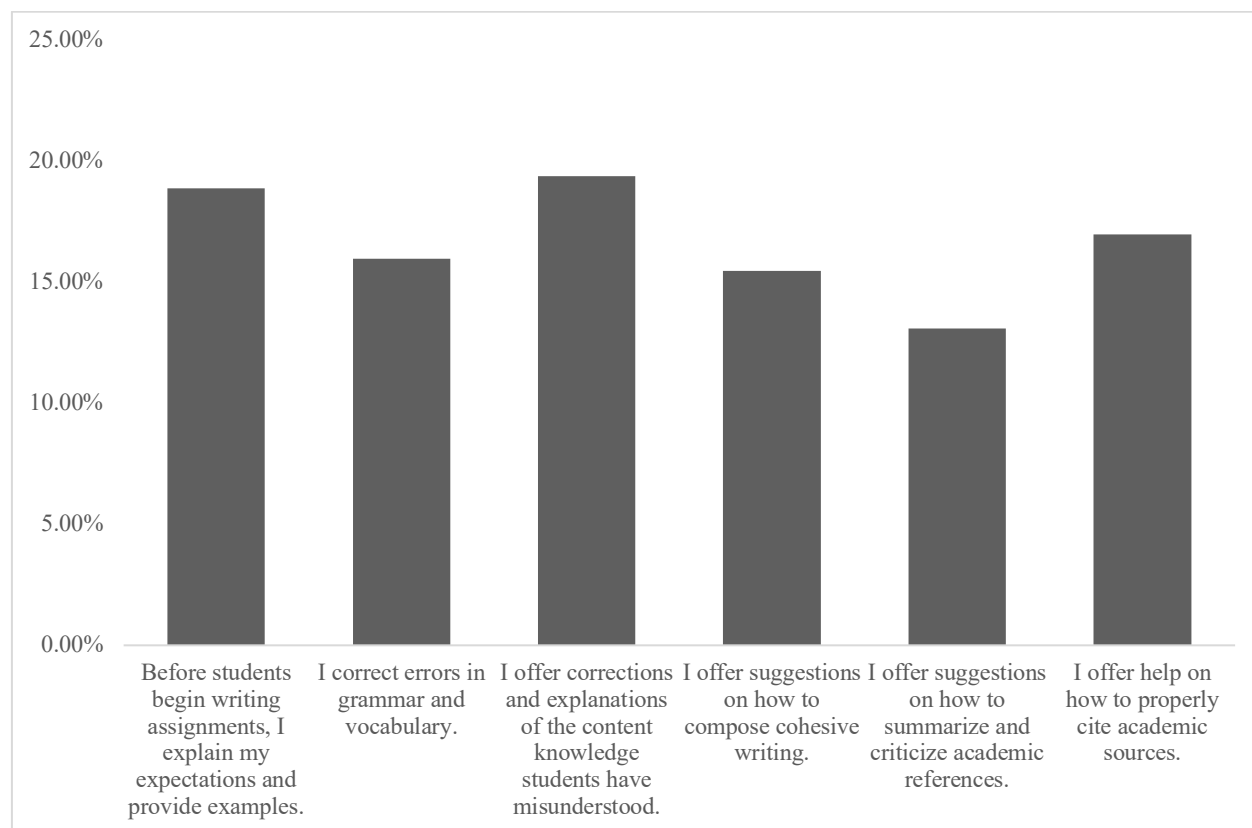
Figure 8: Faculty instructors' academic writing support

The participants who disagreed and strongly disagreed with the statement that they provided international EL2 students' academic support were led to answer question 21, which will be discussed in the next sub-section (4.4. Faculty instructors' challenges of supporting their international EL2 students).

Focus Group Responses

In the focus group discussions, the instructors stated that they provided the same writing support no matter whether their students were international or domestic students. However, participants' academic backgrounds had an impact on the writing support they provided. The following two themes (no differentiated writing support for international EL2 students and faculty instructors' academic backgrounds influence their writing support) will describe what

general writing support they offered and how their academic backgrounds influence their writing

support.

4.3.1. No Differentiated Writing Support for International EL2 Students

Many instructors demonstrated that they did not offer differentiated instruction for their

international EL2 students and that they offered the same writing support to all students. In

general, seven instructors stated that they explained written assignments and six offered feedback

on students' writing, while only one applied a specific writing pedagogy and two deployed

online learning tools into their teaching.

4.3.1.1 Explanation on written assignments.

Seven of the faculty instructors (FG1, FG2, FG3, FG5, FG6, FG8, and FG10) claimed

that they provided detailed explanations of written assignments. Since they noticed that their

international EL2 students' different cultural and educational backgrounds caused unfamiliarity

with their current content and program requirements, many instructors also offered examples and

rubrics to make sure their international EL2 students understood the criteria and expectation of

each assignment.

> FG2: …preparing very detailed rubrics and detailed instructions and giving examples as much as I could of things in class like trying, like really going over the assignments and taking time to make sure that they didn't have questions, that they understood what to expect

> FG3: And I ask students from year to year if I can collect their work to show the students the next year, like I remove the name and stuff. But I like to have examples to show the students because they can see what the other ones did.

> FG5: …especially early in the semester so they know more clearly what my expectations are …… I'm going to look into that.

> FG6: clear, detailed course expectations, I think is very important. Also, recognizing that international students have a different academic and cultural background……rubrics are provided, referencing styles are outlined, as much information as possible.

> FG8: I provide the template. So like, it's always the same for my two classes, it's been the same.

Another instructor (FG10) spent time making students understand the meaning of each assigned task. Since he related these assignments to different purposes, such as improving students' creativity and critical thinking, he hoped his clear explanations of these assignments would help them achieve the learning goals and encourage students to effectively compose writing.

> FG10: And I always emphasize no matter what I say, no matter how, what your perceptions, I don't want the assignment to be a cookie cutter. I don't want that to be something that is a regurgitated nature or something that you just repeat my words, I want you to be creative, kind of focused, …… So whatever I can do to be clear with my expectation that we're going to ease their anxieties and make them perform better, I strive to do.

4.3.1.2 Feedback.

Three of the instructors (FG1, FG6, and FG8) mentioned they provided oral or written feedback on students' work.

> FG6: I have met and will meet with students and support their academic writing, like FG10, I will review a draft of their work and provide formative feedback.
>
> FG8: I share mostly written feedback on the content structure. For the language, if there's too many mistakes, I'm just going to suggest to the student to go, like, to the Academic Writing Center, provide that much feedback on language.
>
> FG1: I do focus on the content and the language and the structure for sure. Sometimes students still need help with like, you know, introductions and conclusions and all that. So yeah, kind of all of the different aspects come up. This, this level of student isn't, doesn't struggle too much, but yeah. I guess a little bit of everything.

In addition to the written feedback, one instructor (FG7) observed audio feedback provides more convenience for her work and opportunities to interact with her students. In her

opinion, written feedback consumes too much of her time and some students even do not read

them carefully.

> FG7: If I take someone's piece of writing, and I point out to them every single place where I think that they did something that was not standard English I want them to know, it takes hours and hours and hours. And I strongly suspect that nobody looks at the feedback. So I no longer do written feedback at all, which is like in complete contrast to what both of you said. What I do now is I do audio feedback. So I look at their, whether it's a term paper, or shorter piece or something, and I speak to them, and our system lets us record that. And you know, it goes right into their, the learning management system […] and they can listen to it by clicking.

Moreover, some instructors (FG3 and FG11) offered continuous feedback on students'

work. FG11 asked her students to submit a pre-written work before the final writing. After

reading students' prewriting, she went back to students and asked them to clarify the points that

she found unclear. These steps finally helped her students to strengthen writing abilities: students

understood their own writing problems and knew how to avoid the same problems in the future.

> FG11: The other things that I've done as well, to answer some of the other questions is, I've also pre-reviewed papers. So they can submit a pre written paper, like a draft form. And I can provide feedback, and they can fine tune it for the final draft. I won't go through, you know, fully mark it, but kind of just give a glance over.

Similarly, FG3 kept providing continuous feedback both on content and language

problems. To address plagiarism, she clearly explained to her students the boundary between

citing and "stealing" a text.

> FG3: I would provide feedback, we would have a meeting like a zoom meeting or Google meet, then they would go back and create or edit that round, then it would come back for a second, a third and a fourth round. ……And there was quite a discussion over that whether it is creating something new, or if they're just stealing from somebody else. But we had to set the boundaries very strictly on what was plagiarism and what wasn't. Because we found that the students were copying quotes directly, like you could take the quote, search the websites and find it. And we had to go back with the feedback and show them this has to be cited, you can't do this. But once that was pointed out by about the second assignment, they were able to realize and quote those ones.

4.3.1.3 Writing Pedagogies and Practices that Facilitate Students' Writing During or After the Course

When we asked participants if they knew about or used any writing pedagogies during or after the course delivery to help with their students' writing development, one instructor expressed stated that he used writing pedagogies. This instructor (FG6) mentioned seven specific procedures (planning, drafting, sharing, critiquing, revising, editing and final writing) of a writing pedagogy he applied in the course. Though he was not aware of the official title of this method, it indicated the idea of The Writing Process approach (Hayes & Flower, 1980). He deployed sequential steps stressing that writing actually is the last thing students need to do, before which students are required to prepare many things including searching and reading sources, synthesizing and revising information, and continuous editing.

> FG6: I recommend this to all students. In other words, writing is the last stage, because so much preparatory work goes into writing. And I find that this is an effective framework, because it not only emphasizes the importance of preparing, but also the importance of sharing, comparing, collaborating. And, of course, revising and editing before establishing a final written product.

Apart from the writing pedagogy, instructor (FG4) talked about the idea of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) that he studied while getting his master degree. He applied this idea as a general approach to supporting students in university classrooms. SFL is a functional grammar that connects meaning with linguistic form and demonstrates how expression of linguistic form and function are constrained by different contexts (Schleppegrell, 2004). FG4 stressed the importance of demonstrating the relevance of course concepts and readings to international EL2 students. By using Microsoft OneNote, he shared articles with his students, allowing them to translate some sections of the reading and even comment on these articles with their own languages. Meanwhile, he asked his international students to identify verbs and

subjects in each sentence and explained how they can communicate with the subject and how

they can apply different vocabulary to talk about their discipline. He explicitly linked grammar

with the exact contents in the course, thereby emphasizing how international EL2 students can

use the learned expression to describe their contents.

> FG12: ……they can identify verbs, which is a really good activity for learners in terms of identifying the different verbs of different subjects. So how do you communicate your subjects? How do you talk about your discipline, and just by turning on the verbs of a text that may be in geography, or maybe in teaching, teacher education, just the use of expressing their content, I think is kind of really neat.

FG4 not only proposed an inspiring strategy of relating content to linguistic form, but

also used digital technology, Microsoft OneNote, to help with students' writing. Microsoft

OneNote is a digital learning tool applied in the course to understand readings and present

students' written comments. Similarly, instructor FG7 deployed Perusall, another digital learning

tool, to support students' writing. She explained that Perusall provided a platform for everyone in

the course to share perspectives and write comments on the course reading. In this case, she can

not only have a deep understanding of her students' ideas but also comment on her students'

writing at the same time.

> FG7: there's this tool called Perusall, …... So the tool is integrated into the course website and the students open the reading. And they are required to make comments in a certain way or respond to questions ……. And they have to do that in writing, obviously, because, you know, that's the whole, that's the way it works. And I think that that makes a difference for students who, for the second language students, you know, you can think about what it is you want to write, and you can work it out and make sure that you've edited it, and it's an it's a short comment of like, you know, two or three lines. …… it's a short piece of writing in response to a particular stimulus that it's not very difficult to get right just technically, and at the level of ideas, which is what we're looking for, they're all responding to each other's comments. So one of my PhD students is going to piggyback on my use of Perusall this fall…... She's interested in the writing and the effectiveness or not of the Perusall tool as a way to help them feel that they're more proficient academic writers.

In contrast, many of the instructors did not hear of or use any writing pedagogies, so they answered this question in a different way. That is, they just described different activities they organized in the course to support students' writing instead of directly explaining their pedagogies used in the course. For example, FG1 and FG9 both asked students to do peer review and feedback, which they found very beneficial to improve students' writing, while FG10 asked students to invite him to join in their zoom meeting during the process of completing assignments.

> FG1: I don't know if this is a pedagogy but like, we do try to really highlight collaboration and like peer support and that kind of thing. So, you know, repeated and ongoing feedback in different ways.

> FG10: So I would ask my students to invite me and this pandemic has opened a lot of different creative doors and opportunity, I would say, Please invite me to your zoom meeting to MST meeting to your WebEx meeting, invite me I wanna, I want you to be present while you're doing a team project with your study group. So that can echo among your peers. So you can reflect, we can debrief.

Furthermore, one instructor (FG3) even spent time before the course to meet with each student in order to know their students' English level. If she found the students' English proficiency to be lower than expected, she would change the articles of the course and written assignments, and rearrange something suitable for students in order to meet students' learning needs.

> FG3: So I did a pre interview before we started classes, and I could get a rough estimate of their English at that point. And I changed the syllabus, like we had articles.

4.3.2. Faculty Instructors' Academic Backgrounds Influence Their Writing Support

As illustrated above, most faculty instructors provided feedback on their students' written assignment as their main support. However, they differed based on whether they offered feedback on both language and content. Many instructors (FG5, FG6, FG8, FG9, FG10, FG11)

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stated that they only provided feedback on the content of their disciplinary courses, while a few

of them (FG1, FG3, FG4) noted that they offered both content and language feedback.

The group offering both content and language support mainly specialized in language

teaching or language teacher training, such as FG1 and FG4. They either taught international

EL2 students in the field of Teaching English as a Foreign Language or worked with a cohort of

international students; their specialization and working responsibilities may allow them to be

more aware of the role that language played in their content courses, thus prompting them to

offer more support on students' language problems.

FG4: . . . . every teacher is a language teacher.

The instructors in STEM fields like nursing, on the contrary, provided less support for

language; in these cases, practical or clinical experience took priority, so instructors may have

had less awareness of supporting their students' language needs.

> FG10: We always say the focus should not be on grades, it's in your competence. And I, in 20 years of my clinical practice, not even once a patient asked me did you have an A in anatomy or B plus in assessment that really does not matter, the humanity, the empathy, you can really, you can model the behavior, but you cannot put a grade on that. ……So when I read students' written assignments, primarily the most important things for me is the content.

4.4. Faculty Instructors' Challenges of Supporting Their International EL2 Students

Survey Responses

When participants disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement in item 17, "In my

instruction, I intentionally provide international EL2 students with additional academic support,"

they were asked to answer question 21, a check-all question with seven options aiming to

understand why instructors did not offer support (see Figure 9). The responses to this question

also reflected the instructors' challenges in providing academic writing support. Among the

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seven choices, the option of "my international students do not seek my help" possessed the

largest percentage (26.10%). In addition, "offering academic support falls outside of the scope of

my course content" and "I should treat all of my students in the same way" made up 21.70%

each. The option "I do not have sufficient time to offer help" accounted for 17.40%. On the

contrary, the least preferred options were "my international EL2 students do not require my

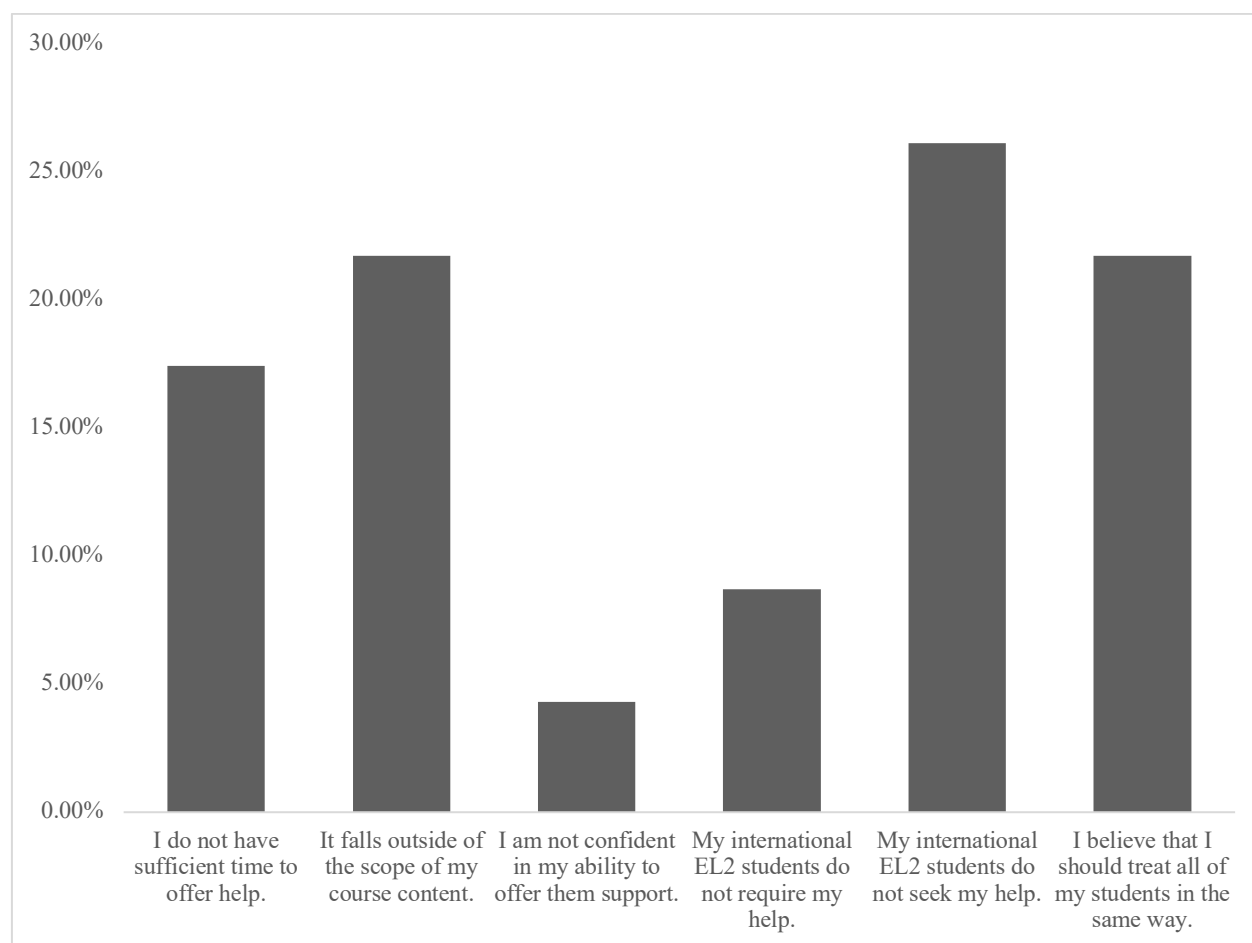help" (8.70%) and "I am not confident in my ability to offer them support" (4.30%).

Figure 9: "In my teaching, I do the following (Please check all that apply)"

Focus group responses

4.4.1 Faculty Instructors Asked for Help from Their Institutions

In the focus groups, faculty instructors presented their challenges in providing academic

writing support. First, they explained the reason why they did not provide differentiated support

for international EL2 students. That is, they wanted to be fair with all students, and providing

additional help to one special group would not be fair for the other students in the program, as

one instructor (FG8) stated.

> FG8: Because on one point, I want to be fair with, with everybody. So I feel if I'm
> taking, like specific steps towards international students, I would be like, I wouldn't be
> fair…

Also, most of them stressed that their heavy workload consumed too much of their

energy, and they had limited time to support international students in a detailed way. Still, some

expressed that they may not be equipped with effective skills to meet their students' needs.

Specifically, some instructors explained that it was logistically quite challenging to

provide detailed feedback on both the content and language of students' assignments in large

classes.

> FG10: I do not provide direct academic support just because of the sheer size of the
> classes and students have Academic Writing Center, they have International Center,
> they can obtain direct help, it's virtually not possible for me to provide direct academic
> support, what I do is provide detailed feedback. I allow students, particularly when they
> do in group work, because it's, it's really hard to do 120 students and provide individual
> feedback on a draft of the work.

> FG4: The challenge is in marking everything. That's, that's my biggest challenge,
> reading through everyone's work and getting it all marked, because obviously, the more
> you give feedback, the longer it takes.

> FG11: Time is probably the biggest factor, for sure.

Meanwhile, instructors were pressed with many other work responsibilities in addition to

instructing their students as FG1 pointed out.

> FG1: … like faculty members are so stretched, like they already are experts in their
> field. And they're already like mentoring students, graduate students, maybe. They're

> administrators, they're researchers, they're, they're like everything, they're asked to do everything.

Furthermore, since many faculty instructors emphasized the importance of understanding the content or practical skills in their academic courses, they felt guilty for sacrificing instruction time for other purposes, such as organizing peer review activities. That is, their course time was limited and they did not feel that they had sufficient time to help their international EL2 students' writing during the course delivery.

> FG3: when you're focused on covering the content, and you've got a three-hour class for the week, and you spend like 40 minutes on how to write the paper, then you're always feeling guilty and pushed for time, because you're not covering the content that you're supposed to be at that point.

Sometimes, instructors directly expressed that they had no idea how they could help. They understood their international EL2 students' strength or weakness, but they did not think they were equipped with all of the effective strategies to address their students' needs, just like the two instructors reported below:

> FG3: I guess the instructors are feeling kind of lost on how to help. They don't know where to start.

> FG2: But maybe when I have a group of individuals in front of me with all different kinds of writing, strengths and weaknesses, that's when I probably don't have all the skills, I need to address a group of people with different learning trajectories.

In summary, the quantitative data demonstrated that faculty instructors have a problem-focused perspective on their international EL2 students' writing, but they also showed sympathetic attitude to these students because the qualitative data presented that they understood these students come from different cultures and educational backgrounds. The survey and focus group responses both showed some common writing problems that instructors thought international EL2 students have in writing and some general writing support they provided for

students, such as explaining specific requirements of the written assignments for their students.

However, the instructors in the focus group further discussed the specific support they offered

for students. Then, by using the mixed methods approach to analyze the survey and focus group

data, I will interpret and discuss the results in the next chapter, Discussion.

Chapter 5

Discussion

Whereas the previous chapter demonstrated the results of this study, this present chapter will answer the two research questions by discussing and interpreting the quantitative and qualitative findings.

5.1. Discussion Relevant to Research Question One

Before revealing what academic writing support faculty instructors attempt to provide for their international EL2 students, it is necessary to understand instructors' perspectives on their international EL2 students' writing performance by answering the first research question:

What do faculty instructors at Canadian universities think of their international EL2 students' academic writing performance and what writing challenges do faculty instructors think their students have?

5.1.1. Faculty Instructors' Views on International EL2 Students' Language Proficiency and Content Organization in Academic Writing

Both the survey and focus group responses reflected that faculty instructors thought international EL2 students' writing performance varied and that their performance depended on their previous personal experience, including their prior educational background, knowledge of the content, and culture. However, faculty instructors did mention that their international EL2 students struggled with grammar and vocabulary, since these students spoke English as an additional language. Especially in the survey, when compared with domestic EL1 students, the instructors' responses to the survey indicated that they believed their international EL2 students had more difficulty with grammar and vocabulary in academic writing. Similarly, the instructors

in the focus groups presented that their international students made grammar mistakes and

composed disorganized sentences in writing; some further demonstrated the students' difficulty

of paraphrasing ideas from different sources due to the students' lower language proficiency.

These writing problems set up obstacles for students to compose effective writing.

In addition to issues that may be directly related to students' proficiency level, in

comparison with domestic EL1 students, instructors believed that international EL2 students

more often had other writing challenges including establishing critical arguments, conforming to

disciplinary conventions, and using outside sources to support their own claims. Even though the

survey responses did not show international EL2 students had more difficulties in these aspects

of writing, the focus groups revealed they have these problems. According to the survey data, the

majority of the faculty instructors answered that international EL2 students have a similar

amount of difficulty with cohesive writing, citation, disciplinary conventions and synthesizing

different sources in comparison with domestic EL1 students. No one answered that international

EL2 students have a lot less difficulty, but a few answered they have a lot more difficulty. This

indicates that while a majority of participants agreed that EL2 students had similar academic

performances when compared to their EL1 counterparts, it is worth noting that some participants

revealed that their students have a lot more difficulty in these essential writing components

(composing coherent arguments, citing appropriately, conforming to disciplinary conventions,

and synthesizing information from sources). Moreover, in the focus group data, some instructors

revealed that international EL2 students tend to plagiarize more and have more difficulty

composing critical writing, and making convincing claims. Plagiarism and supporting claims

based on other sources are connected, since students who plagiarize may not understand how to

make the distinction between their own and others' ideas clearly; they struggle with how to use

outside sources to support their arguments, thereby preventing them from composing critical writing (Harris, 2017).

It is clear that instructors hold a problem-oriented perspective when regarding their EL2 students' performance, which reflects the orientation of language as a problem discussed in Ruiz (1984)'s paper. Ruiz (1984) proposed three kinds of attitudes that people hold to treat students who speak minority languages instead of the mainstream language in a society: language as a problem, language as a right, and language as a resource. Language as a problem refers to a problematic perspective that positions learners' language proficiency as insufficient and as preventing them from fully integrating into the mainstream society (Ruiz,1984). According to this perspective, the English learners' lower language competence is regarded as a problem requiring remedies or solutions when they study in English-speaking institutions. The correspondent support provided by people who hold this view are strategies to "fix" learners' language problems. Unlike the orientation of language as a problem, Ruiz (1984) highly recommended the perspective of language as a resource which stresses the important role of non-English languages as resources for improving learners' L2 acquisition. In the current study, most instructors reported different difficulties that international EL2 students faced in writing, such as grammar, organization and plagiarism, which is a manifestation of Ruiz' s orientation of language as a problem. It showed faculty instructors were more inclined to view international EL2 students' language as a problem because instructors thought what students have learnt before cannot serve as a stepping stone for their current academic learning. Based on these participants' perspectives, it is clear that faculty instructors demonstrate the orientation of language as a problem instead of viewing their language, culture, and previous experiences as a resource to build upon.

On the contrary, perceiving language as a resource would entail using the language knowledge international students already have. Understanding language as a resource encourages learners to draw on their L1 linguistic and cultural knowledge to facilitate L2. Faculty instructors who hold this perspective would view international EL2 students' writing differently when their students' writing is not cohesive or clear: instead of judging their students' writing as a problem, instructors will perceive students' writing as a way of self-expression based on their previous cultural and educational experience. With this perspective, instructors could encourage students to think of the linguistic and cultural similarities and differences between their L1 and English, allowing students to engage with their previous language resources to compose academic writing. In turn, this would also build their students' confidence. Therefore, it implies that the future research should adopt this orientation in looking for ways in which students' languages, cultures, and previous experience can be valued.

5.1.2. Faculty Instructors' Analysis of International EL2 Students' Writing Challenges

In the focus group discussion, instructors not only discussed what difficulties international EL2 students face in academic writing, but they also revealed the reason behind why these students have these writing difficulties. That is, international EL2 students come from different cultures which are distinct from English, and their previous educational experiences are also diverse. For example, in the focus groups, instructors explained the possible reason of students' plagiarism, demonstrating that for international EL2 students, the way of borrowing, referring to or citing a text is distinct from conventions used in western academic culture. This kind of interpretation is consistent with the attitude expressed in Amsberry (2010)'s position paper. Amsberry (2010) argued that western culture stresses the individual ownership while

some cultures may present a collective perspective regarding knowledge as common belongings

to the whole society. International students coming from non-western cultures hold different

perspectives on the distinction between the common knowledge and the information they should

give the text ownership, because the idea of common knowledge in different cultures has a

distinct interpretation. In addition, Amsberry (2010) analyzed that international EL2 students

may lack academic writing experience when they were educated in their own countries. Their

unfamiliarity with the new academic conventions prevents them from clearly explaining

themselves as authors.

Taking a cultural lens to view international EL2 students' writing problems is crucial for

faculty instructors to judge what is "good" and "bad" writing. Most international EL2 students

experience the difficulty of cultural transfer because their cultural values regarding writing might

not be the same as those of their current English institutions (Wingate & Tribble, 2012).

Understanding the cultural relativity of writing-related values and supporting international EL2

students' efforts to link their culture and language with their current learning will help these

students better adapt to the new academic context. Ruiz (1984) proposed the idea of language as

a resource as a better way to improve students' language acquisition in comparison with the

opinions of language as a problem and language as a right. In the context of this study, each

international EL2 student has various experience based on their previous learning, and it can be

discouraging to tell them what they have learnt before cannot work in their current English

institutions. However, if we can encourage them to compare and find the differences between

their prior and current academic culture and allow them to use previous culture experience as

resources to reflect their writing, it will be more positive and inspiring than telling them their

previous understanding has many deficits. In addition, the English institutions need to take other

cultural approaches into account when they make a judgment on international EL2 students'

writing because the "good" writing is situated in specific cultural values (Jin & Cortazzi, 1997).

International EL2 students' contribution might be undervalued or even denied if the English

institutions deploy their unique writing standards in the English culture to assess students'

writing practices based on other distinguished cultures (Robinson-Pant, 2009).

Moreover, according to some participants, students' previous educational experience is

another important factor affecting their writing performance. Instructor FG7 stated that how

much exposure to English and what aspects students view as the most important in writing

deeply impacted their writing abilities. As illustrated in the literature review chapter, since

international EL2 students experienced a distinct educational background from their current

English education, students have formed different interpretations of what should be emphasized

in writing under the influence of their previous educational backgrounds (Schneider, 2018).

Schneider (2008) investigated the previous learning background of nine international students

coming from different countries (Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, China, United Arab Emirates and

Poland) at a US college, finding three characteristics of their previous writing education: students

were mainly asked to write short texts instead of long ones; students wrote for examinations and

their audiences targeted examiners or writing teachers; and their writing tasks were creative

instead of following a specific academic conventions. These features of international EL2

students' previous education of writing are inconsistent with the academic writing expectation in

their current English institution, thereby causing their difficulty of composing effective writing

within the new academic context (Schneider, 2018).

5.2. Discussion Relevant to Research Question Two

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The second research question in this study was:

Do the faculty instructors at Canadian universities provide academic writing support to international EL2 students? If they do, how do they support international EL2 students? What challenges do they face in providing writing support?

The results both from the survey and focus groups proved most of the instructors provided their international EL2 students with writing support, but this support was not differentiated from that provided for other students. Many instructors showed they clearly explained the requirements or expectation of the written assignments and provided feedback on students' writing. Some of them also organized activities or used online learning tools to help with students' writing. However, instructors who did not provide academic writing support had their own reasons and challenges. The subheadings below in this section will explain what academic writing support instructors offered for their students and what obstacles prevented them from providing this support.

5.2.1. The Influence of Faculty Instructors' Beliefs on Their Writing Support

Faculty instructors' beliefs can influence whether and how they provide academic writing support for their students. Their beliefs include what difficulties they think their students have in writing, which aspects of writing are more challenging to them, such as language or content, and whether they are responsible for helping their students with their writing. For example, one instructor (FG4) claimed "every teacher is a language teacher," and correspondently, he offered extensive linguistic support to his students, such as providing exercises which helped them identify the subjects or objects in specific sentences. On the contrary, another instructor (FG8) believed that students should seek help in the writing center to solve their language problems and it was not his responsibility, so he did not offer any language support in academic writing. Still,

another instructor (FG10) believed the purpose of assigning each writing task for his students should ask them to think about their disciplinary knowledge critically and creatively, so what he emphasized was whether his students can apply their learnt knowledge to solve practical problems in different subjects. He thought the ability of applying knowledge in writing yields the writing skills, so he offered less support in writing techniques. However, the knowledge learning process involves the actions of constant noticing and practising in different activities under a specific context, and the reflection on how language is used to present these actions promotes the understanding of the disciplinary knowledge (Lier, 2004). In this current study, instructors provided writing support based on their perspectives on which aspects of writing have the priority and if they have responsibilities to address the writing issues. In this case, if faculty instructors are aware of the language use in their disciplines and transform this perspective into their writing support, their guidance will exert a positive effect on both students' disciplinary learning and writing improvement.

5.2.2. Faculty Instructors' Language and Content Support in Writing

Most of the faculty instructors showed that they would like to offer their support when their international students ask for writing help, because many of them claimed that they have told their students to come to visit them during office hours for extra help. However, when discussing international EL2 students' requests for language support in their writing, many instructors just advised their students to visit the university's writing center. In their opinions, if they made too much effort to support their students' language development, that would convey a signal to their students that language was more important than content. As FG9 claimed, "If I observe mistakes, I try to give and provide a feedback on them. But not put so much emphasis, because then they might really feel that that's all the course is about which it's not." That is,

instructors preferred to support their students' content development rather than their language development. Many instructors in the survey and focus groups stressed that they often clearly explained their expectation of students' writing and strived to make students understand the requirements. For the language production, they expressed that they did not tend to emphasize it because the content was more important, but they did demonstrate clear expectations for the students' language production. That is, even though faculty instructors did believe well-organized and accurate language production has importance, they did not see that it is fully their role to develop their students' academic language and academic writing skills, thus explaining why they offer limited and inconsistent support as a result.

The perspective that instructors did not see their role in supporting their students' language is consistent with the finding in another study of English-Medium Instruction (EMI). In Aguilar (2017)'s study, 41 engineering lecturers from three universities of English-medium instruction in Spain answered a questionnaire and 6 of them later received interviews. Both the quantitative and qualitative data indicated that these lecturers perceived themselves as the content experts instead of the language specialists. Especially in the interviews, the participants expressed that distinguishing their responsibilities of instructing content with the institutions' support in language can better service students' needs. However, in another position paper, Dearden (2018) argued that all content instructors should be language teachers and if they can demonstrate how the language can be used to effectively communicate in their subjects, students can achieve both the language and content goal at the same time as well as adapting to different academic communities.

I believe the benefits of integrating the content with language support in faculty instructors' teaching, but in the current study, faculty instructors hoped to focus on the

disciplinary understanding and they may also experience pressure to offer the language support, which indicates that faculty instructors face different challenges of providing students with writing support. These challenges will be discussed later in one of the following sub-sections (5.2.5. Faculty Instructors' Challenges to Providing Academic Writing Support).

5.2.3. Faculty Instructors' Feedback on Students' Written Assignments

Most instructors viewed feedback as an important part of writing support. This is not surprising considering previous research demonstrating the effectiveness of feedback on writing for L2 learning (Hyland & Hyland, 2006); however, individual instructors' method of providing feedback varied. Traditionally, written feedback is what most instructors do to grade their students' work and help with their writing, but two instructors stressed they offered continuous feedback on students' written work and another two instructors asked students to do peer review and feedback.

Wingate (2010) conducted a study with 68 first-year international students to examine if teachers' formative feedback can improve students' writing. The study lasted for 10 weeks and the teachers in the study provided feedback of structure, appropriate use of sources, critical writing, and the understanding of key issues of their subjects. After assessing and comparing the participants' writing between the start and the end of their written assignments, the study confirmed the effectiveness of feedback as an instructional method to promote students' writing ability, but it is only under the condition that students were fully engaged in the comments from their teachers. That it, if students presented little attention on their feedback comments and did nothing about their writing next time, the feedback might turn to be unhelpful. In this current study, five instructors in the focus group used other ways to provide feedback, such as peer feedback, continuous feedback, and there was also one instructor using audio feedback. The one

who used audio feedback once applied written formative feedback, but she found it inefficient and time-consuming and her students did not show much attention on her comments; this explains why some instructors began to use other forms of providing feedback.

5.2.4. Faculty Instructors' Use of Online Learning Tools to Facilitate Students' Writing

The survey questions did not demonstrate whether instructors organized activities or did other things to support their students' writing, but the focus group discussion allowed participants to express more of their practices in academic writing support, such as applying digital technology to support students' writing.

The web-based online learning environment has becoming popular in higher education as well as in the field of L2 learning (Jeong, 2015). Research found some web-based online learning tools, such as Google Docs or Wikis, are effective to facilitate collaborative learning in L2 writing (Jeong, 2016). As more students apply different digital devices to handle their academic learning, their self-reported digital literacy also reaches the levels of the average and advanced (Jeong, 2015). This provides educators with a great opportunity to employ digital technology to improve students' writing.

In this current study, only two instructors mentioned their usage of online learning tools to support students' writing development. Even though it was relatively rare to hear participants talk about the application of digital technologies, the implication is that this is an area where instructors could benefit from training or resources on how to implement these technologies in their classrooms. In the focus group discussion, they mentioned online learning tools which allowed both students and teachers to annotate the same articles and leave written comments for each other to review. Perusall and MS OneNote were discussed in the interviews, and instructors

found that the online learning tools provided a platform for students and instructors to

communicate in writing. The instructors' application of these online learning tools reflects the

idea that modern digital age influences the way education is presented, and also pushes teachers

to handle technology to promote students' learning (Guri-Rosenblit, 2009). Even though only

two instructors in the focus groups discussed the use of online technologies that would

specifically support international EL2 students, it implies the application of digital technologies

is potential to support academic writing for future instructors.

5.2.5. Faculty Instructors' Challenges to Providing Academic Writing Support

Instructors in the focus group discussion strongly expressed that they did not want their

international EL2 students to fail in academic learning but tried their best to help their students to

acquire the content knowledge and develop academic abilities as much as possible as shown in

the excerpts below:

> FG3: I went back to the students and I said, you can't fail my class, you're going to pass.
> you're going to have to work. But I will give you feedback, I will not let you turn in an
> assignment that will fail
> FG10: …whatever I can do to be clear with my expectation that we're going to ease
> their anxieties and make them perform better, I strive to do.

While they may have had good intentions, it seems that instructors cannot really achieve

their goal of helping their students because various challenges prevent them from providing

writing support for their students. When answering the survey question about why they did not

offer academic writing support, the most widely chosen response was "my international EL2

students do not seek my help". But that does not mean their students do not want or need help. In

the interviews, some instructors mentioned that though they did not intentionally provide

academic writing support for their international EL2 students, they told their students to visit

their offices when students had writing issues. However, it turned out that few of their students

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came to visit, which made instructors believe their students did not seek help form them; this explains why instructors in the survey answered the reason of not offering writing support was the situation that students did not seek help. The instructors just did not notice that not coming to their office for help does not mean their students did not need help.

Faculty instructors mentioned several practical problems: they mainly discussed not having sufficient time to provide students with extensive writing support, and they talked about having too many students to take care of. The survey and focus group responses both demonstrated these heavy workloads and limited time to support their students. In this case, whether they provided writing support or how much support they could offer depended on what available time they had, "… if I can, I'll do one on one feedback with the students. Depending on how much time is available", as FG1 discussed in the focus group. This finding reflects that the instructors are pressured with their work and this blocks their motivation to provide more support, indicating that they need more help from their institutions. Séror (2009) interviewed both instructors and students to investigate the connection between institutional forces and L2 writing feedback in higher education. He found the institutions' decisions on the number of instructors, the number of teaching assistants they hired, and class size do influence how much work instructors took and how detailed their feedback was on students' written assignments. Séror's (2009) study illustrated the same situation that instructors are experiencing in this present study, which asks the institutions to consider what they can do to help instructors in order to relieve their pressure and improve international students' academic learning.

Instructors' ability to provide effective writing support was also another potential obstacle to their providing academic writing support. On the survey, when asked to explain why they did not offer support to their international EL2 students, the smallest percentage of

respondents answered "I am not confident in my ability to offer them support." However, the focus group discussed the problem that instructors sometimes feel lost in providing academic writing support. FG3 stated that she once had a workshop about how to support international students, and she pointed out that "the talk around the table is some of us are really kind of feeling kind of lost. I guess the instructors are feeling kind of lost on how to help. They don't know where to start." This indicates that faculty instructors are not equipped with sufficient knowledge of how to offer writing support for their students though they are professional in their own disciplines. Another instructor, FG2, directly stated that she does not have all the skills that her students need. "…when I have a group of individuals in front of me with all different kinds of writing, strengths and weaknesses, that's when I probably don't have all the skills, I need to address a group of people with different learning trajectories."

To summarize, most instructors held a problem-focused perspective in relation to their international EL2 students' writing. They pointed out different writing challenges that students experienced, but some also showed their empathy to students' writing problems because during the focus group discussions they attempted to put themselves in their students' place to better understand the reasons underlying their struggles with academic writing. Most instructors concentrated on offering content support instead of language support because they believed their responsibility and focus should be on subject knowledge and they rarely differentiated their instruction for their international EL2 students. Specifically, the writing support offered by instructors included explanations of written assignments, diversified feedback, and the use of online tools particularly suited to the needs of international EL2 students. Though most of them expressed that they would like to support international EL2 students' writing, some of them experienced challenges in providing this support. That is, they had less time to complete

overloaded work, and they possessed limited knowledge of how to provide appropriate writing

support and meet their students' writing needs.

In this chapter, I have interpreted the research findings and the themes that emerged in

the data. In the next chapter, I will discuss the limitation, the contribution, and the implication for

future research to close the study.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

This chapter will discuss the limitations and contribution of this current study, and the implications for the future studies. The study has a small number of participants in the survey, and most participants in the focus group interviews were from an education department. However, this study still contributes to the research focusing on course instructors' practices of supporting international EL2 students' writing. This study inspires future studies to concentrate on faculty instructors' support for international EL2 students and how English-speaking institutions can do in the future to help with instructors.

6.1. Limitations

Although our initial goal for survey participation was at least $N = 100$, we were unable to meet that goal. It is possible that the COVID-19 pandemic had an impact on participation. Not only were course instructors under additional pressure and time constraints during this time, there seemed to be a sharp increase in the number of on-line surveys circulating once researchers were no longer able to conduct in-person research. Potential participants may not have been motivated to spend additional time completing yet another survey. Another hypothesis that we had was that perhaps this issue is not of great interest or importance to the majority of course instructors, and for this reason, they chose not to participate. In any case, the number of the participants in the survey was relatively small, and we were unable to conduct reliable statistical tests on the data. Thus, the small number of faculty instructors answering the survey questions is one of the limitations of this current study.

A second limitation was that faculty instructors who self-selected to participate in the study were a group who were interested in supporting their international students, while instructors who are less enthusiastic in supporting their students may have decided not to participate in this project. In addition, a large percentage of the participants worked in education faculties. Instructors from this department might be more inclined to respond to the study because they are committed to improving the education quality and addressing concerns with students' learning. However, that does not mean that instructors from other departments would not have valuable contributions for this study. Therefore, the fact that a majority of the participants are from education faculties becomes a limitation, since instructors from other academic fields may possess distinct perspectives of international EL2 students' writing and different practices of supporting their students.

6.2 Contribution

This study explored a wide range of faculty instructors across Canada and determined their views on international EL2 students' writing performance and the common practices of how they supported their students' writing. Unlike research that has analyzed the discrepancy between international students' writing and their writing requirements, this study sought to better understand what kind of writing support these students receive from their instructors. In addition, compared to research focusing on one or two aspects of writing support from instructors, such as feedback on students' written assignments, this study expanded the scope to investigate the full range of writing support that instructors provide.

Significantly, this study demonstrates that though the instructors held a problem-focused perspective of their students' writing, they also showed compassion and sympathy, and an

understanding that these international students come from a culture or education background with different expectations. Unfortunately, compassion is ultimately not a tool that will assist international EL2 students with their writing, which is something that the instructors understand, since most instructors don't provide differentiated support between international students and native English speakers, even though international EL2 students need more additional writing support, such as offering feedback on their language in writing. These findings provide solid evidence for future research to explore successful ways of encouraging faculty instructors to offer sufficient and effective writing support for international EL2 students.

6.3 Future study

By investigating faculty instructors' perspectives on international EL2 students' writing, their practices and challenges of providing academic writing support, we have a clear understanding of what prevents faculty instructors from offering writing support for their students. This study implies the faculty instructors not only need more support from their institutions and faculties, but also need professional training to equip them with effective ways of better supporting their students' writing.

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ACADEMIC WRITING SUPPORT FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Appendix A: Survey Consent Form

Researchers:
Dr. Susan Ballinger Assistant Professor, Second Language Education McGill University, Department of Integrated Studies in Education (514) 398-4527 susan.ballinger@mcgill.ca

Xinyan Fang Master of Arts student, Second Language Education McGill University, Department of Integrated Studies in Education xinyan.fang@mail.mcgill.ca

Title of Project: Faculty instructors' academic literacy support for international students

Sponsor(s): McGill University, Social Sciences and Humanities Development grant

Purpose of the Study: To better understand faculty instructors' academic literacy support for international students whose first language is not English. Findings will help universities determine how best to support academic course instructors and improve education for international students.

Procedures: Completion of a 15-minute survey on your experiences working with international students as a course instructor. The survey will be open from February 2021 to the end of May. Possible participation in a 90-minute audio and/or video-recorded online focus group (via WebEx) on the same topic. It is not mandatory to participate by video and you can keep your video camera off and use a pseudonym.

Voluntary Participation: Your participation in this study is **voluntary**. You may refuse to participate in parts of this study, or decline to answer any question. If you do not include your email address in the consent form (the only identifiable information), we will not be able to identify or withdraw your individual data once it has been submitted. You may withdraw from the interview at any time, for any reason. If you choose to withdraw your data from the interview after the interview is complete, you will have approximately one month, or until the interview data has been transcribed and anonymized, to do so. Whether you choose to participate or not will not have any impact on your employment. If you decide to withdraw from the study, your data that has already been gathered will be destroyed unless you give permission otherwise. Only research assistants will be able to view videos of the focus groups in order to transcribe them. Videos will be destroyed after transcription.

Potential Risks: There are no anticipated risks to you.

Potential Benefits: Participation in this study will greatly benefit our understanding of the practices and perspectives of university course lecturers as they work with non-English-speaking international students. They will aid in the creation of future professional development initiatives for course instructors.

Compensation: If you participate in the survey, you can choose to enter your email address in a draw for a chance to win 1 of 5 Amazon gift certificates valued at $50 each. The drawing will take place after the study has been completed. You must correctly answer a skill-testing question in order to qualify for a chance to win the draw. If you wish to be considered for this prize, please answer the following question: $(60 \div 3) - (4 + 3 \times 3)$. The approximate odds of winning the draw are 1 in 40. There is no additional compensation for participation in the focus group.

ACADEMIC WRITING SUPPORT FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Confidentiality: In this study, we will collect information on instructors' experiences and perspectives on working with international, non-English-speaking university students. All data that you provide will be kept secure in a password protected file in encrypted iCloud storage system (sync.com) that only the researchers and research assistants can access. You will be assigned a pseudonym upon transcription.

Please note that if you participate in the focus group interview, we will not be able to fully protect your confidentiality and privacy as other participants will hear your answers. These interviews will be audio recorded and may be video recorded if you decide to leave your camera on, but only the researchers and research assistants will view the videos. Once the videos are transcribed, they will be permanently deleted. Data will be disseminated via both professional and academic presentations as well as professional and academic publications. Your name and identifiable information will not appear in any presentation or publication. If excerpts from your interviews are included, you will be assigned a pseudonym. If you refer to third parties in your answers on the survey or interview, their identifying information will also remain confidential through use of pseudonyms or by avoiding using such an extract in presentations and publications. If you provide us with your email address to participate in the drawing or to be contacted regarding the interview, we will delete it one month after data collection ends.

Questions: If you have any questions or need any clarifications about the project, please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Susan Ballinger at **514-398-4527** or susan.ballinger@mcgill.ca. If you have any ethical concerns or complaints about your participation in this study, and want to speak with someone not on the research team, please contact the McGill Ethics Manager, Deanna Collin, at **514-398-6193** (deanna.collin@mcgill.ca).

Appendix B: Focus Group Consent Form

Researchers:

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Title of Project: Faculty instructors' academic literacy support for international students
Sponsor(s): McGill University, Social Sciences and Humanities Development grant

Purpose of the Study: To better understanding faculty instructors' academic literacy support for international students whose first language is not English. Findings will help universities determine how best to support academic course instructors and improve education for international students.

Procedures: Completion of a 15-minute survey on your experiences working with international students as a course instructor.

Possible participation in a 90-minute, audio and/or video-recorded online focus group (via Zoom) on the same topic. It is not mandatory to participate by video and you can keep your video camera off and use a pseudonym.

Voluntary Participation: Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate in parts of this study, or decline to answer any question. If you do not include your email address in the consent form (the only identifiable information), we will not be able to identify or withdraw your individual data once it has been submitted. You may withdraw from the interview at any time, for any reason. If you choose to withdraw your data from the interview after the interview is complete, you will have approximately one month, or until the interview data has been transcribed and anonymized, to do so. Whether you choose to participate or not will not have any impact on your employment. If you decide to withdraw from the study, your data that has already been gathered will be destroyed unless you give permission otherwise. Only research assistants will be able to view interviews of the videos in order to transcribe them. Videos will be destroyed after transcription.

Potential Risks: There are no anticipated risks to you.

Potential Benefits: Participation in this study will greatly benefit our understanding of the practices and perspectives of university course lecturers as they work with non-English-speaking international students. They will aid in the creation of future professional development initiatives for course instructors.

Compensation: If you agree to it, your email address will be included in a drawing for 5 Amazon gift certificates valued at $50 each. The drawing will take place after the study has been completed. You must correctly answer a skill-testing question in order to qualify for a chance to win the draw. If you wish to be considered for this prize, please answer the following question: $(60 \div 3) - (4 + 32)$. The approximate odds of winning the draw are 1 in 40. There is no additional compensation for participation in the interview.

Confidentiality: In this study, we will collect information on instructors' experiences and perspectives on working with international, non-English-speaking university students. All data that you provide will be kept secure in a password protected file in encrypted iCloud storage system that only the researchers and research assistants can access. You will be assigned a pseudonym upon transcription. Please note that if you participate in the focus group interview, we will not be able to fully protect your confidentiality and privacy as other participants will hear your answers. These interviews will be audio recorded and may be video recorded if you decide to leave your camera on, but only the researchers and research assistants will view the videos. Once the videos are transcribed, they will be permanently deleted. Data will be disseminated via both professional and academic presentations as well as professional and academic publications. Your name and identifiable information will not appear in any presentation or publication. If excerpts from your interviews are included, your assigned pseudonym will be used. If you refer to third parties in your answers on the survey or interview, their identifying information will also remain confidential through use of pseudonyms or by avoiding using such an extract in presentations and publications. If you provide us with your email address to participate in the drawing or to be contacted regarding the interview, we will delete it one month after data collection ends.

Yes: ____ No: ____You consent to participate in an on-line video and audio recorded focus group interview.

In order to participate in the drawing for a $50 Amazon gift card, please include your email address here:
_____

Questions: If you have any questions or need any clarifications about the project, please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Susan Ballinger at 514-398-4527 or susan.ballinger@mcgill.ca.

If you have any ethical concerns or complaints about your participation in this study, and want to speak w ith someone not on the research team, please contact the McGill Ethics Manager atplease contact the McGill Ethics Manager, Deanna Collin, at 514-398-6193 (deanna.collin@mcgill.ca).

ACADEMIC WRITING SUPPORT FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Appendix C: Survey Questions

1. How long have you been teaching university courses?

a. 0-1 year   b. 1-5 years   c. 5-10 years   d. More than 10 years

2. In what faculty or faculties do you usually teach? Please list them below:

3. What is the average percentage of international students who speak English as a second language in the classes you teach (henceforth referred to as international EL2 students)?

a. 0%   b. 1-10%   c. 11-25%   d. 26-50%   e. 51-75%   f. 76-100%   g. It depends on the class.

4. Please base your answer on the course that you teach with the highest percentage of international EL2 students. Which of the brackets below best reflects the percentage of international EL2 students in that class?

a. 1-10%   b. 11-25%   c. 26-50%   d. 51-75%   e. 76-100%   f. I'm not sure.

5. How would you rate the academic performance of your international EL2 students?

a. Superior to students whose first language is English

b. Similar to students whose first language is English.

c. Inferior to students whose first language is English

d. It depends on the class.

6. In comparison with students whose first language is English, my international EL2 students have:

a. a lot more difficulty understanding course materials

b. more difficulty understanding course materials.

c. the same amount of difficulty understanding course materials

d. less difficulty understanding course materials

e. a lot less difficulty understanding course materials.

7. In comparison with students whose first language is English, my international EL2 students participate

a. a lot more   b. more   c. the same amount   d. less   e. a lot less

8. In comparison with students whose first language is English, my international EL2 students benefit

a. much more from the course   b. more from the course   c. the same amount from the course

d. less from the course   e. much less from the course

9. In comparison with students whose first language is English, my international EL2 students have

a. a lot more difficulty with academic writing

b. more difficulty with academic writing

c. a similar amount of difficulty with academic writing

d. less difficulty with academic writing

e. a lot less difficulty with academic writing

10. In comparison with students whose first language is English, my international EL2 students make

a. a lot more mistakes in grammar/vocabulary on their written assignments

b. more mistakes in grammar/vocabulary on their written assignments

c. a similar amount of mistakes in grammar/vocabulary on their written assignments

d. fewer mistakes in grammar/vocabulary on their written assignments

e. far fewer mistakes in grammar/vocabulary on their written assignments

11. In comparison with students whose first language is English, my international EL2 students have

a. a lot more difficulty creating cohesive arguments in written assignments

b. more difficulty creating cohesive arguments in written assignments

c. a similar amount of difficulty creating cohesive arguments in written assignments

d. less difficulty creating cohesive arguments in written assignments

e. a lot less difficulty creating cohesive arguments in written assignments

12. In comparison with students whose first language is English, my international EL2 students

have

a. a lot more difficulty synthesizing information from different sources

b. more difficulty synthesizing information from different sources

c. a similar amount of difficulty synthesizing information from different sources

d. less difficulty synthesizing information from different sources

e. a lot less difficulty synthesizing informational from different sources

13. In comparison with other students, my international EL2 students have

a. a lot more difficulty conforming to the conventions of academic writing in my field

b. more difficulty conforming to the conventions of academic writing in my field

c. a similar amount of difficulty conforming to the conventions of academic writing in my field

d. less difficulty conforming to the conventions of academic writing in my field

e. a lot less difficulty conforming to the conventions of academic writing in my field

14. In comparison with students whose first language is English, my international EL2 students

have

a. a lot more difficulty using and citing sources

b. more difficulty using and citing sources appropriately in their own writing

c. a similar amount of difficulty using and citing sources appropriately in their own writing

d. less difficulty using and citing sources appropriately in their own writing

e. a lot less difficulty using and citing appropriately in their own writing

15. In comparison with students whose first language is English, my international EL2 students have

a. much more difficulty giving oral presentations

b. more difficulty giving oral presentations

c. a similar amount of difficulty giving oral presentations

d. less difficulty giving oral presentations

e. a lot less difficulty giving oral presentations

16. Do you have additional comments about the academic performance of international EL2 students?

17. In my instruction, I intentionally provide international EL2 students with additional academic support.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

18. I feel confident in my ability to offer sufficient academic writing support for international EL2 students.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

19. In my teaching, I do the following (Please check all that apply):

a. I adjust my lecture delivery to make it easier to understand.

b. I help students make connections with pre-existing knowledge

c. I offer multiple formats for participation (whole group, small group, and pairs).

d. I offer instruction on how to read course materials.

e. I offer instruction on how to write academic assignments.

f. Other (Please specify)

20. For written assignments, I do the following (Please check all that apply):

a. Before students begin writing assignments, I explain my expectations and provide examples.

b. I offer corrections and explanations of the content knowledge students have misunderstood.

c. I offer suggestions on how to compose cohesive writing.

d. I offer suggestions on how to summarize the criticize academic references.

e. I offer help on how to properly cite academic sources.

f. Other (Please specific)

21. In my instruction, I do not internationally offer additional support to international EL2

students because (Please check all that apply):

a. I do not have sufficient time to offer help.

b. It falls outside of the scope of my course content.

c. I am not confident in my ability to offer them support.

d. I would prefer to offer additional support to students who are stronger academically.

e. My international EL2 students do not require my help.

f. my international EL2 students do not seek my help.

g. I believe that I should treat all of my students in the same way.

h. Other (Please specify)

22. My university does enough to support international EL2 students' academic writing.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

23. What could the university do to help you better support your international EL2 students?

a. Provide teacher training about how to support international EL2 students.

b. Support collaboration between writing specialists and instructors.

c. Reduce my academic duties to allow me to offer more support to my international EL2

students.

d. Set up a community for instructors to share their experience of supporting international EL2

students, where I can turn for help when I have difficulty.

e. Offer an academic writing course tailored to international EL2 students in my field.

f. Other (Please specify)

ACADEMIC WRITING SUPPORT FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Appendix D: Focus Group Protocol for Faculty Instructors

General questions about academic literacy support:

1. How long have you been teaching in the university? What courses do you usually teach and in which faculty/department?

2. Do you have international students who speak English as a second language (international EL2 students) in your courses? Approximately what is the percentage of international EL2 students in your classes? Where are most of the students from?

3. Could you describe these students' performance in your classes? Are there aspects of your courses that they do well at? Do they face similar challenges in your classes in comparison with other students? Are there certain aspects of your classes that they tend to have more difficulty with?

4. As an instructor, what are some of the steps that you take to support your international students (or your students in general) with their course requirements (readings, assignments, participation in class)? What additional steps do you take to help students understand content (during lectures, in their readings or other course materials)?

5. Have you tried to provide academic writing support for your students? If so, in which way did you provide the writing help (e.g. Written or oral feedback on their writing assignments, course delivery, individual office meeting, etc.)? Do you offer different types of support for international EL2 students?

6. If you have offered additional support for these students, what have you found to be particularly successful?

7. Would you like to receive teacher training on how to provide academic literacy support for international EL2 students? Please explain your answers.

8. Who should provide that support (course instructors, academic writing instructors, or faculty/department) for international students' academic literacy? Do you think your department or faculty has done enough to support this? If so, how do they support them? How might they go further in this support, if at all?

Questions specific to academic writing:

9. How important is academic writing to success in your field?

10. What kind of support would you like to receive from your department to help with international El2 students' academic writing?

11. When offering feedback on students' written assignments, which aspect would you like to address the most in their writing, such as content, sentence-level grammatical correction, text-level structure suggestion, discipline conventions, or anything else?

12. Do you provide individual meetings with students to help them with their academic writing?

13. Have you ever heard of or used any writing pedagogies (ex. Process writing) in your classes? Did you find this pedagogy useful/efficient? Please justify your answer.

14. What challenges do you face when you provide academic writing support?

15. Is there anything else that you would like to add on academic literacy or academic writing that you have not yet a chance to say?