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Kayatri Vasu, Vahid Nimehchisalem, Yong Mei Fung, Sabariah Md Rashid

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## **The Usefulness and Effectiveness of Argumentative Writing Self-assessment Checklist in Undergraduate Writing Classrooms.**

Kayatri Vasu, Vahid Nimehchisalem, Yong Mei Fung, Sabariah  
Md Rashid

Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia

### **Abstract**

Writing instruction in the ESL classroom has evolved dramatically over the last few decades. Now, the focus has shifted from the final product of writing to the process of writing. The writing process is divided into three main stages: prewriting, writing and rewriting (Murray, 1985). This change has encouraged educators to look for strategies that focus on the writing process systematically and involve the learners to be focused and active at every stage of writing. One of the strategies that has been gaining popularity is self-assessment. It refers to teaching methods such as self-assessment checklist that prompt student writers to carefully think about, assess and respond to their written work systematically (Nielson, 2014). This study investigates the perception of teachers and students on the usefulness of a self-assessment checklist to assist students in the argumentative writing. Self-assessment Checklist for Undergraduate Argumentative Writing designed by Nimehchisalem et al. (2014) is used in this study. Feedback was obtained from four university writing lecturers through the Delphi method. The checklist was then implemented in the undergraduate writing classroom for a period of five weeks and students' perception on the usability of the checklist was recorded through interviews. Observations were made to understand the implementation process of the checklist. From the experts' feedback, a few changes were made to the checklist by adding, deleting, rewording and re-arranging items to ensure the checklist is more user- friendly. The experts perceived the checklist to be an effective tool in that it would reduce their workload especially regarding the amount of time spent providing feedback to the students. Students reported the checklist motivated them to write, created awareness on their writing ability, enhanced their understanding of argumentative writing, made them independent writers, and assisted them in writing more systematically. The observation enlightened the researchers on the items that needed more assistance or explanation from teacher during the training session.

**Keywords:** English as Second Language Writing, Self-Assessment, Checklist, Argumentative Writing.

## Introduction

The evolution of teaching writing from product to process has brought about significant changes on the way writing is taught and assessed. This change has encouraged educators to look for strategies that focus on the writing process systematically and involve the learners to be focused and active at every stage of writing. The most conventional strategy used in ESL writing classroom is teachers' written feedback where the teacher provides feedback to the students on their writing either directly or indirectly. Students always prefer to receive written corrective feedback from the teachers, as a result they become too dependent on the instructors to always correct their work. In some contexts teacher's feedback fails to promote autonomy in students. According to Hyland (2000), when there is too much of invention by the teachers in the form providing feedback, it decreases students' control of their own writing. Self-assessment is viewed as an alternative that provides more control to students with minimal interference from the teacher. It also encourages students to actively and critically engage in the writing and editing process in order to improve the quality of their writing. A precise gap in the literature exists, whereby, despite the presence of self-assessment as an instructional method, comprehensive guidelines on a genre specific checklist focusing on a specific genre of writing, its usability and implementation procedure, is very rare. This study will fill in the gap in the literature by exploring the usability and implementation process of Self-assessment Checklist for Undergraduate Argumentative Writing designed by Nimehchisalem et al. (2014). This checklist will assist students in self-assessing as well as mastering the argumentative writing skill. This checklist is developed based on the Pyramid of Argumentation (Nimehchisalem, 2010) and the Process Approach of Writing. The development of this checklist is based on strong theoretical ground by integrating and adapting well established theories like The Theory of Communicative Language Ability (Bachman, 1990), Taxonomy of Components of Language Competence (Bachman, 1990), the Theory of Classical Rhetoric (Kinneavy, 1971), and Model of Argument (Toulmin, 2003). Although this checklist has a very strong theoretical background, it is essential to understand its usability at the implementation level. Therefore, this study aims to understand the instructors' and students' perspective on its usefulness and also understand the implementation process. The findings of this study will be valuable for language practitioners, ESL students, curriculum developers and the higher institution. The findings obtained from understanding the instructors' and students' perspective will close the gap that exists between student's expectation and instructors' instructional method. When instructors understand the view of the students on the usability of self-assessment checklist, instructional plan will be tailored to fulfill the need of the students. On the other hand, the findings obtained from the implementation of self-assessment will shed light on the effective flow of implementation. Moreover, understanding the self-assessment strategy in depth and its implementation also will help to reduce the overwhelming workload experienced by the teachers due to the constant teacher feedback and multiple draft checking practiced in the institution over the years. Other than that, this study will assist the curriculum developers to consider self-assessment checklist as a main instructional practice rather than alternative so the importance of self-assessment is down played.

This study is aimed to answer the following research questions.

1. What are instructors' perspective on the usefulness of the Self-assessment Checklist?
2. What are students' perspective on the usefulness and effectiveness of the Checklist?
3. How is the implementation process of the Checklist in undergraduate writing classroom?

## Literature Review

This section reviews some of the available literature related to self-assessment.

### Previous Studies on Self-assessment

Self-assessment is an area that has drawn ample interest among the scholars. The shift from behaviourism to constructivism, summative assessment to formative assessment, and product approach to process approach of writing have supported the exploration on self-assessment as an effective strategy in the higher education context. Self-assessment started gaining interest in the ESL classroom as an alternative or non-traditional form of assessment (Moritz, 1996). Oscarson (2009) asserted the importance of self-assessment as a crucial part of education as it develops the ability of students to assess their results and comprehend its effect on their learning conditions. Based on Nielson (2014), self-assessment encourages reflection and metacognition in ESL writing classrooms as it shifts the responsibility from teacher to students. Furthermore, emphasizing self-assessment is important in the effort to align the classroom practices with the objective of higher education – to produce graduates who are self-sustaining and critical thinkers. Oscarson (1989) pointed out that implementing self-assessment as a core part of learning in the classroom leads to shared responsibility between teacher and students, and create a wider perspective on learning. A study was conducted by Vasu, Ling & Nimehchisalem (2016) to understand the perception of students on different types of assessment strategy, and it reported that self-assessment is highly valued despite being a new method introduced in the research context. In a study conducted by Singh and Terry (2008), it was found that self-assessment encouraged students to critically review and to improve their assignment. Both teachers and students have positive perception towards self-assessment and view it as a skill that is transferable and is one that underlies a lifelong learning skill in other areas (Dragemark-Oscarson, 2009). It is also found that self-assessment skills help students to improve their writing skills as well as their subsequent writing practices (Belachew, Getinet, & Gashaye, 2015). In a study conducted by Honsa (2013), it was found that self-assessment promotes learner autonomy and the students realized that they could develop self-regulated collaborated learning skills. Also, as a result of self-assessment, students developed five learning strategies that would help them in revising their writing. As the purpose of self-assessment is to promote learner autonomy in revising their writing, students become independent writers and are capable of improving their writing on their own to a certain degree. Despite the importance of self-assessment in the current era of education, it doesn't appear to be an easy task for many teachers and students who are comfortable with "provide information" and "test knowledge" (Pappas & Tepe, 1998). Therefore, there are also negative views from students pertaining the practice of self-assessment in ESL writing classrooms. Even though self-assessing one's work can be carried out, some students do get frustrated, especially in writing classrooms where students are required to edit their own essay as some feel that they lack of ability to identify their own mistakes. In this case, the role of the teacher as a resource in guiding them is very crucial. As assessment is usually the task of teachers, some students think that it is unfair to ask them to share the burden of having to do the teachers' work (Ross, Rolheiser & Hogaboam-Gray, 1998). With the current challenges that exist in the implementation of self-assessment, students should be enlightened on its importance and guided clearly so that their perception changes when they understand its value. Therefore, starting self-assessment in a more systematic and structured manner is important to create a

positive outlook of it among the students especially in ESL context. The common methods of self-assessment implemented in classrooms are usage of rubric, self-assessment checklist and learner logs. Checklist and rubric come with indicators where student compare their learning with, whereas, learner log is a method where students record their learning, effort and challenges for reflection. Therefore, rubrics and self-assessment checklist would be a great start for students to begin self-assessment as it is more structured. In general, rubrics are usually used for the purpose summative assessment which is to assign a final grade to a written product. Usually, a rubric contains of the lists criteria used to assess a piece of writing and all these criteria are described according different level of quality, ranging from poor to excellent and scores are provided accordingly(Andrade,2000). Hence, a rubric doesn't contain instructions or items that describes steps in writing. On the flip side, self-assessment checklist contains items that are systematically arranged which guide students to assess their work both formative and summative. Self-assessment Checklist for Undergraduate Writing by Nimehchisalem et al. (2014) is a checklist that contains pointers to master argumentative writing in a more systematic way. It contains three sections, namely Before Writing, While Writing, and After Writing. The Before Writing section focuses on planning steps before start writing, the While Writing section emphasizes the steps in writing an effective argumentative essay and finally the After Writing section focuses on the editing process. This checklist can be considered as superior to other available checklist due to a few reason. Firstly, this checklists developed based on strong theoretical ground, whereby, "the Theory of Classical Rhetoric, Toulmin's Model of Argument and Bachman' model have been integrated" (Nimehchisalem, 2014). Secondly, this checklist is very comprehensive that it guides students from prewriting, while writing to after writing stages. Last but not least, this checklist is not a generic checklist that will be used for any type of writing, it is a genre specific checklist that focuses on every aspect of argumentative writing. Despite the advantages of this checklist, it is imperative to understand its implementation and perception of students and teachers on the checklist.

## **Methodology**

### Data Collection Procedure

The study had a qualitative design. Delphi method, semi-structured interview and observation were conducted to collect data in order to answer the research questions. Three different mode of data collections were needed to obtain the response related to the three research objectives; instructors' perspective, students' perspective and implementation process.

### Delphi

The Delphi method was used to understand the instructors' perspective on the usefulness of the checklist. The Delphi panelists selected in this study is based on their expertise in the area of teaching argumentative writing for many years. Their expertise is essential in validating the content of this argumentative checklist which was developed based on sound theoretical foundations. For obtaining valid results, panel must be from stakeholders who has important interest and role in the development of the field and experts with relevant experience. Spencer-Cooke (1989) suggested that the group is directly related to the validity of the finding of the research. The factors that were assessed by the expert panelists includes the ease of understanding the checklist, content relevance, practicality and impact factor of the checklist if

implemented in classrooms. The panelist chosen for the validation were four female ESL writing lecturers with teaching experience of 10 to 15 years, who are currently teaching in the higher institution where this study is conducted. The aim was to investigate the instructors' perspective on the usefulness of the Self-assessment Checklist for Undergraduate Argumentative Writing designed by Nimehchisalem et al. (2014). A list of questions addressing the criteria of a useful checklist, namely clarity and simplicity, practicality, relevance and impact was sent together with the checklist to the experts. The experts assessed the checklist individually and the checklist was updated based on the experts' response in the first round, and it was sent back to the experts. In the second round, the experts were able to see each other experts' comments, therefore, allow them to rethink of their own position, and finally return their responses to the researchers. The checklist was refined based on the comments. After that, all the comments were again compiled and sent back to all the four panelist to determine if they agree to each other before finalizing it. At this stage, all four panelist agreed with all the changes and finalized the content of the checklist. . Then, the first author met the panel of experts together before finalizing it.

#### Semi Structured Interview

Interviews were used to understand the perspective of students on the usefulness of the checklist in ESL argumentative writing classroom. Semi structured interviewed enabled to researchers to be focused on the response needed from the students. The interview focused on the usability and effectiveness of the checklist in them responding to the argumentative writing task. Firstly, students were given the checklist on the first week of the study and they were allowed to go through it. On the same day, an argumentative writing refresher session was carried out by the tutor with the students. Next, on the second lesson of the first week, teacher trained the students on how to use the checklist and the training session took about two hours as students had some items and terms that needed clarification. Then, in week two, students worked on an argumentative writing task focusing on the "before writing" stage by utilizing the checklist. In week three, students started writing the essay based on the structural outline and plans made during the previous week. Finally, in the fifth week, students started editing the essay and exchanged with a peer after they finished editing their own essay. Finally, students were interviewed on the usefulness and effectiveness of the checklist in their argumentative writing process on the following week.

#### Classroom Observation

Classroom observations were used to understand the implementation process of the checklist. The classes were observed over the period of four weeks to understand the implementation process of the checklist. The researcher observed each session to have an in depth understanding on the implementation procedure especially the training session. The observation is semi-structured, where the researcher's objective and component of the observation were clear but there was no standard observation checklist used. Notes were made based on the issues raised by students during the training session, the amount of time needed to complete explaining each part of the checklist, the items that were confusing to students and students' response and participation during the session. The field notes were then arranged and reflection was written by the researcher based on the notes.

#### *Participants*

The respondents of this study comprised panel of four ESL writing experts and five undergraduate students in a private Malaysian university, Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman. The panel of experts have taught writing for 9 to 20 years and have extensive experience in teaching argumentative writing. They are also actively engaged in research centers in the institution carrying out research on different areas of ESL teaching and learning. On the hand, the group of students participated in this study are from the Faculty of Engineering, UTAR. The participants are in their second year of study for bachelor degree program. This students have completed two levels of writing courses before enrolling for the current writing course which focuses on argumentative writing.

#### Data Collections Instruments

Firstly, for the checklist validation by the experts, a set of questions addressing the usefulness of the checklist were created in close reference to literature. These questions cover the aspects of clarity and simplicity, practicality, relevance and impact of the checklist. The experts were also given chances to express their comments beyond the questions. Appendix C presents the list of questions sent to the experts. Next, another list of semi-structured interview questions were created to understand students' perception the usability and effectiveness of the checklist. The questions cover aspects of clarity, simplicity, practicality, impact and challenges. The list of interview questions used to explore the students' perception can be viewed in Appendix D.

#### Results and Discussion

1. *Instructors' perspective on the usefulness of the Self-assessment Checklist for Undergraduate Argumentative Writing designed by Nimehchisalem et al. (2014)*

##### *Clarity and Simplicity*

Overall, the content of the checklist is found to be clear after some amendments based on the comments and discussion with the teaching experts. Some items were removed and replaced with new ones to avoid confusing students. This is because, some items were found to be unclear and targeting students with more background knowledge on argumentative writing. Therefore, in order to use it among the intermediate group of students, it is sufficient to provide a clearer and self-standing items despite the availability of training sessions. A few items were deleted or blended and some items were added based on the experts' responses. Table... shows the changes made to the items by section. The language used in the checklist is found to be simple for the students to understand by the experts. However, all the four of them emphasized on clarification of some specific terms like 'counter-argument', 'rebuttal' and 'warrant'. This is supported by students experience stating that they were unclear of terms like 'counterarguments', 'rebuttal', 'warrant', 'cliché' and 'metaphor'. This indicates that there is a coherence between teachers' perception and students' experience in the research context.

##### *Practicality*

The checklist is found to be practical as it is easy implemented with training session. However, it is asserted by the teachers that it is essential to understand the development process of the checklist before teachers start using them in the class. Only then, it will be able to yield success as teachers will be to train the students effectively in implementing it. All experts

agreed that the checklist is economical. It also helps to save time spent giving feedbacks serving the role as guide for students' at every stage of writing.

### *Relevance*

The checklist is found to be relevant to assist in teaching-learning writing argumentative essays in undergraduate classrooms. It is apt as it covers each stage of writing and all the items are very specific that students will be able to work very independently in developing the essay. The checklist can serve as a tool for the learners to develop a deeper understanding of the process and mechanics of writing an argumentative essay. It also helps to monitor their own progress and promotes students' metacognitive skills. This is supported by Armstrong (2013) who asserted that self-assessment develops metacognition in students by creating 'awareness of what worked and what need to be improved'.

### *Impact*

This checklist will lessen the burden faced by writing teachers in the current research context because it trains students to be responsible of their learning and assessment. Spiller (2012) reported that self-assessment encourages students to not only be responsible of their learning but eventually become independent learner. Self-assessment supports the aim of higher education to produce learners who treat learning as a lifelong process and keep seeking knowledge through the self-reflection. Singh and Terry (2008) stated that self-assessment properly implemented will be able to foster sustainable learning.

TABLE 1. Summary of Changes made to the Argumentative Writing Self-assessment Checklist Version 1.0

Checklist section	Item Deleted	Item Added	Item reworded	Item moved place
Before Writing	0	1	1	0
During Writing	2	2	6	1
After Writing	1	6	2	1

TABLE 2. Changes Made to the Before Writing Section Post Delphi

Checklist item Version 1	Checklist item version 2	Action taken	Justification
Before Writing			
Review related texts.	Review related sources from various materials/medium.	Item reworded	To ensure that students are not dependent to just one source of medium when to search for information.
	Draft a structural outline for the essay.	Item added	This can be in the form of mind-map and this will serve as a visual guide for their writing/drafting process.



TABLE 3. Changes Made to the During Writing Section Post Delphi

During Writing	<u>Comments</u>	<u>Action taken</u>	<u>Justification</u>
Every idea should be related to the topic	Ensure that every idea is related to the topic.	Item reworded	Clarity
Present the content effectively		Item deleted	The item and its sub items guides the composition of the body paragraphs specifically. However, it is too general to simply state as 'present the content effectively'. This item is replaced a more specific item as below.
	Present the argument and counterargument effectively	Item added	This item is added to replace the above vague item. This item clearly referring to the body paragraph. This avoid confusion on the part of students.
Provide strong evidence to support every claim.	Provide current and relevant evidence to support every claim. If possible, find more empirical evidence.	Item reworded	Clarity
Organize your ideas		Item deleted	Most sub items of this item refer to the introduction and conclusion paragraph. This item is not reflective of that. Therefore, it is deleted and replaced with another specific item as below.
	Present the introduction and conclusion effectively	Item added	This item is specific and refers to its sub items clearly.

Present your argument and counterarguments in the body paragraphs	Present your argument and counterarguments in the body paragraphs	Item moved place	This item was moved place to give better flow and clarity to the checklist user. It was moved up before the items that refers to arguments and counterarguments specifically. Originally it appear after items that describe of the composition arguments and counterarguments. Teacher experts asserted the need to state the place of arguments and counterarguments before describing its composition process specifically.
At the beginning of the first paragraph, write a general statement about the topic.	At the beginning of the introduction paragraph, write a general statement about the topic.	Item reworded	Clarity
In the first paragraph, clearly state your position in the argument. Alternatively, you may state your purpose of writing this paper.	In the introduction paragraph, clearly state your position in the argument. Alternatively, you may state your purpose of writing this paper.	Item reworded	Clarity
At the end of the first paragraph, you may briefly list the arguments and counter-arguments to be discussed in the paper.	At the end of the introduction paragraph, write the thesis statement - arguments and counter-arguments to be discussed in the paper.	Item reworded	Clarity. Introduction has a thesis statement, which serves as a quick guide to develop and control the main ideas in the body paragraphs
	Ensure that the body paragraphs consist of topic sentences,	Item added	To reemphasize the structure of every body paragraphs.

	arguments and evidence.		
Present a summary of your arguments and conclude.	Ensure the main arguments are restated in the conclusion paragraph.	Item reworded	Clarity

TABLE 4. Changes Made to the After Writing Section Post Delphi

After Writing			
	Check if the content is relevant to the topic. Remove the irrelevant ones.	Item added	To be more cohesive
Remove the irrelevant ideas.		Item deleted and combined with the above item	Immediate action by student. Saves time.
	Ensure the ideas are adequately developed/explained.	Item added	To guide students systematically and specifically in checking the content of their writing.
	Ensure the evidence are relevant, current and based on empirical data.	Item added	To guide students systematically and specifically in checking the content of their writing.
	In the introduction paragraph, check if the general statement, stand and thesis statement are well linked.	Item added	To guide students systematically and specifically in checking the organization of their writing.
	In the body paragraphs, check if the evidence provided to support the claims are well linked.	Item added	To guide students systematically and specifically in checking the organization of their writing.

	In the conclusion paragraph, check if the summary of arguments and concluding statement is properly linked.	Item added	To guide students systematically and specifically in checking the organization of their writing.
It is good to use idioms, but some readers do not like clichés.	Check if the use of idioms/metaphors is relevant to your writing.	Item reworded	Clarity
	Use linkers/transition words correctly.	Item added	To remind students indirectly on the importance of being cohesive.
Capitalize words like names	Capitalize words like names and proper nouns.	Item reworded	Clarity

2. *Students' perspective on the usefulness and benefit of the Self-assessment Checklist for Undergraduate Argumentative Writing designed by Nimehchisalem et al. (2014)*

Overall, all respondents indicated the usefulness and usability of the checklist. Firstly, the language used in the checklist is found to be easy to understand by 30% of the respondents. Another 60% of the respondents felt the language to be easy but training was essential in getting clarification on terms like 'rebuttal', 'counterarguments', 'metaphor' and 'cliché'. Respondents found the training session to be essential and useful in understanding the checklist and using it effectively, thereafter. Consequently, it must be noted that teacher role at the introduction of the checklist to students is important so that the implementation process yield success. Only 10% of the respondents stated that was able to understand the language of the checklist with the help of the dictionary.

TABLE 5. Language of the Checklist.

Response	N	%
Language is easy to understand	3	30
Overall able to understand the language but needed clarification of terms like 'rebuttal', 'counterargument', 'metaphor' and 'cliché' during the training session .	6	60
Overall able to understand the language used but referred to dictionary to understand terms like 'rebuttal' and 'cliché'	1	10

Next, all student respondents stated that that they were able to understand the content of the checklist fully only with the help of the teacher through a training session. Items 5.3, 5.4, 5.5 and 5.6 in the ‘while writing’ section were found to be unclear for the respondents. These items were referring to linking claims and evidence, backing up the link between claims and evidence, anticipating rebuttals and listing arguments and counterarguments. It is a point to note that most respondents were not aware of the need for rebuttal in an argumentative essay. Therefore, it led to the confusion on these items in the checklist. However, after the refresher on argumentative writing was carried out, the respondents were able to match the components of argumentative writing and the items in the checklist. The checklist content was found to be a little overwhelming for some respondents at beginning as they didn’t have a clear knowledge on the complex steps and recursive nature of writing. For example:

When I first read the checklist that teacher gives, I didn’t not understand everything especially the during writing section because I feel like so many things.....I feel that like so many things that I have to keep checking when I write. I was a bit confused but when teacher trained us all, I understand what to do.....

However, all their concerns and lack of clarity on the items of the checklist is resolved through the training session and continuous support from the teacher in clearing their doubts.All respondent asserted the usefulness of the checklist after the training session. Thirdly, the layout of the checklist is found to be easy and simple to understand by all respondents. Clarification were provided on the columns ‘done’, ‘pending’ and ‘not applicable’. Next, all respondents found the checklist to be very beneficial in assisting them to write better argumentative essay.

Table 6. Students’ perception on the effectiveness of the checklist in assisting argumentative writing.

Self-assessment checklists benefit	Category
<p>.....understand that self-assessment is not just after writing something but keep doing it at every stages so we not only get good marks finally but also learn the steps correctly.....</p> <p>....It made me realize that so many items to be considered before writing, during writing and also after.....</p> <p>.....I also understand that editing is not only checking spelling errors and word counts and some tenses but more than that. I learnt a lot including the importance of linking sentences, not repeating the same words by using synonyms and others.</p> <p>....It makes writing interesting to me as I approach it as a step by step process now.</p> <p>....I have never seen this detailing in any other material. It teaches me very clearly from one step to another.</p>	<p>Systematic Writing</p>

<p>Yes, it is good because I can always refer to it whenever I work at home. It helps my independent writing sessions. It motivates me to write after class because it still guides me.....</p> <p>..... It is a teacher because keep telling you what is missing or what you should be looking at. I can do my independently now.</p>	Independent learning
<p>.....I also think it is very detailed that it makes me know what the problem with my writing is before.</p> <p>..... For example, I always thought argumentative writing is about making a stand and defend your stand. ....It made me understand writing better and also be aware of many steps in writing.</p>	Enhanced understanding
<p>.....Before this I wasn't aware of the need of some many elements pointed out in the checklist. Now I am aware of the important aspect of argumentative writing.</p> <p>It made me realize that so many items to be considered before writing, during writing and also after. I didn't know writing works this way.....</p> <p>I think so because it made me realize so many steps of writing that I didn't know. . I always write essays by just thinking for points and elaborating them.....</p> <p>I used to be a messy writer before the checklist....</p>	Self-awareness
<p>The checklist also motivate me to master different parts of grammar like tenses, noun, verb and others also so I can edit my own work.....With this method I am not feeling demotivated to edit the grammar my own essay.</p>	Self-motivation

The checklist was found to be guiding students to approach writing in very systematic manner. Respondents valued the detailed step by steps items of the checklist that encourage them to view the process writing approach in a systematic and manageable manner. Other than that, respondents found the checklist assisting their independent learning. This is in line with studies by Fontana and Fernandez (1994) that led students to take active control over their learning. Siow (2015) too reported that students self-assessment made students to feel independent, encouraged them to think more, and become critical and analytical in their thinking. The self-assessment checklist is also found to be enhancing the understanding of the students about the component of argumentative writing. Student respondents obtain deeper understanding on the

component, steps and techniques of writing through this detailed checklist. Hamp-Lyons and Condon (2000) reported self-assessment as a tool that guide students to understand the requirement of what they should have in their composition. Moreover, this study found that self-assessment encourage self-awareness of ability. The respondents became aware of their weakness or element of argumentative writing that they were missing out without the checklist. This is supported by Mrudula (2002), who reported self-assessment as a means to raising the awareness of recognized level of abilities, assisting students in organizing their thoughts and approach their learning critically. Kear (2011) too reported that self-assessment plays the role of creating awareness among students, on the gaps that exist in students' knowledge and lead students to reflect on their skills and make necessary changes to enhance the knowledge and skills. Besides that, the respondents felt the checklist as a motivating factor to go with writing especially editing their own work. There were lack confidence in editing their own work as the respondent had limited knowledge on how to approach the editing process systematically. This is in line with McMillan and Hearn (2008) that asserted self-assessment if correctly implemented, will be able to intrinsic motivation of students. The dynamic nature of self-assessment will definitely enhances the skills and knowledge of students over time and this directly promotes the motivation of learners to keep going in the learning process.

### *3. To understand the self-assessment checklist implementation process in the classroom*

In order to implement the self-assessment checklist effectively, it is essential for the teachers to have sufficient understanding on the development of this checklist. Student respondents posted various questions on the items of the checklist specifically the ones that refer to claims, rebuttal and counterarguments. Deep knowledge on theoretical background of the checklist and the extended of guide of the checklist will be able to assist the teachers in training the students sufficiently. Therefore, it is imperative for teachers to equip themselves with the knowledge pertaining this before taking this to the classrooms. Furthermore, the training period took considerable time as self-assessment is not something that respondents are very familiar with. Thorough training with sufficient time is essential for the success of self-assessment implementation at the level of practice (Andrade & Valtcheva, 2009). Other than that, the refresher on argumentative writing component was essential too as students have to know the component of writing that they are assessing well in order for them to effectively self-assess. It is absolutely necessary for teachers to spend considerable time at the beginning stage training the students not only on the checklist but making sure of their knowledge on the component of the essay. Student respondents started working independently when they were assigned with an argumentative writing task by using the checklist. Teacher intervened when there were doubts. The writing task were started with researching on the related topic, brainstorming, shortlisting the most relevant arguments and counter arguments, and planning for the content of the argumentative essay. Respondents then moved on to the During Writing Stage. At this stage, respondents started drafting the introduction paragraph followed by providing claims and establishing it with evidence. They also ensured counterarguments were present and rebuttals were provided. Respondents were careful that they do not plagiarize anything intentionally or unintentionally from the sources that they were referring. It is noted that students needed teacher's presence and support as they kept referring to teachers to gain better understanding on counterarguments and types of evidence when they write the essay. Another important point observed is where students went back to before writing stage while writing and started looking

for more information to support their arguments and counterarguments. This indicates the recursive nature of writing which this checklist is based on. Students proceeded to the editing stage and they needed the help on online dictionary to check for synonyms and information on pronoun, tenses, and preposition and transition words online. This shows the active engagement of students in learning language components so that they have sufficient knowledge to detect their errors.

### **Conclusion and Future Research**

This revised version of the checklist should be implemented in undergraduate argumentative writing classroom. It is found to be simple, economical and relevant. Furthermore, both students and teachers perceived it as a useful tool in assisting the argumentative writing process. Other than that, it uses simple language that can be understood by the students, has an appropriate layout and clearly structured. Students preferred the checklist as it guides them from one stage to another and motivated them to write. Other than that, it made students to treat writing in a more systematic approach and become more independent writers who has an enhanced understanding of argumentative writing. The checklist can be effectively implemented by addressing the importance of training sessions and some specific items which appear to be new to students. The results of this study shed light on the alternative option available for both teacher and students in an ESL writing classroom. It also indicates the preference of both teachers and students in the research context on self-assessment. Future research should focus on understanding the effectiveness of this checklist on students on argumentative writing performance and their self-regulatory behavior so that its effect on creating autonomous writers could be understood. A bigger group of sample with longer period of implementation will provide a more holistic view on the effectiveness and usefulness of the checklist when it is implemented in undergraduate argumentative writing classroom.

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