

EVALUATION OF THE WRITING COMPONENT OF AN ENGLISH LANGUAGE  
TEACHING PROGRAM AT A PUBLIC UNIVERSITY:  
A CASE STUDY

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Approval of the Graduate School of Social Sciences

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **EVALUATION OF THE WRITING COMPONENT OF AN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING PROGRAM AT A PUBLIC UNIVERSITY: A CASE STUDY**

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This study has the main objective of evaluating the effectiveness of the writing component of the program applied at the Department of Basic English (DBE) and the Department of Modern Languages (DML) at Middle East Technical University (METU) in the 2010-2011 academic year in terms of program objectives, materials and content, teaching-learning process and the assessment of the writing skills. The opinions of the DBE and DML instructors, program coordinators and students as well as the content course instructors at different departments at METU were mainly obtained via questionnaires and interviews. The data collected via the questionnaires were analyzed using SPSS 15 while the analysis of all the qualitative data was done through content analysis.

The results of the questionnaires indicated that the writing components of the program at the DBE and the DML were generally effective as for the dimensions of the programs as specified in the research questions from the perspective of instructors and students. However, the qualitative data revealed participants' suggestions for the improvement of the existing writing programs at both departments. Some of the major conclusions that can be drawn from DBE students' and instructors' suggestions are as follows: There is a need to switch the focus from discourse-level writing to more free-writing practices through more student-centered activities; the materials should be more visually attractive; the assessment procedure applied to test students' writing ability in

the mid-terms should be standardized and the writing tasks as tested in the English Proficiency Exam (EPE) should be focused on in writing classes.

On the other hand, as for the writing program at the DML, the need for the diversification of the writing genres, topics and the citation rules covered in the ENG 101 and ENG 102 courses depending on students' departments was emphasized by the DML participants. Similarly, DBE participants underlined the need for department-related content in writing materials. Also, the content course instructors agreed that the writing program applied at the DBE and the DML should be department-specific. In other words, this study displayed the necessity to conduct a needs analysis aiming to reveal DBE and DML students' writing needs for their departments.

**Key Words:** Program evaluation, L2 writing, METU, Case study

## ÖZ

### BİR DEVLET ÜNİVERSİTESİ'NİN İNGİLİZ DİL ÖĞRETİMİ PROGRAMINDAKİ YAZMA BOYUTUNUN DEĞERLENDİRİLMESİ: BİR VAKA ÇALIŞMASI

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Bu çalışmanın asıl amacı 2010-2011 akademik yılında Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi (ODTÜ) Temel İngilizce Bölümü (TİB) ve Modern Diller Bölümleri'nde (MDB) uygulanan programın yazma boyutunu, program hedefleri, materyal ve içerik, öğrenme-öğretme süreci ve yazma becerilerinin ölçülmesi açısından değerlendirmektir. TİB ve MDB öğretim elemanları, program koordinatörleri ve öğrencilerin yanı sıra farklı bölümlerdeki alan dersi öğretim üyelerinin görüşleri çoğunlukla anket ve görüşmeler yoluyla toplanmıştır. Nitel verilerin analizi içerik analizi yöntemiyle yapılırken anketlerle toplanan veriler SPSS 15 yardımıyla analiz edilmiştir.

Anketlerin sonuçları, TİB ve MDB yazma programlarının araştırma sorularında belirtilen boyutlar noktasında öğrenci ve öğretim elemanlarına göre genel olarak etkili olduğunu göstermiştir. Ancak, nitel veriler her iki bölümde de şu anki yazma programlarının geliştirilmesi için katılımcıların önerilerini ortaya çıkarmıştır. TİB öğrencileri ve öğretim elemanlarının önerilerinden çıkarılan bazı önemli sonuçlar şunlardır: Söylem seviyesinde yazılan yazılardan çok öğrenci merkezli serbest yazma alıştırmalarının yapılması, materyallerin görsel olarak daha çekici hale getirilmesi, ara sınavlarda yazma becerilerinin ölçülmesinde standardizasyona gidilmesi ve yazma derslerinde İngilizce Yeterlik Sınavı'ndaki (İYS) yazma bölümüne yönelik alıştırmaların yapılması.

Diğer yandan, MDB'deki yazma programıyla ilgili olarak, ENG 101 ve ENG 102 derslerinde işlenen yazı türleri, konuları ve alıntılama kurallarının öğrencilerin

bölümlerine göre farklılaşması gerekliliği MDB katılımcıları tarafından ifade edilmiştir. Benzer şekilde TİB’de kullanılan yazma materyallerinin içeriklerinin öğrencilerin bölümleriyle ilişkili olması gerekliliği TİB katılımcıları tarafından vurgulanmıştır. Bunun yanı sıra, farklı bölümlerdeki alan dersi öğretim üyeleri de TİB ve MDB yazma programlarının öğrencilerin bölümlerine odaklanması gerektiği görüşüne katılmışlardır. Diğer bir deyişle, bu çalışma Yabancı Diller Yüksekokulu’ndaki öğrencilerin bölümleriyle ilgili ihtiyaçlarını açığa çıkarmayı hedefleyen bir ihtiyaç analizi çalışmasının gerekliliğini ortaya koymuştur.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Program değerlendirme, İkinci dilde yazma, ODTÜ, Vaka çalışması

To my beloved family

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter starts with a background to the study and continues with the aims of the study as well as relevant research questions. The third section discusses the need for the study and the fourth section presents the definition of some key terms.

#### 1.1. Background to the Study

As in many other countries, English is becoming more and more popular in Turkey owing to certain reasons. Technological developments, the increase in tourism income, the economic integration of Turkey into the global economy, the flow of foreign movies into Turkey and the spread of private channels and cable TV (Acar, 2004) are only few of many other reasons why the English language in both our education system and social life has its important place. As Kırkgöz (2005) points out, the medium of instruction at many universities in Turkey is English and the number of universities providing English instruction is increasing.

All of the private and most of the state-run universities in Turkey offer English preparatory programs that last for an academic year. In the report, *The Higher Education Strategy of Turkey*, Higher Education Council states that of the 53 state universities in Turkey, 23 are English-medium universities offering a one-year intensive English preparation for all new coming students who are not successful in the English proficiency exam (Retrieved from <http://www.yok.gov.tr/en/content/view/557/238/>).

Due to the increasing importance of English in Turkey in recent years, authorities have been seeking ways to develop programs to teach English more effectively. For instance, the English language curriculum was reformed by the Ministry of Education in 1997 to make the school curricula compatible with EU standards by turning it into a more student-centered and constructivist program (Kırkgöz, 2007). Moreover, English language courses have been added into the programs of primary school fourth graders,

which means that Turkish students start learning English earlier. In addition, foreign language preparatory programs in secondary education have been abolished and foreign language training has been spread to the entire program (Ministry of Education Regulations, 2006).

In an attempt to bring university students up to an adequate level in terms of English and to help students use English internationally in various fields, more importance has been given to preparatory schools in Turkey (Toker, 1999). As pointed out by Tunç (2010), these schools generally aim to teach university students how to read and understand English so that they can easily follow their departmental courses in their faculties. Furthermore, these programs intend to teach the necessary writing skills so that they can take notes during the lectures and write paragraphs or essays of different types. In addition, such programs address listening and speaking skills in order to help students follow their lectures, ask questions to their lecturers and make presentations when they start their education in their departments.

Contrary to the increasing importance attached to the English language in Turkey and despite hard-work to develop effective ELT programs, there seems to be a lot of problems in all levels of education in Turkey. Many researchers attract attention to the reality that there have always been criticisms about the fact that the desired level of English cannot be achieved in our country and Turkish students cannot be competent in English despite all the investments and efforts by the authorities (Işık, 2008; Tosun, 2006; Çelebi, 2006; Kırkgöz, 2008). Similarly, in a very recent interview, Demirel (2010) emphasizes that despite 1500-2000 hours of English language instruction in Anatolian high schools and colleges, many of the graduates of these schools cannot succeed in the proficiency exams given in the preparatory schools of universities like Middle East Technical University and Boğaziçi University (Retrieved on August 06, 2010 from <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/egitim/anasayfa>). From Zok's (2010) perspective, the major problem with ELT in Turkey is that even though the field has grown in the course of time, the teaching quality has not.

As in other levels of education, the preparatory school programs in Turkey are not without problems. A few program evaluation studies recently done in the context of

preparatory schools at different universities revealed many issues that need to be improved for a more effective English preparatory school program in Turkey (Gerede, 2005; Örs, 2006; Gökdemir, 2010; Özkanal & Hakan, 2010; Tunç, 2010). For instance, Gökdemir (2010) used a scale of problems so as to investigate the common challenges encountered by preparatory school students in five different universities in Turkey (Dokuz Eylül University, Ege University, Istanbul University, Haliç University and Izmir Higher Technology Institute). The findings of the evaluation revealed the following issues:

1. The lessons at preparatory classes are mostly teacher-centered and students are mostly passive.
2. Not many opportunities are given to practice the language.
3. Students do not believe that these schools are the right places to learn English.
4. Students do not spend enough time and effort to learn the language.
5. Universities cannot provide the required classroom settings, facilities or equipment to learn the language.
6. The program is taught too quickly to cover the planned material.

In some other studies regarding the factors discouraging university students in Turkey from learning a foreign language, some important issues to keep in mind came up. As analyzed by Birdal (2005), Kocaman's (1983) article is based on the idea that teaching English at the university level has problems mainly in terms of the selection and the development of the course books, the use of authentic materials, methods and techniques as well as training qualified language teachers. Therefore, these issues should be carefully handled for an effective language instruction at the university level. In a similar attempt to draw attention to the problems of compulsory English education at state universities in Turkey, Çakır (2007) summarized the following important reasons why it is difficult to learn English at the university level:

1. Foreign language learning is not regarded as important as the courses of the related department.

2. The students are located in the mixed ability classes.
3. Curriculum to teach a foreign language is not suitable for the expected goals.
4. Students are not motivated to learn a foreign language.
5. Students are not well-educated in their previous education.
6. They are not provided with the necessary teaching materials.
7. The textbook chosen to be followed does not fit their needs, ages, cultural backgrounds, and interests.
8. Having a right not to attend the course for 30% of the period leads the students not to come to school, which creates a gap among themselves, particularly for beginners or false beginners.
9. Some textbooks are loaded with unnecessary teaching activities which are likely to be omitted.
10. Foreign language courses are not located at the fruitful hours in weekly course schedules.

More recently, Demirtaş and Sert (2010) state that the English Language Proficiency of Turkish students at the university preparatory class level is not sufficient in spite of a weekly skill-based 25-hour intensive course because of the teacher-centered traditional approaches that deal mostly with grammar teaching. From their perspective, students at preparatory classes are only the passive receivers of knowledge, which is in contrast with the Council of Modern Language Project that requires the active involvement of learners in every stage of the educational process.

In addition to a few studies carried out in different universities in Turkey, there have been a number of evaluation studies conducted at the SFL (DBE and DML), METU that is the context of the current evaluation study. Besides revealing important findings about different components of the program at METU, these studies have revealed invaluable results regarding the writing component of the program that makes up the main focus of this study. For instance, Topçu (2005) focused on the theme-based curriculum at METU and used questionnaires and focus group interviews with former students of DBE and DBE instructors to evaluate the program applied in the 2003-2004 academic year. The main finding of the study is that the writing component is the most

problematic area that needs improvement in the program and as far as materials are concerned, the reading skill was the most successfully developed one. Instructors were found to hold more negative opinions than students about the program. The possible reasons behind this finding were thought to be the implementation and quality of the materials and lack of communication between instructors and administrators. Students who took part in the study indicated that they found hand-outs much more useful than the course books and pair/group work was considered as ineffective due to time constraints in the program.

In another study at the DML at the same university, Güntek (2005) focused on the ENG 101 as a part of the Curriculum Renewal Project in 2002. In order to evaluate the course book *English for Academic Purposes 1* and to evaluate the effectiveness of this course in terms of the goals and objectives, assessment procedures, materials and teaching methods; questionnaires and interviews were administered with students and instructors. The results of the study showed that the participants were generally satisfied with the course; however, there were some complaints resulting from instructors' workload, time constraints and the high number of writing tasks. Besides the results of her study, Güntek reports the findings of a needs-analysis study carried out by the SFL in 2002. Interviews were held with 18 instructors, 24 graduates, their employers, the English instructors at the SFL as well as the students who had received ENG 101 and ENG 102 courses. This needs analysis revealed that there was a need to develop the reading and writing skills of METU students by improving the ENG 101 course.

According to the findings of the self-evaluation report of the SFL at METU in 2007 (Retrieved in September 2010 from <http://www.dbe.metu.edu.tr>), the content course instructors in different departments at METU hold the idea that students who had successfully completed the preparatory program had problems in expressing themselves in writing. Similarly, the instructors at the DML argued that because student had only been taught how to write paragraphs at the DBE, they had problems with composition writing in the ENG 101 course.

In the sharing and feedback sessions about the program of the DBE last year (Retrieved in September 1, 2010 from <http://www.dbe.metu.edu.tr/port/documents>),

some instructors voiced their concerns and suggestions about the writing component of the program as follows, which seems to concur Topçu's finding that the writing component of the program needs improvement:

- One suggestion was to produce only sentence-level writings as beginner students lack the necessary tense knowledge.

- Students had difficulties in sentence writing. Writing and Grammar could go together.

- It was suggested that essays are more realistic than condensed paragraph writing.

- More attention should be paid on sentence level writing and using linkers. Sentence types in English would be helpful.

- During discussions on how to improve writing, one suggestion was to give students a questionnaire to get feedback on our teaching of writing. This questionnaire could be repeated in the freshman course to obtain feedback on their success.

- To achieve better standardization for assessing writing, 1 hour could be allotted after the exam to standardization. Another suggestion was to leave the day after the exam to marking only (no classes).

- Writing objectives should be revised. Some inconsistencies in writing instruction such as not encouraging the use of "I" and "we" in academic writing, yet teaching "I propose..." for argumentation need to be straightened out.

- One comment was that students unfamiliar with "discourse" patterns are more successful in the writing section of the Proficiency exam while our students get confused trying to fit their writing to a "discourse" rather than answering the question.

- Discourse writing should come later in the program and the idea of using hand-outs instead of a writing book was not favored much.

## **1.2 Aims of the Study and Research Questions**

Although there have been some evaluation studies done in different preparatory schools in Turkey, these studies mainly focused on the program in general. Therefore, further research dealing with specific component of the programs in different ELT contexts is necessary. This study has the main objective of evaluating the effectiveness of the writing component of the program applied at the DBE and the DML at METU in the 2010-2011 academic year in terms of program objectives, materials and content, teaching-learning process and the assessment of the writing skills. This study also aims to provide suggestions for the use of program stakeholders in order to improve the program.

As explained in the official website of the SFL, the coordinating and monitoring body of the academic work at the DBE and the DML, the SFL has the main goal to enable students to follow their departmental courses at different faculties at METU (Retrieved from <http://www.ydyom.metu.edu.tr/sfl/mission.htm>) whose medium of instruction is English. Through Lynch's (1990) context-adaptive evaluation model, this study intends to analyze the current situation of the writing component of the ELT program at the SFL by analyzing relevant documents like materials, revealing the opinions of relevant stakeholders about the program as well as observing classes to understand instructors' classroom practices. As both the DBE and the DML complement each other in terms of equipping students with the language skills and the sub-skills necessary to deal with the requirements of their departments, the writing component of both departments was focused within the scope of this study (see section 4.1. for a detailed analysis of the context of the evaluation).

Considering the purpose and the context of this evaluation, the research questions have been formulated as follows:

1. How do DBE students evaluate the writing component of the program in terms of program objectives, materials and content, teaching-learning process and the assessment of the writing skills at the DBE?
2. How do DBE instructors and program coordinators evaluate the writing

component of the program in terms of program objectives, materials and content, teaching-learning process and the assessment of the writing skills at the DBE?

3. How do DML students evaluate the writing component of the program in terms of program objectives, materials and content, teaching-learning process and the assessment of the writing skills at the DML?

4. How do DML instructors and the program coordinator evaluate the writing component of the program in terms of program objectives, materials and content, teaching-learning process and the assessment of the writing skills at the DML?

5. How do content course instructors at different departments evaluate the writing program at the SFL (the DBE and the DML)?

### **1.3 Need for the Study**

There are a number of reasons why there is an assumed need for this evaluation study. First of all, this study can be regarded as important in that it aims to contribute to the field of program evaluation in the neglected context of ELT. As Murphy (2000) underlined, the attention to program evaluation and its uses in ELT is quite a recent phenomenon even though evaluation studies have been carried out in different fields of education for around 50 years. This study may be an example of ELT program evaluation for the other preparatory schools in Turkey and may trigger more evaluation research in the context of other preparatory programs in Turkey.

This study is assumed to be significant as the context of this evaluation has one of the oldest ELT programs that have given inspiration to many other state and private universities in Turkey. As pointed out by Temizyürek (2001), foreign-medium instruction in Turkish higher education appeared in the aftermath of the establishment of METU and became popular with universities like Hacettepe and Dokuz Eylül. In addition, the results of the self-evaluation report in 2007 and the feedback sessions in 2010 in addition to the findings in Topçu's (2005) and Güntek's (2005) studies revealed

serious concerns about the writing component of the program at the SFL at METU. It was also realized that the mean of preparatory students' writing scores in the METU English Proficiency Exam (EPE) administered in June 2009 and in September 2010 and was the lowest among other sections like listening, reading comprehension and language use. For that reason, there is an assumed need for an in-depth analysis of the writing course at the SFL.

As all evaluation studies are generally expected to reveal areas for program improvement (Murphy, 2000), evaluating the writing component of the current program through a comprehensive research study is likely to reveal areas that need to be improved and the results of the current program evaluation study are hoped to give some guidance to the Curriculum Core Committee, the research committee, the administration and instructors about the strengths and weaknesses of the writing component of the program in terms of its objectives, testing procedures, materials and the instructional methods used in the program. As stated by Baskan (2002), the findings of such studies done in the context of the DBE are taken seriously by the administrative body for the improvement of the program:

The Department of Basic English, METU is a department which claims to be a center of excellence and is continuously looking for ways to improve the English courses offered. Every possible suggestion to enhance the program is considered carefully and immediate action is taken if and when there is a problem.

The application of Lynch's (1990) context-adaptive model in this language program evaluation study is another significant aspect of the study as this model gives great attention to the context of the evaluation. As maintained by Kantor (1984, cited in Zamel, 1987), the context of the evaluation, the conditions under which students write and teachers' methods of teaching writing are lacking in most of the research dealing with L2 writing.

In addition to the intended contribution of this study to the existing literature on language program evaluation, there is a need for this study because it is an attempt to explore the writing component of an ELT program in an EFL context. The reason why writing has been chosen as the primary focus of this evaluation is that L2 writing has

been another neglected part of the language program for a long time (Badger & White, 2000). It is known that because of the dominance of the audio-lingual approach for quite a long time in ELT (Matsuda, 2001, cited in Matsuda, 2003), not enough studies were carried out about L2 writing. The situation of writing instruction in non-English dominant countries like Turkey has received only little attention even though there have been a great number of studies about teaching English writing in English dominant contexts (Leki, 2001). Similarly, Fujieda (2006) states that the number of studies dealing with writing in EFL contexts is very limited and the field of L2 writing is still underdeveloped in second language studies and applied linguistics.

#### **1.4 Definition of Terms**

The terms here are used in this dissertation as explained below:

**L2 writing:** Writing in a foreign or a second language.

**Preparatory program:** An additional one-year intensive English program which is compulsory at some universities in Turkey if a proficiency examination cannot be passed.

**SFL:** The main body coordinating both the DBE and the DML at METU (Retrieved from <http://www.ydyom.metu.edu.tr/sfl/mission.htm>)

**Course content instructors:** Instructors teaching departmental courses at different faculties at METU (e.g., physics, history).

**DML instructors:** The English instructors at the DML who have experience in teaching the ENG 101 and ENG 102 courses.

**Testing:** This term embodying student performance in writing is used interchangeably with the term *assessment*. Language assessment is described as the process of using language tests to accomplish particular jobs in language programs (Norris, 2000).

**Teaching:** An umbrella term referring to the teaching-learning process (Brown, 1995).

**Program evaluation:** The evaluation of different aspects of a language program, such as the curriculum design, the teachers and students and classroom processes (Mackay, 1994).

**Content:** The topics and themes of a material (Graves, 2000).

## **CHAPTER II**

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

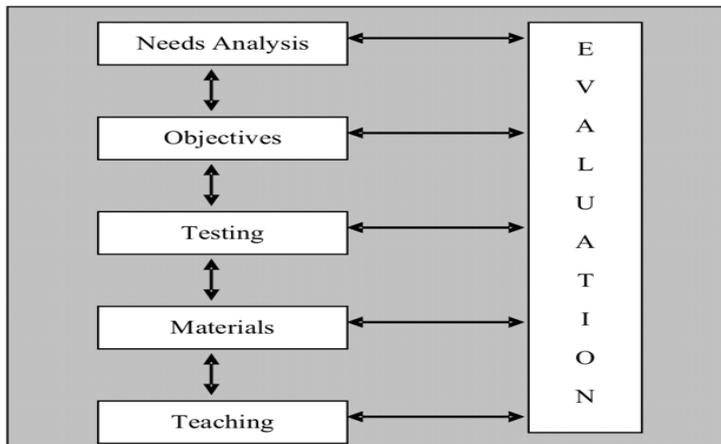
The section deals with the literature pertaining to language program evaluation as well as teaching L2 writing. First of all, elements of a language curriculum are discussed to clarify the relationship between these elements and language program evaluation. After focusing on some of the essential issues regarding language program evaluation, different program evaluation types and models are presented. Finally, some of the program evaluation studies conducted both in Turkey and abroad are reviewed.

As far as the literature dealing with teaching L2 writing is concerned, first of all, what it means to learn writing in L2, why it is an important skill and what are some challenges in learning how to write in L2 are briefly discussed. Then, the approaches to L2 writing instruction (i.e. product-based approaches and process-based approaches) that have so far emerged in L2 writing pedagogy are presented. Finally, the focus is shifted to some of the relevant issues, such as the materials used in L2 writing classes, written feedback and assessment of the writing ability.

#### **2.1 Elements of a Language Curriculum**

In order to go deep into the language program evaluation for a better understanding of the theoretical background to the current evaluation study, the elements of a language curriculum that are all linked to program evaluation should be presented. To present these elements, Brown's (1995) systematic approach to design and maintain language curriculum was used as some of the curriculum elements in Brown's model including objectives, testing, materials and teaching have helped the researcher to formulate the research questions and limit the focus of the current evaluation study. A detailed review of the issues pertaining to program evaluation, which is regarded as the component of his model that "gives meaning to all the other elements" (Brown, 1995, p. 217), is presented in this section after a brief introduction to other important dimensions

of a language curriculum as illustrated in an order below (Brown, 1995: 20):



**Figure 2.1:** Brown's (1995) Systematic Approach to Design and Maintain Language Curriculum

Language curriculum is described in general by Brown (1995) as a systematic process during which language teaching and language program development occur on interrelated elements. The first element among these elements is the needs analysis referring to the identification of the language students are likely to use. According to Nunan (1988), needs analysis is a term referring to systematic techniques and procedures to collect information to be utilized in designing a syllabus. The situations in which a language will be used, the objectives and purposes for which the language is needed, the types of communication that will be used and the level of proficiency that will be required are some of the issues that are focused in the needs analysis process (Richards, et al., 1985, cited in Brown, 1995). Data collection tools, such as interviews, observations and questionnaires are used to reveal students' needs in order to start developing the curriculum by formulating goals and objectives depending on their needs.

Another key term that is quite often confused with needs analysis is situation analysis which is the type of research design applied for the current evaluation study. Different from needs analysis, situation analysis deals with the analysis of factors and their potential effect on the curriculum and aims to reveal a program's strengths and weaknesses considering the institutional and individual factors. Also, situation analysis

addresses the negative factors for curriculum implementation at the end of the evaluation (Richards, 2001).

What has been learned in the needs analysis or situation analysis is utilized to formulate goals and objectives that make up the second step in the development of a language curriculum. Goals are described by Brown (1995: 21) as “general statements concerning desirable and attainable program purposes and aims based on perceived language and situation needs”. He underlines some of the important characteristics of goals by pointing out that the goals usually focus on what the students should be able to do when they leave the program. For him, goals should reflect the general statements of the program purposes and can serve as basis to develop more precise and observable outcomes. In an attempt to make the difference between objectives and goals clear, Graves (2000: 76) uses the journey metaphor to imply that one can find himself/herself in wrong places during this journey towards a language curriculum and he/she should redefine the goals for a better destination referring to the general objectives of the course.

In parallel with the formulation of goals and objectives, an appropriate testing procedure should be established to give information about the development of the other elements in Brown’s model. Taking different purposes of testing into consideration, Smith (2004) categorizes language tests in five main categories:

1. Proficiency test: Overall language ability is the focus for such tests and what has been learned previously is not of concern in such tests.
2. Placement test: These tests are conducted to place the learner at a suitable level so that teachers can adjust their teaching accordingly.
3. Achievement test: These tests aim to assess learning over a longer period of time after students cover a certain amount of material, especially at the end of a program.
4. Progress test: Such tests is intended to see the progress over a short period of time (e.g., after a unit or a topic).
5. Diagnostic test: Diagnostic tests are administered to identify students’ weaknesses and eliminate them before it is too late.

On the other hand, believing that the most pressing point to consider in designing and developing a language test is the use for which it is intended, Bachman and Palmer (1996) seek an answer to what makes a test useful. From their perspective, “test usefulness provides a kind of metric by which we can evaluate not only the tests that we develop and use, but also all aspects of test development and use” (p. 17). They refer to six qualities of a useful test: reliability, construct validity, authenticity, interactiveness, impact and practicality. Reliability is the quality of a useful test that refers to the “consistency of scores from one set of tests and test tasks to another” (pp. 19-20). Construct validity is the “extent to which we can interpret a given test score as an indicator of the ability(ies), or construct(s), we want to measure” (p. 21). Authenticity is the quality that “relates the test task to the domain of generalization to which we want our score interpretations to generalize” (pp. 23-24). Interactiveness refers to “the extent and type of involvement of the test taker’s individual characteristics in accomplishing a test task” (p. 25). Impact is a term embodying different ways tests affect the educational system, society and the individuals in this system. Finally, practicality “is the relationship between the resources that will be required in design, development, and use of the test and the resources that will be available for these activities” (p. 36).

When the goals and objectives as well as a relevant testing system are established, the materials development process begins. In general, materials refer to teaching instruments like cassettes, course books, DVDs, workbooks, photocopied exercises, CD-ROMs, lectures, internet sources, dictionaries, videos, talks by guest speakers and all kinds of realia (Tomlinson, 1998). A key term related to materials is the content. For Graves (2000), the content (e.g., topics, themes, units) of a material makes up the backbone of what will be included and be taught in a program.

Regarding the materials component of a language curriculum, Graves (2000) puts forward some important considerations in terms of activity/task types, social context, learning, learners, language and materials. First of all, as far as activities and task types are concerned, it is advised that the learners should see the relationship with real language use through authentic and various tasks and activities. When it comes to the social context, materials should be selected or developed in such a way to develop

intercultural and critical social awareness. As for learning, engaging in discovery, problem solving, analysis and developing specific skills and strategies are of crucial importance. In terms of learners, materials should be related to learners' experience/background as well as to their affective needs. Regarding the language, use of authentic texts and the integration of four basic skills are considered as important. Finally, it is true to suggest that materials should meet different learning needs, styles and strategies of students and thus should be as varied as possible.

Similar to Graves, Richards (2006) maintains that effective instructional materials in language teaching depend on the consideration of a number of factors like contextual, teacher and learner factors. Contextual factors might include the classroom conditions, school culture, availability of teaching sources in situations where the materials will be used and the class size. He underlines that teacher factors refers to the teachers' language proficiency, their training and experience, cultural background and preferred teaching style while learner factors are students' style preferences, their language learning needs, interests and motivations. For Richards, two other factors play a crucial role in determining what the materials will look like and how they will work. One is the theory of language and language use reflected in the materials, and the other is the theory of language learning on which the materials are based.

Cunningsworth (1995) highlights the importance of materials selection and development by stating that materials should be in parallel with the students' language needs and the teaching program's aims, methods and values. Among ELT materials, the course book has been regarded as the only universal element in ELT programs (Hutchinson and Torres, 1994). According to the framework proposed by Cunningsworth (1995) to evaluate course books, there are important issues to take into consideration. For instance, the course book should meet students' needs and cover the objectives of the program. Moreover, they should include the language that will help students to use the language for their own purposes, have a supporting role for the learners and be flexible in that a certain method should not be imposed in the presentation of the course book content.

Teaching, the last step preceding the program evaluation stage, can be regarded

as the most important step in Brown's curriculum development model as the kinds of instruction characterize the language program and affect the achievement of its goals and objectives. This aspect of the language curriculum is so important that a language program with clear goals and objectives, a relevant testing system and high quality materials is likely to fail because of teaching. Therefore, even before starting to teach in a specific program, teachers should be provided with the required knowledge about the learners (e.g., educational background, age, sex), teachers (e.g., teaching skills, attitudes towards teaching), administrative processes (e.g., interaction among employers, issues related to budgeting), institution (e.g., duration and intensity of the program) and the context of the program (e.g., parental attitudes, examination systems, materials).

It is emphasized in Brown's model that for effective teaching, teachers should be supported by doing the following: orienting teachers to the new curriculum through get-togethers and teachers' guide, supporting teachers' teaching efforts in the form of administrative support and about issues like testing and materials, monitoring instruction in the form of giving or receiving feedback and by providing ways for teachers to revitalize themselves with the help of conferences, workshops, journals and involving in curriculum development studies.

### **2.1.1 Language Program Evaluation**

All the language curriculum elements as discussed above are held as a meaningful whole by the program evaluation which is an essential part of the curriculum development process. Program evaluation can be described as "the systematic collection of information about the activities, characteristics, and outcomes of programs to make judgments about programs, improve the program effectiveness, and/or inform decisions about future programming" (Patton, 1997, p. 3). Cummings (1998) approaches the issue of program evaluation as a disciplined inquiry to collect data about a program, to reveal the quality, effectiveness, and the value of a program and finally to support decision making. Mackay's (1994) view of program evaluation reflects the view held by the researcher of the current study as from Mackay's point of view, program evaluation

focuses on many different aspects of a language program, such as the teachers and students, curriculum design and classroom processes.

As Hewings and Dudley-Evans (1996) argue, the interest of program evaluation has moved from test results to the need to collect information and to make judgments about all aspects of the curriculum, from planning to implementation. In 1960s, the research in foreign language teaching was mostly concentrated on the effectiveness of one teaching method over the other; however, it is known today that methods ignore institutional, political, contextual and social restrictions English teachers have to cope with (Clarke, 1994). It would be true to claim that with the changing trends in ELT, program evaluation studies have become more contextually situated. As Norris (2006) indicates, language educators in different contexts have become interested in program evaluation as a means of program improvement, educational effectiveness, and even for the survival of the language teaching profession.

In order to carry out a useful, feasible, fair, and accurate evaluation study, a recent perspective of program evaluation should come into play. This recent shift in the focus of language program evaluation is from the traditional, short-term, summative, product-oriented evaluations relying mostly on rigid data collection and analysis methods to on-going evaluations giving more importance to the context of the evaluation, the flexibility in collecting and analyzing data as well as the participation of different stakeholders who can utilize the findings of the evaluation study to make decisions about the contextualized program (Norris & Watanabe, 2007).

Norris (2009) draws attention to the use of multiple methodologies of data collection from distinct perspectives and highlights the importance of the rich contextualization of evaluation findings. Within the scope of this study, different data collection procedures were applied and written documents were used to clarify the context of the evaluation. In terms of essential issues about program evaluation, Weir and Roberts (1994) point out that both qualitative and quantitative data should be collected and it is very important to involve both insiders and outsiders who cooperate with the researcher in the evaluation process. Another point they focus on is that in the context of program evaluation, there should be a central interest in improvement and

there is a need for systematic documentation in all stages of evaluation. As an outsider to the program, the researcher worked in close cooperation with the Administrations of the DBE and the DML as well as the program coordinators expressing their interests to contribute to the study. In terms of the interest in improvement, Enginarlar (2006) asserts that both the DBE and the DML carry out self-evaluation studies in coordination with the SFL in intervals of 2-3 years, cooperate with the Foreign Language Education and Educational Sciences Departments of the Faculty of Education for evaluation projects and encourage evaluation theses written in the context of the SFL (Retrieved from <http://www.ydyom.metu.edu.tr/sfl/history12.htm>).

In each evaluation study, there should be a program element or a number of elements to be investigated. Among these elements to evaluate a language program, the ones that are relevant to the current evaluation study are *objectives* evaluated in terms of clarity and how achievable they are, *the syllabus and program content* explored with regards to issues like the appropriateness of the level and relevance for the students and *methods of teaching and educational materials* investigated by observing classroom practices or focusing on students' and teachers' views about the efficiency of different methods and aids (Richards, 2001).

Richards (2001) draws attention to some useful questions under the following headings to guide program evaluators to ensure that the evaluation was designed sufficiently:

1. Scope: Does the range of information collected include all the significant aspects of the program being evaluated?
2. Audience: Does the information collected adequately serve the needs of all the intended audiences?
3. Reliability: Has the information been collected in such a way that the same findings would be obtained by others?
4. Objectivity: Have attempts been made to make sure that there is no bias in the collecting and processing of information?
5. Representativeness: Does the information collected accurately describe the program?

6. Timeliness: Is the information provided timely enough to be of use to the audiences for the evaluation?
7. Ethical considerations: Does the evaluation follow accepted ethical standards and is confidentiality of information guaranteed and is the information obtained in a professional and acceptable manner?

As mentioned before by Norris and Watanabe (2007), evaluation studies should ideally be useful, feasible, fair, and accurate. Their description of an ideal evaluation study originates from the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (1994). In order to develop standards that educational program evaluation studies should meet, sixteen professional organizations that make up the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation approved of four basic standards leading program evaluators to quality evaluation. Although these standards are very detailed, the four basic criteria for quality evaluation are *utility* (i.e. the evaluation should serve the information needs of intended users), *feasibility* (i.e. the evaluation should be realistic, prudent, diplomatic, and frugal), *propriety* (i.e. the evaluation should be conducted legally, ethically, and with due regard for the welfare of those involved in the evaluation, as well as those affected by its results) and *accuracy* (i.e. the evaluation should reveal and convey technically adequate information about the features that determine the worth or merit of the program being evaluated).

A more recent similar joint statement was proposed by the National Foreign Language Resource Center (NFLRC) Summer Institute in 2007 (Retrieved from <http://www.nflrc.hawaii.edu/evaluation/example1.htm>) in order to enable the field of foreign language to recognize program evaluation as indispensable for enhancing student learning, to change perceptions of evaluation and to increase the value of evaluation. According to the recommendations made by the NFLRC, program evaluation should aim to improve the program and emphasize how useful the evaluation is for student learning, program articulation, departmental collaboration and for academic community. Also, it should be emphasized that the program evaluation process has a public, participatory and inclusive nature, and the evaluation goals should be linked to the stated institutional priorities.

While designing the current evaluation study, the above-mentioned recent trends in language program evaluation and related suggestions for a quality language program evaluation have been carefully considered by the researcher. The next part of the literature review deals with different types of evaluation and the program evaluation models that have emerged in the field of education so far.

### **2.1.2 Program Evaluation Types and Models**

Throughout the history of language program evaluation, different types of program evaluation have appeared. Different models have been used in different research studies. The differences among these models result from issues, such as the purpose of evaluation, the researchers carrying out the evaluation study, the research questions and the applied data collection and analysis methods used in the evaluation. For instance, Richards (2001) proposed and illustrated three different types of program evaluation on the basis of different purposes of evaluating a language program: formative, summative and illuminative.

According to Richards, in formative evaluation, the ongoing improvement of a program is focused by revealing what is working well and what is not. Questions like “Is the methodology teachers are using appropriate?” are frequently asked in this type of evaluation. In summative evaluation, the course is evaluated at the end of a program in order to decide on the worth or value of different aspects of a curriculum. “How effective was the course?” and “Did it achieve its aims?” are only few of the typical questions dealt with in such evaluation studies. While formative evaluation leads to decisions about program development including modification and revision; summative evaluation helps different stakeholders to make decisions concerning program continuation, termination, expansion and adoption. On the other hand, in illuminative evaluation, the continuing teaching and the learning stages in a program are focused on and evaluation research questions like “What types of teacher-student interaction patterns typically occur in classes?” are generally worked on.

Taking the purposes of program evaluation into account, Weir and Roberts

(1994) differentiate between two types of program evaluation: accountability-oriented and development-oriented evaluation. Accountability-oriented evaluation usually explores the effects of a program and is carried out for the benefit of an external audience while development-oriented evaluation is conducted to improve the quality of a program as it is being implemented with the involvement of staff involved in the program.

Researchers like Brown (1995) and Worthen and Sanders (1987) tried to name different evaluation approaches and related evaluation models. Brown (1995) lists four main approaches to program evaluation that are product-oriented approaches, static-characteristic approaches, process-oriented approaches and decision facilitation approaches:

1. Product-oriented approaches are concerned with whether the goals and objectives that make up the main focus of the evaluation for models designed around this approach have been realized or not.
2. Static-oriented approaches aim to investigate static characteristics of a program like the number of books in the library, types of degrees held by the faculty, the number and seating facilities.
3. Process-oriented approaches allow evaluators not to pay attention to the goals of the program but to what is actually happening in the program.
4. Decision-facilitation approaches are intended to support the decision making process.

Similar to Brown, program evaluation approaches leading to different program evaluation models are grouped into six categories and exemplified by Worthen and Sanders (1987) as follows:

1. Objectives-Oriented Evaluation Approach: The purpose of such evaluations is to assess to what extent program objectives and goals are realized. Brown's (1995) product-oriented approaches seem to overlap with this approach. Tyler's (1942) behavioral objectives model based on the idea of comparing intended outcomes with actual outcomes of the program is one of the most well-known models that can be given as an example of this approach.

2. Management-Oriented Evaluation Approach: This approach that is described by Brown (1995) as decision-facilitation approach aims to provide program stakeholders like administrators, policymakers, school boards and teachers with the information that they can use to make decisions about program inputs, processes and outputs. This approach can best be exemplified with Stufflebeam's (1971, cited in Worthen and Sanders, 1987) on-going evaluation procedure that is called the CIPP model (Context, Input, Process, Product) which is intended to help the decision-makers to make their own judgments considering the data collected through this model. In CIPP, *C* represents the context of the evaluation while *I* refers to Input (e.g., objectives, content). The first *P* stands for process (e.g., teaching materials, materials, assessment) and the second *P* is the short form of the product yielding valuable information to program stakeholders to make decisions about whether to terminate, modify or to continue the current program.
3. Consumer-Oriented Evaluation Approach: Studies conducted on this basis of this approach focuses more on the actual outcomes of a program rather than the goals and objectives. Brown's (1995) process-oriented approach reflects the characteristics of this approach. Scriven's (1967, cited in Worthen and Sanders, 1987) goal-free model can be given as an example for this approach.
4. Expertise-Oriented Evaluation Approach: As the name of this approach implies, it is based on professional expertise to evaluate a program generally for accreditation. In this static-oriented approach, as named by Brown (1995), it is an outside expert that usually inspects the program.
5. Adversary-Oriented Evaluation Approach: Studies done within the framework of this approach investigate the strengths and weaknesses of a program by exploring all the debatable issues. An evaluation model arising from this approach is the adversary model that helps program stakeholders to make a decision about whether to continue the program considering the program strengths and weaknesses.
6. Naturalistic and Participant-Oriented Evaluation Approach: This approach

requires the presentation of all the issues of a program as a response to an audience's requirement for information. The most widely-known example of a program evaluation model is Stake's (1967) countenance model that sets off with a rationale and ending with judgmental operations at three different levels: antecedents (prior conditions), transactions (interactions between participants) and outcomes (transfer of learning to real life).

In addition to these models that can be used in a variety of program evaluation contexts, there are some models proposed in the form of several continuing stages. Jacob's (2000) ten-stage evaluation model and Lynch's (1990) seven-stage context-adaptive model are two well-known examples of such models. Incorporating both formative and summative evaluation types, Jacobs's model is an internal participatory model that is generally used to evaluate an innovation in a program. Ten stages proposed in the model can be listed as follows:

1. Locate the innovation within the context and policy frameworks of its operation.
2. Determine the goals of the evaluation (e.g., formative, summative, illuminative goals).
3. Identify the principal stakeholders from all relevant stakeholders (e.g., students, policy makers).
4. Identify the aspects of the program to be evaluated together with stakeholders.
5. Determine criteria for evaluating aspects of the program (e.g., effectiveness, attitudes of participants).
6. Decide on the best sources of information with all participants (e.g., record of ongoing events, informal remarks).
7. Decide on evaluation methods (e.g., qualitative, quantitative).
8. Collect data from sources.
9. Analyze and interpret data by means of different techniques (e.g., discourse analysis).

Although Lynch's (1990) seven-stage context-adaptive evaluation model is explained in detail later in the methodology part as it is the model used for the current study, the steps proposed by Lynch can now be summarized as follows:

1. Establishing the audience(s) and goals for the evaluation
2. Developing a context inventory
3. Developing a preliminary thematic framework
4. Developing a data collection design
5. Collecting the data
6. Analyzing the data
7. Formulating the evaluation report

The above reviewed evaluation models can be adapted to different language teaching programs while there are some models like Kirkpatrick's (1998) four-level model of training evaluation that is generally applied in the evaluation of in-service training programs. The consecutive levels in the model start with the reaction level dealing with the immediate attitudes towards issues like the trainer, topic of the training and the materials used in the training. The second level, learning, seeks an answer to the question what participants have learned during the training. At this level, trainees' knowledge can be assessed by achievement tests, their skills can be evaluated by observing their performance and the change in their attitudes can be revealed by instruments like questionnaire. The behavior level is related to the change in the trainees' on the job performance after a certain period of time. The results level gives information about the effects of the training on issues like quality improvement and productivity increase. This level deals with whether trainees can apply what they have learned to unfamiliar situations.

There is another very recent program evaluation model specifically designed for pre-service English teacher training programs. Peacock's (2009) evaluation model that is based on the literature about what makes a good teacher education program is organized around a comprehensive list of 15 questions like "Does the program incorporate and balance linguistic, pedagogic, and managerial competence to an appropriate degree?". This model encourages the researcher to collect valuable information from various program stakeholders by means of student questionnaire, student essays, teacher interviews and evaluation of course materials.

It would be an overgeneralization to assume that the evaluation models reviewed

above are the only ones in the literature. Instead, it is possible to combine different evaluation models and devise new ones taking the evaluation context into account. To illustrate, Daloğlu's (1996) evaluation of an in-service teacher training course offered at Bilkent University in Turkey is an example of an evaluation study combining two evaluation models which are Tyler's (1942) goal-based model and Stufflebeam's (1971) CIPP (Context-Input-Process-Product) evaluation model.

### **2.1.3 Evaluation Studies in Turkey and Abroad**

Below is a review of evaluation studies done in different contexts using different data collection techniques and evaluation models. First, research dealing with the university preparatory education in Turkey is presented as the preparatory program at the Department of Basic English at METU makes up the main focus of this evaluation study. Finally, studies conducted in different contexts both abroad and in Turkey are summarized in this section. In order to realize what kinds of issues have arisen at preparatory schools in different universities in Turkey so far and to link the findings of these studies to the current one, it is important to review some of the evaluation studies done in different university settings first. While the focus of some of the following studies is only on certain components of the program, other evaluation studies deal with the ELT program as a whole.

Collecting data via interviews and questionnaires, Gerede (2005) explored the renewal project in the preparatory program at Anadolu University by comparing what students think about the old and the new program. Being able to follow English-medium content courses at five English-medium departments at Anadolu University was taken as the main criterion for this evaluation study. Most of the students who participated in the study stated that their language needs related to their subject area were not met in the program at all. The paper concludes that it would not be a realistic goal for preparatory programs to develop students' language needs related to each subject area because there are students from very different departments.

In another study, Örs (2006) explored the Preparatory School of Gaziantep

University in terms of the importance given by the students to English learning, the views of students about whether the preparatory program is sufficient for them, materials, the beliefs of students about learning/teaching strategies and skills and students' perspectives about testing. Significant differences between proficiency levels of students and their beliefs about the program were found. According to the findings, the length of the program should be reconsidered. Furthermore, materials used at the preparatory program were not considered interesting by most of the students and it was suggested that extra materials other than the course book should be provided to the students as both students and instructors hold the idea that the course book is insufficient in terms of drills. As far as the testing aspect of the program is concerned, it was understood that the participants thought that professional help is required to renew the testing system. It was also realized that more emphasis should be put on audio visual material and a few hours of technical terms instruction may be integrated.

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of the whole preparatory program at Ankara University, Tunç (2010) collected data from instructors by means of interviews and from students using a questionnaire. Written documents (e.g., university booklet, university advertisement hand-outs and brochures, the official web site of the university and class lists) were analyzed. The findings indicate that necessary improvements are needed in terms of the content, materials, physical conditions and the assessment dimensions of the program. Moreover, it was realized that the current curriculum lacked well-defined objectives and the difficulty of the exams throughout the program was not consistent. Supplementary materials were not found to be effective in terms of providing students with enough chances to practice by instructors. There was also a common feeling among students and instructors that the program was overloaded.

Investigating the effectiveness of the English preparatory program on the basis of students' opinions at Eskişehir Osmangazi University by means of both quantitative and qualitative data, Özkanal and Hakan (2010) found that the students were content with the program, the program was successful in teaching English and the instructors were good at teaching. On the other hand, most of the students emphasized that the physical conditions of the school were not satisfactory and an English for Specific

Purposes (ESP) course should be implemented in the program. Furthermore, it was revealed that there is a need for innovations on teaching methodologies and preparatory education models.

Karataş (2007) investigated the program of the specific course, English II, which was applied at the DML at Yıldız Teknik University in the spring term of the 2005-2006 academic year. The course has the main objective to enable students to develop reading and writing strategies and to practice grammar and vocabulary through reading texts. In order to find whether instructors and students held similar views about the program, the researcher gathered data about the instructors' and students' perspectives in the department. The main findings of the study show that teachers believe the program was not adequate to provide the students with necessary English knowledge for various job areas. Moreover, it was believed by most of the instructors that the program did not contribute much to the students' improvement in listening-speaking skills and in their grammar knowledge. It was also found that there were some significant differences between instructors and students in terms of the appropriateness of the program's objectives for the students' improvement, the suitability of the textbook for the students' level and the comprehensibility of the content of the textbook. On the other hand, Güllü (2007) evaluated the usefulness and the effectiveness of the ELT program at Kozan Vocational School of Çukurova University from the students' perspectives by means of questionnaires and interviews. Major findings of the study show that students complain about the irrelevant and unattractive course materials and content, lack of physical equipment and lack of motivation as well as interest.

Kırkgöz (2009) conducted a needs assessment by using questionnaires and interviews with 15 lecturers and first-year undergraduate students who were continuing their studies in their respective departments of the university offering English-medium instruction after completing the one-year compulsory program at the center of foreign language. The findings of this needs assessment showed that a gap was noticed between the requirements of department courses and what they were taught at the center of foreign language. Among many important findings, Kırkgöz drew attention to students' reactions towards writing by concluding that surface features were mainly dealt with in a

de-contextualized manner in writing classes.

With regards to the application of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach in two preparatory English classes in a Turkish university, Coşkun (2011) carried out a qualitative case study with two English teachers teaching general English to a group of intermediate students. Classroom observations and questionnaires were conducted with these teachers for the purposes of evaluating whether their classroom practices reflect their attitudes towards basic features of CLT like pair and group-work activities, fluency and accuracy, error correction and the role of the teacher. The observations and questionnaires to understand teachers' attitudes towards CLT yielded contradicting results in that while teachers and the program favor CLT as the main teaching approach, teachers' actual classroom practices do not overlap with the principles of this approach. When asked to justify the discrepancy between their attitudes and in-class behaviors, both teachers stated that large class size, traditional grammar-based examinations and the lack of time to prepare communicative materials are the main reasons.

In addition to above-mentioned studies on the preparatory education at different universities in Turkey, a few studies in the context of the primary English education in Turkey have appeared. In order to evaluate the English curriculum for fourth and fifth graders at state-run primary schools in Turkey, Erdoğan (2005) collected teachers and students' views. He found that the objectives and the content were regarded as consistent but not effective by teachers. Thus, some revisions in the curriculum were thought to be necessary for the effective application of the program. In another similar study, Topkaya and Küçük (2010) explored primary school English language teachers' views about the general characteristics, aims/outcomes and content of the new fourth and fifth grade ELT program at state schools in Turkey by conducting questionnaires. The result of the study indicated that even though the English language teachers have moderately positive opinions on the general characteristics, aims/outcomes, and content of the new program, they still think that there are inefficient aspects of the new Key Stage I ELT program that needs to be improved.

Apart from the evaluation of general English programs and primary English

education programs in Turkey, some studies dealt only with English teacher education programs in Turkey. For instance, in order to evaluate the language improvement courses in the pre-service ELT program at Eastern Mediterranean University, Erozan (2005) collected data through a number of instruments like classroom observations, analysis of related written documents, evaluation questionnaires for trainees and interviews with them and their trainers. The findings of the study indicate that the following issues are in need of consideration to improve the program: various methods and activities, a wider variety of authentic materials, more practice component in the language improvement courses and continuity as well as coherence between or among the courses. Regarding the practice side of a pre-service English teacher education program in Turkey, Seferoğlu (2006) conducted a qualitative study and asked last year student teachers' perspectives about the methodology and practice component of the program. Most of them were found to have the desire for more micro-teaching activities in addition to more observations of different aspects of different teachers at different levels in the school experience courses.

Şallı-Çopur (2008) focused on the extent to which graduates of the English teacher education department at METU perceive themselves as competent English teachers and the extent to which they find the components of the program effective in supporting them to have these competencies. Data via questionnaires and interviews indicated that the program graduates perceived themselves to be competent in most of the competency areas described by the Higher Education Council but competency areas like the language knowledge, spoken use of English, classroom management, assessment and instruction were found to be the components of the program in need of improvement.

In a more recent study, Coşkun and Daloğlu (2010) aimed at exploring the pre-service English teacher education program components of a state university to identify program features that need to be improved or maintained both from teachers' and students' perspectives by using Peacock's (2009) evaluation model. The data obtained via questionnaires and interviews with teachers and senior students in their final years at the department showed that both teachers and students have different ideas about the

balance among linguistic and pedagogic competences in the program. It was found that while teachers believe that the new English teacher training program implemented by the Higher Education Council in 2006-2007 academic year does not suffice to improve students' linguistic competence, students hold the idea that it is the pedagogic side of the program that needs to be improved.

In terms of teaching basic skills and the effectiveness of different methods, there have been some studies carried out abroad. In order to link the above studies done in Turkey to wider literature in the world, some of these studies are briefly reviewed. Lynch (1990), for example, evaluated the Reading English for Science and Technology (REST) Project at the University of Guadalajara, Mexico by using his context-adaptive model applied in the current study. The basic question of his study was whether an ESP reading course related to science and technology in a chemistry engineering department helps learners' general reading ability and their grammatical knowledge as well as their comprehension skills. First, a two-year course was developed and grammar and vocabulary were only taught if they were necessary to comprehend reading texts. Three types of tests including grammar, reading comprehension and a paragraph completion cloze test were given to students at the end of the program and it was realized that the course improved the skills mentioned above.

In another study, Beretta and Davies (1985) explored the Communicational Teaching Project (CTP) in Bangalore in order to make a comparison between the communicational method with the Indian version of the structural method. The basic rationale behind this evaluation study was that the focus of language instruction should be on meaning, not on form. By organizing a research design on the basis of one experimental and one control group in four different schools using different instructional methods, the researcher gave participants two tests: an achievement test as measures of each method and the proficiency tests that were neutral of method. It was realized that both groups did significantly better in their own achievement tests while CTP groups performed better in the proficiency tests.

In an attempt to evaluate the communicative language teaching approach in three classes with adult students in an intensive ESL language learning context in an

English medium university in Canada, Spada (1987) utilized COLT (Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching) scheme for classroom observations. He found that some students had a better performance in certain skills like speaking and listening and this difference among classes can be justified with the types of instruction provided to these students. In another evaluation study, Snow and Brinton (1988) evaluated the effectiveness of the adjunct model in a 7-week Freshman Summer Program (FSP) at UCLA by giving 79 students a retrospective survey about the global benefits of FSP courses, students' demographic information and the usefulness of specific activities and skills. Three types of positive attitudes towards FSP were found: the ease of adjustment, self-confidence, and learning to get help. It was suggested at the end of the study that follow-up support is needed after FSP and the program focuses less on natural science but more on humanities and social science.

Sharp (1990) explored a course lasting for 4 months at the University of Brunei, Darussalam by means of initial, formative and summative evaluation. The results of the study revealed problems that need to be coped with. Considering these problems, Sharp recommends that a greater emphasis on oral and written skills, more accurate diagnostic testing and more frequent use of authentic materials should be included in the program. In South Korea, Nam (2005) was interested in the new communication-based English curriculum and attempted to reveal students and teachers' attitudes towards an English program at the university. The results of this study showed that students had negative attitudes whereas teachers had positive attitudes towards the new curriculum. It was suggested by the researcher that the result of this study might be related to institutional system behind the curriculum in South Korea.

In this part of the literature review, different elements of language curriculum were discussed with special emphasis on the program evaluation that seems to be the last and the most important element in a language program. Then, evaluation types and methods were presented and finally major evaluation studies conducted both in Turkey and abroad were reviewed. The following section deals with one aspect of English preparatory programs, namely writing.

## **2.2 Learning to write in L2 and Possible Challenges**

As this study is an evaluation of a writing program, following is an introduction to why L2 writing is important, what learning to write in L2 requires and why it is difficult to learn it. The next part of this literature review has the main aim to review literature about approaches to teach L2 writing. In order to better understand the historical progress in the field of L2 writing pedagogy and to realize different perspectives about the nature of L2 writing, a detailed review of all these approaches and relevant techniques is necessary. Besides writing approaches, some of the related issues about the materials used to teach L2 writing, written feedback and assessment systems used in L2 writing classes are highlighted at the end of this section.

It is common knowledge that writing is an essential productive skill to communicate our ideas in our native language, to develop thinking skills to make language learners academically successful and to help them become productive members of the society they live in (Grabe & Kaplan, 1997). Believing that writing is a vital skill not only in L1 learning but also in L2 learning, Raimes (1983) emphasizes that writing is to produce a connected text for a purpose and to a specific audience by means of the constant use of eyes, hands and the brain.

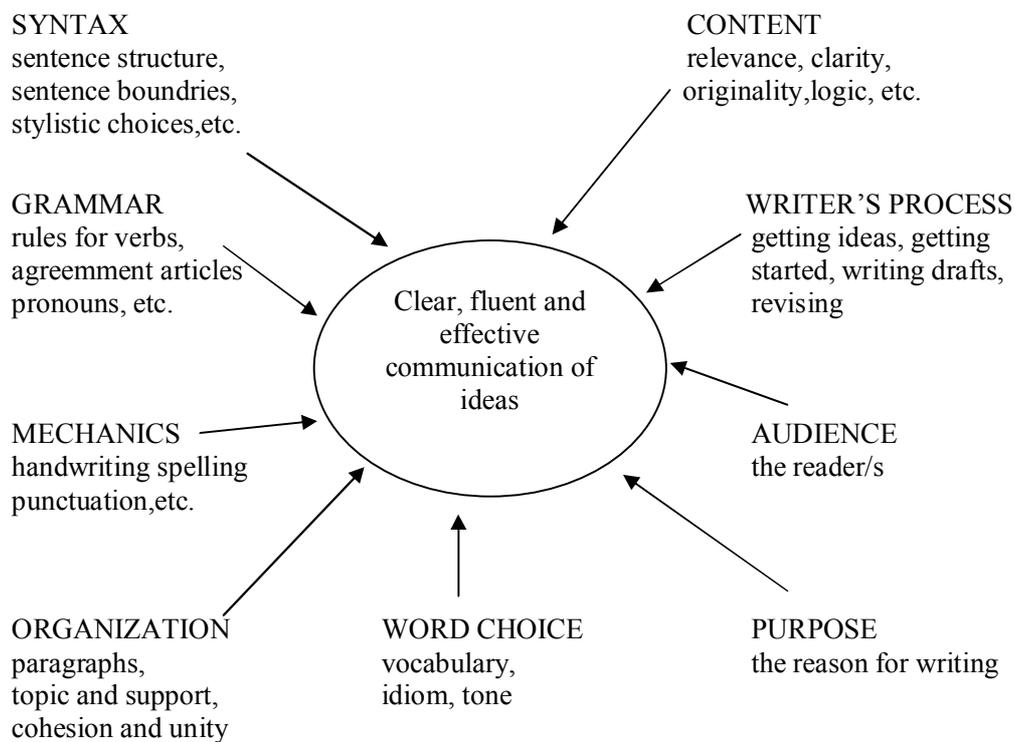
Writing has an important place in learning a foreign language. As suggested by Grami (2010, p. 8), “based on the natural order hypothesis, writing is generally considered to be the language skill obtained last, but nevertheless it is as important as the rest”. About the importance of the writing skills in ELT, the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) with 60.000 individual and intuitional members who are dedicated to improve the teaching and learning of English in the world published a report indicating that the writing skill is considered as an essential key to achievement in school, in the workplace as well as in the larger world (Retrieved from <http://www.ncte.org/positions/statements/writingbeliefs>). According to Raimes (1983), there are three reasons why writing is important. Firstly, while writing, students’ grammatical structures and vocabulary are practiced and thus reinforced. Secondly, students learn to produce new ideas using the language and to take risks. Thirdly,

students get very much engaged in the new language as they spend a lot of effort in the writing process.

Reviewing relevant research dealing with L2 writing for the last 20 years, Cumming (2001) tried to find an answer to the question what it means to learn how to write in L2 on the basis of three dimensions of the writing pedagogy: text, composing and the context of writing. On each dimension, Cumming writes about macro and micro levels to explain what is involved in the learning process. On the text dimension, writers develop morphology, syntax and the lexis accuracy in their texts at a micro-level while at a macro-level writers begin to signal related ideas by using cohesive, functional-semantic or different stylistic language devices. As far as the composing dimension is concerned, at a micro-level, writers think about a word or a sentence and pay attention to the content and the language of the text at the same time. At a macro-level, on the other hand, they plan, revise and edit. In the context dimension, writers see writing as a process of individual development in a specific social context at a micro-level and they consider writing as social change and improving learning opportunities at a macro-level.

There are some key terms that need to be explained here to better explain the issues involved in the L2 writing process. Lazaro (1996) lists these important terms as purpose, audience, content, organization, grammar, vocabulary and mechanics, each of which should have certain characteristics. For example, the purpose of writing that is the context and the reason of the writing task should preferably have relevance to the writers' real-life. The audience that refers to the target audience of the text should be clearly indicated in a writing task and the content (i.e. ideas expressed in the text) should be relevant to the given topic or purpose. The organization of the produced text should be in a logical and coherent order and as for vocabulary and grammar, it is important to use them correctly abiding by the learned rules. About the mechanics, it would be true to say that punctuation and spelling rules should be carefully applied in the text.

Similarly, in order to illustrate what has involved in the process of writing a text, Raimes (1983, p.6) draws the following diagram:



**Figure 2.2:** Producing a Piece of Writing

What makes a good L2 writer is another area of research that was focused on to describe the characteristics of the skilled foreign language writer. Working on the concept of skilled and unskilled writers, for example, researchers like Uzawa (1996), Zamel (1983) and Raimes (1985) tried to reveal the characteristics of these types of writers and the features of the written work they produce. Uzawa (1996) describes unskilled writers as the ones who are more concerned about the surface-level errors and are less flexible when it comes to applying metacognitive skills, such as revising. In contrast, skilled writers are described as those who can explore and discover ideas (Zamel, 1983) and effectively use metacognitive skills (Raimes, 1985). Considering the research carried out by researchers like Raimes (1985) and Flower and Hayes (1981), Kpolugbo (2006: 291) categorizes the characteristics of skilled and unskilled L2 writers as shown below:

Skilled Writers	Unskilled Writers
1. Consider purpose and audience	1. Spend little time considering the reader
2. Use schemata (i.e. consult background knowledge)	2. Do not use schemata effectively
3. Allow ideas to incubate and make flexible plans	3. Make rigid plans or take less time to plan
4. Employ a recursive, non-linear approach	4. Follow a strictly linear plan
5. Focus on content in revision	5. Focus more on form and less on content in revision
6. Set goals/define rhetorical problems	6. Do not set goals and have difficulty defining rhetorical problems
7. Able to review high-level goals and replace with new goals	7. Depend on abstract top-level goals or on only low-level ones

**Figure 2.3:** Profile of Skilled and Unskilled Writers.

Besides being an important skill to learn in both L1 and L2, learning to write poses a number of challenges in both languages as it requires a number of complex skills. For Nunan (1999), writing is “probably the most difficult thing to do in language” (p. 271) as it is a skill necessitating “complex, cognitive process that requires sustained intellectual effort over a considerable period of time” (p. 273). As emphasized by Özbek (1995), if writing requires formal training even for native speakers of English, it is more difficult for non-native learners of English. In order to justify some of the challenges posed by learning how to write in L2 writing, Leki (2001) indicates that especially students who are not experienced enough in L1 writing encounter with problems while writing in a foreign language. The lack of self-confidence about their ability to write and of knowledge about the appropriate level of formality for the discourse context and different genres (for example, essay writing versus research report writing) are only a few of these challenges. Besides, they might not know how to make use of peer feedback, follow processes like drafting and revising texts or think flexibly enough to be aware of the fact that the teacher is not the only audience they can target at while writing something in L2.

The difficulty of L2 writing can also be justified with the complex interaction of the writers’ skills, experience, knowledge, identity, and culture with the norms and

cognitive demands of a given writing task (Archibald & Jeffery, 2000). Raimes (1983) draws attention to the features that writers have to cope with (e.g., mechanics, grammar, word choice, syntax, content, organization, the audience and the writing process) to justify the complex nature of L2 writing. For Hadfield and Hadfield (1990, cited in Simpson, 2006), learning how to write in L2 is hard for three basic challenges: psychological, linguistic and cognitive. Deciding on the piece of information needed by the reader and choosing the best way to present this information makes up the psychological challenge. The awareness of discourse patterns for certain types of foreign language writing leads to the linguistic challenge. Cognitive challenges, on the other hand, arise from the difficulty of organizing the writers' thoughts on paper.

Approaching L2 writing from a broader social perspective, Hyland (2002a) points out that the difficulty of the writing process lies in the fact that students need not only learn the conventions of L2 writing as Raimes listed above but also realize how texts can change depending on the given topic, audience, purpose and the cultural norms. In Grabe and Kaplan's (1996) notion of "ethnography of writing", there is a more detailed list of different components of writing all of which affect what and how a text is written:

1. The setting of the text
2. The purpose of the text
3. The content of the text
4. The intended audience for the text, their role and purpose in reading the text
5. The relationship between the reader and writer of the text and how this impacts about what they say and how they say it.
6. General expectations and conventions for the text, as well as particular expectations, conventions and requirements of the student's field of study
7. The background knowledge, values, and understandings it is assumed they will share with their readers
8. The relationship the text has with other genres and how they will be used to support an argument.

Focusing on the challenges encountered by the teacher, on the other hand, Leki

(2001) claims that writing teachers in EFL contexts like Turkey have two main concerns that make the teaching of writing harder for them. The first concern is about issues arising from daily teaching life. Class size, time constraints and meeting local needs are only a few of these problems. The second “less obvious but more powerful” (p. 197) concern for writing teachers is a result of the ideological issues, such as the right to resist center-imposed materials and methods and the need for dialogue with students about the place of writing in their lives. As for the relationship between these ideological concerns and L2 writing, Leki gives the example of a research study done in the context of the current research study, Turkey, by Clachar (2000) to reveal the attitudes of a group of Turkish EFL instructors at Bilkent university (an English medium university) towards Western writing pedagogy. The results of this study indicated that some instructors accepted the Western pedagogy in teaching L2 writing and were found to be in favor of exposing Turkish students to the conventions of Western scholarship whereas some other instructors held more negative attitudes towards Western pedagogy justifying their students’ difficulty with this pedagogy by referring to their students’ deference to the authenticity of the text.

### **2.2.1 Approaches to Teaching L2 writing**

Similar to any field that has its own approaches which have emerged throughout its history, L2 writing instruction is not without its unique approaches that have all added new and different perspectives to L2 writing pedagogy. For a clear understanding of the historical developments in L2 writing approaches and of the progress made in the field till today, reviewing these approaches is of crucial importance. These approaches are important in that one of the main foci of this evaluation study is on the teaching component of the writing program at the SFL at METU. Curriculum elements in Brown’s (1995) model including materials and testing are later reviewed with special focus on L2 writing.

Many approaches like controlled composition, the process approach, English for academic purposes and current-traditional rhetoric (Silva, 1990) were popular until

1990s and different ways of L2 writing conceptualization as writing as sentence-level structure, as discourse-level structure, as a process and as language use in context (Matsuda, 2003) were brought up in L2 writing pedagogy. As Hyland (2003) underlines, these growing approaches should be seen as complementary and overlapping and they should be viewed as means of understanding the complexity of L2 writing rather than contradictory ends of the pole. Likewise Raimes (1983) suggests that the EFL writing teacher should be eclectic in that he/she should not depend merely on one approach but benefit from all the useful aspects of different approaches. While a pure application of a single approach is rarely used by teachers to teach L2 writing, Cumming (2003) maintains that it is normal for one approach to dominate one's teaching depending on the teachers' conceptualization of their work.

To the best of my knowledge, the earliest historical sketch of L2 writing approaches was drawn by Raimes (1983) introducing six different approaches to teaching L2 writing that can briefly be explained as follows:

1. *Controlled-to-free approach*: It involves sentence-level exercises including grammar, syntax and mechanics and then continues with paragraph manipulations. Emphasizing accuracy rather than fluency, this approach requires the correction of any errors by the teacher.
2. *The free-writing approach*: It requires focus on quantity over quality and only little error correction was needed as it was believed that writers' grammatical knowledge will anyway improve over time. In this approach, instead of correcting students' errors, teachers only make comments about the content of the written product.
3. *The paragraph-pattern approach*: Based on the imitation of model texts, this approach necessitates activities, such as ordering scrambled sentences, writing or identifying topic sentences and inserting or deleting sentences, all of which were believed to improve students' awareness of the English conventions of writing and the organization of the text.
4. *The grammar-syntax-organization approach*: It enables students to pay attention to grammar and syntax and at the same time to linking words like *first, then and*

*finally* that are used to organize a text. The purpose of writing is linked to the forms necessary to convey message in this approach.

5. *The communicative approach*: Focusing on the purpose of the task and the target audience of the text, this approach necessitates behaving like writers in real life and carrying out authentic tasks, such as writing an email.
6. *The process approach*: It supports students' discovering of ideas (Zamel, 1982), planning, drafting, revising and editing a text instead of dealing only with the final written product. Giving students time to produce ideas, think about the purpose and audience and write multiple drafts, this approach suggests that students should be given greater responsibility for their own learning process by their teachers.

Claiming that approaches in teaching L2 writing can be viewed as curriculum options, each of which organizes L2 writing around a different focus, Hyland (2003) made a review of different approaches holding different foci on different aspects of the language. The approaches considered as L2 writing curriculum options can be grouped under five main focus areas as suggested below:

1. *Focus on language structures*: Language structures refer to vocabulary choice, stylistic patterns, and cohesive devices. According to Silva (1990), this approach was the result of structural linguistics and behaviorist learning theories of second language teaching in 1960s when habit formation and learners' ability to produce well-formed sentences were given great importance. This approach requires four stages:
  - a. Familiarization: Grammar and vocabulary are generally presented by means of a text.
  - b. Controlled writing: Students start playing with fixed patterns usually from substitution drills.
  - c. Guided writing stage: Students try to write texts similar to the provided model.
  - d. Free-writing stage: Students use the learned patterns to produce written products, such as an essay or a letter.

2. *Focus on text functions*: Functions that can also be labeled as “current traditional rhetoric” are described as the means to achieve the purpose of writing. This approach depends on the fact that certain language forms are used to express certain functions which facilitate students’ producing different types of paragraphs or essays. A writing course organized around this approach consists of common functions like drawing conclusions and narrations.
3. *Focus on creative expressions*: This approach views writing as a skill of discovering meaning that necessitates a nondirective and personal instruction whose main focus is on enabling students to create their own voice. As Mohamed (2004) points out, students should explore the language and experiment freely with it to write creatively.
4. *Focus on the writing process*: Flower and Hayes (1981) underline that the stages of the process approach are not followed in a linear sequence but is repetitive; for example, the written work of a student can be revised at any time in the writing process. The writing course organized around this approach requires strategy training so that students can generate draft and refine the content of the text. Typical activities of such teaching are pre-writing activities like brainstorming and outlining. The common error correction method in this approach, on the other hand, is giving extensive feedback at any stage of writing and encouraging peer responses.
5. *Focus on context*: The main focus of this approach is on writing topics (e.g., ethics) that have coherence in themselves and a clear purpose for the writing course.

### **2.2.2 Product-Based Approaches**

For the sake of clarity in the presentation of L2 writing approaches, it is possible to group all these approaches under two umbrella terms: product-based and process-based approaches. In this part of the literature review, major approaches that can be categorized as product-based approaches are reviewed.

In her state-of-the-art article, Raimes (1991) states that the focus on form approach became popular in L2 writing starting from 1966 when the emphasis of ELT was mostly on oral discourse. With this approach, activities like substitutions, transformations and completions became popular; in addition, the mastery of grammar structures and the logical construction of these features were considered to be more important than the ideas students write about. Therefore, the correction of grammatical errors in a text was very common. As the mastery of grammar structures is one of the main aims of this approach, it is worth mentioning here some of the ideas about the correction of grammatical errors in students' written work. In a review paper arguing against grammar correction, Truscott (1996) claims that the correction of students' written grammatical errors is ineffective and even harmful for their learning process. Approaching learning grammar from an SLA (second language acquisition) perspective, Truscott argues that the acquisition of grammar is so complex that it cannot be directly transferred from teacher to student. On the other hand, Ferris (2003) argues that feedback is actually very effective at the intermediate stage of the writing process. For Ferris, Truscott's evidence was only dated, incomplete and even inconclusive.

Arising from the focus on form approach, controlled writing is based on the rationale to improve students' correctness of linguistic knowledge by allowing students no freedom to make mistakes. This approach is mostly concerned with the cohesive devices, syntax, mastery of vocabulary and focuses mostly on error-free sentence level structures (Pincas, 1982, cited in Badger & White, 2000). This product-based approach sees writing as the imitation of model texts given by the teacher (Badger & White, 2000). As claimed by Watson-Reekie (1984), these model texts show how to use the lexical items, structural patterns and the conventions of the target language. Also, such models familiarize students with different stylistic variety like the intended audience. Therefore, it is important to select these models appropriately to provide students with guidance and support and expose them to cultural features, such as values, assumptions, attitudes towards the world.

Grabe and Kaplan (1996) realized that L2 writing is more than only producing error-free grammatical sentences and proposed contrastive rhetoric that had an important

influence on L2 writing research. This theory is based on the idea that sentence structures and paragraphs are culture-specific and the context of the writing had an important effect on teaching L2 writing. Kaplan's theory suggests that writing styles depend on the writer's culture and the writer's social, historical and political realities are somehow reflected within this style. As highlighted by Hyland (2002b), the writer's cultural contexts influence the text with the grammatical and lexical features it includes. According to this theory, there are systematic differences in the thinking patterns and rhetorical structures that change from one culture to another, which causes interference while writing in L2 because of the writers' transference of linguistic patterns and rhetorical conventions from L1 to L2 (Connor, 2003). Therefore, Zamel (1983) puts forward the idea that while designing courses and preparing lessons, students' native culture, learning styles and schemata should all be taken into consideration.

Richards (1990) summarizes the main principles and related techniques of product approaches in L2 writing instruction. The principles of these approaches are as follows:

1. The teaching of second language writing has often been synonymous with the teaching of grammar or sentence structure.
2. This view of writing reflects the principles of audio-lingual theory which saw writing as the written form of spoken language.
3. At more advanced levels, students will learn how to write an essay on X.
4. Correct sentence structure is an essential component of writing; grammatical skills receive considerable emphasis.
5. Errors in writing are avoided by providing learners with models to follow.
6. Students do not usually learn from their mistakes.

Furthermore, he suggested a couple of writing activities to be used in product-based teaching of L2 writing:

1. Providing models to which learners make minor changes and substitutions.
2. Expanding an outline or summary.
3. Constructing paragraphs from frames, tables, and other guides.

4. Producing a text through answering a set of questions.
5. Sentence combining: developing complex sentences following different rules of combination.

About the last activity above, sentence combining, Enginarlar (1994a), who is the originator of the technique called sentence combining plus (SC plus), brings some considerations to the agenda by indicating that even though sentence combining requires negotiation of meaning to some extent and composition only on the sentence-level, it is non-rhetorical in that it is away from the real composing processes. In his article “Sentence combining plus: a new use for an old technique”, he introduced SC plus, which involves both sentence combining and ordering jumbled sentences to make meaningful texts. Exemplifying SC plus with sample activities in his article, Enginarlar (1994a, p. 222) states the pedagogical strengths of SC plus as follows:

First, since their implementation requires problem-solving in groups, they increase student involvement in a non-threatening atmosphere and thus make for enjoyable student-centered classes. Secondly, they are integrative activities, involving the use of the four major language skills. In addition to writing, students are engaged in reading, and also in speaking and listening while discussing their output.

### **2.2.3 Process-Based Approaches**

Starting from 1976, the writer was put into the core of the L2 writing approach, which led to the process approach that seems to be the contrary to the product-based approaches in terms of its principles and techniques (Raimes, 1991). As put forward by Hairston (1982), following 1980s, writing instruction underwent a paradigm shift due to the focus by L2 writing researchers on the writing process, teacher intervention and teaching strategies for invention and discovery.

Differentiating the traditional product approach from the process approach, Nunan (1999) states that the product approach deals with tasks in which the writer copies or transforms model texts given by the teacher to encourage an error-free text. In contrast, the process approach that is considered by Matsuda (2003, p. 69) as “the most successful approach” in the whole history of L2 writing pedagogy is based on the

premise that writers follow steps like producing, reflecting on, discussing, and reworking drafts of the written work. O'Brien (2004) sees the discovery of meaning and ideas as the essence of this approach and Susser (1994) characterizes this approach with the awareness of intervention by teachers or peers to improve the written text. Freeman and Freeman (1996, cited in Livant, 2006) discuss that according to this approach, students should be given enough time and opportunity by their teachers so that they could select topics, produce ideas, write drafts, revise the text and receive feedback to correct their errors until the final stage of the writing process.

In the process approach, individual development through self-detection and the ability to follow the stages proposed in this approach were considered as key issues (Zamel, 1983). The stages that are often proposed for process writing were listed and exemplified by Richards (1990) as follows: planning (e.g., brainstorming, free association, word mapping, ranking activities, quick writing), drafting (e.g., elaboration exercise, reduction exercise, jumbled paragraph, jumbled essay, writing thesis statements and topic sentences, group drafting, quick writing) and revising (peer feedback, group correction activities, rewriting exercises, teacher feedback). Different stages can be used by the teachers to deal with different issues like content and organization. Unlike traditional writing classes where teachers treat students' errors of the written product only at the final stage, error correction is a continuous process provided by teachers or peers during all the stages of the process writing (Seow, 2002). Considering the appropriate time to give feedback, Ferris (2003) suggests that teachers should give feedback during the composing stage.

In an attempt to describe the general framework to teach writing using the process approach, Hairstone (1982, p. 86) draws attention to the following general characteristics of this approach that can be viewed as a summary of this approach:

1. This approach focuses on the writing process; instructors intervene in students' writing during the process.
2. It teaches strategies for invention and discovery; instructors help students generate content and discover purpose.
3. It is rhetorically based; audience, purpose and occasion figure

prominently in the assignment of writing tasks.

4. Instructors evaluate the written product by how well it fulfills the writer's intention and meets the audience's needs.
5. It views writing a recursive rather than a linear process; pre- writing, writing and revision are activities that overlap and intertwine.
6. It is holistic, viewing writing as an activity that involves the intuitive and non-rational as well as the rational faculties.
7. It emphasizes that writing is a way of learning and developing as well as a communication skill.
8. It includes a variety of writing modes, expressive as well as expository.
9. It is informed by other disciplines, especially cognitive psychology and linguistics.
10. It views writing as a disciplined creative activity that can be analyzed and described; its practitioners believe that writing can be taught.
11. It stresses the principle that writing teachers should be people who write.
12. It is based on linguistic research and research into the composing process.

Although the process approach seems to be contradictory to the product approach, Raimes (1985) suggests that the combination of these two approaches in L2 writing classes will better inform our classroom practices. McKay (1994) also agrees with Raimes by avoiding the debate between the process and the product approach and taking a stance on the side of the use of the good points of both approaches.

Beginning from 1986, writing can be associated with a focus on content (Raimes, 1991) which places emphasis on the teachers' determination of which academic content is appropriate so that the writing course or modules can be organized around that content. Raimes' categorization of focus on form from 1966, focus on the writer from 1976 and focus on content from 1986 are followed by the focus on the reader starting from 1996. This last focus is on the reader whose expectations are dominant in the writing process. As a result of the reader who is at the heart of the writing process, English for Academic Purposes (EAP) was born as an idea dealing mostly with the expectations of academic readers (Reid, 1989). As Silva (1990) underlines, from an EAP

perspective, learning to write is actually becoming socialized to the academic community and the reader is supposed to be a member of the academic community who has a good understanding of the academic discourse.

Voicing their concerns about the effectiveness of the process-based approach, EAP specialists reacted against this approach to create a new and distinct perspective in L2 writing literature (Zamel, 1983). To illustrate, Horowitz (1986) argued that process-based approaches do not generally take into account the differences among individuals and do not prepare students for academic work by neglecting the realities of academia. On the other hand, Hyland (2003), who approaches the process-approach from a social perspective, underlines its limitation arguing that writers are very likely to produce contextually inappropriate texts as the structure of the target genre is not explicitly taught.

The genre approach that was put forward by Swales (1990) as a reaction to the process approach requires the teachings of various types of writing (e.g., business letter and academic report) that are closely related to social purposes so that writers can make their written piece more appropriate for the communicative purpose. As maintained by Schwarz and Nazarenko (2010, p. 103) genre approach in writing requires the teacher to provide students with “models of the type of texts they will have to write so that they can become familiar with the features that are typical of that text type (genre)”.

There have been some recent studies arguing for the blending of the process approach with genre approach or the post-process approach. For instance, in an attempt to bridge the gap between process and genre approach, Kim and Kim (2005) suggest that rather than trying to replace the process approach with genre approach, it would be wise to blend them. Also, as in the post-method pedagogy in ELT that was first mentioned by Kumaravadivelu (1994), L2 writing researchers like Atkinson (2003) introduced the post-process approach. From the perspective of the post-process approach, seeing the process merely within the limits of the writers' cognition should be replaced by the rich and multifaceted nature of the field that views writing as more pertinent to social issues. Cumming (1995, cited in Cumming, 2001) asserts that moving beyond the text to social issues led to interest among L2 writing professionals in investigating teachers' spoken

discourse, beliefs about writing, the dynamics of peer or group responses to writing, teacher-student conferences and one-to-one tutoring.

Since there have been many ways of viewing L2 writing and handling L2 writing instruction as reviewed above, writing teachers might get confused about which one/s of these methods to apply in their classes. In order to solve this problem, Silva (1990) advises teachers to evaluate approaches by considering some of the important factors, such as the context of L2 writing (e.g., cultural, political, social, economic, situational, and physical contexts) and by answering questions like “Is a given approach informed by an appropriate and adequate theory of L2 writing?” and “Is the approach supported by valid and reliable research?”.

In addition to applying one or more approaches in teaching L2 writing that have been discussed in this section so far, English writing teachers can take suggestions of different bodies like The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE, 2006) into account for a more effective L2 writing instruction. NCTE suggests the following tips for L2 writing teachers’ to support their students in a position paper (Retrieved from <http://www.ncte.org/positions/statements/teacherseducatingell>):

1. Providing a nurturing environment for writing;
2. Introducing cooperative, collaborative writing activities which promote discussion;
3. Encouraging contributions from all students, and promoting peer interaction to support learning;
4. Replacing drills and single-response exercises with time for writing practice;
5. Providing frequent meaningful opportunities for students to generate their own texts;
6. Designing writing assignments for a variety of audiences, purposes, and genres, and scaffolding the writing instruction;
7. Providing models of well-organized papers for the class. Teachers should consider glossing sample papers with comments that point to the specific aspects of the paper that make it well written;

8. Offering comments on the strength of the paper, in order to indicate areas where the student is meeting expectations;
9. Making comments explicit and clear (both in written response and in oral responses). Teachers should consider beginning feedback with global comments (content and ideas, organization, thesis) and then move on to more local concerns (or mechanical errors) when student writers are more confident with the content of their draft;
10. Giving more than one suggestion for change so that students still maintain control of their writing;
11. Not assuming that every learner understands how to cite sources or what plagiarism is.

Focusing more on the concept of *a successful writing teacher* rather than the approaches and relevant techniques for teaching L2 writing, some researchers tried to identify the common features of successful writing teachers and effective writing instruction. Cumming (1992), for instance, investigated the behavior of three successful teachers and found the following six common qualities of them: drawing students' attention, assigning tasks, collectively constructing interpretations, establishing criteria, providing individual feedback and guiding individual development. In a study he carried out later, Cumming (2003) tried to document in detail how highly experienced instructors of EFL/ESL writing in 6 different countries conceptualized their teaching of writing. Five guiding concepts defined the instructors' conceptualizations of their writing curricula although there was considerable overlap among the following concepts for most of the courses described: composing process, genres and text types, text functions and structures, topical themes as well as personal and creative expressions. Most of the instructors described their courses as having the primary goal of prompting students to practice and develop their processes for composing in English. Students are expected to improve their language, style, rhetoric, logic, composing processes, expression, and confidence, academic or cultural socialization.

With regards to what makes good writing in EFL classrooms, Gabrielatos (2002) differentiates between process-based and product-based writing. From his perspective,

language (e.g., spelling, grammar and syntax as well as the vocabulary), the layout and the organization, relevance to the task and the clarity of the written text are the elements making up an effective process-based writing text. On the other hand, stages like task analysis, planning, writing the first draft and finally evaluating and improving the first draft are the elements of an effective process-based written work. Believing in the merits of the systematic treatment of a variety of interrelated elements to teach writing, Gabriellatos proposed a cyclical framework of teaching writing procedures including 4 stages. The first stage is *awareness-raising* where learners are guided to discover and identify certain features of good writing. The second stage is the *support* where learners are supported to clarify the points discussed during the first stage and are helped to produce a text. In the third stage, *practice*, students are given the opportunity to experiment with the features of good writing brought about in the awareness-raising stage. The fourth stage, *feedback*, learners are invited to figure out the strong sides and shortcomings of their writing performance, try to justify these shortcomings and discuss possible improvements.

Working on the issue of what makes an effective writing program by analyzing previous articles, Holbrook (1984) came up with a list of classroom characteristics. For instance, classrooms should include opportunities for students in all grades to write frequently with delayed or "as needed" instruction in grammar. Effective writing programs also require students to learn how to write for many audiences and for effective writing instruction, teachers should write with their students. On top of all, the evaluation of student writing should be non-threatening with focus on revision instead of correction.

In this part of the literature review, the teaching aspect of the L2 writing programs has been discussed with special emphasis on product and process-based approaches and some related features for both of them. The next sections deal basically with two issues (i.e. materials to teach writing and the assessment of the writing skills) making up the main foci of this evaluation study in addition to the objectives and the teaching-learning process applied in the program.

#### **2.2.4 Materials Used in L2 Writing Classes**

In addition to the teaching component of an ELT program and related approaches, the material side of the program needs to be discussed in this review as the scope of the current evaluation study is limited to some of Brown's (1995) curriculum elements including teaching, materials, testing and program objectives and goals. After reviewing relevant literature about L2 writing materials below, some important issues pertaining to testing and error correction are discussed.

The type of writing materials in ELT contexts can generally be classified into two groups (Ur, 1994): writing as a means and writing as an end. If writing is considered as a means, students are expected to show their mastery of a linguistic item; if it is viewed as an end, students read, speak, listen to be able to produce original texts considering an audience and a purpose. Whatever the type of writing involved, Mayora (2009) proposes the following suggestions for EFL writing teachers to keep in mind in preparing writing materials:

1. consider students' profile (age, level of proficiency)
2. take into account the context and goals of the writing instruction (English for general purposes, EAP)
3. create impact, be relevant and interesting
4. embed writing into a whole lesson
5. integrate writing to other skills
6. set reachable goals
7. include clear instructions
8. acknowledge the stages of writing
9. provide a situation for writing as realistic as possible
10. expose students to a wider audience
11. provide input and activities for the production stage
12. allow learners to write and rewrite
13. guide the revising and editing stages
14. encourage peer-reviewing and editing

(Retrieved from <http://www.slideshare.net/camayora/materials-for-writing-in-efl>)

Some of the important features of writing materials that should be taken into consideration in choosing, designing, or adapting materials to teach L2 writing, specifically to intermediate-students in EFL countries were underlined by Qian (2010):

1. Materials should be learning-centered rather than teaching-centered. They should focus on helping students to develop their own strategies for learning.
2. Materials should be creative. They should provide stimulating activities to focus students' attention on the things to be learned. Audiovisual aids such as tapes, pictures, and diagrams should be used to activate the students' awareness of the content as something real.
3. Materials should be interesting. They should be related to students' interests. Moreover, there should be a variety of text types and activity types in the materials to motivate the students' interest in writing.
4. Materials should be task-based. They should use purposeful tasks to motivate students' learning and to make students see the usefulness of writing.
5. Materials should be practical. They should deal with real-life communication tasks.

On the other hand, Howard and Major (2004) highlight that learners, curriculum and the context, resources and the facilities, personal confidence and the competence, copyright compliance and the time are some of the factors to keep in mind while designing materials not only for writing but also for all the other basic skills. As far as teacher-made materials, they hold the idea that there are some justifiable reasons why teachers try to develop their own teaching materials although there is a wide range of materials options that are available in the market. From their perspective, teacher-made materials are good for contextualization, can better meet individual needs, help students to personalize the language and are more time-saving. Finally, they put forward some guidelines, according to which ELT materials should have certain characteristics. According to these guidelines, ELT materials should be prepared considering the students' experiences, mother tongues and the topics giving students realistic purposes

to use the target language. Also, they should trigger interaction and should enable students to produce the language and develop learning strategies as well as skills. Furthermore, ELT materials should focus on form as well as the meaning, and they should give students the chance for integrated target language use. Besides being flexible and attractive in terms of user-friendliness, physical appearance and durability, ELT materials should have authentic content and appropriate instructions. Finally, materials should be linked to each other for the progression of skills and language items.

### **2.2.5 Written Feedback in L2 Classes**

Another issue that has often been discussed with L2 writing approaches and writing materials is written feedback. Reviewing relevant literature, it would be true to claim that in the last fifty years, the way of giving students written feedback that can be described as the “input from a reader to a writer with the effect of providing information to the writer for revision” (Keh, 1990, p. 294) has undergone a sudden change. During the years when the audio-lingual approach to teaching foreign languages was the most popular among English teachers, any errors should be avoided and thus be immediately corrected by the teachers (Brooks, 1960, cited in Russell, 2009). After 1970s, some L2 writing scholars claimed that error correction was not only unnecessary, but also harmful to second language acquisition (Russell, 2009). As mentioned in the review of product-based approaches, one of these well-known scholars is Truscott (1996), who believes that error feedback is ineffective as a means of improving students’ written texts. Despite such beliefs, there is considerable amount of research revealing that both teachers and students believe that error correction is preferable to improve L2 writing skills (Radecki and Swales, 1988; Leki, 1991; Enginarlar, 1993).

In their state-of-the-art review of papers dealing with feedback on second language students’ writing, Hyland and Hyland (2006, p. 83) take their stance on the usefulness of error correction in L2 writing classes and underline the importance of written feedback with the following sentences:

Feedback has long been regarded as essential for the development of L2 writing

skills, both for its potential for learning and for student motivation. In process-based, learner-centered classrooms, for instance, it is seen as an important developmental tool moving learners through multiple drafts towards the capability for effective self-expression.

Although a lot of research questions have been asked in the field of written corrective feedback throughout the history of L2 writing research pedagogy, many researchers generally work on common issues, such as “the most useful type of feedback, when to provide it, and how to get a better understanding of student attitudes to different types of instructional techniques” (Enginarlar, 1993, p.193). Lyster and Ranta (1997) focused on five main questions that have been focused on in the field:

1. Should learners’ errors be corrected?
2. When should learners’ errors be corrected?
3. Which errors should be corrected?
4. How should errors be corrected?
5. Who should do the correcting?

Among these issues, one of the most widely researched areas is regarding how errors are corrected in writing classes. As stated by Williams (2003), error feedback is the most important aspect of a writing program including three general types of feedback: written teacher feedback, peer feedback and oral teacher student conferences. Ellis (2009) proposes a more detailed typology of the different types of written corrective feedback (CF) available to teachers. In his classification, six different types of corrective feedback are explained.

1. Direct CF: The teacher provides the student with the correct form.
2. Indirect CF
  - a. Indicating + locating the error: The teacher indicates that an error exists but does not provide the correction.
  - b. Indication only: This takes the form of underlining and use of cursors to show omissions in the student’s text.
3. Metalinguistic CF: The teacher provides some kind of metalinguistic clue as to the nature of the error.

- a. Use of error code: Teacher writes codes in the margin (e.g., ww = wrong word; art = article).
  - b. Brief grammatical descriptions: Teacher numbers errors in text and writes a grammatical description for each numbered error at the bottom of the text.
4. The focus of the feedback: This concerns whether the teacher attempts to correct all (or most) of the students' errors or selects one or two specific types of errors to correct. This distinction can be applied to each of the above options.
5. Electronic feedback: The teacher indicates an error and provides a hyperlink to a concordance file that provides examples of correct usage.
6. Reformulation: This consists of a native speaker's reworking of the students' entire text to make the language seem as native-like as possible while keeping the content of the original intact.

Focusing on some of the error correction types as indicated above, Ferris (2003) found that direct feedback that is directly provided by the teacher is preferred more by beginning students whereas indirect feedback requiring teachers to highlight their errors with symbols or notes seems to be perceived as more favorable by intermediate and advanced students. Working on 47 freshmen EFL students' attitudes towards written feedback practices at METU, Enginarlar (1993) revealed that students have the tendency to regard effective feedback as the type of feedback indicating errors, followed by brief feedback to help them revise the written text. Considering the findings of his study, he concludes his paper with some implications. One of the implications of his study was that the responsibility of written feedback should be shared between the teacher and the student both contributing to the revision process. More recently, in their state-of-the-art review of studies in the field of written error feedback, Hyland and Hyland (2006) draw attention to the benefits of feedback practices like collaborative peer feedback and computer-mediated feedback.

As maintained by Ferris (1999), error feedback is especially useful when it

is done selectively and strategically. In a more recent article, Ferris (2003) makes the following conclusions after reviewing the previous research studies about correcting students' written work:

1. Feedback is most effective when it is delivered at intermediate stages of the writing process.
2. Teachers should provide feedback on all aspects of student writing (e.g., content, rhetorical structures, grammar and mechanics).
3. Teacher feedback should be clear and concrete to assist students with revision.
4. Teacher feedback must take individual and contextual variables into account.
5. ESL writers attend to teacher feedback and attempt to utilize it in their revisions.
6. Teacher-student writing conferences may be more complex with L2 writers.

Although teachers may have different ways of correcting written errors, Lazaro (1996, pp. 104-105) makes the below suggestions to writing teachers about how to treat students' written errors:

1. Mark positively in order not to discourage students from writing and boost their strengths.
2. Design a specific and reliable correction system by answering questions as follows:
  - 2.a. What aspects of writing will be taken into account (content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, spelling, etc.)
  - 2.b. What type of descriptors will be used (numbers, letters, words, such as excellent, good, fair, etc.)
  - 2.c. What criteria will be established to understand what each descriptor represents. These criteria can be arranged in holistic scales (general descriptions of writing ability) or analytic scales, which separate the aspects of writing into different units.

3. Mark selectively by attending to certain points in the written text ignoring all the others.
4. Use a clear correction code by means of abbreviations such as S for spelling errors that are generally written in the margins of the written text so that the place of the error is indicated and students can correct the error themselves.
5. Give the opportunity to students to self-correct themselves by encouraging students to take a more active responsibility to revise, edit, and correct their writing.

When it comes to the most favorable type of error correction to apply in L2 writing classes, Ferris (2003) asserts that the research does not show any superiority of these feedback types. As rightly advised by Zhang (1995), students' learning styles and error correction preferences should be revealed to decide on which type of error correction should be used to treat students' errors. It is normal to have students who hold diverse views for feedback preferences because of their education background, foreign language learning goals and the type of the task. It is similarly usual to expect these students to act in different ways when given a certain type of feedback (Cumming & Riazi, 2000).

### **2.2.6 Assessment of the Writing Ability**

As one of the main objectives of this study is to evaluate the writing program at the SFL at METU in terms of teaching writing, materials and testing systems applied in the program, it is important to review here some of the basic literature regarding the assessment of the writing ability. As it is the case for other skills, assessing writing is necessary to decide whether and to what extent students have achieved the goals of a language program.

Drawing attention to the complexity of teaching and assessing writing, Heaton (1989) suggests that the skills to be focused in assessing a good piece of writing are language use (i.e. the ability to write correct and appropriate sentences), mechanical

skills (i.e. the ability to use correctly the conventions like spelling peculiar to the written language), treatment of content (i.e. the ability to think creatively and develop thoughts), stylistic skills (i.e. the ability to manipulate sentences and paragraphs) and judgment skills (i.e. the ability to write in an appropriate manner for a particular purpose with a particular audience in mind).

Before making a decision on the type of assessment to apply in a classroom, some factors in need of consideration by teachers or test developers are mentioned as follows by Cohen (1994): time available for assessment, cost of assessment, ease of assessment, relevance of the dimension for the given task (e.g., content, rhetorical structure, organization, vocabulary, style, grammar, spelling, punctuation, accuracy of meaning). Similarly, in an attempt to highlight important issues to think about before the construction of a writing test, Coombe (2010) states that there are some questions to seek an answer to. The first question is related to how much time should be allocated for a writing task. The second question is about whether all the stages in the writing process should be assessed or only the product should be evaluated. The third question is pertaining to under which conditions the test should be administered. For example, should it be allowed to use technological advances like spell and grammar check? The fourth question is regarding whether all the students should write on the same topic or they have the flexibility to choose among given topics. Another question is pertaining to who will rate students' written works, especially whether it should be the classroom teachers grading their own students' papers. Last but not least, the question whether more than one rater is a necessity to mark written works comes up.

Besides these considerations, there are some elements to take into account in designing good writing assessment tests and tasks. One of these elements is the prompt (Hyland, 2003) referring to the given instructions for a writing test or a task. As for the ideal prompt in L2 writing tests, Tribble (1996) points out that one of the most important points to consider in writing prompts is assigning tasks that are related to students' real problems, which keeps their level of motivation high and it important to provide students with prompts that will help them activate their personal knowledge and background knowledge.

In terms of the type of assessment in L2 writing, Coombe (2007) writes about two types of writing: free writing and guided writing. She differentiates between these two types of writing by stating that while tests of guided writing ask students to manipulate content that is given through the prompt, generally in the form of a chart or diagram; free writing tasks expect students to understand a given prompt that describes a situation and write a response considering their background knowledge and their knowledge gained from the writing course. As far as free writing is concerned, Coombe suggests that teachers should be clear about the expected form and length of response, specify the discourse pattern(s) the students are expected to use, ask them to provide something beyond the prompt, such as an opinion and be amenable to revising the anticipated answer even as they grade. Regarding the tests based on guided writing, Coombe advises teachers to use multiple raters, agree on grading criteria in advance, familiarize students with the marking scheme by using it, teach good writing strategies and avoid controversial issues that might offend or disadvantage students.

Hamp-Lyons (2003) emphasizes that traditionally, the writing ability in L2 was assessed indirectly and objectively by means of multiple choice and grammar completion tests generally measuring correct usage in sentence level constructions and the mechanics of writing (e.g., spelling and punctuation). Contrary to these traditional assessment tools, it is nowadays believed that testing students' writing ability directly via more subjective test types like compositions is more preferable to indirect testing instruments, such as multiple choice, and sentence completion tasks (di Ginnaro, 2006). Direct writing assessment requires students to produce the content by organizing the ideas and using appropriate vocabulary, grammatical structures and syntax. Essay writing is an example of a direct writing assessment instrument and essay tests are considered to be the most valid means of measuring L2 writing ability to decide on the general level of the students' writing proficiency (Schoonen et al., 1997). However, as argued by Silva and Brice (2004), the timed direct essay tests cannot predict students' abilities to write under natural conditions and as asserted by Qinghua (2010), there is dissatisfaction with timed impromptu essay tests.

In addition to the above-mentioned testing instruments, there have been some

alternative assessment tools mentioned in the literature. As written by the Minnesota Articulation Project (<http://www.carla.umn.edu/assessment/mlpa/pdfs/miniguide.pdf>) members in 1997, students perform better when they are motivated by real reasons to use language. In their report, they urge for a need for performance-based assessment that helps students to understand the development of their communicative competence and they defined performance-based assessment as contextualized, authentic, task-based and learner-centered. As argued by Akar (2001), portfolio assessment is one of the useful alternative performance-based assessment instruments commonly applied in the field of education for a variety of purposes. In a general sense, portfolios include samples of evidence selected by the student about students' skills, efforts, abilities and achievements (Brown & Hudson, 1998) so that teachers can realize the extent of students' learning and provide individualized teaching. Delett et al. (2001) draw attention to the popularity of portfolio assessment to test students' writing ability. As far as the use of portfolios in writing classes is concerned, portfolios are intended to see student progress in a certain period of time by means of the collection of students' written work. Students' samples of projects, assignments, diary entries, self-assessments, comments from peers, and comments from teachers (Hancock, 1994) are only a few of the written works that can be included in a portfolio.

Enginarlar's (1994b) study conducted in a composition class at METU proves the popularity of portfolio assessment among students in L2 writing classes by revealing that the students held favorable attitudes to process writing approach and portfolio grading. He also emphasizes in his study that portfolio assessment, which requires the assessment of students on the basis of several written works written at different times, gives students the opportunity to revise their work and to receive feedback from their teachers and from their peers. He continues to suggest that portfolio assessment in writing classes provides solutions to validity and reliability concerns and it results in the beneficial backwash effect in the assessment of students' writing skills.

Self-assessment is another important means of testing writing because of the large class size and teachers' busy working schedules. Moreover, self-assessment is believed to raise students' motivation, consciousness of writing skills and strategies and

to reinforce the positive attitude towards writing (Mesana, 2004). Liang (2006) favors the use of self-assessment procedures that are central to learner-based curriculum and are effective in reflecting on the goals, content, methods of learning and evaluating learning progress. As for the benefits of self-assessment, he draws attention to the advantages of self-assessment. For Liang, self-assessment involves students directly in their own learning process and increases learner autonomy as well as self-sufficiency in language learning. Moreover, it trains students to assess their own language learning performance accurately, realize their weaknesses, and try ways to self-repair. Self-assessment also makes students' more aware of the learning process and enables them to approach critically to the content and the assessment aspects of the course. Besides raising students' knowledge about their learning goals and needs, self-assessment reduces the teacher's workload.

In parallel with these assessment types, two different types of writing scales for assessing student written proficiency have appeared in the L2 writing literature: holistic marking and analytical marking. For Coombe (2010), holistic marking depends on the marker's general impression of the essay as a whole. When it comes to analytic marking, Weigle (2002) points out that raters might assess students' written works on different aspects, such as organization, register, vocabulary and grammar. Regarding the selection of marking type for a writing program, Coombe (2010) holds the idea that contextual factors like the teacher population, management structure of the institution, the availability of resources and amount of time allocated to getting reliable writing marks to administration will help the test developers establish their own marking type. Moreover, she draws attention to inter-rater marking as a means to maintain writing test reliability in whatever writing scales are used.

Offering some useful and practical guiding principles concerning writing assessment, the report prepared in the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) by the Committee on Assessment in 2006 (Retrieved from <http://www.ncte.org/cccc/resources/positions/writingassessment>) is worth mentioning here as it contains important issues to pay attention to L2 writing in today's ELT world.

1. Writing assessment is useful primarily as a means of improving teaching

and learning. The primary purpose of any assessment should govern its design, its implementation, and the generation and dissemination of its results. As a result, the best assessment practice should be informed by pedagogical and curricular goals, is undertaken in response to local goals, and provides regular professional development opportunities.

2. Writing is by definition social. Learning to write entails learning to accomplish a range of purposes for a range of audiences in a range of settings. For that reason, best assessment practice engages students in contextualized and meaningful writing in addition to supporting and harmonizing with what practice and research have demonstrated to be effective ways of teaching writing.
3. Any individual's writing ability is a sum of a variety of skills employed in a diversity of contexts, and individual ability fluctuates unevenly among these varieties. Therefore, best assessment practice uses multiple measures, respects language variety and includes assessment by peers, instructors, and the student writer himself or herself.
4. Perceptions of writing are shaped by the methods and criteria used to assess writing. Therefore, the following principles should be kept in mind:
  - a. The methods and criteria that readers use to assess writing should be locally developed, deriving from the particular context and purposes for the writing being assessed.
  - b. Best assessment practice clearly communicates what is valued and expected, and does not distort the nature of writing or writing practices.
  - c. Best assessment practice enables students to demonstrate what they do well in writing.
5. Assessment programs should be solidly grounded in the latest research on learning, writing, and assessment. Hence, best assessment practice results from careful consideration of the costs and benefits of the range of available approaches and is continually under review and subject to change by well-

informed faculty, administrators, and legislators

Finally, similar recommendations about some of the major issues voiced by L2 writing researchers about the assessment of the writing skills were made by Coombe and Evans (2000), who conclude their article about the principles of test design, construction, administration and analysis by suggesting that assessment should first of all reflect the goals of the language program. In addition to this, writing tests should be administered more frequently rather than testing writing only in mid-term or final exams so that students' writing ability can be evaluated more fairly and more practice opportunities can be provided to students.

To sum up the literature review section of this study, there were basically two parts in the review, the first of which was the language program evaluation including the other elements of a language curriculum like the objectives, testing, materials and teaching because this study is a program evaluation study focusing mainly on these dimensions. Following important points regarding the language program evaluation, program evaluation types and models as well as program evaluation studies were discussed. As for the second part, after an introduction to L2 writing, the teaching approaches to L2 writing were grouped into product-based and process-based approaches. Apart from teaching approaches, the literature regarding the materials to teach L2 writing, the written feedback practices and the ways to assess L2 writing skills were reviewed towards the end of the second part.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **METHOD OF RESEARCH**

The method of research applied in this study is presented in this chapter. First, the type of research design used is discussed briefly. Secondly, the steps proposed in Lynch's (1990) context-adaptive model are explained with reference to the current study. Finally, the participants who have taken part in this study and the data collection instruments and procedures are explained in detail.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

As mentioned in the introduction, the main purpose of this study is to investigate the writing component of the program at the DBE and the writing components of the ENG 101 and ENG 102 courses offered by the DML from the perspective of different program stakeholders in the 2010-2011 academic year. With this purpose in mind, the research questions below have been formulated:

1. How do DBE students evaluate the writing component of the program in terms of program objectives, materials and content, teaching-learning process and the assessment of the writing skills at the DBE?
2. How do DBE instructors and program coordinators evaluate the writing component of the program in terms of program objectives, materials and content, teaching-learning process and the assessment of the writing skills at the DBE?
3. How do DML students evaluate the writing component of the program in terms of program objectives, materials and content, teaching-learning process and the assessment of the writing skills at the DML?
4. How do DML instructors and the program coordinator evaluate the writing component of the program in terms of program objectives, materials and content, teaching-learning process and the assessment of the writing skills

at the DML?

5. How do content course instructors at different departments evaluate the writing program at the SFL (the DBE and the DML)?

Considering the abovementioned research questions, the context of the evaluation, the target stakeholders, the evaluation model used for the evaluation and the existing research traditions, the design of the research for the current case study was organized around a mixed-method approach including both qualitative and quantitative data collection tools. Although the underlying differences between qualitative and quantitative research resulted in *paradigm wars* between researchers of these two different camps (Muijs, 2004: 3), the use of both is more widely accepted in language program evaluation studies (Murphy, 2000). Besides, as Witte and Faigley (1983) assert, evaluation studies that are of quantitative nature could only provide few important insights concerning writing programs. They warn researchers against the sole use of quantitative methods in evaluation studies involving not only students but also faculty, curriculum, and administrative structures. Therefore, a mixed-method research design involving both *qualitative and quantitative* data is used in this study aiming to evaluate the writing component of the SFL at METU from the perspective of different stakeholders.

Underlining the growing popularity of mixed methods research, Dörnyei (2007) maintains that the combination of qualitative and quantitative methods allows the multi-level analysis of complex issues, improves validity and reaches multiple audiences; in addition, researchers can expand the scope and breadth of their research by including a variety of components in their research. He argues that both methods complement each other when mixed in program evaluation studies by stating that "...*qualitative* methods can be used to explore the process of a certain instructional program and *quantitative* methods to assess the program outcomes" (p. 165).

In addition to its mixed-method nature, it would be true to claim that this evaluation study is a *case study* as it has the main objective to make a thorough analysis of the experiences and characteristics of selected stakeholders involved in a particular

program in its real context, which is the SFL of an English-medium public university. As maintained by Balbach (1999), while the implementation of programs is viewed as predictable and measurable by traditional evaluation designs, case studies approach program implementation as a series of events, which enables the evaluator to reveal a full, complex picture of what has occurred in the program. The evaluation model used for this study also places utmost importance on the description of the context of the evaluation by analyzing relevant documents and making field observations.

This study can also be regarded as an example of a *utilization-focused evaluation* as the findings of this evaluation were reported to the administration of the SFL and other relevant stakeholders like the instructors and curriculum designers so that the results could be used for the improvement of the writing component of the program. As far as the utilization-focused evaluation is concerned, Norris and Watanabe (2007) underline that findings of such evaluation studies provide clear and feasible guidance for future program action by giving a sense of ownership of the findings to the participants.

Furthermore, the current research can be described as *development-oriented evaluation* applied in order to improve the quality of a program as it is being implemented with the contribution of different stakeholders involved in the program (Weir & Roberts, 1994). Finally, this study can be viewed as a *situation analysis* since the main objective of this study is to reveal the strengths and weaknesses of the writing program at the SFL at METU considering institutional factors.

### **3.2 Context-Adaptive Model**

Claiming that the evaluation of English language teaching programs has only dealt with specific issues of methodology and has confined evaluation to a certain form, Lynch (1990) presents a generalized program evaluation model that he illustrated with examples from his evaluation of the Reading English for Science and Technology (REST) Project at the University of Guadalajara, Mexico. For the purpose of proposing a generalized evaluation model that addresses the full range of concerns of language teaching programs, Lynch developed his context-adaptive model.

There are a couple of reasons why Lynch's model has been selected for this study among many other evaluation models. Firstly, the model allows the evaluator to apply a variety of data sources and methods. In the current evaluation study, opinions of different stakeholders like the students, instructors and the program coordinators were obtained through both quantitative and qualitative data collection instruments. Secondly, considering the purpose of this study and the importance the model attaches to the context of the evaluation, the methodology of this study was based on Lynch's (1990) seven-stage context-adaptive model taking the contextual factors as the starting point of the evaluation design. Lynch points out that starting the evaluation with an analysis of the context in which the program exists guarantees a high degree of flexibility making the model highly adaptable to different contexts. What makes his model different from the other reviewed evaluation models is that the evaluation gives great importance to the context inventory defined by Lynch as an essential step in the model helping the evaluator to "develop a preliminary sense of the important themes and issues" so as to "determine what is being evaluated" (Lynch, 1996, p. 170).

In this study, the context inventory developed on the basis of the analysis of documents as suggested by Lynch, informal interviews with program coordinators, chairpersons and some instructors as well as some classroom observations at the DBE and the DML revealed the need for the evaluation of the writing programs at the DBE and the DML focusing primarily on the objectives, materials and content, the teaching-learning process and the assessment of the writing skills at these two departments. Besides, informal interviews showed that focusing on the questions whether the DBE writing program prepares students sufficiently for the DML and whether both of these departments prepare students well for the writing tasks required in their own departments would yield invaluable data to be considered by the program stakeholders.

His model consisting of seven clearly-stated steps is presented briefly below and a detailed analysis of the context inventory is made section 4.1.

### **Step 1: Audience and Goals**

In the first stage, the audience and the goals for the evaluation are determined. Identifying possible stakeholders who will see the evaluation report and utilize the results of the evaluation has been primarily focused on. It has been decided that the Administration and instructors at the SFL, the members of the Curriculum Core Committee as well as the Research Committee make up the core audience for the current study. As asserted by Lynch, successful communication between the evaluator and the audience is vital; therefore, the researcher worked in close cooperation especially with the department chairpersons and the program coordinators in the process of evaluating the program. Their contribution was of great importance in planning the evaluation, in developing the data collection instruments, in implementing the plan and in reporting the findings.

Considering these stakeholders' expectations from an evaluation study and the need for the investigation of the writing component of the program, the researcher had the main goal to inform the intended audience about the effectiveness of the writing program and make recommendations to improve it so that they can utilize the findings of this study and make necessary changes.

### **Step 2: Context Inventory**

The context inventory, which informs future decisions concerning data collection and analysis, refers to the essential features that characterize the context of the program. In order to better interpret the results of such evaluation studies and to better evaluate writing programs, it is necessary to specify the context of the evaluation. In an attempt to draw attention to the place of the context in the evaluation of writing programs specifically, Witte and Faigley (1983) highlight the importance of revealing program features, such as the social and the cultural context in which the program exists, the institutional context, the program structure, administration, the content or curriculum of the program, the type of instruction, and the interactions among these components. They have claimed that it is necessary to approach the evaluation of writing programs from

different lenses by exploring written products, attitudes and teaching methods as well as the goals and objectives of the program.

In his model, Lynch presents a checklist of eleven potentially relevant dimensions of language education programs. Among these dimensions, the program students and staff, the size and intensity of the program, the instructional materials and resources available to the program as well as perspective and purpose of the program have been selected as relevant dimensions of the context inventory for the current study. Furthermore, the documents related to the objectives, testing, materials and the teaching aspects of the program have been obtained from the websites of the DBE and the DML. Besides, informal interviews were conducted with instructors and students at both departments, the assistant chairperson at the DBE and the ENG 101 and ENG 102 program coordinator at the DML. Finally, the researcher made some classroom observations of writing-focused lessons to better reflect the instructional context of the program.

### **Step 3: Preliminary Thematic Framework**

In the first two steps of this evaluation model, some themes begin to appear, which leads to the development of a preliminary thematic framework focusing on what aspects of the program the evaluator should investigate in detail. This preliminary framework provides a conceptualization of the program that helps the evaluator guide the data collection and the analysis steps of the evaluation. Information about the focused dimensions of the context inventory is important in developing a program-specific thematic framework. After the examination of relevant written documents and the obtained data in the early stages to develop a context inventory, some common issues used to develop a preliminary thematic framework about the program emerged. These issues helped the researcher to make decisions about the data collection instruments to be used.

#### **Step 4: Data Collection Design/System**

The results of the first three steps shape the evaluation process in terms of specific questions that need to be answered. In this study, depending on the literature review of studies done both abroad and in Turkey, the context inventory and the preliminary thematic framework; the preparation process of the quantitative data (e.g., questionnaires) as well as the qualitative (e.g., interviews) data collection instruments began. During this process, a question pool for both the questionnaire and the interview was created first based on other studies and informal interviews with the ENG 101 and ENG 102 program coordinator at the DML in addition to the assistant chairperson at the DBE about the context of the program and their perceived needs for an evaluation of the writing program at their departments. In the informal interviews with the program coordinator and the assistant chairperson, it was realized that there is a need for the evaluation of the writing programs at both departments in terms of the objectives of the writing programs, materials and content, teaching-learning process and the assessment of the writing skills.

More specifically, as for objectives, there was a need to work on the question how competent students perceived themselves and how competent instructors thought their students were in the writing skills emphasized in program objectives. Related to materials and content, it was emphasized in the interviews that the handouts could be investigated in more detail. As for the teaching-learning process, instructors' self-evaluation of their ways of conducting writing-focused lessons and the students' evaluation of their instructors were regarded as important by the interviewees. When it comes to the assessment dimension of the program, there was a perceived need to evaluate the mid-terms. In addition to these issues, the question whether the DBE prepares students well for DML and whether the DBE and the DML prepare students sufficiently for their departments in terms of writing was brought up. The SFL Director was also conferred with in terms of the possible items to include in the questionnaire. In light of the contextual necessities for such an evaluation study, the question pool for the data collection instruments were developed.

The question pool, initial data collected from the program coordinator and the assistant chairperson in addition to the analysis of relevant literature and program documents like the writing syllabus, materials and the testing procedures used in writing classes led the researcher to Erozan's (2005) data collection instruments including similar items arising from informal interviews and other reviewed evaluation studies. The questionnaires and the interviews she developed to evaluate the English writing improvement courses (i.e. Writing Skills I, II and Advanced Writing Skills) at the Department of English Language Teaching at Eastern Mediterranean University was adapted to the current evaluation study with her permission. Student and instructor versions of the questionnaires as well as questions in the interview guide for both DBE and DML teachers and program coordinators were based on Erozan's study.

In the adaptation process of the instruments, the information related to the instructional materials, program staff, students and the purpose of the program was collected from the assistant chairs at both departments or from the websites of the departments. Preliminary observations were made to better understand the context of the evaluation and to adapt the items in the instruments accordingly. Furthermore, the originator of the instruments was contacted via e-mail and was requested to offer suggestions to adapt the instruments using her expertise and the given information about the context of the evaluation. In addition, program coordinators also made useful recommendations for the adaptation of the instruments. The context inventory (see section 4.1. for a detailed analysis of the context of the evaluation) and expert judgments were taken as the guide to eliminate, add or reword some of the items in Erozan's instruments. For example, in her questionnaires, there were items including names of the course book used in the program she evaluated (e.g., 'exercises/tasks in the textbook *Sentence Combining* were effective in improving my writing skills') and such items were reworded as 'hand-outs were effective in improving my writing skills' depending on the type of materials used at the DBE and the DML. The items considered irrelevant to the context of the current evaluation study (e.g., tape-sessions in writing-focused lessons) were removed from the questionnaire. Some other items (e.g., I used only English in class) regarded as unimportant for the evaluation of the writing component of

the programs at the DBE and the DML were similarly excluded from the questionnaires. On the other hand, some questions believed to produce valuable data in this study (e.g., ‘how well do you think the writing program at the DBE prepares students to produce written responses in their own departments?’) were added to the instructor questionnaires and the interview guides. Data collection instruments and procedures are explained later in detail in section 3.4.

### **Step 5: Data Collection**

After obtaining expert views and the feedback from the commission of program coordinators at the DBE and the DML about the drafts of the questionnaire and the interview guide, necessary changes were made. The researcher was only able to start the data collection procedure following the permission obtained from the METU Human Subjects Ethics Committee and the Administrations of the DBE and the DML because it is known that especially evaluation studies are supposed to follow ethical standards, such as the confidentiality of information and an acceptable manner of data collection (Stufflebeam, et al., 1985).

### **Step 6: Data Analysis**

The data collected via the questionnaires was analyzed using SPSS 15 while the analysis of all the qualitative data was done through content analysis which is based on the organization of data into similar categories like suggestions, concerns, strengths and weaknesses. The analysis of the interviews was made by applying content analysis and common patterns and trends emerging during the content analysis of the interviews helped the researcher to better evaluate the program (Kiely & Rea-Dickens, 2005).

### **Step 7: Evaluation Report**

The summary of the evaluation report and the implications of the study for the

improvement of the writing programs at the DBE and the DML was shared with the Administration of the SFL and a brief report summarizing the main findings was presented to the program coordinators and interested instructors.

### **3.3 Participants and Sampling**

The program stakeholders dealing with the writing program at the SFL at METU took part in this evaluation study: students, instructors and program coordinators at the DBE and the DML in addition to course content teachers teaching different departmental courses at different faculties at METU in the 2010-2011 academic year. Different perspectives regarding the L2 writing program at the SFL represented different angles in the evaluation process, which contributed to the richness of the data. The participants who participated in this study can be grouped as DBE participants, DML participants and content course instructors.

Around 15% of the whole student population at the DBE and the DML was given the student version of the questionnaire. Among 450 students who were given the questionnaire at the DBE, 414 students returned and out of 270 DML students, 241 returned the questionnaire. As far as the instructor version of the questionnaire, one third (n=50) of all the instructors teaching writing at the DBE (n=149) and 29 out of a total of 45 ENG 102 returned the instructor questionnaire.

In the process of selecting the sample of program stakeholders to interview or give the open-ended surveys, the researcher focused mainly on what Balbach (1999) calls as the *key informants* who know a lot about the program and are willing to be reflective about it. All the program coordinators at the DBE (n=5) and at the DML (n=1) were determined as the key informants to be interviewed in this study. In addition, 6 instructors teaching at different proficiency levels at the DBE and 5 instructors offering ENG 102 to different sections were interviewed.

Besides, 9 instructors teaching writing at different levels at the DBE and 4 ENG 102 instructors teaching at different sections were surveyed using an open-ended written survey in parallel with the interview guide. In other words, 10 DML instructors including the program coordinator and 20 DBE instructors including the program

coordinators took part in the interviews or the open-ended surveys. The reason why open-ended surveys were used along with interviews was that an appropriate time for the interviews with some instructors could not be arranged because of their heavy teaching loads during the day.

### 3.3.1 DBE Participants

Out of 414 DBE students who filled in and returned the questionnaire, 216 were male and 198 were female and the number of students between the ages of 17-19 was 322 and the ones between the ages of 20-22 made up around 22 % of the participating students at the DBE. Considering the number of students who graduated from different high schools, it can be stated that Anatolian High Schools send the highest percentage of students to METU. As regards the English proficiency level of the students, while 136 of the students were in the pre-intermediate group, 114 students were in the intermediate, 98 students in the upper-intermediate and 66 students were in the advanced group. The number of those who gained a total average score of between 20-25 (out of the maximum 45) in the first term is 15 while 108 students scored between 26-31. While 236 students scored between 32-37, 55 students got a score between 38-43. The information about some of the basic characteristics of the DBE students can be summarized as in Table 3.1.

**Table 3.1 Demographic data about DBE students**

		<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
<b>Gender</b>	Female	198	47.8
	Male	216	52.2
<b>Age</b>	17–19	322	77.8
	20–22	92	22.2
<b>Type of High School</b>	Anatolian High School	278	67.1
	Super High School	3	0.7
	Science High School	44	10.6
	Vocational High School	15	3.6
	Private High School	11	2.7
	Mainstream High school	34	8.2
	Anatolian Teacher High School	29	7.0

**Table 3.1 (continued)**

<b>Proficiency Level in the Second Term</b>	Pre-intermediate	136	32.9
	Intermediate	114	27.5
	Upper-intermediate	98	23.7
	Advanced	66	15.9
<b>First Term Grade out of 45</b>	20–25	15	3.6
	26–31	108	26.1
	32–37	236	57.0
	38–43	55	13.3
<b>TOTAL</b>		414	100

When it comes to the participating instructors at the DBE, one third of the writing instructors (n=50) filled in the questionnaire. While 41 of these participants were female, the rest 9 were male. Most of these instructors (n=32) have been working at the DBE for less than 10 years while 30% of them have been teaching at the DBE for more than 10 and less than 20 years. Only 6% of the participants have been working at the department for more than 21 years. Among participants teaching at different levels of proficiency in the second term, 30% of them were teaching to upper intermediate students whereas 28% of them were teaching to the pre-intermediate level. 26% of the instructors were teaching at the intermediate level while the rest 16% were teaching to the advanced groups. Table 3.2 illustrates the demographic data about participating DBE instructors.

**Table 3.2 Demographic data about DBE instructors**

		<i>N</i>	%
<b>Gender</b>	Male	9	18.0
	Female	41	82.0
<b>Years of Teaching Experience at the DBE</b>	1–10	32	64.0
	11–20	15	30.0
	21–30	3	6.0
<b>Level teaching in the second semester</b>	Pre-intermediate	14	28.0
	Intermediate	13	26.0
	Upper-intermediate	15	30.0
	Advanced	8	16.0
<b>TOTAL</b>		50	100

### 3.3.2 DML Participants

As can be seen in Table 3.3, out of 241 students who returned the questionnaire, 138 students were male and 103 were female. DML students who took part in this study were studying at different departments at METU. Freshmen students at the Sociology, Biology and Physics Departments represented the Faculty of Arts and Science. Students at the Departments of Early Science Education and the Computer Education represented the Faculty of Education while Mechanical Engineering, Computer Engineering and Food Engineering students were selected to represent the Faculty of Engineering. There were also participating students from all the three departments of the Faculty of Architecture (i.e. City and Regional Planning, Architecture, Industrial Design). Finally, students at the Departments of Business Administration, Political Science and Public Administration as well as Economics responded to the questionnaires.

The age range of most of the students was found to be between 18-21 and it was revealed that most of the students had studied at the DBE before taking the ENG 101 and ENG 102 courses. It is worth mentioning that participating students had taken ENG 101 in the first term. About the scores students obtained in the ENG 101 course, the majority of the students indicated that they got CC. Below is a more detailed illustration of the participating DML students.

**Table 3.3 Demographic data about DML students**

		<i>N</i>	%
<b>Gender</b>	Male	138	57.3
	Female	103	42.7
<b>Department</b>	Early Science Education	19	7.9
	Sociology	16	6.6
	Biology	21	8.7
	Mechanical Engineering	18	7.5
	Business Administration	22	9.1
	Computer Education	21	8.7
	Computer Engineering	16	6.6
	Political Science and Public Administration	13	5.4
	Economics	12	5.0

**Table 3.3 (continued)**

	City and Regional Planning	11	4.6
	Food Engineering	21	8.7
	Architecture	20	8.3
	Industrial Design	18	7.5
	Physics	13	5.4
<b>Age</b>	18-21	210	87.1
	22-25	31	12.9
<b>Did you study at the DBE?</b>	Yes	210	87.1
	No	31	12.9
<b>ENG 101 Score</b>	AA	28	11.6
	BA	26	10.8
	BB	45	18.7
	CB	44	18.3
	CC	50	20.7
	DC	26	10.8
	DD	22	9.1
<b>TOTAL</b>		241	100

On the other hand, out of 29 ENG 102 instructors, 25 were female and only 4 were male. The number of instructors whose length of work experience at the DML ranges from 1-10 is 21 while only 7 instructors indicated that they had been working at the DML for 11-20 years. Only one of the participants has been working at the DML for more than 20 years. The following table shows the demographic data of the DML instructors.

**Table 3.4 Demographic data about DML instructors**

		<i>N</i>	%
<b>Gender</b>	Male	4	13.8
	Female	25	86.2
<b>Years of Work Experience at the DML</b>	1-10	21	72.4
	11-20	7	24.1
	21-30	1	3.4
<b>TOTAL</b>		29	100

### **3.3.3 Content Course Instructors**

A total number of 10 content course instructors volunteered to fill in a survey of open-ended questions at their convenience rather than being interviewed because of their tight schedule during the weekdays. Two instructors from each of the five faculties at METU responded to the questions dealing with the students' writing performance in different departments. Two instructors currently offering departmental area courses (City and Regional Planning and Industrial Design) in the Faculty of Architecture, two instructors (Food Engineering and Chemical Engineering) in the Faculty of Engineering, two instructors (Primary Education and Secondary Education) in the Faculty of Education, two instructors (Physics and Psychology) in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences and two instructors (International Relations and Public Administration) in the Faculty of Economic and Administrative Sciences were given an open-ended survey. While five of the instructors were professors, three were associate professors and two were assistant professors. Their years of teaching experience in their departments range from 5 to 35 years.

### **3.4 Data Collection Instruments and Procedures**

Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected in this study. As Coetzee (2009) points out, qualitative data is the holistic data collected from a smaller sample to find the common patterns emerging in the natural setting of the research. Such data is generally obtained through data collection instruments, such as case studies, interviews, document analysis, opinion surveys and formal or informal meetings. Although certain aspects of qualitative data can be quantified, such data cannot easily be turned into numbers, and thus is often more difficult to analyze. Conversely, quantitative data that are generally collected via checklists, surveys and self-ratings mainly depend on numbers in reporting results. Comparing this type of data with the qualitative one, it would be fair to point out that quantitative data is used to gather data from a larger number of people and is easier to analyze.

In this study, the quantitative data was obtained by means of student and instructor questionnaires including closed and open-ended items about the objectives, materials and content, the teaching-learning process and the assessment dimensions of the writing component of the program at the DBE and the DML. On the other hand, qualitative data was collected by means of written document analysis, classroom observations, interviews with English instructors and DBE and DML program coordinators as well as content course instructors teaching departmental courses in different faculties. An open-ended survey was generated from the interview questions for DBE and DML participants who preferred to write answers to survey questions instead of being interviewed because of their heavy teaching loads.

Using multiple data sources helped the researcher to validate the findings of the current study. Patton (1990) emphasizes that the strengths of different data collection instruments should be combined, which is important to triangulate the data by maintaining both their validity and the reliability. Triangulation is important in evaluation studies to be able to evaluate the program from different angles; for that reason, in this study, the issue of triangulation was handled with care by collecting both qualitative and quantitative data and by involving a variety of stakeholders.

Below is the introduction to all the data collection instruments and procedures applied in this study.

### **3.4.1 Questionnaires**

After a brief description of the questionnaires in general, specific parts dealing with the objectives, materials and content, the teaching-learning process and the assessment dimensions are explained.

Four questionnaires were adapted from Erozan's (2005) evaluation study. Two of these questionnaires were given to DBE students (see Appendix A, see Appendix B for the DBE student questionnaire in Turkish) and instructors (see Appendix C). Similarly, the other two questionnaires were administered to DML students (see Appendix D) and instructors (see Appendix E). The closed items in the questionnaires were intended to

gather data about student and instructor perspectives regarding the program objectives (e.g., ‘writing complex sentences’), content and materials (e.g., ‘the materials had variety’), teaching-learning process (e.g., ‘there was an efficient use of time in writing lessons’) as well as assessment (e.g., ‘students were assessed on the things they practiced in the lessons’). Besides, some open-ended questions (e.g., ‘list the most positive 3 things that you think helped students the most to improve their writing skills’) were added to the questionnaire for the purpose of obtaining participants’ suggestions to improve the writing program in both departments.

Although the DBE and the DML questionnaires show few differences, all the questionnaires have similar items seeking an answer to the research questions for this study. For instance, all the questionnaires were divided into six parts, each of which serves a unique purpose to seek an answer to the research questions from the instructors’ and the students’ perspectives. The first part includes items pertaining to the participants’ demographic information, such as gender. The second part of the questionnaires is related to perspectives on how competent students became in the writing objectives (e.g., ‘writing academic paragraphs with appropriate topic, supporting and concluding sentences’) retrieved from the course outlines provided by the DML and the DBE for the 2010-2011 academic year. The closed items in this part of the questionnaire were in the form of a scale ranging from ‘not competent at all’ to ‘highly competent’. At the end of this part, participants were asked to give their suggestions for the improvement of these objectives through the open-ended question requiring participants to list 3 changes at most which they would make in the list of given objectives.

The third part of the questionnaires contains items about the content and the materials aspects of the writing program. The items in this part (e.g., ‘the course materials were appropriate to students’ interests’) were prepared in the form of a scale of 1 to 5 in which 5 stood for ‘strongly agree’, 4 stood for ‘agree’, 3 stood for ‘not sure’, 2 stood for ‘disagree’, and 1 stood for ‘strongly disagree’ regarding key points, such as the appropriateness of the materials and the content for students’ levels. An open-ended question was added to this part as well so as to collect participants’ suggestions about

the ideal materials and the content for their writing programs.

The fourth part of the questionnaires is related to the assessment dimension of the program. In this part pertaining to the assessment and student performance in the writing program, there are closed items, through which participants were asked to express their views about relevant issues like whether students were assessed on the things they practiced in the writing program. With a following open-ended question at the end, participants' opinions about how their performance in writing should be tested were gathered.

The fifth part about the teaching-learning process was made up of two sections, the first of which is intended to find out to what extent the given activities (e.g., lecturing) and methods (e.g., self correction) were used to teach writing on a scale ranging from 'more than necessary' to 'none'. The second section of this part dealing with various issues (e.g., 'there was an efficient use of time in class') pertaining to the teaching-learning process to teach writing includes items in the form of the scale of 1 to 5 as in parts four and two. As in other parts, this section is followed by an open-ended question seeking participants' suggestions on how the teaching-learning process should be to teach writing.

The final part of the questionnaires has the main aim to obtain participants' perceptions about the overall writing program. In this part, in order to reveal the strengths and weaknesses of the writing program and the participants' suggestions for the improvement of the program, open-ended items requiring participants to list 3 positive and 3 negative things about the writing program and 3 suggestions to improve it were included.

### **3.4.2 Document Analysis**

As a part of the qualitative data collection procedure, the written documents about the DBE and the DML were investigated not only to better develop the context inventory for this evaluation study but also to triangulate the data collected via other means. The context inventory helped the researcher both to realize how the program

operates and to prepare the data collection instruments for this study. In the context-adaptive evaluation model, the context inventory established as a result of the document analysis is an important aspect of this study in order to make decisions on what issues to prioritize in the evaluation process. The documents that are available on the websites of the two departments were downloaded for analysis; in addition, some documents were obtained from the department heads or the coordinators who have knowledge about the relevant dimensions. Finally, some preliminary observations and informal interviews were made to better reflect the context of the evaluation.

Among many dimensions proposed by Lynch to develop a context inventory in his evaluation model, the dimensions that are emphasized to develop the context inventory for the current evaluation study are *the program students* (i.e. students' demographic data, such as age, gender and department), *the program staff* (i.e. the number of staff), *the size and intensity of the program* (i.e. the distribution of courses or different language proficiency levels in the program), *the instructional materials and resources available to the program* (i.e. the information about the available instructional materials like course books, reference materials and hand-outs as well as other resources, such as assessment tools) and *the perspective and purpose of the program* (i.e. curricular objectives of the program).

In short, documents pertaining to essential aspects of the program like the program objectives, assessment procedures, content and materials and finally the teaching-learning process were analyzed within the scope of this study as these dimensions make up the main focus of this dissertation.

### **3.4.3 Interviews (Open-ended Surveys) and Classroom Observations**

Another qualitative data collection instrument used for this study is the interview described by Balbach (1999) as the foundation of case studies like the current one. He claims that interviews are invaluable means to collect data in program evaluation studies in that they help researchers to realize what happened from the perspective of the participants and how they reacted to it. As claimed by Dörnyei (2007), interviews are the

most often used method to collect qualitative data and as maintained by Richards (2001), interviews are frequently applied in evaluation studies as they allow for a deeper understanding about any aspects of the program by means of collecting views from different stakeholders.

Depending on the level of structure in the interview guide containing a list of questions prepared for the interviewee, one-to-one interviews can be basically grouped as structured, unstructured and semi-structured (Nunan, 1992). If the aim of the interview is to collect the same information from all participants, a more structured interview should be conducted whereas a less structured interview is more suitable in studies where the participants' individual differences might affect their response to interview questions. The type of interview applied for this study can be described as a mixture of both semi-structured and structured interview as the researcher had a pre-determined list of questions to be asked during the interviews about the program dimensions focused on through different parts of the questionnaires; in addition, there was flexibility to add, revise or expand on previous questions during the interviews depending on the participants' responses so that a more in-depth understanding of what participants think about the program could be gained (Nunan, 1992).

Interviews for this study were adapted from the sample teacher course evaluation interview developed by Erozan (2005). The evaluation interviews were intended to obtain more in-depth data from English instructors and program coordinators about their perceptions of different aspects of the program that are in parallel with the parts of the questionnaire in order to cross-check the data. Interview questions aiming to reveal the suggestions of these program stakeholders for the improvement of the program were included in the interview guides. In addition to 5 DBE and 1 DML program coordinator, 6 DBE instructors teaching writing to students with different proficiency levels and 5 ENG 102 instructors teaching at different sections were interviewed. Some instructors at the DBE (n=9) and at the DML (n=4) volunteered to answer the questions in the interview guide in the form of written open-ended surveys rather than to be interviewed face-to-face. Similarly, content course instructors (n=10), who expressed an interest to take part in this study, preferred the open-ended written surveys instead of interviews.

Following the piloting of the interview questions with 2 English instructors at the DBE and 2 English instructors at the DML, interviews with English instructors and the program coordinators were scheduled by the Administrations of both departments. Before each interview, the introduction of the interview guide explaining the purpose and the duration of the interview were read aloud to the participants. After taking the participants' permission to tape-record the interview, the researcher first asked some background questions about the participants (e.g., 'How long have you been teaching at the department?'). Following this part, the researcher asked the main questions by making necessary additions depending on participants' responses. Interviews with instructors and program coordinators were tape-recorded to be transcribed later. The participants were interviewed in their offices and each interview took around 20 minutes. The length of the time planned for each interview was formerly 15 minutes but it was changed to 20 minutes as the interviewees the researcher piloted the interview guide with were only able to give answers to each question in 20-22 minutes.

Each part of the interview guides prepared for DBE instructors and the program coordinators (see Appendix F) and for DML instructors and the program coordinator (see Appendix G) were paralleled with DBE and DML instructor questionnaires dealing with all the dimensions of the program mentioned in the research questions. However, the open-ended survey for the content course instructors (see Appendix H) only focused on the program objectives as well as content and materials because they may not have sufficient information pertaining to the teaching-learning process and the assessment aspects of the program applied at the DBE and the DML. The content course instructors were provided with some background knowledge about the writing programs at the SFL while the instructors at the DBE and the DML were only given the list of program objectives as they were considered to be familiar with other issues brought up about the writing program in their departments during the interviews.

The first part the interview guides and the parallel open-ended surveys designed for DBE and the DML instructors and program coordinators aims to reveal information about participants' background and the program context in which the writing instruction is implemented. In the interview guide for instructors in both departments, there are 6

parts, the first of which is relevant to the program's and the participants' background.

The second part of the interview guides starts with questions intended to elicit the effectiveness of the writing objectives from the perspective of the participants (e.g., 'do you think all these objectives are achieved by the end of the academic year?'). They were also asked to suggest changes as for the improvement of the program objectives. In the third part, all the questions are about the content as well as the materials used to teach writing (e.g., 'what is good and not so good about the materials used to teach writing at the DBE?'). As in other parts of the interview guide, participants reflected on their perspectives about the content and materials used to teach writing in their departments and proposed related suggestions for the betterment of the program.

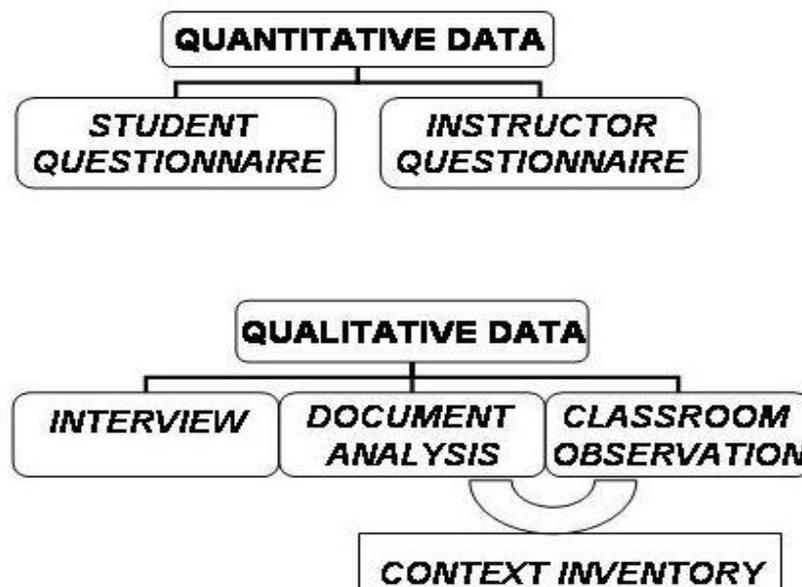
In the fourth part, the interviewees did the same as for the teaching-learning process and the kinds of activities and methods applied in the teaching of writing in their departments. The fifth part of the interview guide includes questions, such as 'do you think that the assessment tools used for the assessment of the writing skills at the DBE are effective?' to reveal issues regarding the assessment aspect of the writing program, and participants were expected to critically approach the testing instruments used in the program and offer ways for the betterment of the assessment procedure.

In addition to these dimensions, the interview guide included two more questions, one of which was related to whether the writing program at the DBE has prepared students sufficiently for DML. The other question, on the other hand, tries to reveal whether the writing program at the DBE has prepared students sufficiently for their departmental courses. At the end of the interview, each participant was asked whether they have anything else to add about the writing dimension of the program they are involved in.

In program evaluation studies, interviews are sometimes complemented with classroom observations providing researchers with direct experience by helping them to clarify the context in which the program is implemented. By means of the classroom observation, which requires the researcher to take field notes and to use classroom observation checklists or rating scales, some valuable data can be recorded (Balbach, 1999). Classroom observations are usually conducted to investigate examples of

different teaching styles and lesson formats in such evaluation studies. In terms of the classroom observation involved in this study, it would be true to say classroom observation is used as a data collection tool to better understand the instructional context of the writing program and to establish the context inventory about how writing is handled in the classroom at both the DBE and the DML. Three writing instructors teaching at different levels at the DBE and three DML instructors teaching ENG 102 in different sections were observed in writing-focused lessons by means of taking field notes. Observations were carried out in writing-focused lessons at both departments in order to observe important points about the writing-focused lessons, such as how the teaching-learning process is followed with special focus on the materials, teacher behavior, student behavior in addition to tasks and activities.

In brief, as summarized in Figure 3.1 below, while the quantitative data was collected via student and instructor questionnaires, the qualitative data was mainly obtained through interviews with instructors and program coordinators at both departments. Also, in order to develop the context inventory for the current evaluation, informal interviews with program coordinators and assistant chair persons were made in addition to document analysis and classroom observations:



**Figure 3.1:** Summary of Data Collection Instruments

#### **3.4.4 Piloting**

After the questionnaires for students and instructors at the DBE and the DML were prepared by the researcher, the items in the questionnaires were examined by the commission of the program coordinators and assistant chairs at both the DBE and the DML to assess the applicability of these questionnaires to these departments by paying special attention to the comprehension difficulty of items and whether the content of the instruments overlap with their program. In addition, five experts (holding PhDs) in ELT, an expert in the field of Measurement and Evaluation and another expert in the field of Educational Sciences checked the questionnaires' content and face validity. The items in the questionnaires were also validated by considering comments made by a native-speaker English instructor regarding the wording of the items. The same procedure explained above was also applied to the interview guides prepared in parallel to the parts in the questionnaires.

On the other hand, the student version of the DBE student questionnaire was translated into Turkish by the researcher in order to eliminate possible comprehension problems. It was pointed out by the department chairperson and some of the program coordinators that there was a need to translate the questionnaire into Turkish because especially pre-intermediate and intermediate students were not very likely to understand and respond to the questionnaire items properly. Two DBE instructors made back-translation of the translated scale and checked whether the items in it were comprehensible enough for DBE students. Then, a professional translator looked into the original and the translated version to make the final revisions.

The DML student questionnaire was conducted in English as students with whom the researcher piloted the English questionnaire did not have any comprehension difficulties and it was believed by DML instructors the researcher consulted with that the students could understand and answer the questionnaire items in English. Still, it was stated in the instructions of the comment parts of the instrument that students could write their comments in Turkish.

While the DBE student questionnaire was piloted with 100 students, the DML

student questionnaire was piloted with 75 students to prepare the final questionnaires for both departments. The reliability of each part of the DBE and the DML student questionnaires dealing with a different dimension of the writing program, such as program objectives, materials and content, teaching learning process as well as assessment was revealed. Some items were removed from the scales as their reliability was found to be low in light of expert judgments, comments made by program coordinators and assistant chairs as well as some statistical procedures. For example, item 16 ('there was a need for more supplementary materials to improve my writing skills') in the materials and content part of the questionnaire, item 14 ('I preferred to work individually in class') in the part of the scale dealing with the teaching-learning process and item 5 ('the questions in the mid-term exams were difficult') in the part pertaining to the assessment dimension of the program were removed from the DBE student questionnaire. In addition, in light of expert judgments and comments made by program coordinators and assistant chairs, some items were modified so that DBE students could better comprehend and visualize the statements. For instance, some objectives, such as 'writing complex sentence' were given as skills in the questionnaire with short explanations and sample sentences in the translated questionnaire given to the student because it was pointed out by the majority of program coordinators that some students might not know what a complex or a compound sentence was.

Following the removal of the items after the piloting, Cronbach's alpha coefficient values for each part of the DBE student questionnaire were calculated through SPSS 15. Table 3.5 shows that each part of the DBE student questionnaire has internal reliability with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient value, the lowest of which is 0.84 and the DBE student questionnaire was found to have internal reliability as a whole with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient value of 0.93.

**Table 3.5 Cronbach's alpha coefficient values for the DBE student questionnaire**

	<b>Program Objectives</b>	<b>Materials and Content</b>	<b>Activities and Methods</b>	<b>Teaching-Learning Process</b>	<b>Assessment</b>	<b>Overall</b>
<b>N of Items</b>	9	14	15	16	12	66
<b>Cronbach <math>\alpha</math></b>	0.84	0.84	0.85	0.89	0.81	0.93

In the same way, some items with lower reliability were excluded from the DML student questionnaire. To illustrate, items 13 ('I had difficulty in following the course materials'), 15 ('I preferred to work with (a) partner(s) in class), item 5 ('the exam questions were difficult') were excluded from relevant parts of the DML student questionnaire. On the basis of feedback received from the experts, some items were reformulated. To exemplify, the item 'the course materials provided me with what I needed to know or do' was rewritten as 'the course materials (i.e. *Academic English: Survival Skills I and II*) provided me with what I needed to know or do' to help participating students realize what it meant by the course materials. Considering the high Cronbach's alpha coefficient values (the lowest was 0.85) for each dimension of the DML student questionnaire as illustrated in Table 3.6, it would be fair to state that each part of the DML student questionnaire has internal reliability and the scale was found to have internal reliability as a whole with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient value of 0.95.

**Table 3.6 Cronbach's alpha coefficient values for the DML student questionnaire**

	<b>Program Objectives</b>	<b>Materials and Content</b>	<b>Activities and Methods</b>	<b>Teaching-Learning Process</b>	<b>Assessment</b>	<b>Overall</b>
<b>N of Items</b>	15	16	16	17	14	78
<b>Cronbach <math>\alpha</math></b>	0.91	0.90	0.85	0.91	0.89	0.95

In addition to the experts' and coordinators' judgments as well as the statistical procedures applied to reveal the reliability of the questionnaires, the literature relevant to validity issues was taken into account in the preparation of the questionnaires. With regards to the validity of the questionnaires, Dörnyei (2007) underlines some important points to be considered in designing a questionnaire. For example, questionnaire items should be formulated by using simple and natural language and by avoiding ambiguous and loaded words. Negative constructions and double paralleled sentences should be avoided in the construction of valid questionnaire items. Also, so as to ensure validity, the wording of the questions in the interview guides and especially the items in the questionnaires were kept easy and short.

Necessary modifications were made in both the questionnaires and the interviews in light of the piloting, constructive criticisms obtained from the DBE and the DML

commissions as well as the experts who looked into the data collection instruments. As the instructor versions of the questionnaires included the same items with the student version, the reliability of the instructor questionnaires were not focused on. Questionnaires and interview guides were finalized and administered to the participants during the time scheduled by the Administrations of the DBE and the DML. The data collection procedure began after the researcher obtained the permission from METU Human Subjects Ethics Committee.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS OF THE DATA ANALYSIS

The findings of the study are presented in this chapter. Firstly, the context inventory, which is the first step of the program evaluation model used in this study, is presented on the basis of the analysis of relevant documents, informal interviews with key stakeholders (e.g., program coordinators and chairpersons) and classroom observations at the DBE and the DML. Secondly, the research questions are answered one by one by analyzing both quantitative and qualitative data under each focus area (i.e. objectives of the writing program objectives, materials and content used in writing classes, the teaching-learning process applied to teach writing and the assessment of the writing skills).

#### **4.1 The Context Inventory (Document Analysis and Classroom Observation)**

For the context inventory, program features like the perspective and purpose of the program, the size and intensity of the program, the instructional materials and resources available to the program as well as the number of program students and staff were focused on. Also, the documents pertaining to the objectives, testing, materials and the teaching aspects of the writing program at both departments were investigated. Relevant documents and information were explored. Classroom observations were carried out in order to better understand and reflect the instructional context of the study. Besides, the assistant chair who is in charge of the ELT program at the DBE and the ENG 101 and ENG 102 program coordinator at the DML were interviewed and necessary field observations were made so as to set up the context of this evaluation. After a brief introduction to the mission and the vision of the SFL, which is the main body coordinating both the DBE and the DML, a more detailed analysis is presented for both of these departments separately.

Originally founded in 1961 with the name The English Language Preparatory

Division (ELPD), the mission of the SFL is stated on the official website of the school as follows:

The mission of the SFL is to provide the students studying at METU with English language education at international standards by coordinating and monitoring the academic work in its departments, namely Department of Basic English (DBE) and Department of Modern Languages (DML). The main goal of the SFL is to enable the students at METU, where the medium of instruction is English, to follow their departmental courses, to access and effectively use all kinds of resources related to their academic studies and to use English in their professional lives by communicating in written and oral contexts.

In addition to its basic responsibility to prepare students for the English medium education at different departments at METU, the SFL is responsible for preparing and administering the METU English Proficiency Exam (EPE), maintaining the proper operation of the Academic Writing Centre, offering consulting services to graduate students and the METU faculty staff about their written works and organizing courses for the public and private sectors. The SFL also holds a Teacher Education Unit providing training to the newly-hired instructors during their first year at the SFL.

#### **4.1.1 The Department of Basic English**

When students are eligible to get enrolled at METU depending on their scores at the University Entrance Exam, they have to pass the EPE administered by the DBE at the beginning of the students' first year at the university. Students' scores obtained from this exam are taken into account so as to decide whether their English proficiency is at a level sufficient for them to follow their departmental courses.

As indicated in the official website of the SFL, there are two stages in the exam, the first of which consists of 70 multiple-choice questions in two sections that need to be completed within 90 minutes: language use (40 questions / 20 pts.) and reading comprehension (30 questions / 30 pts.). To be eligible to sit for the second stage of the exam, students have to get a minimum score of 24.50, which makes up half of the total score in this first stage. The second stage of the exam, on the other hand, contains two sections: listening comprehension (30 pts.) and writing (20 pts.). This section of the

exam includes half of the total test (50 pts.) and its duration is 110-120 minutes.

Those who fail EPE with a score that is below 59.5 out of 100 or those who have not taken this test have to attend the DBE, which runs a two-semester intensive program putting emphasis on reading, writing, listening and speaking. For the first semester, students are placed into four groups (e.g., upper-intermediate, intermediate, elementary, beginner) according to their levels of English determined by EPE and a placement exam and in the second semester, students are divided into five groups (pre-faculty, advanced, upper-intermediate, intermediate, pre-intermediate) according to their grades from the first semester.

The information obtained from the department's Registrar showed that the approximate number of teaching staff increased to 200 and the number of students to around 3123. In the interview with the assistant chairperson of the DBE, it was realized that due to the large number of students at the elementary and beginner levels, the classrooms of especially these groups are quite crowded. The groups and daily class hours for these groups for the first and the second semester (Retrieved from <http://www.dbe.metu.edu.tr/student/duyurular/RulesRegulations2009-2010.pdf>) can be illustrated in the figure below:

<b>First Semester</b>		<b>Second Semester</b>	
<b><i>Groups</i></b>	<b><i>Daily Class Hours</i></b>	<b><i>Groups</i></b>	<b><i>Daily Class Hours</i></b>
		Pre-faculty	3
Upper-Intermediate	3	Advanced	3
Intermediate	4	Upper-Intermediate	4
Elementary	4	Intermediate	4
Beginner	6	Pre-intermediate	6

**Figure 4.1:** The Groups and Daily Class Hours at the DBE

As summarized by Baskan (2002, p.8), who is an English instructor at the DBE, the general functioning of the department in terms of the administration and testing works is as follows:

Everything in the department is centralized. The Administration is in charge of organizing and supervising all the academic functions and activities. Each group has a coordinator to design the syllabus and write supplementary materials, and a tester to prepare all the testing materials.

Before proceeding to the objectives, the assessment procedures, content and materials as well as the teaching-learning process applied in the writing program of the DBE, it is worth mentioning here some of facilities at the DBE. The Self-Access Center, for instance, has a collection of dictionaries, books, video/audio materials and tests administered in previous years. In addition, there are rooms like the silent study room where students can study the tests for different levels, the reading room in which students can spend time reading books and magazines, the audio-video room in which students can watch films and listen to songs and the computer room providing students with free-access to the web easily.

When it comes to the main focus of this evaluation study, writing at the DBE, it would be fair to state that the main emphasis of the program is on paragraph development. As some DBE instructors call it, the type of paragraph focused on in the program can be described as an ‘extended paragraph’. The following skills can be listed as the writing objectives of the writing program at the DBE based on the writing syllabus obtained from the Administration of the DBE:

1. Writing simple sentences
2. Writing compound sentences
3. Writing complex sentences
4. Using correct and appropriate vocabulary
5. Using appropriate discourse patterns (cause-effect, compare-contrast, problem-solution, argumentation)
6. Writing academic paragraphs with appropriate topic, supporting and concluding sentences
7. Achieving cohesion in writing via referencing, maintaining focus and looking out for old/new information
8. Achieving unity in writing through the use of appropriate signal words
9. Using appropriate register in writing (formal / informal language).

In addition to these objectives above, some valuable information about the testing system in the department was gathered. For instance, the achievement grade for each semester at the DBE is based on the score students obtain from mid-terms (25%), pop-quizzes and quizzes (15%) and performance grade (5%) while mid-terms (35%), pop-quizzes and quizzes (15%) and performance grade (5%) make up the criteria for the second semester. The pop-quizzes generally test students’ reading, grammar and

listening abilities. Students' writing ability is generally tested in three mid-terms in each term and the writing sections comprise twenty percent of the exams.

As far as the content of the mid-term exams is concerned, it would be true to say that all the students at different proficiency levels take different mid-terms in the first semester while the last mid-term of the second semester is the same for all groups. In informal interviews with students, it was realized that students are generally tested on what they are taught mostly by means of the hand-outs. For instance, in the first mid-term of the first term, students were asked to write a narrative paragraph in simple past tense by looking at the given pictures and the information. In the second mid-term, students wrote a descriptive paragraph about a camera and in the last mid-term of the first term, students were asked to write a cause-effect paragraph without providing them with any clues or ideas. It was observed that similar tasks were focused on through the hand-outs distributed in the class.

Another important issue dealt with in this study about the assessment dimension of the program is the students' performance at the DBE. In order to include some aspects of the students' learning outcomes at the DBE in this study, some documents containing information about students' performance in the EPE, especially the means of students' EPE scores in different sections of the exam administered at the end of the 2008-2009 as well as the 2009-2010 academic years were collected from the IT center and the Administration of the DBE. Although this study was not based on quantitative data about the learning outcomes, some of the statistical figures presented below seem to give some valuable data about students' proficiency at the end of the program at the DBE. For instance, it can be claimed that the DBE is quite successful in implementing its program considering the quantitative data reflecting DBE students' achievement rate in the EPE in the last two academic years (June, 2009 and 2010). The means and percentages of the scores in the EPE as illustrated in both Table 4.1 and Table 4.2 show that students' proficiency is above 60% in almost every section of both exams. Still, the writing section of the EPE administered in June, 2009 was found to have a relatively low mean. It is also known that the means of the writing scores in the EPE administered in September 2010 was the lowest among other sections, which verifies the need for the

evaluation of the writing program at the DBE.

**Table 4.1 Means of the EPE Scores in June 2009**

	<b>Grammar (20%)</b>	<b>Reading (30%)</b>	<b>Listening Average (30%)</b>	<b>Writing (20%)</b>
<b>Mean</b>	13.68	20.45	21.24	10.71
<b>%</b>	68.40	68.17	70.81	53.56

**Table 4.2 Means of the EPE Scores in June 2010**

	<b>Grammar (20%)</b>	<b>Reading (30%)</b>	<b>Listening Average (30%)</b>	<b>Writing (20%)</b>
<b>Mean</b>	12.48	19.70	19.31	12.66
<b>%</b>	62.40	65.67	64.37	63.30

As for another important dimension of the program, materials and content, it was observed that there is no single course book to teach writing as in earlier academic years, but only hand-outs; in addition, the writing sections of the main course book used to teach general English in an integrated way are also covered in writing-focused lessons. As indicated by Enginarlar (2006) in the official web-site of the SFL, about half of the course materials used by the DBE are prepared by the instructors themselves (Retrieved from <http://www.ydyom.metu.edu.tr/sfl/history12.htm>). Moreover, as asserted by the assistant chairperson of the program, the materials to teach writing at the department are generally in the form of hand-outs either prepared by the instructors or taken from different course books that have previously been used to teach writing in the program (e.g., *Paragraph Power, Write Ideas and Academic Writing Course*).

After a careful document analysis of course materials prepared for different levels, it can be generalized that the hand-outs generally start with a brief introduction to the genre of writing to be covered in the lesson and provide students with a model text so that they can see the organization of a typical example of the intended type of writing. There is a top-down process in the presentation of the materials in that after the model text is provided, linking words and some relevant and useful expressions are presented. This is followed by ideas for practice. These ideas are generally writing tasks to be completed at home although the instructor may sometimes ask students to do the tasks in the class. Instructors are provided with a teacher copy of the hand-out containing alternative tasks and an answer key. It is important to note here that in order to maintain

consistency in the writing program, each instructor has to use the same material to teach writing. It is also worth mentioning here that instructors at the DBE are expected to give written feedback to students' work. As for the content of the materials, it would be fair to state that the materials cover a variety of themes ranging from daily to scientific issues (e.g., global warming).

Following the writing objectives, testing system and the materials and the content used to teach writing at the DBE, the teaching aspect of the program needs to be explained. In terms of teaching writing at the department, Baskan (2002), who is an English instructor working at the DBE, highlights three major approaches that have so far been applied in the writing program at the DBE respectively: controlled writing, free writing and integrated writing. Firstly, she explains how the term controlled writing, which can be associated with the product approach for this study, was interpreted at the DBE by illustrating typical stages for this approach:

First, the students are given a paragraph or essay on a certain rhetorical form (e.g., cause-effect). Next, they are asked to analyze it focusing on the topic, supporting and concluding sentences and transitions. Then, they are provided with exercises in which they have to fill in the blanks, make some grammatical changes and so on. In the final stages, given all the information and clues about a topic, they are asked to write paragraphs only by making grammatical manipulations and putting the words and phrases in the sentences. In the mid-term and quizzes, the students are tested in the same way (Baskan, 2002, p. 11).

She continues to underline that in 1999-2000 academic year, the administration decided to switch from controlled writing to free writing in the teaching and testing of writing skills in light of the criticisms and suggestions from the DML and from the students' departments. The main criticism against the controlled writing at the DBE was that this type of writing required students only to manipulate the grammatical structures in the text, which made them ignore ideas and thoughts to include in a piece of writing. In other words, in controlled writing tasks, students were only expected to combine given words or phrases into sentences, and the sentences into paragraphs and important issues like the content and the organization of the text were neglected. In parallel with this teaching approach, instructors gave corrective feedback to their students' written works by mainly dealing with grammar mistakes instead of the content.

Baskan (2002) claims that free writing approach, which reflects basic characteristics of the process approach, was applied at the DBE as a reaction to controlled writing. In this approach, students are first introduced to skills like brainstorming and then, they are taught how to organize their ideas so that they can come up with their own topic, supporting and concluding sentences. In the exams, they are asked to write their own paragraphs on a given topic without any clues. According to Baskan, there is an important concern arising from the free writing approach in that students might not have enough knowledge related to the topics and themes to write about. As a result, she suggests that the third approach, integrated writing, should come into play at the DBE. From her perspective, this approach combines the most favorable aspects of controlled and free writing in that the students are taught major grammatical structures to be used in their paragraphs for which some clues as well as ideas are provided; however, students are expected to select the relevant ideas from these texts, which means that they have to do some critical thinking as in the free writing approach and eliminate the irrelevant ideas. They are also asked to decide on the major and minor supports, and they are supposed to add their own ideas.

The classroom observations carried at the DBE yielded some valuable data about the current instructional context of the writing-focused lessons and helped the researcher to verify some of the findings of the current study. The first feeling on entering the classroom to be observed was that especially the beginner and PIN group classrooms were quite crowded considering the size of the classroom. Some common teaching behaviors were observed in all the three lessons. For instance, in all the three lessons, the dominant way of conducting the lesson was lecturing and individual work by the students. Nearly, one fourth of the observed class time was spent on instructor lecture. Despite instructors' attempts to organize pair/group work so that students was able to write together, students generally ended up with writing on their own. The aim of all the three lessons was to present and practice certain discourse-level paragraph writing (e.g. cause-effect and argumentation).

The way instructors corrected written mistakes was similar in that usually errors were corrected directly by the teacher although one of the instructors enabled students to

correct each other's written work. The instructors generally started the activity with general questions about the sample text and the discourse patterns emphasized in the texts are first practiced with some controlled exercises, such as gap-fills. Then, students write controlled paragraphs using the prompts given in the hand-outs about certain topics. The instructors were all ready for support by answering students' questions while the students were working individually.

As for the teaching behaviors of the instructors, it would be fair to suggest that the instructors established good rapport with students using eye contacts, encouraging them to participate and calling them by name. It is worth mentioning that the instructors generally called on some of the volunteering students dominating the lesson. The lack of audio-visual aids was observed in all the lessons. Throughout the lessons, it was observed that the instructors were eager to help, enthusiastic, patient, lively, tolerant and encouraging.

As for another important dimension of the program, materials and content, it was observed that the materials were usually the hand-outs taken from the course books previously used to teach writing at the DBE and there was no single course book to teach writing as in earlier academic years. Besides the hand-outs, some of the writing sections of the main course book, *Language Leader*, used to teach general English in an integrated way were covered. Informal interviews with instructors and students showed that the writing sections of the main course book are sometimes skipped and are sometimes done very quickly in the class while the hand-outs are concentrated on in writing-focused lessons. It was observed that there is no parallelism between the hand-outs and the writing sections of the main course book, *Language Leader*. For instance, the researcher observed a cause-effect paragraph in an elementary class but no such tasks could be detected in the main course book for that level. It was observed that the vocabulary of the sample texts in the hand-outs were a bit beyond students' proficiency levels as some students looked up their dictionaries very frequently or asked the meaning of some words to the teacher.

#### **4.1.2 The Department of Modern Languages**

When students are freshman, the DML, which currently has 72 instructors teaching English courses and 17 instructors teaching other foreign languages, continues to offer different compulsory and optional English courses during the students' departmental studies in their faculties. These courses mainly deal with different skills, such as reading, writing, listening, speaking and giving presentations. In addition to optional courses like ENG 201 English-Turkish Translation and ENG 212 Writing Term Papers, the department offers the following compulsory courses: ENG 101 English for Academic Purposes I, ENG 102 English for Academic Purposes II, ENG 211 Academic Speaking Skills and ENG 311 Advanced Communication Skills. Since the writing program applied at the DML was evaluated in addition to the writing components of the preparatory program at the DBE, it is worth explaining the objectives of two of the courses (i.e. ENG 101 and ENG 102), which were focused on within the scope of this evaluation as these courses emphasize L2 writing in addition to other skills.

The coordinator of ENG 101 and ENG 102 highlighted that while the DBE has the main goal to teach “extended paragraph writing” by the end of the first academic year, the DML mainly concentrates on both paragraph and academic essay writing in a process-based approach in these two courses. After explaining the objectives, testing system, materials and the teaching aspects of ENG 101, ENG 102 is discussed from the perspective of the same dimensions.

In students' first years at their departments, the DML offers ENG 101 in the fall semester and ENG 102 in the spring semester. Comparing the writing objectives of these two compulsory courses (Retrieved from <http://www.mld.metu.edu.tr/node/24>), it would be true to claim that ENG 102 gives more importance to writing than ENG 101. To exemplify, while there are 14 writing objectives listed in the ENG 102 outline, students are only expected to be able to do the following by the end of the ENG 101 course:

1. write expository paragraphs
2. write reaction paragraphs
3. write an expository essay

4. learn, internalize, accept and carry out the stages in a process writing approach, while writing paragraphs and/or essays
5. use correct, appropriate language structures, vocabulary and discourse markers.

As mentioned in the ENG 101 course outline for the 2010-2011 academic year, this course is a four-hour, learner-centered, integrated-skills based course that will develop students in the four skills in an academic context. The course outline also emphasizes the following points about course objectives:

Tasks involving higher order thinking skills will require students not only to perform at knowledge and comprehension levels, but to synthesize and evaluate information, ideas and judgments as well. The variety of texts and perspectives presented through themes in and outside the class will facilitate their critical thinking process and thus enable students to become active and autonomous learners.

The grading system for ENG 101 is based on a mid-term exam (25%), final exam (30%), expository essay (15%=12.5% essay + 2.5% process), extensive reading pack quiz (5%), quiz(es)/task(s) (10%), speaking (5%=1 or 2 tasks) and paragraph writing (10%=minimum 2 paragraphs). In terms of the writing part of the grading, it is pointed out in the outline that the expository essay and the graded paragraphs must be written in class while other written works can be completed at home. Students' written works are graded on rubrics which are posted on the website of the department at the beginning of the term.

Because the other issue focused on in this study about the assessment of the writing skills at the DML is the students' performance in writing, students' overall achievements were also investigated by obtaining students' letter grades in ENG 101 and ENG 102 courses in the 2007-2008 and the 2009-2010 academic years from the IT department of the DML. As writing is an integrated skill in ENG 101 and ENG 102 courses, students' overall success can be taken as an important construct in analyzing learning outcomes. Table 4.3 shows that students overall success in both of these courses in two consecutive academic years were generally satisfactory as the number of students passing these courses with AA, BA, BB and CB was higher than those who got CC, DC, DD, FD or FF.

**Table 4.3 Letter Grades for ENG 101 and ENG 102**

<b>2007-2008</b>	<b>Grade AA</b>	<b>Grade BA</b>	<b>Grade BB</b>	<b>Grade CB</b>	<b>Grade CC</b>	<b>Grade DC</b>	<b>Grade DD</b>	<b>Grade FD</b>	<b>Grade FF</b>
<i>ENG 101</i>	255	325	477	439	424	246	157	98	74
<i>ENG 102</i>	737	522	472	255	163	71	48	34	77
<b>2008-2009</b>	<b>AA</b>	<b>BA</b>	<b>BB</b>	<b>CB</b>	<b>CC</b>	<b>DC</b>	<b>DD</b>	<b>FD</b>	<b>FF</b>
<i>ENG 101</i>	130	293	482	500	482	338	251	111	89
<i>ENG 102</i>	462	526	561	428	272	140	69	34	98

With regards to the materials used in ENG 101 and ENG 102, it can be stated that the course book for ENG 101, *Academic English: Survival Skills I*, was written by Gülen et al. (2009), who are instructors teaching at the DML. As maintained by the writers, this course book includes essential skills that students need in their departmental courses and is based on a thematic and integrated-skills approach. The main theme of the course book organizing all the units is “Change”. These units have been divided into 4, each of which focuses on a different aspect of the main theme. For example, the title of Unit 2 is “Changing Communication”. All four skills are practiced with a variety of tasks and exercises in this course book.

As for the writing tasks involved in the course book, it can be realized from the overview of the book that the major tasks to be completed by the end of the course contain writing an expository paragraph, writing a reaction paragraph, writing an expository essay and writing a reaction paragraph. As maintained in the aim of the book section, because it is a course book encouraging autonomous learning, it is accompanied by “Study Skills” and “Appendices” sections that are hoped to enable students to improve their survival skills outside the class. In the informal interview with the program coordinator of this course, it was understood that while there is no additional need and requirement to provide students with supplementary materials like hand-outs, some instructors may wish to support the course book with instructor made materials.

As far as the presentation and the teaching of the writing skills in the course book are concerned, it would be fair to suggest that before the writing tasks that are all about different aspects of the main theme of the course book, activities focusing on other skills like reading are generally covered in the class. These reading texts introduce some key

vocabulary that might be used in writing tasks. For the purpose of teaching how to write reaction paragraphs in Unit 2, some reading-focused activities and related vocabulary are focused on first and the process of writing a reaction paragraph is explained in a step-by-step manner. This is followed by a sample model text written by a student in response to a given quotation. Students are expected to read the model text and identify the sentences explaining the main idea of the quotation and the topic sentence reflecting the student reaction. After introducing the model text with some basic questions, students are directed to analyze a given cartoon and write a reaction paragraph using words that have been learned in this unit. Two boxes are provided to students in this writing task as spaces for students to write both the outline and the actual paragraph. This writing task is followed by other activities focusing on other skills like speaking. In all the three observed writing-focused lessons at the DML, a similar approach was followed.

ENG 102, on the other hand, is a course offered in the second semester to freshman students who have successfully passed the previous first-term compulsory course ENG 101. This course, which can be regarded as a continuation of ENG 101, is described in the outline as a learner-centered and integrated-skills course taught 4 hours a week. As mentioned earlier, considering the objectives and the weekly schedule of this course, it would be true to claim that this course is a more writing-based course than ENG 101. According to the course outline for the 2010-2011 academic year, the objectives of ENG 102 expect students to reach the following learning outcomes by the end of the term:

1. write expository paragraphs
2. write reaction paragraphs
3. write a documented expository essay
4. write a documented argumentative essay
5. write a reaction-response essay
6. learn, internalize, accept and carry out the stages in a process writing approach, while writing paragraphs and/or essays
7. use correct, appropriate language structures, vocabulary and discourse markers
8. evaluate sources for relevance and reliability
9. identify reference information
10. research on the Internet

11. research in the library
12. identify and select relevant sources
13. practice using APA citation rules
14. practice borrowing ideas by paraphrasing, summarizing, quoting, and synthesizing

In terms of the materials used at the DML, Enginarlar (2006) points out in his presentation of the history of the SFL that nearly all of the course materials used by the DML are home-prepared (<http://www.ydyom.metu.edu.tr/sfl/history12.htm>). The name of the ENG 102 course book written by Gülcü et al. (2010), four department instructors, is *Academic English: Survival Skills II*. As maintained by the writers of this book, all the texts and tasks revolve around one main theme “Power” that is approached from different perspectives in each unit. It is also emphasized by the writers that the book contains important skills that students are very likely to need in their departments, such as effective time management, computer skills and taking essay exams. Moreover, the tasks in this course necessitate not only performing at the knowledge level but also synthesizing and evaluating information, ideas and judgments. Especially as for the writing skill, the course book deals with a number of various issues like research skills (e.g., researching in the internet), APA citation (e.g., giving end-text reference), the argumentative essay (e.g., refuting the counter arguments) and the reaction-response essay (e.g., developing the reaction). As in *Academic English: Survival Skills I*, *Academic English: Survival Skills II* includes “Study skills” and “Appendices” sections to help students improve their self-study and survival skills.

The grading of this course is based on students scores obtained from quizzes (10%), speaking (5%), mid-term exams (25%), documented expository essay (15% essay+5% process=20%), documented argumentative essay (15% essay+10% process= 25%) and the final exam involving the writing of a reaction-response essay makes up 15% of the total 100. It is important to note here that all the essays for this course must be written in class. Similar to ENG 101, the grading in ENG 102 is based on different rubrics for different essay types. Students are given written feedback for their written products. Each writing task in this course is designed around the process-writing approach in that the instructor gives feedback to the first drafts and the final drafts of

students' written works. The instructors are finally submitted the completed tasks to be graded in a file including all the drafts and the sources used in the process of writing the tasks. With regards to the type of written feedback applied in the program, the informal interview with the coordinator of ENG 101 and ENG 102 revealed that instructors might have different written feedback practices although the coordinator could only advise the instructors offering these courses to use correction codes to enable students to take more responsibility for their learning and to shorten the time allocated for written error treatment in instructors' busy teaching schedules.

In terms of the way writing is taught in this course, it can be stated that the flow of the unit and the presentation of the writing activities are similar to ENG 101. As in ENG 101, ENG 102 writing tasks are preceded by speaking, reading or listening activities that are all related to the main theme of the course book. To illustrate, Unit 4, called as "Power and the Rich" aims to teach reaction and response essay. For this aim, the unit provides students with a model reaction response essay written to respond to the reading text introduced before. Following this sample essay, students are asked to carry out certain exercises like underlining the thesis statement of the sample essay. Students are then explained what reaction and response mean and they are provided with four main stages to be able to write a reaction-response essay. All of these stages are accompanied by relevant tasks and activities. For instance, in stage 1, analyzing the text critically, several steps to analyze a text are listed (e.g., evaluate the evidence and support, determine your stance, do extensive research) and another sample text analyzed by a student, who underlined some part of the text and wrote relevant notes for these parts, is presented to the students. In the second stage, deciding on your reaction, different types of reacting and responding to a text (e.g., agree with the points in the text or the way they have been presented) are discussed. This is followed by reacting thesis statements, the type of which should be identified by the student. In the third stage, organizing ideas into an outline, students are given thesis statements to analyze and to decide what might be discussed for these thesis statements.

Also, the sample essay that was introduced before is focused on again to enable students to write down a detailed outline of the essay in the given box. In the final stage,

writing the reaction-response essay, the structural difference of this type of essay from the others is explained because it is important for such essays to contain a summary and a reaction to the original text. In a step-by-step manner, how to write the introduction, how to develop the reaction and how to conclude the texts are illustrated. At the end of this presentation, students are asked to produce an essay.

In addition, the classroom observations revealed some insights into the teaching-learning process in writing-focused lessons at the DML. The main aim of all the lessons was to introduce and practice reaction-response essay writing through the unit “Power and the Rich”. As the name of the unit implies, all the activities in the observed lessons were about the relationship between power and the rich and some of the related issues raised in the text were about outsourcing, brain drain and dumping wastes.

After asking general questions like why there might be a need for such an essay type and revisiting the components of an outline, the instructors asked students to draw an outline of the given sample text called as “It is a Rich Man’s World”. In all the three observed lessons, instructors mainly built their lesson on the sample essays in the course book and asked their students to read these model texts and draw an outline of the main parts of the essay like the introduction of the source of the main topic, major ideas of the text and thesis statement in a reaction-response essay model. One of the instructors distributed an outline template with blanks to be filled in so that students could identify the key parts of the essay and write them down on the template while two instructors drew the outline of the model text on OHP as a whole class work.

Students mostly worked individually and silently and the teacher monitored the class and supported the students whenever there was something students could not manage. After students completed the outlining task, the instructors checked students’ work as a whole class activity and a few students dominated the lessons as they volunteered more than other students and the instructors mainly called on volunteering students. Most of the time, the instructors called students by name and encouraged them to participate in the lessons. As in the DBE hand-outs, it was observed that some students had hard time in figuring out the sample text as it included vocabulary which is not very familiar to some students.

## **4.2 Results of the DBE Student Questionnaire**

The sixth step in the evaluation model employed for this study is analyzing the collected data, and in this part of the study, the findings relevant to the first research question “How do DBE students evaluate the writing component in terms of program objectives, materials and content, teaching-learning process and assessment of the writing skills at the DBE?” are presented. First, the results obtained from the closed and open-ended questions in the student questionnaire are discussed under four headings as listed in the research question. The findings about the same dimensions are then discussed from the perspectives of the DBE instructors.

### **4.2.1 DBE Students’ Opinions about the Program Objectives**

After the part of the DBE student questionnaire aiming to reveal the demographic information regarding the participants, the part dealing with the objectives component of the writing program explored to what extent students thought that they became competent in the writing skills, which are actually the objectives of the writing program at the DBE, as a result of the writing program at the DBE. Considering the student views about the objectives of the writing program at the DBE as shown in Table 4.4 below, it would be fair to say that the majority of the students perceived themselves as competent enough in most of the given skills.

**Table 4.4 DBE students’ opinions about the objectives of the writing program**

Items	Not Competent At all		Not Competent Enough		Competent Enough		Highly Competent	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. Writing simple sentences	0	0.0	7	1.7	123	29.7	284	68.6
2. Writing compound sentences	0	0.0	34	8.2	214	51.7	166	40.1
3. Writing complex sentences	2	0.5	53	12.8	221	53.4	138	33.3
4. Using correct and appropriate vocabulary	4	1.0	153	37.0	227	54.8	30	7.2
5. Using appropriate discourse patterns (cause-effect, compare-contrast, problem-solution, argumentation)	6	1.4	118	28.5	247	59.7	43	10.4
6. Writing academic paragraphs with appropriate topic, supporting and concluding sentences	7	1.7	111	26.8	222	53.6	74	17.9
7. Achieving cohesion in writing via referencing, maintaining focus and looking out for old/new information	5	1.2	105	25.4	245	59.2	59	14.3
8. Achieving unity in writing through the use of appropriate signal words	7	1.7	90	21.7	254	61.4	63	15.2
9. Using appropriate register in writing (formal / informal language)	34	8.2	229	55.3	124	30.0	27	6.5

Analyzing the Table 4.4 showing the results obtained from the students to reveal how competent they became in the given writing skills, one can see that the options ‘competent enough’ and ‘highly competent’ were marked more frequently than the options ‘not competent enough’ and ‘not competent at all’ except for one item ‘using appropriate register in writing (formal / informal language)’ in which most students (63.5%) felt incompetent (‘not competent enough’ and ‘not competent at all’) while only 36.5% of the students perceived themselves competent (‘competent enough’ and ‘highly competent’) in this skill.

On the contrary, while more than half of the students stated that they became competent (‘competent enough’ and ‘highly competent’) in most of the given skills, the skills in which a vast majority of the students felt competent were ‘writing simple sentence’ (98.3%), ‘writing compound sentences’ (91.8%), ‘writing complex sentences’ (86.7%). The skills other than these were comparatively less marked as competent.

In the questionnaire, there were two parts aiming to reveal the positive things in the writing program that students regard as helpful to improve their writing skills and the

negative things that they consider as not very helpful. Some of the comments written by the students to these open-ended questions in the questionnaire were found to be relevant to the program objectives of the writing program at the DBE. One of the most commonly written comments to the question about the negative aspects of the program as for objectives given in the questionnaire was about the restrictions of students to certain discourses, structures and expressions which were generally claimed to be memorized by the students. Out of 38 students who wrote comments regarding the negative points of the writing program, nearly half of the students (n=17) students agreed that their writing was very guided and restricted to certain discourses, structures and expressions that they had to memorize.

Also, there was an open-ended question in the part of the questionnaire dealing with the evaluation of program objectives. This part was intended to collect students' suggestions for the improvement of the writing program objectives at the DBE, and the most commonly made suggestion about the program objectives was related to the most common complaint of the students about how limited they felt to certain discourse patterns, structures or expressions. As a solution to this complaint, among 39 students who proposed changes (e.g., additions, omissions) they would like to be made in the given writing skills, 22 students suggested that they should do more free-writing activities without sticking to a certain organizational style. In other words, they implied that free-writing should be added to the program objectives and fewer discourse types should be taught in the program. Some students (n=10) proposed the idea that the type of writing they need for their departments should be taught while 6 students argued for the teaching of essays in addition to paragraphs. On the other hand, a few (4) students made comments about the importance of the speaking skill for their departments and agreed that the same importance attached to the writing skill at the DBE should be given to the speaking skill.

In general, the questionnaire revealed that students perceived themselves as competent in most of the skills except for using appropriate register in writing. Complaining about the fact that writing is restricted to certain discourses, students suggested including free-writing skills into the list of objectives as a means to express

themselves more freely without less focus on certain discourse patterns. Also, it was recommended by some students that the writing styles students would have to deal with in their departments and essay writing should be included into the list of objectives.

#### 4.2.2 DBE Students' Opinions about the Program Materials and Content

The results concerning the questionnaire items asking students to express their opinions about the writing materials and the content by indicating their level of agreement with a number of relevant issues are presented below. The findings of this part of the questionnaire as well as the relevant open-ended question requiring students to comment suggestions about the writing materials and the content used at the DBE are analyzed below. Table 4.5 shows a high level of agreement among students with certain aspects of the writing materials and their content obtained by means of the closed items in the questionnaire.

**Table 4.5 DBE students' opinions about the materials and the content of the writing program**

Items	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Not Sure		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. The materials to teach writing at the DBE (e.g., hand-outs and the focused writing parts in the main course book) provided me with what I needed to know or do.	16	3.9	66	15.9	165	39.9	149	36.0	18	4.3
2. The materials were appropriate to my interests.	33	8.0	89	21.5	177	42.8	101	24.4	14	3.4
3. The materials fit my long term goals in terms of writing skills.	24	5.8	95	22.9	177	42.8	109	26.3	9	2.2
4. The topics and themes in the materials were interesting.	42	10.1	93	22.5	137	33.1	128	30.9	14	3.4
5. The materials offered continuity (between earlier and later parts).	10	2.4	69	16.7	123	29.7	182	44.0	30	7.2
6. The writing skills taught in the program were useful for improving my general writing ability in English.	11	2.7	27	6.5	104	25.1	206	49.8	66	15.9
7. The writing skills were taught sequentially (i.e. building upon prior learning).	12	2.9	38	9.2	77	18.6	215	51.9	72	17.4
8. The materials were sufficient to improve my writing skills.	18	4.3	75	18.1	178	43.0	129	31.2	14	3.4

**Table 4.5 (continued)**

9. Hand-outs were effective in improving my writing skills.	13	3.1	33	8.0	80	19.3	223	53.9	65	15.7
10. The writing sections focused in the main course book <i>Language Leader</i> were effective in improving my writing skills.	155	37.4	137	33.1	80	19.3	34	8.2	8	1.9
11. The materials had variety.	20	4.8	74	17.9	149	36.0	147	35.5	24	5.8
12. The materials helped me to improve my writing skills.	18	4.3	54	13.0	129	31.2	185	44.7	28	6.8
13. The materials were visually attractive.	95	22.9	117	28.3	126	30.4	68	16.4	8	1.9
14. The materials were appropriate to my proficiency level in English.	10	2.4	21	5.1	80	19.3	246	59.4	57	13.8

With regards to the students' opinions about the materials and the content of these materials, the results presented in Table 4.5 reveal that while most students expressed higher degrees of agreement with the positive points regarding the materials and content used to teach writing at the DBE, some students expressed either comparatively less agreement or even disagreement with certain items. As far as the positive points concerning the materials, it was generally agreed upon ('agree' and 'strongly agree') by more than half of the instructors (51.2%) that 'the materials offered continuity'. Another positive side of the materials was found to be related to the item 'the writing skills taught in the program were useful for improving my general writing ability in English' (65.7% agreed or strongly agreed). Besides, that 'the writing skills were taught sequentially' was regarded to be a positive point of the program by most of the students (69.3% agreed or strongly agreed). High levels of agreement (69.6% agreed or strongly agreed) were also found with regards to the item indicating that the hand-outs were effective in improving students' writing skills and that the materials helped students to improve their writing skills (51.5% agree or strongly agreed). Another positive aspect of the program regarding the materials was that the materials were appropriate to students' proficiency level in English (73.2% agreed or strongly agreed).

On the contrary, with respect to the negative aspects of the materials, some of the main issues students disagreed with ('disagree' and 'strongly disagree') can be listed as follows: 'the writing sections focused in the main course book *Language Leader* were effective in improving my writing skills' (70.5% disagreed or strongly disagreed) and

‘the materials were visually attractive’ (51.2% disagreed or strongly disagreed). In addition to these items, there were some items marked as ‘not sure’ by quite a lot of students. To illustrate, 42.8% of the students indicated that they were not sure about whether the materials were appropriate to their interests. Exactly the same numbers of students were found to be unsure about whether the materials fit their long term goals in terms of writing skills. Furthermore, 43% of the students thought that they were not sure about the item ‘the materials were sufficient to improve my writing skills’.

About some of the remaining items, it would be fair to suggest that students had mixed feeling. For example, as for the item ‘the materials to teach writing at the DBE provided me with what I needed to know or do’ was either agreed or strongly agreed by 40.3% of the students while a similar number of students (39.9%) expressed uncertainty about this item. Also, whether the topics and themes in the materials were interesting was responded as positively (34.3% agreed or strongly agreed) or negatively (32.6% disagreed or strongly disagreed) by some students while some other students indicated that they were not sure about this item (33.1%).

In addition to the quantitative findings analyzed above under the categories of positive, negative and uncertainty, the open-ended questions in the questionnaire revealed some points perceived as positive and negative by the students as well as some suggestions for the improvement of the writing materials and content. In response to the open-ended question requiring students to list the most positive things in the writing program that they think helped them the most to improve their writing skills, a few students (2 out of 4 students who made positive comments about the materials and content) commented on the usefulness of the materials in terms of the variety of the activities they contained while 2 other students underlined that the written materials reflected on the OHP are very helpful for their learning.

Conversely, 21 out of 34 students who drew attention to the most negative things about the material and content in the writing program commented that the topics in the hand-outs were not interesting. Out of 30 students who proposed suggestion about the writing materials and the content used at the DBE, 22 students favored the idea that they should have the flexibility to choose the topics they have to write about. Similar to

comments made about the objectives of the writing program to express the desire to learn the type of writing they will encounter with in their future departments, 17 students called for writing topics related to their departments. These students urged for topics and themes that have some relevance to their majors.

As two students commented, there were too many topics about biology and genetics in the hand-outs. Complaining about the visual unattractiveness of the hand-outs, 16 students suggested that more visual aids and visually attractive materials should be used in the materials. Moreover, 13 students held the idea that hand-outs would be better if they included more interesting topics. Some students (n=11) also agreed on the idea that rather than hand-outs distributed to students in the classroom, they should be compiled in a book format while 9 students thought that a writing course book available in the market could be more useful than the hand-outs. About the sample paragraphs in the hand-outs, 6 students requested that there should be more sample paragraphs to analyze.

On the whole, materials and content were evaluated positively by DBE students; however, the writing sections focused on in the main course book *Language Leader* were not regarded as effective by most of the students. Many of the students thought that the materials were not visually attractive. The open-ended parts of the questionnaire similarly revealed that some students shared concerns about the visual unattractiveness of the hand-outs. Another point in need of consideration from the students' perspectives was that the topics were not interesting. Also, students made some suggestions for the improvement of the materials and content dimension of the program. According to the students, they should have the freedom to choose the topics to write about and the topics relevant to their departments should be included as the content of the writing materials. In addition to this, it was suggested by some students that the hand-outs should be compiled in the form of a book or a writing course book available in the market should be used. A few students, on the other hand, drew attention to the necessity to include more sample paragraphs in the hand-outs.

### 4.2.3 DBE Students' Opinions about the Teaching-Learning Process

The results about the teaching-learning process obtained from the questionnaires shed light on the frequency and weight of the given activities and methods used in writing-focused lessons at the DBE. Students' opinions not only about the activities and methods applied to teach writing at the DBE but also about various issues regarding the teaching-learning process in general are presented below. Table 4.6 is the summary of the students' perspectives about the activities and methods used to teach writing while Table 4.6 illustrates findings about the general teaching-learning process applied in writing-focused lessons.

**Table 4.6 DBE students' opinions about the activities and methods**

Items	None		Not Enough		The Right Amount		More than Necessary	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. Student presentations	93	22.5	161	38.9	136	32.9	24	5.8
2. Pair work	25	6.0	102	24.6	252	60.9	35	8.5
3. Group work	31	7.5	118	28.5	226	54.6	39	9.4
4. Discussions	54	13.0	165	39.9	174	42.0	21	5.1
5. Games	119	28.7	155	37.4	118	28.5	22	5.3
6. Role plays	192	46.4	138	33.3	67	16.2	17	4.1
7. Projects	158	38.2	149	36.0	92	22.2	15	3.6
8. Reading aloud written work	97	23.4	129	31.2	170	41.1	18	4.3
9. Whole class activities done on the board	66	15.9	132	31.9	196	47.3	20	4.8
10. Whole class feedback sessions on exercises	11	2.7	37	8.9	329	79.5	37	8.9
11. Peer correction	46	11.1	105	25.4	244	58.9	19	4.6
12. Self correction	13	3.1	135	32.6	253	61.1	13	3.1
13. Journal keeping	293	70.8	60	14.5	53	12.8	8	1.9
14. Brainstorming	110	26.6	151	36.5	137	33.1	16	3.9
15. Dictation	240	58.0	94	22.7	68	16.4	12	2.9

The results as summarized in Table 4.6 imply that while some activities and methods were sufficiently used in the program ('the right amount' and 'more than necessary'), some others were not ('none' and 'not enough'). The results reveal that among some of the activities considered to be incorporated sufficiently into the program, more than half of the students thought that pair work (60.9%) and group-work (54.6%) activities were carried out at the right amount. Peer correction (63.5% marked 'the right

amount' or 'more than necessary') and self correction (64.2% marked 'the right amount' or 'more than necessary') were also regarded by most of the students as activities employed sufficiently in the writing program. Another activity considered to be adequately applied in the program by more than half of the students (52.1% marked 'the right amount' or 'more than necessary') was whole class activities done on the board. Even more students (88.4% marked 'the right amount' or 'more than necessary') believed that whole class feedback sessions on exercises were used adequately in the program.

However, some activities, such as student presentations (61.4%), role-plays (79.7%), projects (74.2%), games (66.1%), journal keeping (85.3%), brainstorming (63.1%) and dictation (80.7%) were ranked among the least commonly used activities in the program by most of DBE students marking either 'none' or 'not enough' for these activities. As for the activities 'discussions' and 'reading aloud written work', students expressed mixed feelings in that while more than half of the students indicated that these activities were not used at the right amount, there were quite a lot of students who pointed out that discussions (47.1%) and reading aloud written work (45.4%) were applied sufficiently ('the right amount' and 'more than necessary').

In addition to the activities and methods used to teach writing, the general teaching-learning process applied at the DBE yielded valuable data obtained via the questionnaires. The following table summarizes the relevant main quantitative findings.

**Table 4.7 DBE students' opinions about the general teaching-learning process**

Items	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Not Sure		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. There was an efficient use of time in writing lessons.	17	4.1	54	13.0	97	23.4	172	41.5	74	17.9
2. There was a good student-teacher interaction in writing lessons.	6	1.4	31	7.5	77	18.6	218	52.7	82	19.8
3. We had cooperative relationships with each other.	9	2.2	42	10.1	97	23.4	221	53.4	45	10.9
4. A variety of activities was used to teach writing.	48	11.6	138	33.3	153	37.0	61	14.7	14	3.4
5. Writing lessons were taught in an interesting way.	58	14.0	123	29.7	143	34.5	71	17.1	19	4.6
6. It was easy to follow the teacher.	8	1.9	19	4.6	88	21.3	240	58.0	59	14.3

**Table 4.7 (continued)**

7. The teacher's instructions were clear.	3	0.7	14	3.4	66	15.9	256	61.8	75	18.1
8. The teacher's teaching methodology was effective in my learning.	10	2.4	17	4.1	109	26.3	200	48.3	78	18.8
9. The teacher encouraged me to participate in the lessons.	11	2.7	21	5.1	92	22.2	198	47.8	92	22.2
10. The teacher used audio-visual aids (OHP, video, tape-recorder, etc.) effectively in the lessons.	58	14.0	57	13.8	84	20.3	141	34.1	74	17.9
11. The teacher used the board effectively.	15	3.6	31	7.5	72	17.4	218	52.7	78	18.8
12. The teacher gave equal attention to all students in the classroom.	14	3.4	19	4.6	51	12.3	220	53.1	110	26.6
13. The teacher corrected my mistakes in an effective way.	9	2.2	17	4.1	59	14.3	222	53.6	107	25.8
14. The teacher helped me to learn how to write.	7	1.7	14	3.4	56	13.5	231	55.8	106	25.6
15. The teacher gave sufficient feedback on my performance (i.e. written work).	5	1.2	12	2.9	58	14.0	218	52.7	121	29.2
16. We gave sufficient feedback on each other's performance.	59	14.3	99	23.9	125	30.2	106	25.6	25	6.0

With regards to the results presented in Table 4.7, one can realize that students were generally positive ('agree' and 'strongly agree') about the teaching-learning process in writing-focused lessons at the DBE although there were a few items disagreed ('disagree' and 'strongly disagree') by many students. The results show that students considered the following points as the most effective points with regards to the teaching-learning process by marking as either 'agree' or 'strongly agree': student-teacher interaction (72.5%), clarity of the teacher's instructions (79.9%), the teachers' encouragement of their students to participate in the lessons (70%), the teacher's use of the board effectively (71.5%), the equal attention given to all students in the classroom (79.7%), the way the teacher corrected students' written mistakes (79.4%), the teacher's support for the students' improvement of their writing skills (81.4%) and the feedback the teacher gave on students' performance (81.9%).

As far other positive aspects of the teaching-learning process that were comparatively less agreed with by the students, it can be stated that more than half of the

students thought that there was an efficient use of time in writing lessons (59.4% agreed or strongly agreed). Most students (64.3%) also either agreed or strongly agreed with the idea that they had cooperative relationships with each other. A similar percentage of the students (67.1% agreed or strongly agreed) were found to be positive about the effectiveness of the teaching methodology. On the other hand, only about half of the students (52% agreed or strongly agreed) expressed their agreement with the item 'the teacher used audio-visual aids (OHP, video, tape-recorder, etc.) effectively in the lessons'.

On the contrary, the items 'a variety of activities was used to teach writing' (44.9%), 'writing lessons were taught in an interesting way' (43.7%) and 'we gave sufficient feedback on each other's performance' (38.2%) were either disagreed or strongly disagreed by a considerable number of participants. These items were found to be the least positive aspects of the teaching-learning process because the percentages of disagreement and uncertainty for these points were comparatively higher than all the other items. More specifically about these items, it would be true to state that while 44.9% of the students disagreed or strongly disagreed with the idea that there was a variety of activities, 37% of the students indicated that they were not sure about whether a variety of activities was included in the program. Moreover, 43.7% of the students disagreed or strongly disagreed that the lessons were taught in an interesting way and 34.5% of the students expressed their uncertainty about this item. Finally, 38.2% of the students expressed their disagreement (disagreed or strongly disagreed) with the feedback they give to each other's written work and 30.2% indicated that they were not sure about it.

The open-ended parts of the questionnaire also revealed some findings about the positive and negative aspects of the teaching-learning process. Starting with the positive points, it would be fair to say that a lot of students (24 out of 53 who made comments about the positive sides of the teaching-learning process) claimed that teachers' feedback was very helpful for their learning. Secondly, teachers' support and effort they spend to teach writing were perceived as other positive sides of the teaching-learning process by 12 students. More specifically about the activities employed to teach writing, 7 students

appreciated whole class work to write a paragraph while 5 students agreed that analyzing sample paragraphs is a strength of the program. Finally, outlining was seen as a helpful activity by 5 students.

On the other hand, there were some negative common points brought up by some students. Out of 15 students commenting negatively, 9 reported that the classrooms were very crowded. Moreover, some students (n=6) expressed their dissatisfaction with the number of writing assignments and the writing practice opportunities offered to them in the classroom. Apart from these positive and negative points, none of the students made any suggestions specifically related to the teaching-learning process.

To sum up findings relevant to the activities and methods as well as the teaching-learning process to teach writing at the DBE, while most of the activities were considered to be sufficiently applied, the questionnaire findings revealed that student presentations, role-plays, projects, games, journal keeping, brainstorming and dictation were the activities that were not adequately used in the program. Students also expressed their concerns about the lack of variety of the activities and the lessons that were taught in an uninteresting way. The qualitative data revealed that teachers' feedback, support and outlining activities were regarded as the positive aspects of the teaching-learning process. Also, it was argued by some students that whole class work to write a paragraph and analyzing a sample paragraph were the strong points as far as the teaching-learning process is concerned. When it comes to the negative points, some students voiced their concerns about the crowded classrooms, the lack of writing assignments and the writing practice opportunities given to them.

#### **4.2.4 DBE Students' Opinions about the Assessment of the Writing Skills**

In the questionnaire, students were also asked to evaluate the assessment dimension of the program by expressing their view on certain aspects of the program. As in all the previous parts, students were requested to write comments about this dimension following these items. The relevant results obtained are demonstrated in Table 4.8.

**Table 4.8 DBE students’ opinions about the assessment of the writing skills**

Items	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Not Sure		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. We were assessed on the things (i.e. skills) we practiced in the lessons.	7	1.7	16	3.9	45	10.9	227	54.8	119	28.7
2. Before the tests (i.e. mid-terms), we were given information about the scope of the tests.	15	3.6	43	10.4	88	21.3	207	50.0	61	14.7
3. The directions in the mid-term exams were clear.	8	1.9	15	3.6	68	16.4	244	58.9	79	19.1
4. The materials used in the lessons and the test materials were similar in terms of difficulty level.	27	6.5	65	15.7	122	29.5	174	42.0	26	6.3
5. The mid-term exam results demonstrate my actual ability/proficiency in writing skills.	41	9.9	100	24.2	146	35.3	110	26.6	17	4.1
6. My writing skills have been correctly measured.	37	8.9	76	18.4	152	36.7	136	32.9	13	3.1
7. The grading was fair.	23	5.6	39	9.4	111	26.8	192	46.4	49	11.8
8. My performance in writing was good.	17	4.1	66	15.9	165	39.9	139	33.6	27	6.5
9. My writing skills have improved after the writing program.	11	2.7	26	6.3	105	25.4	216	52.2	56	13.5
10. I received sufficient feedback on my assignments.	13	3.1	29	7.0	91	22.0	208	50.2	73	17.6
11. I received sufficient feedback on my class work.	17	4.1	36	8.7	132	31.9	187	45.2	42	10.1
12. I received sufficient feedback on my performance in the mid-term exams.	13	3.1	41	9.9	130	31.4	186	44.9	44	10.6

The results presented in Table 4.8 revealed that the majority of the students evaluated some aspects of the assessment component of the writing program positively (‘agree’ and ‘strongly agree’) while a certain level of disagreement (‘disagree’ and ‘strongly disagree’) can be seen for certain items. For instance, as for the positive things with regards to the assessment of the writing skills, it can be stated that students expressed higher degrees of agreement (83.5% agreed or strongly agreed) with the item ‘we were assessed on the things we practiced in the lessons’. Many students (64.7% agreed or strongly agreed) were positive about being informed beforehand about the

scope of the tests. Even more students (78% agreed or strongly agreed) responded positively to the item regarding the clarity of the directions on the tests. In terms of students' perceptions about their performance and progress in writing, 65.7% of the students either agreed or strongly agreed that their writing skills have improved after the writing program.

Students expressed comparatively less agreement with some of the items which can still be considered to be positively evaluated. For instance, approximately half of the students (48.3%) agreed or strongly agreed that the lesson materials and the test materials were similar in terms of difficulty level. As for the fairness of grading, 58.2% of the students expressed their agreement by marking either 'agree' or 'strongly agree'. When it comes to the items pertaining to feedback on assignments, class work and mid-term exams, it can be stated while 67.8% of the students agreed or strongly agreed that they received sufficient feedback on their written assignments, around 55% of the students responded positively ('agree' or 'strongly agree') to the other related items 'I received sufficient feedback on my class work' and 'I received sufficient feedback on my class work'.

As far as the comparatively negative points disagreed by quite a lot of students are concerned, it would be fair to say that a high number of students either disagreed or expressed uncertainty for certain items. While 22.2% of the students disagreed or strongly disagreed with the item 'the materials used in the lessons and the test materials were similar in terms of difficulty level', 29.5% of the students indicated that they were not sure about this item. The item 'the mid-term exam results demonstrate my actual ability/proficiency in writing skills' was also negatively evaluated. About this item, 34.1% of the students expressed disagreement and 35.3% students indicated uncertainty. It can also be stated that students held mixed feelings about the item 'my writing skills have been correctly measured' as 27.3% of the students disagreed with it while 36.7% of the students stated that they were not sure about it. Another item responded quite negatively by the students was related to the students' good performance in writing (40.1% agreed or strongly agreed and 39.9% marked 'not sure').

Students' comments made about the assessment of the writing skills at the DBE

yielded some invaluable perspectives that could not have been found through the questionnaire items. Among 36 students who made comments about the assessment aspect of the program, there was a common concern shared by 9 students about the ‘subjective assessment’ of their written works. In parallel with this concern, 8 students proposed that two teachers should assess their paragraphs for more objective scoring. The same number of students focused on the mismatch between what was done in writing classes and what was tested in the writing part of the English Proficiency Exam (EPE). These students suggested having more writing exercises in parallel with the writing sections of the EPE and working on writing tasks as tested in the EPE (e.g., responding to a reading text). Complaining about the fact that there are only few writing pop-quizzes throughout the academic year, 5 students commented that it would be a good idea to have more writing pop-quizzes. Furthermore, 4 students had objections to the time allocated to writing a paragraph in the exams and urged for more time. On the other hand, only 2 students suggested that their instructors should not penalize them for minor errors committed in the exams.

In brief, although many students evaluated the assessment dimension of the program positively, there were a few points raised by the students. For instance, the difficulty level of the lesson and the test materials were thought to be different by some students and it was found that many students had doubts about whether the mid-term exam results demonstrated their actual writing ability. Maybe, the reason why they thought that the mid-term did not demonstrate their actual writing ability was that some students held the belief that the grading was not very objective and proposed that two teachers should assess their paragraphs for more objective scoring. Also, some students focused on the inconsistency between the writing program at the DBE and the writing section of the EPE and commented that more writing exercises as tested in the EPE (e.g., responding to a reading text) should be covered in the lessons. Moreover, some students proposed the idea of having more pop-quizzes and more time for writing tasks in the exams.

#### 4.2.5 Overall

On the whole, this part of the analysis dealt with the research question “How do DBE students evaluate the writing component in terms of program objectives, materials and content, teaching-learning process and assessment of the writing skills at the DBE?” Generally, it would be fair to claim the majority of the students expressed positive opinions about the dimensions mentioned in the research question although some points were considered to be in need of improvement by the students.

As far as the objective dimension of the program, most students perceived themselves as competent in all the skills apart from using appropriate register in writing. Some students also argued for free-writing practices as they were concerned about the fact that they were writing in different discourses by only memorizing the relevant discourse patterns. Besides, some students underlined the need to learn how to write essays and the type of writing required by their future departments.

In terms of materials and content, while there was consensus among most of the items in the questionnaire, it was revealed that most students evaluated the writing sections of the main course book negatively. Also, the materials were thought to be visually unattractive by some students. Similarly, the qualitative results show that students were not pleased with the hand-outs as far as its visual attractiveness is concerned. On the other hand, the topics were generally regarded as uninteresting by some students. From the perspective of many students, each student should be able to write about the topic he/she wants and the topics included in the materials should somehow be related to their departments. Some students suggested that the hand-outs should be compiled in the form of a book or a writing course book should be used in teaching writing as in previous years. Finally, some students thought that it was necessary to include more sample paragraphs to analyze in the hand-outs.

As for the teaching-learning process, it can be concluded that although there was agreement with most of the items, some activities, such as student presentations, role-plays, projects, games, journal keeping, brainstorming and dictation were inadequately employed in writing-focused lessons at the DBE. Also, most students expressed

disagreement with the items concerning the variety of activities and the interesting way of conducting the writing lessons. Even though teachers' feedback, support, outlining, whole class work to write a paragraph and analyzing a sample paragraph were the strengths of the program, a few students indicated that the classrooms were crowded and there were not enough writing assignments and writing practice opportunities provided to them by their teachers.

Finally, students evaluated the assessment of the writing ability and their own performance in the program positively even though there were a few issues disagreed by most of the students. One of these issues was pertaining to the difference in the difficulty level of the lesson and the test materials. The other issue was pertaining to whether mid-term exam results demonstrated students' actual writing ability. Maybe, the reason why they thought that the mid-term did not demonstrate their actual writing ability was that some students held the belief that the grading was not very objective. It was suggested by these students that for reliable and objective scoring, two instructors should mark their written works. The lack of relevance of the classroom activities to the EPE was another concern shared by some of the students who recommended that writing tasks like responding to a reading text in a written form should also be focused on the program. Finally, some students underlined the need for having more pop-quizzes and allocating more time for writing tasks in the exams.

#### **4.3 Results of the DBE Instructor Questionnaire and Interviews**

In this part of the analysis, the same procedure applied above is followed to present the findings obtained via the closed and open-ended questions in the questionnaire from DBE instructors. The results regarding the research question "How do DBE instructors and program coordinators evaluate the writing component in terms of program objectives, materials and content, teaching-learning process and the assessment of the writing skills at the DBE?" are analyzed below. In addition to that, the interview findings relevant to each dimension of the writing program mentioned in the research question are presented. After the presentation of the results with regards to the

program objectives, materials and content, the teaching-learning process and the assessment of the writing skills, DBE instructors' responses to the following questions in the questionnaire and the relevant questions in the interview are analyzed for an overall evaluation of the program:

1. How well do you think the writing program at the DBE prepares students to successfully participate in DML courses like ENG 101 and ENG 102?
2. How well do you think the writing program at the DBE prepares students to produce written responses in their own departments?

#### 4.3.1 DBE Instructors' Opinions about the Program Objectives

Considering the instructors' perspectives about the objectives of the writing program at the DBE as illustrated in the table below, one can say that most of the instructors thought that their students became competent in all the writing skills by the end of the academic year. More specifically, the results regarding the objective dimension of the writing program at the DBE are presented in Table 4.9.

**Table 4.9 DBE instructors' opinions about the objectives of the writing program**

Items	Not Competent At all		Not Competent Enough		Competent Enough		Highly Competent	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. Writing simple sentences	0	0.0	2	4.0	23	46.0	25	50.0
2. Writing compound sentences	1	2.0	10	20.0	28	56.0	11	22.0
3. Writing complex sentences	2	4.0	18	36.0	22	44.0	8	16.0
4. Using correct and appropriate vocabulary	1	2.0	19	38.0	29	58.0	1	2.0
5. Using appropriate discourse patterns (cause-effect, compare-contrast, problem-solution, argumentation)	8	16.0	0	0.0	30	60.0	12	24.0
6. Writing academic paragraphs with appropriate topic, supporting and concluding sentences	1	2.0	11	22.0	23	46.0	15	30.0
7. Achieving cohesion in writing via referencing, maintaining focus and looking out for old/new information	1	2.0	22	44.0	25	50.0	2	4.0
8. Achieving unity in writing through the use of appropriate signal words	1	2.0	13	26.0	30	60.0	6	12.0
9. Using appropriate register in writing (formal / informal language)	2	4.0	18	36.0	21	42.0	9	18.0

On the basis of the results in Table 4.9 showing how instructors responded to the question how competent their students became in the given writing skills as a result of the writing program at the DBE, one can realize that almost all the instructors believed that their students became competent ('competent enough' and 'highly competent') in writing simple sentences. Similarly, the number of instructors who thought that their students became competent far outweigh the number of instructors who evaluated their students as incompetent ('not competent enough' and 'not competent at all') in the following skills: 'writing compound sentences', 'using appropriate discourse patterns (cause-effect, compare-contrast, problem-solution, argumentation)', 'writing academic paragraphs with appropriate topic', and 'achieving unity in writing through the use of appropriate signal words'.

On the other hand, the skills 'writing complex sentences', 'using correct and appropriate vocabulary' and 'using appropriate register in writing (formal / informal language)' were marked as competent ('competent enough' and 'highly competent') by 60% of the instructors while they were marked as incompetent ('not competent enough' and 'not competent at all') by 40% of the instructors. The number of those who stated that their students were not competent (46% marked 'not competent enough' or 'not competent at all') is very close to the number of those who held the idea that their students were competent (54% marked 'competent enough' and 'highly competent') in the skill 'achieving cohesion in writing via referencing, maintaining focus and looking out for old/new information'.

As in the student version of the questionnaire, some open-ended questions were added to the closed items in the instructor questionnaire to get deeper insights about different dimensions of the writing program at the DBE. Some of the positive and negative comments as well as the suggestions made by the instructors were found to be related to the objective dimension of the program. Some of the commonly emphasized strengths of the program, especially the objectives of the program were connected with learning different aspects of writing. For instance, out of 28 instructors who made positive claims about the strengths of the writing program objectives, 17 instructors emphasized that students learnt how to write topic sentences, major and minor supports

while 9 instructors similarly argued that students learnt useful language patterns they needed while writing. Only 2 instructors, on the other hand, drew attention to learning coherence and cohesion in writing a paragraph as positive points in terms of program objectives.

On the contrary, some of the negative aspects as for program objectives were also emphasized by 28 instructors who gave an answer to the overall evaluation question requiring participants to comment on the most negative things that did not help students to improve their writing skills. Almost all the negative points associated with the objectives of the writing program were pertaining to the teaching of discourse-level writing (e.g., cause-effect, compare-contrast, problem-solution and argumentation). Similar to some of the concerns commented on by DBE students with regards to the limitations of the program due to the discourse patterns emphasized too much, 10 DBE instructors agreed upon the idea that there was too much focus on the discourse patterns and the formulaic writing expressions, which lessens the importance attached to the content and the message of the written text. In parallel with this comment, some instructors (n=7) even argued that the program objectives required such guided and structured writing tasks that students' creativity was somehow hindered.

While discussing the findings revealed through the open-ended questions in the DBE student questionnaire, it was found that some students complained about memorizing a lot of fixed discourse patterns to write a paragraph. The same issue was raised by 5 of the instructors commenting that students had to memorize the language needed to write a paragraph in a certain discourse, which makes students' written works all look alike. Another comment was made by 4 instructors asserting that there was not much emphasis on sentence-level writing at the department. Another concern shared by 2 instructors was the limited amount of time allocated to teach each type of discourse.

On the other hand, some instructors (n=23) proposed possible changes (e.g., additions, omissions) in order to improve program objectives. One of these suggestions made by more than half of the instructors (n=13) was that there was a need to include more free-writing tasks than discourse-level writing tasks. There was also a perceived need (n=11) for more sentence-level production rather than discourse-level paragraph

writing. On the other hand, according to 4 instructors, there should be fewer discourse types to include in the program so that each discourse can be taught more effectively. Finally, 5 instructors thought that students should be able to write essays instead of ‘condensed paragraphs’ (the term used by DBE instructors to describe the type of paragraph taught at the DBE).

The interviews and the open-ended surveys in parallel with the interview guide were administered with 15 DBE instructors and 5 program coordinators. Some comments made during the interviews or in the open-ended surveys corroborate some of the findings obtained by means of the open-ended questions in the DBE student and instructor questionnaires. Following some background questions about the participants, the DBE instructors were asked how they could describe the main aim of the writing program at the DBE. Among many similar descriptions of the perceived main aim of the program made by 9 instructors, the one embodying most of the other descriptions is as follows:

To equip learners with the basic features of academic writing and to enable them to complete the requirements of their freshman courses. (Instructor 8)

When asked whether all the DBE objectives were achieved by the end of the academic year, more than half of the DBE instructors (n=12) claimed that they were achieved. Some instructors (n=3) argued that it was not logical to expect that all the students could achieve all the objectives due to some reasons arising from students’ background, the size of the class and the lack of time allocated for each objective. One of these instructors justified these points as follows:

Considering the poor English backgrounds of most students and the insufficient time allotted to writing in crowded classes, which causes students to memorize discourse and language patterns, it would be unpractical to expect any student to achieve all the objectives. (Instructor 16)

Another instructor drew attention to some of the other possible reasons including the lack of time in order to justify why the program objectives could not be fully mastered. The reasons listed in the following comment were also emphasized by some DBE students and instructors as negative points revealed through the questionnaire:

I think, the problem is timing. First, we teach them how to write a good topic sentence, majors and minors in a paragraph. Once we spend some time for each of these components, we start with a discourse. Within two or three weeks, we test them on this discourse. They understand the skeleton of the paragraph and they know there should be a good topic sentence and major ideas but our students cannot develop and produce ideas in writing. We should give a topic and make them write freely without giving them prompts. (Instructor 9)

The other instructor focused on a rather different possible cause of the failure in achieving these objectives by highlighting the lack of consensus and consistency among DBE instructors as follows:

All these objectives aren't achieved because there isn't much consensus among instructors on what needs to be emphasized more and what needs to get penalized. (Instructor 3)

Two instructors made a detailed analysis of the given objectives and explained which ones could be achieved while which ones could not in the current writing program. One of these instructors made a comment as follows:

I believe that by the end of the course, the learners are able to write simple and compound sentences with some accuracy while they continue to have difficulty writing complex sentences and using a variety of academic vocabulary with appropriate lexical and grammatical collocations. Furthermore, although they become quite competent in applying the framework of various text types, they have difficulty selecting the appropriate discourse type and developing as well as integrating the major supporting ideas introduced. Finally, although they receive ample practice and therefore develop some degree of competence in maintaining coherence through the use of transition signals and cohesive devices, referencing, focus and looking out for old and new information are aspects of which they gain awareness only if their instructor makes a point of these. Otherwise, these issues receive almost no emphasis in the current materials. The same holds for "using appropriate register in writing. (Instructor 6)

The other instructor, who made a critical evaluation of the achievement of the DBE writing objectives, brought up an issue (too much memorization) already revealed by means of the questionnaires given to both students and instructors:

I believe that the objectives concerning writing simple sentences and writing topic, supporting and concluding sentences are achieved to a certain degree; however, I am not very sure about the others. Students produce only memorized patterns from the hand-out but cannot produce accurate sentences in terms of grammar and vocabulary. (Instructor 14)

When asked to comment on any suggested changes for the betterment of the writing objectives at the DBE, while 8 of the instructors saw no need to change the objectives by adding, omitting or rewording an objective, 9 other instructors proposed to add ‘free-writing’ as an objective of the writing program at the DBE. These instructors expressed that they favored a writing approach requiring writing without resorting to the ‘spoon-fed’ (Instructor 1) prescribed discourse patterns. While 3 instructors suggested that ‘coherence’ should also be emphasized as an objective in addition to ‘cohesion’, 2 instructors held the idea that the expository discourse types should be included as an objective. Another instructor suggested the following change for lower level students, especially for the pre-intermediate groups:

For lower levels, I would propose to omit the objectives ‘using appropriate discourse patterns, writing academic paragraphs and using appropriate register in writing (formal and informal)’. (Instructor 8)

On the other hand, two instructors agreed on the idea that writing tasks where students could use their creativity should also be included as one of the objectives of the writing program at the DBE. Implicitly, they argued for the addition of ‘creative writing’ as an objective. One of the instructors made an interesting comment on how far the writing program was from improving students’ creative writing abilities:

Unfortunately, students don’t need to use any creativity in doing the tasks in the hand-outs. The other day, I found myself saying to my students: ‘Use your creativity in other platforms. This is not a good way of getting good grades here. You need to follow these outlines and the given skeleton’. (Instructor 20)

Similarly, two instructors focused on the importance of the content and the message of the written text, arguing against the fixed organizational style taught in the writing program at the DBE. One of these instructors proposed to remove the word ‘paragraph’ from the list of writing objectives and justified the argument as follows:

I would remove the word *paragraph*. As long as students answer the question, whether it is a paragraph or an essay does not matter much. I mean, I would focus more on the content. I wouldn’t try to put all piece of writings in a restricted frame. I would try to encourage students to express themselves differently. When you look at students’ writing, they all look alike because we teach them a certain way of organization, and we teach them certain language patterns. Students use the same language patterns, the same format, the same organization but unfortunately, although they seem to be OK with all these

objectives, the content is missing. Sometimes you look at a paper and the topic sentence is excellent because the student have learnt the way you taught it. The first major is OK but there is no idea development. The second major is also there. No idea development. When you look at the conclusion, you don't get an idea out of it. In the end, you say to yourself 'has the student really answered the question?' Language-wise, it is OK. Organization-wise, it is OK. Content? That is how I feel. (Instructor 3)

Another instructor underlined the importance of the 'message', namely content in writing instead of the discourse patterns by suggesting the following changes:

Firstly, I would make these objectives more specific for each level or even for each task. What is appropriate vocabulary may change from person-to-person. What is expected of students needs to be clarified in detail. Secondly, I would omit discourse patterns to be one of the objectives; instead, I would try to teach students how to understand what the writing question is really asking. Analyzing how to answer the question is part of the question. When you emphasize discourse pattern more, students also worry about the patterns but not about the message. (Instructor 17)

Two instructors favored the addition of essay writing in the list of writing objectives at the DBE. Essay writing was also urged for by some DBE students and instructors responding to the questionnaires:

Writing condensed paragraphs might be omitted and replaced by essays as students need to write essays in the academic world. (Instructor 5)

Similarly, another instructor proposed to remove the academic writing component as a whole from the writing program of the DBE and suggested that the writing program at the DML should handle academic writing:

Here, we teach them like parrots how to write topic sentences, conclusion sentences and transitions. We should let them write on their own using free topics, not academic. We can leave the academic writing to the DML. The writing priority here should be grammar, transitions and conveying ideas. Our first aim should be to make these students confident, free and happy with the language they are trying to learn without putting too much pressure on them. (Instructor 6)

To sum up DBE instructors' perspectives about the writing objectives, the findings obtained from the instructor questionnaire revealed that instructors thought that their students were generally competent in the program objectives. The open-ended part of the questionnaire, on the other hand, yielded the following good points in terms of program objectives: writing a topic sentence, major and minor supports, the useful language patterns students learnt and the coherence and cohesion in writing a paragraph. However, the majority of the instructors argued that the way writing was approached as a skill was very prescriptive and guided to a great extent. Therefore, it was the common concern of most of the instructors that the fixed discourse patterns were just memorized by the students and the content of the written text as well as the students' creativity were almost out of the question. As a reaction to the importance attached to the discourse-level writing, most of the instructors suggested that free-writing and more sentence-level production should be emphasized as the objectives of the program. Some instructors urged for fewer discourse types and the inclusion of essay writing into the list of program objectives.

In addition, through the interviews, it was found that while the majority of the instructors believed that the objectives were generally achieved by the end of the academic year, some instructors drew attention to possible reasons why they could not be fully mastered. Among these reasons were the lack of consensus among instructors, students' poor English background, the large size of the class and the lack of time allocated for each objective, especially the one about teaching paragraph writing within certain discourse patterns. As a solution to the failure of the achievement of the objectives, one instructor proposed the omissions of objectives, such as 'using appropriate discourse patterns, writing academic paragraphs and using appropriate register in writing' for lower proficiency levels while another instructor suggested that the DBE should have level-specific objectives rather than general program objectives for all groups.

### 4.3.2 DBE Instructors' Opinions about the Program Materials and Content

In this part of the instructor questionnaire dealing with the evaluation of the materials and content, instructors were given a list of items aiming to reveal how they evaluate materials and content used to teach writing at the DBE. In addition, they were asked to make suggestions for the improvement of this dimension. Table 4.10 is a summary of the results obtained from the questionnaire.

**Table 4.10 DBE instructors' opinions about the materials and the content of the writing program**

Items	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Not Sure		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. The materials to teach writing at the DBE (e.g., hand-outs and the focused writing parts in the main course book) provided students with what they needed to know or do.	0	0.0	5	10.0	15	30.0	18	36.0	12	24.0
2. The materials were appropriate to students' interests.	2	4.0	12	24.0	14	28.0	20	40.0	2	4.0
3. The materials fit students' long term goals in terms of writing skills.	1	2.0	13	26.0	14	28.0	13	26.0	9	18.0
4. The topics and themes in the materials were interesting.	0	0.0	10	20.0	25	50.0	14	28.0	1	2.0
5. The materials offered continuity.	0	0.0	3	6.0	14	28.0	28	56.0	5	10.0
6. The writing skills taught in the program were useful for improving students' general writing ability in English.	1	2.0	9	18.0	10	20.0	21	42.0	9	18.0
7. The writing skills were taught sequentially (i.e. building upon prior learning).	1	2.0	1	2.0	10	20.0	31	62.0	7	14.0
8. The materials were sufficient to improve students' writing skills.	1	2.0	9	18.0	23	46.0	13	26.0	4	8.0
9. Hand-outs were effective in improving students' writing skills.	1	2.0	10	20.0	18	36.0	14	28.0	7	14.0
10. The writing sections focused in the main course book <i>Language Leader</i> were effective in improving students' writing skills.	4	8.0	12	24.0	16	32.0	14	28.0	4	8.0
11. The materials had variety.	0	0.0	4	8.0	11	22.0	28	56.0	7	14.0
12. The materials helped students to improve their writing skills.	1	2.0	6	12.0	13	26.0	24	48.0	6	12.0
13. The materials were visually attractive.	9	18.0	26	52.0	12	24.0	3	6.0	0	0.0
14. The materials were appropriate to students' proficiency level in English.	2	4.0	5	10.0	17	34.0	22	44.0	4	8.0

Analyzing Table 4.10 illustrating the results regarding DBE instructors' opinions about the materials and the contents of the writing program, it can be stated that most of the instructors expressed negative attitudes with the items which were disagreed by most of the DBE students. One of these items was 'the topics and themes in the materials were interesting' (30% of the instructors marked 'not sure' and 20% of them expressed disagreement) and the other was 'the materials were visually attractive'. Moreover, half of the instructors indicated that they were not sure about the former and 20% of them disagreed ('disagree' and 'strongly disagree') with it. As for the latter, it would be fair to say that a vast majority of the instructors expressed their disagreement with it. Another negative point regarding the materials and the content was pertaining to the item 'the materials were sufficient to improve students' writing skills'. While 46% of the instructors expressed uncertainty with this item, only 34% of them either agreed or strongly agreed with it.

In addition, it was revealed that instructors had mixed feelings about the effectiveness of the hand-outs. While 22% of the instructors either disagreed ('disagree' and 'strongly disagree') with the effectiveness of the hand-outs or expressed uncertainty (36%) about this issue, only 42% of them agreed with it. Similarly, the item 'the writing sections focused in the main course book *Language Leader* were effective in improving students' writing skills' was marked as 'not sure' by 32% of the instructors and marked as 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree' by the same number of instructors whereas only 36% of the instructors expressed agreement ('agree' and 'disagree') with it.

However, it would be fair to state that the rest of the items about the materials and content were evaluated positively by most of the instructors. More than half of the instructors responded positively to the following items by expressing agreement ('agree' and 'strongly agree'): 'the materials to teach writing at the DBE provided students with what they needed to know or do' (60%), 'the materials offered continuity' (66%), 'the writing skills taught in the program were useful for improving students' general writing ability in English' (60%), 'the writing skills were taught sequentially' (76%), 'the materials had variety' (70%), 'the materials helped students to improve their writing skills' (60%) and 'the materials were appropriate to students' proficiency level in

English' (52%).

The comments made in response to the open-ended items in the DBE instructor questionnaire revealed some important considerations for the improvement of the materials and content used in the writing program at the DBE. To illustrate, 23 instructors expressed their concerns about some of the negative points relevant to the materials and the content included in these materials and made relevant recommendations. The idea that the content of the materials should be more interesting was the most commonly agreed comment by more than half of the instructors (n=14). It was agreed by 11 instructors that students should have the flexibility and freedom to choose the topic they want to write about. It is worth noting here that a similar comment had been made by a number of DBE students. While 6 instructors suggested that the technical and uninteresting topics should be removed from the hand-outs, the same number of instructors recommended that more visual materials should be developed and used in the writing program. As for the latter point, the instructors were found to be consistent with their most commonly disagreed response to the questionnaire item 'the materials were visually attractive'.

Another important suggestion in line with students' opinions as revealed in the analysis of their comments was that the topics should be as varied as possible to address to different students from different departments (n=19). On the other hand, 4 instructors agreed upon the idea that the writing lessons should be supplemented by more authentic materials. As also found in the analysis of the students' comments, some teachers (n=4) thought that a course book might be more useful than hand-outs. When it comes to the hand-outs, 2 instructors held the belief that the materials should be revised so that advanced grammatical structures and vocabulary can be eliminated from the sample texts because students become diverted from the real writing tasks. The same number of instructors drew attention to the *Language Leader* course book and suggested focusing more on the free-writing activities in the book. Some other suggestions made by few instructors are as follows: more sample paragraphs should be included in the materials (n=2), non-academic and student-friendly daily topics should be dealt with in addition to the academic topics (n=2), more real life writing tasks should be added to the hand-outs

(e.g., about students' life) (n=2) and materials should be improved at the end of each term based on teachers' feedback (n=1).

The qualitative data as presented above was supported by the interviews and the open-ended written surveys conducted with a total number of 20 DBE instructors, 15 of whom were instructors while 5 of them were program coordinators. When asked what was good and not so good about the materials used to teach writing, 9 instructors indicated that hand-outs were good for a number of reasons. Firstly, they thought that hand-outs provided sample writing paragraphs (n=3) and a lot of language practice (n=3). Secondly, they were regarded as good reference sources for students (n=2). Thirdly, hand-outs prepared students for the EPE and helped students to learn the organization of the English writing (n=1).

On the other hand, 6 out of 20 interviewed instructors agreed that the hand-outs contained so many details that the meaning and the content of the written text was almost lost. Moreover, 2 instructors indicated that the hand-outs had some slips they always warned their students against. The idea that hand-outs were visually unattractive and mechanical in terms of the writing tasks was also agreed upon by 2 instructors. Only 1 instructor believed that the sample paragraphs in the hand-outs were too long and not realistic; moreover, the language guidance in the hand-outs was very controlled, which made students end up with similar written works.

As far as the main course book, *Language Leader*, is concerned, three instructors held the idea that *Language Leader* didn't meet their students' needs to write academically. According to some instructors (n=5), the course book was reasonable but it could not be given the attention it deserved due to certain reasons, such as the lack of time and the inconsistency between the activities in the course books and the tasks in the EPE. The common feeling among these instructors can be summarized by the comment made by one of the instructors:

The writing parts in the *Language Leader* can help students practice free writing on various topics, but because of time constraints and the incompatibility between the writing activities in the course book and what students are expected to do in the writing sections of the mid-terms and the proficiency exam, most students and teachers are reluctant to cover the writing parts of the *Language Leader*. (Instructor 19)

Besides, instructors were asked to make suggestions about the materials and the contents of the materials used at the DBE for the purpose of teaching writing. Four instructors argued that there was a need for freer writing practices in the writing tasks of the hand-outs not confined to certain discourse patterns. The comments as regards this proposal can be illustrated with the following suggestion of one of these instructors:

...there should be free-flowing materials that encourage students' creative thinking and going to solutions via processing. (Instructor 2)

Three instructors favored the idea that the writing materials should be adapted according to students' needs and interests. As one of these instructors commented, the materials should be field-specific. In a sense, these instructors seemed to agree with the students who thought that the materials and the writing topics should have some relevance to their future departments.

When asked to list some of the most common topics covered in the hand-outs, the instructors came up with the following list: *health, genetics, environment, natural disasters, migration, global warming* and *technology*. These topics were found to be the ones covered more than the other topics in the hand-outs. One of the instructors drew attention to the overuse of some topics like global warming in their hand-outs. Concerning the global warming, the instructor (Instructor 3) pointed out that 'students were not interested in global warming any longer as we had had enough of it'.

In addition, the instructors were asked to make suggestions about other topics which they thought should somehow be included to the hand-outs. Among the topics they listed, contemporary issues, more daily life topics and the topics that are related to students' departments were ranked as the most useful topics if they could also be included in the hand-outs.

As one of the instructors pointed out as follows, five instructors urged for department specific topics in the writing program at the DBE:

The topics should be department-specific. For example, engineering students should study themes and topics like design where there are more likely to pick up vocabulary related to their studies. (Instructor 2)

One of the instructors arguing for department-related topics approached the issue from a similar perspective as illustrated below by focusing on the need for more topics related to economy and social sciences:

Some of the written texts we cover in the hand-outs are related to medical sciences and agriculture although METU hasn't got a medical or an agriculture faculty. These topics are difficult and confusing. There should be more contents related to economy and social sciences. (Instructor 17)

Finally, in terms of the relevance of the topics to the departments, one instructor made the following reasonable suggestion that a variety of topics should be selected from different fields so as to address as many students as possible:

Although students from different departments aren't put into the same class, we can put together bits and pieces about different topics to address students' different departments. (Instructor 12)

In addition to instructors favoring topics related to students' departments, there was one instructor who argued that students should write about topics they had some knowledge about and interest in.

What I have observed over the years as a challenge for the students is that they don't know the content. They don't have enough information about what to write. So that is one reason I believe why they have difficulty in developing their ideas. Take chaos theory. If students don't know anything about chaos theory in L1 and if you ask them to write about it in L2, that is a very difficult task for them. Without knowing the concept and the related vocabulary, without having heard or read about it, it is very difficult for them to write about it. (Instructor 1)

Also, it was found that 3 instructors agreed on the issue that more sample paragraphs should be analyzed and more time should be allocated to practice the learned writing conventions in the hand-outs. On the other hand, one instructor argued against the mere use of hand-outs suggesting the use of a comprehensive writing course book starting with sentence-based exercises leading gradually to paragraphs. As for the writing sections of the *Language Leader* course book, one instructor thought that some writing parts of the book needed improvement and made the following comment:

Some parts of the book need improvement because some of the tasks don't have a purpose in it. Students have no idea why there is a need to do the task. (Instructor 13)

To conclude the findings with regards to the materials and content, it can be suggested that instructors generally evaluated the writing materials and content positively; however, the items ‘the topics and themes in the materials were interesting’, ‘the materials were visually attractive’ and ‘the materials were sufficient to improve students’ writing skills’ caused uncertainty and disagreement among many instructors. Similarly, the data collected through the open-ended questions in the questionnaire show that the topics were not regarded as interesting by many of the instructors; hence, it was suggested that students ought to be given the flexibility to choose the topic they want to write about. Furthermore, some instructors believed that it would be better if topics relevant to students’ majors could be integrated into the writing materials while some other instructors proposed the idea of including as many topics as possible in the hand-outs in order to address students of various departments.

As found through the closed items in the questionnaire, the open-ended part of the questionnaire revealed that many of the instructors thought the materials could be more visually attractive. Some other suggestions made by the instructors are as follows: the revision of the hand-outs to eliminate the advanced grammatical structures and the vocabulary, the compilation of the hand-outs in the form of a book, the selection of a writing course book available in the market, focusing on the free-writing parts of the *Language Leader* course book and the inclusion of more sample paragraphs, non-academic, student-friendly daily topics as well as real life writing tasks in the hand-outs.

The interviews yielded similar results in that the hand-outs were generally regarded as good because they provided sample writing paragraphs, prepared students for the EPE and could be effectively used as a reference source by the students; on the contrary, they were considered to be mechanical, too long and visually unattractive. It was also pointed out by a few instructors that the hand-outs included slips that students should not be exposed to. There was a complaint that the writing sections of the *Language Leader* did not meet the goals of academic writing. About the *Language Leader*, although some instructors were aware that the book included some free-writing tasks, they claimed that they could not usually cover the writing parts due to time constraints and the mismatch between the writing sections of the book and the writing

section of the EPE. Finally, it was found that health, genetics, environment, natural disasters, migration, global warming and technology were the most common topics while instructors suggested that contemporary issues, more daily life topics and the topics related to students' departments could be included in the hand-outs.

### 4.3.3 DBE Instructors' Opinions about the Teaching-Learning Process

The part of the questionnaire dealing with the teaching-learning process applied in teaching writing at the DBE is aimed at revealing the instructors' opinions not only about the frequency and weight of certain activities and methods but also about the general teaching-learning issues ranging from the student-teacher interaction to the efficient use of time. After analyzing the questionnaire data, the interview results are presented. Table 4.11 summarizes the instructors' views about the frequency and weight of certain activities and methods used to teach writing at the DBE.

**Table 4.11 DBE instructors' opinions about the activities and methods**

Items	None		Not Enough		The Right Amount		More than Necessary	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. Student presentations	19	38.0	25	50.0	5	10.0	1	2.0
2. Pair work	1	2.0	13	26.0	34	68.0	2	4.0
3. Group work	2	4.0	15	30.0	30	60.0	3	6.0
4. Discussions	4	8.0	25	50.0	19	38.0	2	4.0
5. Games	18	36.0	25	50.0	7	14.0	0	0.0
6. Role plays	23	46.0	23	46.0	4	8.0	0	0.0
7. Projects	22	44.0	22	44.0	6	12.0	0	0.0
8. Reading aloud written work	23	46.0	14	28.0	12	24.0	1	2.0
9. Whole class activities done on the board	1	2.0	9	18.0	36	72.0	4	8.0
10. Whole class feedback sessions on exercises	1	2.0	8	16.0	37	74.0	4	8.0
11. Peer correction	8	16.0	25	50.0	17	34.0	0	0.0
12. Self correction	9	18.0	23	46.0	17	34.0	1	2.0
13. Journal keeping	36	72.0	12	24.0	2	4.0	0	0.0
14. Brainstorming	0	0.0	12	24.0	37	74.0	1	2.0
15. Dictation	34	68.0	8	16.0	7	14.0	1	2.0

The results regarding DBE instructors' perspectives about the activities and methods employed as a part of the teaching-learning process were found to be in parallel with DBE students' views about the same issue. Like students, most of the DBE

instructors came to the agreement ('not enough' and 'none') that student presentations (88%), games (86%), role plays (92%), projects (88%), reading aloud written work (74%), journal keeping (96%) and dictation (84%) were inadequately employed at the DBE. Along with these activities, there were two correction methods considered to be insufficiently used in writing-focused lessons. For example, 66% of the instructors thought that peer correction is not applied sufficiently ('not enough' and 'none') while 64% of them held the same idea about self-correction. On the contrary, some of the activities and methods many instructors marked as either 'the right amount' or 'more than necessary' are as follows: pair work, group work, whole class activities done on the board, whole class feedback sessions on exercises and brainstorming.

In relation to the teaching-learning process applied to teach writing at the DBE, the questionnaire includes items about the use of certain activities and methods as analyzed above in addition to some general items intended to reveal instructors' perspectives regarding the way they conduct writing classes. Table 4.12 below is a summary of the main findings related to the general teaching-learning process.

**Table 4.12 DBE instructors' opinions about the general teaching-learning process**

Items	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Not Sure		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. There was an efficient use of time in writing lessons.	2	4.0	3	6.0	16	32.0	23	46.0	6	12.0
2. There was a good student-teacher interaction in writing lessons.	0	0.0	4	8.0	9	18.0	32	64.0	5	10.0
3. Students had cooperative relationships with each other.	0	0.0	3	6.0	11	22.0	30	60.0	6	12.0
4. A variety of activities was used to teach writing.	0	0.0	9	18.0	22	44.0	16	32.0	3	6.0
5. I taught writing in an interesting way.	1	2.0	2	4.0	25	50.0	18	36.0	4	8.0
6. It was easy for students to follow me in writing lessons.	0	0.0	2	4.0	8	16.0	34	68.0	6	12.0
7. My instructions were clear.	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	6.0	38	76.0	9	18.0
8. My teaching methodology was effective in students' learning.	0	0.0	1	2.0	13	26.0	29	58.0	7	14.0
9. I encouraged students to participate in the lessons.	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	6.0	36	72.0	11	22.0
10. I used audio-visual aids (OHP, video, tape-recorder, etc.) effectively in the lessons.	4	8.0	8	16.0	9	18.0	14	28.0	15	30.0

**Table 4.12 (continued)**

11. I used the board effectively.	0	0.0	0	0.0	4	8.0	29	58.0	17	34.0
12. I gave equal attention to all students in the classroom.	0	0.0	2	4.0	9	18.0	26	52.0	13	26.0
13. I corrected students' mistakes in an effective way.	0	0.0	2	4.0	7	14.0	32	64.0	9	18.0
14. I helped students to learn how to write.	0	0.0	0	0.0	5	10.0	32	64.0	13	26.0
15. I gave sufficient feedback on students' performance	0	0.0	0	0.0	6	12.0	21	42.0	23	46.0
16. Students gave sufficient feedback on each other's performance	8	16.0	13	26.0	23	46.0	3	6.0	3	6.0

Considering the findings in Table 4.12, it can be stated that while most of the instructors were positive ('agree' and 'strongly agree') about the teaching-learning process in general, there was reasonably higher disagreement ('disagree' and 'strongly disagree') or uncertainty ('not sure') among the instructors regarding certain items. The first two of these items analyzed below yielded similar results to the DBE student version of the questionnaire in that most students expressed disagreement or uncertainty for these items. To illustrate, as for the item 'a variety of activities was used to teach writing', 18% of the instructors expressed disagreement while 44% of them were not sure and only 38% either agreed or strongly agreed with it. The item 'I taught writing in an interesting way' was disagreed or strongly disagreed by 6% of the instructors whereas half of the instructors indicated that they were not sure and the rest 44% of them responded positively to this item by marking 'agreed' or 'strongly agree'. Another item evaluated more negatively was regarding peer-feedback ('students gave sufficient feedback on each other's performance'). While only 12% of the instructors responded positively ('agree' and 'strongly agree') to this item, 42% of them disagreed with it and 46% of them stated that they were not sure about it.

On the contrary, student-teacher interaction, cooperation among the students, the ease of following the writing lessons, the clarity of the instructions, teachers' methodology, encouragement of the students to participate in the lesson, use of the board, equal attention given to all the students, correcting students' written mistakes and helping students learn how to write can be reported as the most effective because the percentages of agreement for these items were comparatively higher. On the other hand,

fewer instructors (58%) agreed or strongly agreed with the items ‘there was an efficient use of time in writing lessons’ and ‘I used audio-visual aids effectively in the lessons’.

In response to the relevant open-ended questions in the DBE instructor questionnaire, 33 instructors made comments about some of the activities or methods that they thought helped students the most to improve their writing skills. For instance, more than half of the instructors (n=18) underlined the ‘teacher feedback’ as one of the strong points of the program. Outlining (n=13), brainstorming (n=9), reflecting students’ written works on the OHP (n=3) were regarded as other helpful activities for students to improve their writing skills.

As for the question requiring the instructors to make suggestions for the improvement of the teaching-learning process in writing-focused lessons, 17 instructors made comments. While 6 instructors commented that a process-based approach should be incorporated into the writing program at the DBE, 4 instructors held the belief that writing should be more integrated with other basic skills. On the other hand, 3 instructors suggested that more informal writing tasks, such as journal keeping might be encouraged before the presentation of the formal academic writing conventions. Complaining about the lack of OHPs available, 2 instructors recommended that there should be more OHPs at the department. Another suggestion made by 2 instructors was regarding the use of pair and group activities more frequently while the same number of instructors drew attention to the need for more peer-feedback applied with the use of relevant checklists. Moreover, 2 instructors thought that it was necessary to analyze poor, adequate and good written samples in the classroom.

The interview and the open-ended survey data collected from 20 instructors revealed that the teaching of the writing skills is mostly based on teacher lecturing (n=8). As one instructor explained as follows, it was the instructor who did most of the talking in the class:

Mainly, I talk in the lesson. The material is so long and detailed so the teachers should deal with all of it because students are likely to be tested on the points in these materials. (Instructor 2)

While 3 other instructors explained that they used the presentation-practice-production stages as in teaching other language skills, there were some instructors who expressed that they only followed the hand-outs in a step-by-step fashion (n=3). One of these instructors explained the way they taught writing as follows:

I just go over the hand-outs, do all the writing tasks and generally give feedback. I don't think this is an effective way to teach writing. (Instructor 20)

On the other hand, 2 instructors drew attention to how they used the hand-outs as only supplementary materials rather than the main teaching tools. One of them made the following comment:

I never start with the hand-outs or rules. Firstly, I get my students to brainstorm a topic and then ask them to analyze a sample example paragraph on the topic. Next, we have discussions about the paragraphs, its topic, controlling ideas, language patterns and so on. This way, students can figure out what makes a good paragraph. Finally, I use the hand-outs as supporting/supplementary. (Instructor 3)

Another instructor made the following detailed description of a writing lesson including a variety of activities and focusing less on the hand-outs distributed by the coordinators:

I try to get my students to discover patterns and structures and build on those. To this end, I have them work individually, in pairs and in groups. I usually prepare my own hand-out with awareness-raising questions. These are at times photocopied and distributed to all or printed on OHP. PowerPoint would also work but it is currently not a standard practice in my classroom. The blackboard is something I make use of while eliciting ideas as well as alternative ways of expression and while working on whole-class error correction at sentential level. Practice in my classroom generally involves brainstorming in pairs or groups followed by whole-class feedback. While the first paragraph is often produced in the classroom, with guidance from the teacher, the second is often done collaboratively with students brainstorming, individually producing, parts of the paragraph, receiving feedback from peers and the teacher. Following this, learners generate ideas individually, pool these in their groups, cluster and select and then produce drafts which they revise following feedback. The criteria are often elicited and made public in class. As for effectiveness, I believe that I am on the right track. If only there was more time. (Instructor 14)

Finally, 20 DBE instructors were asked to name the activities and methods they most commonly used to teach writing at the DBE. The majority of the instructors listed silent individual work (n=13), teacher correction (n=10) and lecturing (n=7) while dictation, journal keeping and the games were found to be the least commonly used ones to teach writing at the DBE. The activities considered useful by the instructors if they could be implemented in the writing program at the DBE were free writing activities without discourse patterns (n=12), process writing activities like drafting and outlining (n=7), activities integrating technology (n=2), more self-correction (2), projects (n=2) and student presentations (n=2).

To sum up the analysis of the teaching-learning process applied to teach writing at the DBE, it can be stated that most of the instructors were pleased with the teaching-learning process in general; however, the items 'a variety of activities was used to teach writing', 'I taught writing in an interesting way' and 'students gave sufficient feedback on each other's performance' were responded more negatively than the other items. The student questionnaire also yielded the first two of these items as the least agreed ones.

The open-ended question in the questionnaire revealed that while teacher feedback, outlining, brainstorming and reflecting students' written works on the OHP were regarded as the most helpful activities in writing-focused lessons, there was a perceived need for more integration of the writing skill to the other basic skills, more use of pair and group activities, more student-centered activities, more peer feedback applied with the use of relevant checklists and the analysis of poor, adequate and good written samples.

The interview findings yielded both similarities and some additional findings with regards to the activities and methods used at the DBE. While silent individual work, teacher correction and lecturing were considered to be the activities and methods commonly used by DBE instructors; dictation, journal keeping and the games were thought to be the least commonly used ones. In addition to this, it was revealed that free writing activities without discourse rules, process writing activities, activities integrating technology, more self-correction, projects and student presentations were also regarded as effective if they could somehow be incorporated into the program.

#### 4.3.4 DBE Instructors' Opinions about the Assessment of the Writing Skills

In the questionnaire, in addition to the parts dealing with program objectives, materials and content as well as the teaching-learning process, there was a part asking DBE instructors to evaluate the assessment aspect of the program. As in other parts, instructors were requested to make suggestions and comments about the assessment dimension of the program through interviews or open-ended questions. The quantitative findings obtained with regards to the assessment of the writing skills at the DBE are demonstrated in Table 4.13 below.

**Table 4.13 DBE instructors' opinions about the assessment of the writing skills**

Items	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Not Sure		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	N	%	N	%	N	Items	N	%	N	%
1. Students were assessed on the things (i.e. skills) they practiced in the lessons.	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	6.0	24	48.0	23	46.0
2. Before the tests (i.e. mid-terms), students were given information about the scope of the tests.	0	0.0	2	4.0	3	6.0	22	44.0	23	46.0
3. The directions in the mid-term exams were clear.	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	4.0	24	48.0	24	48.0
4. The materials used in the lessons and the test materials were similar in terms of difficulty level.	0	0.0	1	2.0	6	12.0	26	52.0	17	34.0
5. The mid-term exam results demonstrate students' actual ability/proficiency in writing skills.	3	6.0	6	12.0	23	46.0	13	26.0	5	10.0
6. Students' writing skills have been correctly measured.	1	2.0	4	8.0	22	44.0	16	32.0	7	14.0
7. The grading was fair.	2	4.0	3	6.0	7	14.0	28	56.0	10	20.0
8. Students' performance in writing was good.	1	2.0	6	12.0	17	34.0	21	42.0	5	10.0
9. Students' writing skills have improved after the writing program.	1	2.0	0	0.0	15	30.0	25	50.0	9	18.0
10. Students received sufficient feedback on their assignments.	0	0.0	0	0.0	4	8.0	34	68.0	12	24.0
11. Students received sufficient feedback on their class work.	0	0.0	0	0.0	8	16.0	31	62.0	11	22.0
12. Students received sufficient feedback on their performance in the mid-term exams.	0	0.0	1	2.0	13	26.0	24	48.0	12	24.0

The obtained results presented on Table 4.13 illustrate that excluding two of the

issues related to whether the mid-term exam results demonstrate students' actual ability in writing skills (marked 'not sure' by 46% of the instructors) and whether students' writing skills have been correctly measured (marked 'not sure' by 44% of the instructors), it would be true to state that instructors generally expressed highly positive attitudes towards the assessment of the writing skills at the DBE and the students' performance in writing. As two of the above-mentioned items were agreed less than all the other items and marked 'not sure' by many instructors (44%-46%), these issues can be regarded as the least effective points regarding the assessment dimension of the program. It is worth mentioning here that the same items were responded negatively by DBE students.

On the other hand, among the issues regarded as positive by many of the instructors, the ones with the highest level of agreement ('agree' and 'strongly agree') were as follows: 'students were assessed on the things (i.e. skills) they practiced in the lessons' (94%), 'before the tests (i.e. mid-terms), students were given information about the scope of the tests' (90%), 'the directions in the mid-term exams were clear'(96%) and 'students received sufficient feedback on their assignments' (92%).

In the questionnaire, there was a part asking instructors to make suggestions for the improvement of the assessment dimension of the writing program at the DBE. The open-ended question with regards to the assessment aspect of the program revealed some concerns about the fairness of the writing exams. To illustrate, some teachers (7 out of 23 instructors who made relevant suggestions) thought that a standardization procedure should be established for the assessment of the students' written works at the DBE. Similarly, 5 instructors argued for a more objective assessment system; in addition, according to 4 instructors, the writing assessment scale used at the DBE should be more detailed to ensure standardization among instructors. Regarding the assessment criteria, 2 instructors pointed out that students should be familiarized with the writing assessment criteria. Drawing attention to the mismatch between the EPE and the writing activities focused on in writing lessons at the DBE, 6 instructors suggested that there was a need to incorporate activities in parallel with writing tasks as tested in the EPE. With regards to the writing tasks that were not practiced but tested in the EPE, one

instructor underlined the need for the activity requiring students to respond to a reading text in the written form.

According to 3 instructors, portfolio assessment should be a part of their assessment procedure and from the perspective of two instructors, assessment ought to be based on regular written projects rather than timed paragraph writing in the exams. Moreover, 2 instructors recommended that instructors at the DBE need workshops regarding issues like giving written feedback, written error correction and the assessment of the writing skill. Finally, 2 instructors suggested that the word limit in the writing part of the exams should be increased, and students should be assessed on the quality of the writing rather than the quantity.

The data collected through interviews and open-ended surveys conducted with 20 instructors yielded results similar to the relevant open-ended part of the questionnaire. It was found that while more than half of the instructors (n=11) were generally satisfied with the assessment tools used for the writing component of the program, 7 instructors shared their concerns that although the mid-term exams were fair enough to test students' writing ability, EPE was not. One of these instructors made the following comment with regards to the difficulty of the writing section and the type of writing required in the EPE:

Mid-terms are fine because they test what we teach but the EPE is far above their levels and they require free writing which we never do in class. (Instructor 9)

Similar to the views of a few instructors who made negative comments about the first part of the writing section in the EPE in response to the open-ended part of the questionnaire, the interview and the survey data revealed that 7 instructors making negative comments about the EPE specifically touched upon the first part of the writing section of the EPE requiring students to respond to a reading text in the written form. One of these instructors made the following comment to argue that this part had nothing to do with testing writing:

In the EPE, there is a reading text which requires students to comprehend a reading text and to respond to it. This part of the exam isn't fair as we are testing reading here, not writing. (Instructor 18)

Likewise another instructor elaborated on the first part of the writing section in the EPE as follows in order to highlight the dilemma that they generally taught discourse-level writing in class although discourse patterns are never tested in the EPE:

Mid-terms are fine because we teach what we cover in the hand-out. The basic things are tested in the proficiency (EPE) but not the discourse. We keep teaching discourse and we test it in the mid-terms but when it comes to proficiency, we penalize the students. Students write in a specific discourse that is relevant to the proficiency exam question and sometimes they choose the wrong discourse. But an outsider taking the EPE with no information about this discourse can get a better grade as he/she can produce ideas. If we are testing the discourse in that way in the EPE, why should we try so hard to teach them certain types of discourse? We should just let them write something well. Sometimes our students also ask “Why should I write it like this” and they come up with some cliché sentences without really understanding these sentences. It looks very funny and mechanical. (Instructor 2)

On the other hand, 4 instructors urged for more writing quizzes and writing competitions among students while 3 instructors thought that the portfolio assessment could be an alternative to the timed paragraph writing in the exams. Moreover, 6 instructors suggested that the assessment criteria should be revised and there was a need for the standardization of the assessment of the writing skills. One of these instructors commented as follows about this issue:

Using the same grading scale, teachers can give very different scores to similar paragraphs. The assessment criteria should be more detailed. (Instructor 7)

Furthermore, one of these instructors made the following comment to compare the mid-terms and the EPE in terms of reliability with a focus on the need for the standardization of the assessment of the writing skills, especially in the mid-terms:

The problem is we don't have standardization of the assessment, especially at the mid-terms. The EPE has a higher reliability rate than the mid-terms because the teachers who grade the writing don't know the students. For standardization purposes, we can make the teachers attend workshops. (Instructor 11)

Two instructors were also concerned about the unfairness of the assessment of the writing skills. Complaining about the scoring of the discourse patterns, one of these instructors said:

...most raters penalize students who do not follow these discourse patterns even if they answer the writing question correctly and even if they communicate their ideas. The same is true for the other way around. They give extra credits to those who use the expected discourse specific devices (linkers, enumerations, signaling words etc.) but do not really communicate ideas. (Instructor 16)

Overall, in terms of the evaluation of the assessment dimension of the program, it would be true to conclude that except for two items, instructors were generally satisfied with how writing was tested in the department. The items which caused uncertainty or disagreement among many of the instructors were the items 'the mid-term exam results demonstrate students' actual ability in writing' and 'students' writing skills have been correctly measured'. The qualitative data obtained from the questionnaire revealed that some instructors called for more objective grading of students' written works and urged for the establishment of a standardization procedure in marking writing. For a more standard scoring, some instructors argued for a more detailed assessment scale and the familiarization of the students with this scale.

Some interview findings corroborated with some of the findings revealed through the open-ended parts of the questionnaire. To illustrate, the need for the standardization of the assessment of the writing skills was emphasized by some instructors participating in the interviews. Also, some of the suggestions made for more objective assessment were as follows: 'a more detailed assessment scale', 'two instructors marking students' written works' and 'encouraging instructors to attend workshops about the standardization of the assessment of the writing ability'. Another important finding was that the EPE included writing tasks that were not normally focused on in writing classes; therefore, some instructors proposed to include in the program certain writing tasks as tested in the EPE (e.g., responding to a reading text in the written form). Considering the free-writing nature of paragraph writing tasks in the EPE, it was recommended that teaching discourse-level writing should be abandoned.

### 4.3.5 Preparation of DBE Students for the DML and the Departments

In order to make an overall evaluation of the writing program at the DBE, instructors' views on the following questions were also collected via the closed questionnaire items as well as the interviews and open-ended surveys. After the presentation of the results obtained via questionnaires in Table 4.14, instructors' answers to the interview and the open-ended survey questions are analyzed.

1. How well do you think the writing program at the DBE prepares students to successfully participate in the DML courses like ENG 101 and ENG 102?
2. How well do you think the writing program at the DBE prepares students to produce written responses in their own departments?

**Table 4.14 DBE instructors' opinions about the writing program in general**

		<i>F</i>	%
1. How well do you think the writing program at the DBE prepares students to successfully participate in the DML courses like ENG 101 and ENG 102?	<b>Very Good</b>	2	4.0
	<b>Good</b>	16	32.0
	<b>Average</b>	25	50.0
	<b>Just a little</b>	6	12.0
	<b>Poor</b>	1	2.0
2. How well do you think the writing program at the DBE prepares students to produce written responses in their own departments?	<b>Very Good</b>	2	4.0
	<b>Good</b>	13	26.0
	<b>Average</b>	27	54.0
	<b>Just a little</b>	6	12.0
	<b>Poor</b>	2	4.0
<b>TOTAL</b>		50	100

Considering the results with regards to the question how well the writing program at the DBE prepares students for DML courses, it can be seen that half of the instructors evaluated the quality of the DBE writing program as 'average'. Only 1 instructor marked 'poor' for this question. When it comes to the second question in Table 4.14, more than half of the instructors similarly (54%) marked 'average'. Only, 8 (16%) instructors responded to this question as 'very little or poor'.

Similar questions were asked to the instructors in the interviews and the open-ended surveys. When asked whether the DBE prepares sufficiently for the writing component of ENG 101 and ENG 102 courses, the majority of the instructors (13 out of 20 instructors) stated that they had no idea about the writing program offered by the

DML. Three instructors responded to this question negatively by describing the type of writing they focused on at the DBE. One of them made the following comments:

I do not know much about the courses offered at DML. However, as students are writing condensed paragraphs with suggested word limits, they cannot support their ideas in detail. They can only write a few words for each supporting idea. This might cause problems for the students as they need to be skilled in providing enough details/explanations for the majors when writing longer essays. In addition, students produce only memorized patterns from the hand-out but cannot produce accurate sentences. (Instructor 5)

Another instructor voiced similar concerns as for the type of writing instruction at the DBE by arguing against teaching discourse patterns:

Everything that is learned at the DBE is squeezed into patterns, which for the participant is in the departments meaningless. (Instructor 16)

The last question was aimed to reveal the instructors' views on whether the DBE writing program prepared students sufficiently for their departments in terms of writing. Three teachers responded positively to this question by arguing that students get a sense of unity in writing, which could be useful in their departments. However, most of the instructors (n=14) stated that they could not make comments about this question as they were not totally aware of what kind of writing is required at the departments except for three instructors who made similar comments like the one below to imply that the answer to this question depends on students' departments:

...I talk to my previous students, what I hear is they don't normally use English in their lessons and in their lectures. What they do is to read pages and pages of books. When you think that this is a technical university, we can say that the technical groups do more math and they don't need so much English. My previous students say that they keep doing formulas, they hardly use future perfect or such tenses and they didn't need these. But if you talk to a sociology or psychology student, then he/she will need English and will need to be proficient in using the language itself... (Instructor 6)

All in all, as can be realized from the views of DBE instructors about whether the writing program at the DBE prepares students sufficiently for the DML courses and for the students' own departments, DBE instructors generally marked 'average' for both of the questions and only some of the instructors were able to make comments to the

interview questions as they stated that they did not have enough knowledge about the writing program at the DML and the writing tasks that were generally carried out in students' departments. The instructors who responded negatively to the questions in this part explained what kind of writing they focused on at the DBE (extended paragraphs in different discourse types) and supposed that what they did at the DBE did not prepare students for the DML courses like ENG 101 and ENG 102 courses in which essay writing in different discourse types were introduced. A few instructors, on the other hand, supported the view that every department had its own writing requirements and even some departments did not necessitate much writing.

#### **4.3.6 Overall**

In conclusion, this part of the analysis dealt with the research question "How do DBE instructors and program coordinators evaluate the writing component in terms of program objectives, materials and content, teaching-learning process and assessment of the writing skills at the DBE?" Generally, it would be true to state that the majority of the instructors expressed positive opinions about the dimensions mentioned in the research question above although there were some points evaluated comparatively negatively by the DBE instructors regarding each dimension.

As far as the objectives dimension of the writing program at the DBE is concerned, the majority of the instructors held positive attitudes towards their students' achievement of the writing objectives. Still, the qualitative data revealed some suggestions made by the instructors to improve the list of DBE writing objectives. Believing that the way writing was handled at the DBE was too prescriptive and guided, most of the instructors suggested adding free-writing and sentence-level writing to the current list of objectives. That the number of the discourse types should be reduced and the essay writing should be taken as an objective was also agreed upon by some instructors. When asked whether all the objectives were achieved by the end of the academic year, some instructors responded negatively and justified their response by listing reasons, such as lack of consensus among instructors about what to emphasize in

the program, students' poor English background, the large size of the class and the lack of time allocated for each objective.

In terms of materials and content, it can be said that this dimension was generally evaluated positively despite the fact that some points can be considered to be less positively evaluated. For instance, many instructors were unsure or negative about the interesting feature of the topics and themes and the visual attractiveness of the materials. More in-depth analysis of the instructors' opinions about the program was made through the qualitative data collected via interviews or surveys. For instance, it was argued by most of the instructors who participated in the interviews that students should be given the freedom to choose the topic to write about. Moreover, there was agreement among a few instructors with the idea of including department-specific topics in hand-outs. As for the hand-outs, a couple of instructors argued that contemporary issues, non-academic and more daily life topics should be added to the hand-outs. As far as the *Language Leader* is concerned, even though it was known by a few instructors that the course book contained useful free-writing tasks, the writing parts of this book were generally neglected in the program because of time constraints and the mismatch between the writing activities in the book and the writing exam questions.

When it comes to the teaching-learning process, the majority of the instructors responded positively to most of the questions except for the following ones, the first two of which were also negatively responded by the DBE students: 'a variety of activities was used to teach writing', 'I taught writing in an interesting way' and 'students gave sufficient feedback on each other's performance'. Among activities and methods some instructors suggested to improve the teaching-learning process at the DBE contained the integration of the writing skill to the other basic skills, more use of pair and group work activities, more student-centered activities, more peer-to-peer feedback applied with the use of relevant checklists and the analysis of poor, adequate and good written samples. While activities like silent individual work, teacher correction and lecturing were considered to be more frequently used than any other activities by the instructors; dictation, journal keeping and the games were regarded as the least commonly used ones. Furthermore, it was recommended by most of the instructors that free writing

activities without prescriptive discourse rules should be included in the program. Other suggestions related to the inclusion of some activities and methods were about the use of process writing activities, activities integrating technology, more self-correction, projects and student presentations.

As for the assessment dimension of the program, it can be maintained that instructors were generally pleased with how writing was assessed at the DBE. The items responded negatively by both the DBE students and instructors were the same following items: ‘the mid-term exam results demonstrate students’ actual ability in writing’ and ‘students’ writing skills have been correctly measured’. Among suggestions made to improve the assessment procedure regarding the writing skill, instructors agreed that there was a need for the standardization of the assessment of the writing ability, workshops intended to train instructors for the standardization process in assessing writing, double marking of students’ written works, a more detailed assessment scale and familiarizing students with the assessment scale. Also, many instructors argued that the EPE included writing tasks that were not typical of what was done in class and suggested focusing on writing tasks that students might encounter with in the EPE (e.g., responding to a reading text in the written form). Besides, it was recommended that discourse types should not be taught at the DBE because the writing part in the EPE does not require the use of certain discourse patterns.

Finally, when asked to comment on how well the DBE prepares students sufficiently for the DML courses and the departments, many of the instructors did not make any comments indicating that they were not totally aware of what kind of writing tasks were done at the DML and the departments.

#### **4.4 Results of the DML Student Questionnaire**

In this part of the study, the findings pertaining to the research question “How do DML students evaluate the writing component in terms of program objectives, materials and content, teaching-learning process and the assessment of the writing skills at the DML?” are presented. First, the results of the DML student questionnaire including both

closed and open-ended questions are discussed with regards to the dimensions mentioned in the research question. Then, the findings for each of these dimensions are presented from the DML instructors' perspectives.

#### 4.4.1 DML Students' Opinions about the Program Objectives

The results of the DML student questionnaire with regards to the objectives of the writing program at the DBE revealed that after taking ENG 101 and ENG 102 courses, most of the students perceived themselves as competent in all the skills. The findings obtained with regards to students' opinions about the program objectives are presented more specifically in Table 4.15.

**Table 4.15 DML students' opinions about the objectives of the writing program**

Items	Not Competent At all		Not Competent Enough		Competent Enough		Highly Competent	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. Writing expository paragraphs	8	3.3	38	15.8	170	70.5	25	10.4
2. Writing reaction paragraphs	7	2.9	42	17.4	165	68.5	27	11.2
3. Writing an expository essay	8	3.3	46	19.1	163	67.6	24	10.0
4. Learning, internalizing, accepting and carrying out the stages in a process writing approach, while writing paragraphs and/or essays	10	4.1	49	20.3	138	57.3	44	18.3
5. Using correct, appropriate language structures, vocabulary and discourse markers.	5	2.1	64	26.6	128	53.1	44	18.3
6. Writing a documented expository essay	7	2.9	59	24.5	141	58.5	34	14.1
7. Writing a documented essay	7	2.9	63	26.1	137	56.8	34	14.1
8. Writing a reaction-response essay	9	3.7	61	25.3	136	56.4	35	14.5
9. Evaluating sources for relevance and reliability	7	2.9	48	19.9	127	52.7	59	24.5
10. Identifying reference information	7	2.9	48	19.9	127	52.7	59	24.5
11. Researching on the Internet	11	4.6	32	13.3	124	51.5	74	30.7
12. Researching in the library	26	10.8	77	32.0	99	41.1	39	16.2
13. Identifying and selecting relevant sources	5	2.1	48	19.9	143	59.3	45	18.7
14. Practicing using APA citation rules	14	5.8	70	29.0	100	41.5	57	23.7
15. Practicing borrowing ideas by paraphrasing, summarizing, quoting, and synthesizing	6	2.5	49	20.3	130	53.9	56	23.2

Analyzing the results about how competent students became in these skills, it can be seen that while the highest percentage of the students (82.2%) indicated that they became competent ('competent enough' and highly competent') in researching on the

internet, the lowest percentage of the students (57.3%) stated that they became competent ('competent enough' and highly competent') in researching in the library. Along with the skill 'researching in the library', the skill 'practicing using APA citation rules' was marked as 'competent enough' by less than half of the students.

The open-ended parts of the questionnaire intended to reveal the positive and the negative points regarding the program in general yielded some findings pertaining to the DML writing objectives. For instance, as one of the most positive aspects of the program, some students (8 out of 14 students who made positive comments related to the objectives) underlined 'referencing' while 6 students mentioned 'outlining'. Furthermore, the process writing approach (n=3), linkers (n=3) and paraphrasing (n=2) were regarded as other good sides of the program in regards to the program objectives. A common suggestion for the list of ENG 101 and ENG 102 writing objectives was that more focus should be placed on paraphrasing and summarizing as most departments require academic writing and researching (n=5). On the other hand, a few (n=4) students pointed out that speaking skill should not be neglected for the sake of writing in ENG 101 and ENG 102 courses.

To sum up findings relevant to the objectives dimension of the program, it can be concluded that while a vast majority of the students perceived themselves as competent in researching on the internet, only more than half of the students (57.3%) thought that they were competent in researching in the library. The qualitative data collected via the open-ended questions in the questionnaire revealed that referencing, outlining, process-writing, linkers and paraphrasing were some of the strong points as to objectives while some students suggested focusing more on paraphrasing and summarizing. Some DML students made additional comments to highlight that speaking should also be emphasized more in the program.

#### **4.4.2 DML Students' Opinions about the Program Materials and Content**

In this part of the questionnaire, a list of items connected to the materials and the content of these materials were given to the DML students. The results of the

questionnaire reveal that in general, students hold positive attitudes toward most of the relevant issues. The results concerning the evaluation of this dimension of the program are presented in Table 4.16.

**Table 4.16 DML students' opinions about the materials and the content of the writing program**

Items	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Not Sure		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. The course materials (i.e. <i>Academic English: Survival Skills I and II</i> ) provided me with what I needed to know or do.	15	6.2	21	8.7	78	32.4	105	43.6	22	9.1
2. The course materials were appropriate to my interests.	33	13.7	41	17.0	104	43.2	51	21.2	12	5.0
3. The course materials fit my long term goals in terms of writing skills.	13	5.4	34	14.1	80	33.2	98	40.7	16	6.6
4. The topics and themes in the materials were interesting.	30	12.4	64	26.6	60	24.9	68	28.2	19	7.9
5. The course materials offered continuity (between earlier and later parts).	11	4.6	19	7.9	80	33.2	102	42.3	29	12.0
6. The writing skills taught in the program were useful for improving my general writing ability in English.	10	4.1	19	7.9	67	27.8	116	48.1	29	12.0
7. The writing skills were taught sequentially (i.e. building upon prior learning).	7	2.9	17	7.1	98	40.7	97	40.2	22	9.1
8. The materials were in line with the writing objectives (see Question 5 for the list of writing objectives for ENG 101 and ENG 102).	4	1.7	15	6.2	108	44.8	97	40.2	17	7.1
9. The course books were appropriately priced.	13	5.4	39	16.2	79	32.8	90	37.3	20	8.3
10. Course materials were sufficient to improve my writing skills.	12	5.0	30	12.4	88	36.5	92	38.2	19	7.9
11. The writing sections in the course books were effective in improving my writing skills.	7	2.9	35	14.5	66	27.4	108	44.8	25	10.4
12. The course materials had variety	19	7.9	51	21.2	89	36.9	74	30.7	8	3.3
13. The course materials helped me to improve my writing skills.	11	4.6	26	10.8	74	30.7	109	45.2	21	8.7
14. The course materials were visually attractive.	42	17.4	58	24.1	91	37.8	40	16.6	10	4.1
15. The course materials were appropriate to my proficiency level in English.	19	7.9	23	9.5	75	31.1	106	44.0	18	7.5
16. The supplementary materials the teacher used were useful for improving my writing skills.	10	4.1	20	8.3	64	26.6	78	32.4	69	28.6

Considering Table 4.16 showing students' responses to the items about the effectiveness of the writing materials and content used in ENG 101 and ENG 102 courses, it can be stated that the students believed that the course materials and content were effective in general. Still, there were some items which were evaluated more positively ('agree' and 'strongly agree') whereas some items were responded more negatively ('disagree' and 'strongly disagree') by DML students. For instance, students expressed comparatively higher positive attitudes towards all the items except for the following items with comparatively lower percentages of agreement (less than 40% agreed or strongly agreed): 'the course materials were appropriate to my interests' (26.2%) 'the topics and themes in the materials were interesting' (36.1%), 'the course materials had variety (34%) and 'the course materials were visually attractive' (20.7%).

On the contrary, the items with the highest percentages of agreement (more than 60% agreed or strongly agreed) were 'the writing skills taught in the program were useful for improving my general writing ability in English' (60.1%) and 'the supplementary materials the teacher used were useful for improving my writing skills' (61%).

The open-ended question requiring students to make suggestions for the improvement of the writing materials and their content was responded to by 27 students. Out of 27 students who made relevant suggestions, nearly half of the students (n=13) argued that both the covered topics and the taught writing genres in ENG 101 and ENG 102 should be closely relevant to their departments. Similarly, 4 students recommended that supplementary materials related to their departments should be used in addition to the current course books. Moreover, similar to some DBE students, some DML some students (n=7) favored the idea that there should be flexibility to choose the topic they want to write about. Pertaining to the topics, 6 students shared their concerns about the 'uninteresting topics' used in the materials to teach writing. Besides, referring to the thematic nature of the course books, 6 students agreed that the same topics like leadership were discussed so repetitively in the class that they got easily bored when encountered with such topics. Two students suggested that more up-to-date topics should be preferred to the technical ones like plastic surgery and obesity; moreover, 2

students urged for a needs analysis in various departments to understand what kinds of topics should be included in the course books for ENG 101 and ENG 102. While 5 students asserted that instructors should use more visual materials, 3 students emphasized that more writing samples should be analyzed in these courses.

On the whole, while there was a high level of agreement with the effectiveness of the materials and content in general, some issues caused more disagreement and uncertainty among students. It was found that students' evaluation of the course materials was comparatively negative with regards to the uninteresting content, the lack of variety as well as the visual attractiveness of these materials. The open-ended questions in the questionnaire show that some students argued for the topics and the writing genres relevant to their departments. In addition to this, it was recommended by a few students that supplementary materials related to students' departments should be used in addition to the current course books. While some students agreed that they should be flexible to choose the topic to write about, some students argued against the thematic nature of the course books organized around the same theme (i.e. Power and Change). As a suggestion to improve the materials and content, students underlined the need for more writing samples, more visual materials and more current topics.

#### 4.4.3 DML Students' Opinions about the Teaching-Learning Process

As to the evaluation of the teaching-learning process by the DML students, the findings obtained from the questionnaire are shown in Table 4.17 summarizing findings with regards to the weight and frequency of the activities as well as methods used to teach writing in ENG 101 and ENG 102 courses.

**Table 4.17 DML students' opinions about the activities and methods**

Items	None		Not Enough		The Right Amount		More than Necessary	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. Student presentations	10	4.1	58	24.1	151	62.7	22	9.1
2. Pair work	9	3.7	31	12.9	159	66.0	42	17.4
3. Group work	10	4.1	52	21.6	134	55.6	45	18.7
4. Discussions	16	6.6	68	28.2	127	52.7	30	12.4
5. Games	100	41.5	81	33.6	45	18.7	15	6.2
6. Role plays	90	37.3	68	28.2	66	27.4	17	7.1

**Table 4.17 (continued)**

7. Projects	49	20.3	57	23.7	109	45.2	26	10.8
8. Reading aloud written work	42	17.4	59	24.5	122	50.6	18	7.5
9. Whole class activities done on the board	40	16.6	72	29.9	103	42.7	26	10.8
10. Whole class feedback sessions on exercises	7	2.9	39	16.2	159	66.0	36	14.9
11. Peer correction	18	7.5	48	19.9	157	65.1	18	7.5
12. Self correction	7	2.9	41	17.0	173	71.8	20	8.3
13. Teacher Correction	5	2.1	22	9.1	183	75.9	31	12.9
14. Journal keeping	52	21.6	70	29.0	101	41.9	18	7.5
15. Brainstorming	23	9.5	65	27.0	122	50.6	31	12.9
16. Dictation	33	13.7	52	21.6	135	56.0	21	8.7

The results of the DML students' questionnaire with regards to the teaching-learning process applied in writing classes at the DML revealed that while some teaching-learning activities and the methods were adequately used in these courses, some others were not adequately employed. Concerning the activities and methods used sufficiently in the program, teacher correction (75.9%), self correction (71.8), whole class feedback sessions on exercises (66%), pair work (66%), peer correction (65.1%), student presentations (62.7%), dictation (56%), group work (55.6%), reading aloud written work (50.6%) and brainstorming (50.6%) can be listed as activities considered to be applied adequately ('the right amount') by more than half of the students. On the other hand, games (only 18.7% of the students marked 'the right amount') and role plays (only 27.4% of the students marked 'the right amount') were the least frequently used ones.

As for the teaching-learning process applied to teach writing at the DML, students also responded to some general items about the instructors' classroom conduct in their writing-focused lessons. Table 4.18 below summarizes the relevant findings.

**Table 4.18 DML students’ opinions about the general teaching-learning process**

Items	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Not Sure		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. There was an efficient use of time in class.	5	2.1	12	5.0	54	22.4	105	43.6	65	27.0
2. There was a good student-teacher interaction.	6	2.5	19	7.9	47	19.5	99	41.1	70	29.0
3. We had cooperative relationships with each other.	7	2.9	24	10.0	58	24.1	118	49.0	34	14.1
4. A variety of activities was used in the course.	10	4.1	35	14.5	77	32.0	98	40.7	21	8.7
5. Writing lessons were taught in an interesting way.	26	10.8	42	17.4	90	37.3	62	25.7	21	8.7
6. It was easy to follow the teacher in writing classes.	8	3.3	17	7.1	52	21.6	112	46.5	52	21.6
7. The teacher’s instructions were clear.	5	2.1	14	5.8	34	14.1	117	48.5	71	29.5
8. The teacher’s teaching methodology was effective in my learning.	8	3.3	12	5.0	52	21.6	107	44.4	62	25.7
9. The teacher encouraged me to participate in the lessons.	7	2.9	18	7.5	62	25.7	102	42.3	52	21.6
10. The teacher used audio-visual aids (OHP, video, tape-recorder, etc.) effectively in the lessons.	11	4.6	33	13.7	64	26.6	93	38.6	40	16.6
11. The teacher used the board effectively.	5	2.1	26	10.8	58	24.1	104	43.2	48	19.9
12. The teacher gave equal attention to all students in the class.	5	2.1	16	6.6	43	17.8	107	44.4	70	29.0
13. The teacher corrected my mistakes in an effective way.	9	3.7	14	5.8	45	18.7	103	42.7	70	29.0
14. We helped each other to learn how to write.	16	6.6	34	14.1	75	31.1	92	38.2	24	10.0
15. The teacher helped me to learn how to write.	5	2.1	21	8.7	49	20.3	122	50.6	44	18.3
16. The teacher gave sufficient feedback on my performance (i.e. written work).	6	2.5	12	5.0	52	21.6	102	42.3	69	28.6
17. We gave sufficient feedback on each other’s performance	30	12.4	31	12.9	87	36.1	62	25.7	31	12.9

The results regarding the students’ evaluation of various aspects of the teaching learning process show that despite agreement with many of the items among the students, a certain level of uncertainty (‘not sure) and disagreement (‘disagree’ and ‘strongly disagree’) were found to be higher with the item ‘writing lessons were taught in an interesting way’. While 65.5% of the students expressed either disagreement or uncertainty for this item, only 34.4% of the students agreed (‘agree’ and ‘strongly agree’) with it. Another aspect of the program evaluated by students more negatively

than others ('disagree' and 'strongly disagree') was about the peer-feedback students gave to each other ('we gave sufficient feedback on each other's performance'). While only 38.6% of the students expressed agreement ('agree' and 'strongly agree') with this item, 36.1% of them indicated uncertainty and 25.7% of them disagreed with this item.

On the contrary, as more than 70% of the students either agreed or strongly agreed with the following issues, they can be regarded as to be the most effective aspects of the teaching-learning process in ENG 101 and ENG 102: efficient use of time in class (70.6%), clarity of the teacher's instructions (78%), teacher's teaching methodology (70.1%), the equal attention the teacher gave to all students in the class (73.4%), the way the teacher corrected students mistakes (71.7%) and the teacher feedback on students' performance (70.9%).

By means of the open-ended parts of the questionnaire requiring students to comment about the positive and negative points of the program, some positive and negative issues pertaining to the activities and methods as well as the general teaching-learning process were revealed. To illustrate, out of 13 students who made positive comments about the teaching-learning process, 7 students agreed on the idea that the most positive side of the writing program in ENG 101 and ENG 102 courses was that they had received plenty of feedback from their instructors. Moreover, 5 students thought that they had supportive DML instructors teaching these courses.

On the other hand, out of 15 students who made negative comments about the teaching-learning process, 4 students underlined the idea that these courses were loaded and tiring. Similarly, another negative point raised by 4 students was related to their complaint that there were too many assignments for these courses. Also, 9 students made suggestions for the improvement of the teaching-learning process applied in ENG 101 and ENG 102. Their suggestions revealed that for some students (n=4), there was a need for more interactive lessons while 3 students proposed more peer and group work activities so that they could see others' perspectives in writing.

Overall, some of the activities and methods were found to be more commonly used in writing-focused lessons in ENG 101 and ENG 102 courses. For instance, teacher correction, self correction, whole class feedback sessions on exercises, pair work, peer

correction, students presentations, dictation, group work, reading aloud written work and brainstorming were considered to be adequately applied in writing classes by more than half of the students. On the other hand, games and role plays were found to be the least frequently used ones. As for the teaching-learning process in writing-focused lessons in general, students generally agreed with the effectiveness of all the issues pertaining to the teaching-learning process, except for the idea that the instructor taught writing in an interesting way and students gave sufficient feedback on each other's performance. The comments written in response to the open-ended questions revealed that while the instructor feedback and the support were regarded as the strengths of the teaching-learning process, some other students agreed that ENG 101 and ENG 102 courses were loaded, tiring and included too many assignments. As suggestions to consider for the improvement of the teaching-learning process, more interactive lessons and more peer and group work activities were proposed by some students.

#### 4.4.4 DML students' opinions about the assessment of the writing skills

The assessment dimension of the program was evaluated from the perspective of DML students by means of closed and open-ended items in the questionnaire. Students' responses to the items about the assessment dimension of the program in addition to the items regarding their own writing performance are summarized in Table 4.19.

**Table 4.19 DML students' opinions about the assessment of the writing skills**

Items	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Not Sure		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. We were assessed on the things (i.e. skills) we practiced in the lessons.	4	1.7	7	2.9	72	29.9	125	51.9	33	13.7
2. Before the tests (i.e. mid-terms and final exams), we were given information about the scope of the tests.	5	2.1	12	5.0	58	24.1	118	49.0	48	19.9
3. The directions in the exams were clear.	7	2.9	10	4.1	52	21.6	121	50.2	51	21.2

**Table 4.19 (continued)**

4. The materials used in the lessons and the test materials were similar in terms of difficulty level.	6	2.5	17	7.1	84	34.9	108	44.8	26	10.8
5. The assignment/homework (i.e. paragraph and essay writing) results demonstrate my actual ability/proficiency in writing skills.	12	5.0	26	10.8	72	29.9	97	40.2	34	14.1
6. The exam results demonstrate my actual ability/proficiency in writing skills.	27	11.2	32	13.3	95	39.4	70	29.0	17	7.1
7. My writing skills have been correctly measured in ENG 101 and ENG 102.	20	8.3	33	13.7	87	36.1	84	34.9	17	7.1
8. The grading was fair.	26	10.8	30	12.4	69	28.6	82	34.0	34	14.1
9. Homework/assignments were relevant to the course objectives.	9	3.7	20	8.3	72	29.9	110	45.6	30	12.4
10. My performance in ENG 101 and ENG 102 was good.	15	6.2	20	8.3	90	37.3	84	34.9	32	13.3
11. My writing skills have improved after these courses.	11	4.6	19	7.9	73	30.3	110	45.6	28	11.6
12. I received sufficient feedback on my assignments.	9	3.7	18	7.5	56	23.2	123	51.0	35	14.5
13. I received sufficient feedback on my class work.	7	2.9	16	6.6	60	24.9	122	50.6	36	14.9
14. I received sufficient feedback on my performance in the exams.	20	8.3	36	14.9	72	29.9	85	35.3	28	11.6

As for Table 4.19 demonstrating students' opinions about the assessment and their performance in writing, it would be true to point out that students expressed the highest degree of agreement with the issue about the clarity of the directions in the exams (71.4% either agreed or strongly agreed). As other strong points agreed or strongly agreed by more than half of the students, the following items can be listed: 'we were assessed on the things (i.e. skills) we practiced in the lessons' (65.6%), 'before the tests (i.e. mid-terms and final exams), we were given information about the scope of the tests' (68.9%), 'I received sufficient feedback on my assignments' (65.5%), and 'I received sufficient feedback on my class work' (65.5%).

On the other hand, students expressed comparatively less agreement (less than half of the students agreed or strongly agreed) as to the items 'the exam results demonstrate my actual ability/proficiency in writing skills' (36.1%), 'my writing skills have been correctly measured in ENG 101 and ENG 102' (42%), 'the grading was fair'

(48.1%), ‘my performance in ENG 101 and ENG 102 was good’ (48.2%) and ‘I received sufficient feedback on my performance in the exams’ (46.9%). Among these items, the first item indicating that the exam results show the students’ actual ability was found to be the least agreed aspect of assessment dimension of the writing program at the DML.

The open-ended question aiming to reveal students’ suggestions for the improvement of the assessment of the writing skills in ENG 101 and ENG 102 showed that there was a common belief among 7 (out of 12 students whose comments were found to be related to the teaching-learning process) students that the scoring of their written works was very subjective changing from one teacher to another. In link with this assumption, 5 students underlined the importance that there should be a standardization of the assessment system for these courses. In addition, 5 students recommended that the time allocated to essay writing process should be extended as they thought that the time was not sufficient.

In general, from the quantitative and the qualitative data presented above, one can conclude that in spite of a high level of agreement with many of the items about the assessment of the writing skills at the DML, the item ‘the exam results show the students’ actual ability’ was the least agreed upon one. Furthermore, believing that the scoring of their written works is not objective enough, some students argued that there should a standardization of the assessment system for these courses. Finally, it was suggested that the time allotted to essay writing process should be longer.

#### **4.4.5 Overall**

In conclusion, this part of the analysis focused on the research question “How do DML students evaluate the writing component in terms of program objectives, materials and content, teaching-learning process and the assessment of the writing skills at the DML?”. Analyzing students’ responses to the closed items in the questionnaire, one can suggest that the students’ opinions were positive in general; nevertheless, the open-ended parts of the questionnaire revealed some negative points or suggestions to improve the program.

As for the objectives of the program, for example, researching in the library was the skill in which fewer students felt themselves competent. The data obtained from the open-ended questions of the questionnaire yielded referencing, outlining, process-writing, linkers and paraphrasing as good points covered as objectives. However, spending more time on paraphrasing and summarizing were among the suggestions for the improvement of the writing program objectives.

With regards to the materials and content, DML students evaluated the materials positively, apart from some of the less agreed upon items pertaining to the topics and themes, the variety as well as the visual attractiveness of these materials. The open-ended questions in the questionnaire revealed that some students suggested that the program should include the topics and the writing genres that are likely to be needed in their departments. Complaining about the lack of student flexibility in choosing the topics to write about, lack of interesting topics and the boring thematic nature of the course books; some students highlighted the need for more writing samples, more visual materials and more current topics.

When it comes to the teaching-learning process, it would be true to conclude that students thought that the following activities and methods were adequately employed in their classes: teacher correction, self correction, whole class feedback sessions on exercises, pair work, peer correction, student presentations, dictation, group work, reading aloud written. However, games and role plays were found to be the least commonly used activities in writing-focused lessons. In terms of the general teaching-learning process, students evaluated the implementation of the writing-focused lessons positively. The only two issues they expressed their concerns about were regarding the items indicating that the instructor taught writing in an interesting way and students gave sufficient feedback on each other's performance. On the other hand, the qualitative findings revealed that instructors' written feedback and their support in their writing process were the points students found effective. However, there were concerns among some students that the writing program of ENG 101 and ENG 102 were loaded, tiring and required too many writing assignments. In order to improve the teaching-learning process, students underlined the need for more interactive lessons and more peer and

group work activities.

Finally, about the assessment dimension of the program, students generally made a positive evaluation, but there were some students who did not believe that the exam results showed the students' actual ability. Arguing that the assessment of their written works is not objective enough, some students suggested that there is a need for the standardization of the assessment procedure for these courses. It was also recommended by some students that the time given to essay writing process should be extended.

#### 4.5 Results of the DML Instructor Questionnaire and Interviews

The results regarding the research question “How do DML instructors and the program coordinator evaluate the writing component in terms of program objectives, materials and content, teaching-learning process and the assessment of the writing skills at the DML?” are presented in this part of the study. The findings obtained via both the closed and the open-ended questions of the questionnaire are analyzed first and then, the results of the relevant interview and open-ended survey questions are discussed.

##### 4.5.1 DML Instructors' Opinions about the Program Objectives

The findings about the objectives of the writing program at the DML showed that instructors thought that their students were competent in many of the skills. The results summarized in Table 4.20 illustrate this point clearly.

**Table 4.20 DML instructors' opinions about the objectives of the writing program**

Items	Not Competent At all		Not Competent Enough		Competent Enough		Highly Competent	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. Writing expository paragraphs	0	0.0	1	3.4	11	37.9	17	58.6
2. Writing reaction paragraphs	0	0.0	2	6.9	17	58.6	10	34.5
3. Writing an expository essay	0	0.0	2	6.9	18	62.1	9	31.0
4. Learning, internalizing, accepting and carrying out the stages in a process writing approach, while writing paragraphs and/or essays	0	0.0	2	6.9	19	65.5	8	27.6
5. Using correct, appropriate language structures, vocabulary and discourse markers	1	3.4	13	44.8	14	48.3	1	3.4

**Table 4.20 (continued)**

6. Writing a documented expository essay	1	3.4	3	10.3	21	72.4	4	13.8
7. Writing a documented essay	0	0.0	3	10.3	21	72.4	5	17.2
8. Writing a reaction-response essay	0	0.0	4	13.8	18	62.1	7	24.1
9. Evaluating sources for relevance and reliability	0	0.0	7	24.1	18	62.1	4	13.8
10. Identifying reference information	0	0.0	3	10.3	17	58.6	9	31.0
11. Researching on the Internet	0	0.0	5	17.2	20	69.0	4	13.8
12. Researching in the library	0	0.0	9	31.0	19	65.5	1	3.4
13. Identifying and selecting relevant sources.	0	0.0	3	10.3	23	79.3	3	10.3
14. Practicing using APA citation rules	0	0.0	8	27.6	16	55.2	5	17.2
15. Practicing borrowing ideas by paraphrasing, summarizing, quoting, and synthesizing	0	0.0	11	37.9	16	55.2	2	6.9

Considering the results of the instructors' opinions about how competent students became in the given writing skills, it would be fair to suggest that except for the skill 'writing expository paragraphs' marked as 'highly competent' by more than half of the instructors (58.6%), DML students were considered to be 'competent enough' by more than half of the instructors in all the following skills: 'writing reaction paragraphs' (58.6%), 'writing an expository essay' (62.1%), 'learning, internalizing, accepting and carrying out the stages in a process writing approach while writing paragraphs and/or essays' (65.5%), 'writing a documented expository essay' (72.4%), 'writing a documented essay' (72.4%), 'writing a reaction-response essay' (62.1%), 'writing a reaction-response essay' (62.1%), 'evaluating sources for relevance and reliability' (62.1%), 'identifying reference information' (58.6%), 'researching on the internet' (65.5%), 'researching in the library' (79.3%), 'identifying and selecting relevant sources' (79.3%), 'practicing using APA citation rules' (55.2%), 'practicing borrowing ideas by paraphrasing, summarizing, quoting, and synthesizing' (55.2%).

On the other hand, the skill 'using correct, appropriate language structures, vocabulary and discourse markers' was marked as 'competent enough' by less than half of the instructors (48.3%) while a similar number of instructors (44.8%) thought that students did not become competent enough in this skill.

The open-ended questions revealed both positive and negative findings relevant to the program objectives of ENG 101 and ENG 102. Nearly half of the instructors (n=15) made positive comments about the writing objectives of these courses. Process-based writing approach (n=8), outlining (n=3), borrowing ideas (n=3), awareness of

plagiarism (2), writing thesis statement (n=2) and academic writing (n=2) were considered to be the most positive points about the objectives. On the other hand, some suggestions for the improvement of the objectives were made by 16 DML instructors. For instance, 11 instructors held the idea that they should diversify writing genres (e.g., report writing for most of the engineering students and literature survey for students in social sciences) on the basis of students' departments. In other words, they argued for teaching different types of writing for students at different departments. Moreover, 7 instructors suggested that the citation rules (e.g., MLA) required by students' departments should be taught instead of teaching APA to all the students regardless of their departments. While the program objectives were considered to be too detailed and redundant for students studying at technical departments by 5 instructors, 4 instructors urged for more focus on paraphrasing, synthesizing and summarizing as a skill. In addition, 3 instructors recommended that more focus should be placed on acknowledging the sources and 2 instructors commented that they should focus more on the mastering of appropriate language structures, vocabulary and discourse markers.

The interviews and the open-ended surveys administered with 10 DML instructors including the program coordinator showed that although most of the instructors responded (n=6) positively to the question whether all the given ENG 101 and ENG 102 course objectives were achieved, three teachers drew attention to "paraphrasing" as a skill that could not be fully achieved. One instructor justified this point as follows:

Students' proficiency level is simply far too low to successfully manipulate grammar structures and vocabulary without distorting meaning. (Instructor 5)

Similarly, one instructor made the following comment to raise other concerns about the skills 'learning, internalizing, accepting and carrying out the stages in a process writing approach, while writing paragraphs and/or essays' and 'evaluating sources for relevance and reliability' in addition to the process-writing approach followed by the DML:

Process writing is not feasible with 75 students per term. However, the

approach is not product either. It's in between. My personal opinion is that one can learn how to write equally well in a product approach. Only practice will make perfect, whether it is process or product. Moreover, evaluating sources for reliability is something they need to practice outside class, which they are not very likely to do, so this objective may not be fully achieved. (Instructor 5)

When asked whether they could suggest any changes (e.g., additions, omissions, rewording) for the objectives, almost none of the instructors proposed any changes in the list of given objectives. Only one instructor suggested rewording of some of the objectives:

Practicing is not a behavioral objective. If you practice something it does not mean the objective has been achieved. So 'borrowing ideas by paraphrasing sentences', by paraphrasing a paragraph, borrowing ideas by summarizing a paragraph, by summarizing a multi-paragraph text would be more appropriate. (Instructor 5)

In brief, instructors declared agreement with the idea that their students were competent in all the skills which were actually the objectives of ENG 101 and ENG 102. The only skill about which the instructors had mixed feelings ('not competent enough' and 'competent enough') was related to the correct, appropriate use of language structures, vocabulary and discourse markers. The qualitative data collected via the open-ended questions in the questionnaire showed that some instructors believed that some objectives regarding paraphrasing, process writing, evaluating sources for relevance and reliability might not have been achieved due to reasons like large class size or the students' low proficiency level. In terms of the positive and negative comments about the objectives, some instructors listed the following positive skills related to the objectives of the writing program: process-based writing approach, outlining, borrowing ideas, awareness of plagiarism, writing thesis statement and academic writing. On the contrary, some instructors argued for the diversification of writing genres depending on students' future departments. Besides, some instructors suggested including in the list of objectives the citation rules (e.g., MLA for some engineering departments) required by different departments instead of teaching APA to all the students. It was highlighted by some instructors that the objectives were too

detailed and redundant for students, especially for the ones studying at technical departments. Among other suggestions made by the instructors were more focus on paraphrasing, synthesizing, summarizing, acknowledging the sources and the mastering of appropriate language structures, vocabulary and discourse markers

#### 4.5.2 DML Instructors' Opinions about the Program Materials and Content

DML instructors were asked to respond to items about the materials and content used to teach writing at the DML so as to reveal how they evaluate this dimension of the writing programs of ENG 101 and ENG 102. The findings obtained via the questionnaire are presented in Table 4.21.

**Table 4.21 DML instructors' opinions about the materials and the content of the writing program**

Items	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Not Sure		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. The course materials (i.e. <i>Academic English: Survival Skills I and II</i> ), provided students with what they needed to know or do.	0	0.0	1	3.4	0	0.0	15	51.7	13	44.8
2. The course materials were appropriate to students' interests.	0	0.0	2	6.9	6	20.7	11	37.9	10	34.5
3. The course materials fit students' long term goals in terms of writing skills.	0	0.0	1	3.4	8	27.6	9	31.0	11	37.9
4. The topics and themes in the materials were interesting.	0	0.0	1	3.4	5	17.2	13	44.8	10	34.5
5. The course materials offered continuity.	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	6.9	9	31.0	18	62.1
6. The writing skills taught in the program were useful for improving students' general writing ability in English	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	6.9	16	55.2	11	37.9
7. The writing skills were taught sequentially (i.e. building upon prior learning).	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	6.9	10	34.5	17	58.6
8. The materials were in line with the writing objectives.	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	3.4	9	31.0	19	65.5
9. The course books were appropriately priced.	0	0.0	0	0.0	5	17.2	11	37.9	13	44.8
10. Course materials were sufficient to improve students' writing skills.	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	10.3	12	41.4	14	48.3
11. The writing sections in the course books were effective in improving students' writing skills.	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	10.3	11	37.9	15	51.7

**Table 4.21 (continued)**

12. The course materials had variety.	0	0.0	2	6.9	1	3.4	12	41.4	14	48.3
13. The course materials helped students to improve their writing skills.	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	6.9	17	58.6	10	34.5
14. The course materials were visually attractive.	0	0.0	1	3.4	6	20.7	13	44.8	9	31.0
15. The course materials were appropriate to students' proficiency level in English.	0	0.0	3	10.3	7	24.1	11	37.9	8	27.6
16. The supplementary materials were useful for improving students' writing skills.	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	9	31.0	20	69.0

Analyzing the results of DML instructors' views about the materials and the content of these materials, it was realized that the level of instructors' agreement with the items was very high. The highest level of agreement (51.7% agreed and 44.8% strongly agreed) was with the item 'the course materials (i.e. *Academic English: Survival Skills I and II*) provided students with what they needed to know or do' while the lowest level of agreement was with the item 'the course materials were appropriate to students' proficiency level in English' marked as 'not sure' by 7 (24.1%) and 'disagree' by 3 (10.3%) instructors.

The open-ended parts of the questionnaire revealed that among 14 DML instructors who wrote comments about the materials and content of the writing program at the DML, 8 instructors favored the idea of including topics relevant to their students' departments into their materials (e.g., topics about economy for economy students). Moreover, 7 instructors suggested that instead of following a thematic approach, a variety of topics should be included in the course books to make writing more enjoyable. Also, 6 instructors recommended that materials should be visually more attractive.

The interview and the open-ended survey findings obtained from 10 instructors revealed that in terms of the course books, the great majority of the instructors (n=9) held positive attitudes towards the course books as they believed that the books were thematic, gave flexibility to choose among different activities and were very specific to course objectives and their students' profiles. Only one of the instructors thought that the reading texts were "a little bit overloaded" and made the following comment:

The books are very loaded and there is no way we can do the books in full in the class. We don't have to do everything in the book in class, though. (Instructor 7)

As far as the content of the course books is concerned, many instructors expressed their satisfaction with their contents by underlining that the main themes “Power” and “Change” were general; therefore, they can be related to many other sub-topics. However, one instructor commented as follows to underline both the positive and the negative points of theme-based course books used in ENG 101 and ENG 102:

...as the books are theme-based, each unit is about power in the second semester. This can be a little bit boring for our students. I know that there was a kind of complaint coming from students. But there is something good about the organization of each unit around the same theme. Although everything is about change in the first book and power in the second, we can just examine and analyze the issue from different perspectives through the same theme. I am happy with the theme change a lot. Power is also OK for argumentation and debate especially. (Instructor 2)

Making the following remark about the topics and themes in the course book, another instructor suggested that thematic approach should be abandoned:

Abandoning the thematic approach would be nice. This way the book would become more usable by a wider community. If teachers insist on a writing theme they can do so without following a thematic book through some extra extensive reading materials. (Instructor 3)

None of the other instructors made any suggestions on other specific topics and possible themes to include in the course books.

To sum up findings about the materials and content from the perspective of DML instructors, it can be concluded that the instructors were generally highly pleased with the materials and content used to teach writing in ENG 101 and ENG 102. While nearly all of the instructors thought that the course materials (i.e. *Academic English: Survival Skills I and II*) provided students with what they needed to know or do, some instructors had doubts about whether the course materials were suitable for students’ proficiency level. The qualitative findings obtained from the questionnaire revealed that some instructors argued against the thematic nature of the course books and suggested that a variety of topics should be used to make writing more enjoyable. It was also recommended by some instructors that the topics covered in the materials should be relevant to the students’ departments and the materials should be visually attractive. The

interview findings showed that despite the fact that most instructors evaluated the course books positively, there were a few instructors arguing that the books were loaded and the thematic nature of the content of the course books made students bored.

#### 4.5.3 DML Instructors' Opinions about the Teaching-Learning Process

Like objectives and materials and content, the teaching learning process applied in teaching writing at the DML was evaluated by the instructors. The findings obtained via the relevant parts of the questionnaire, interviews and the open-ended surveys aimed to reveal instructors' opinions about the frequency of certain activities and methods employed in ENG 101 and ENG 102 as well as the teaching-learning process in general. The instructors' responses to the items concerning the activities and the methods used to teach writing are presented in Table 4.22 below.

**Table 4.22 DML instructors' opinions about the activities and methods**

Items	None		Not Enough		The Right Amount		More than Necessary	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. Student presentations	1	3.4	12	41.4	16	55.2	0	0.0
2. Pair work	0	0.0	0	0.0	29	100.0	0	0.0
3. Group work	0	0.0	4	13.8	25	86.2	0	0.0
4. Discussions	1	3.4	9	31.0	19	65.5	0	0.0
5. Games	16	55.2	8	27.6	5	17.2	0	0.0
6. Role plays	12	41.4	11	37.9	6	20.7	0	0.0
7. Projects	12	41.4	7	24.1	10	34.5	0	0.0
8. Reading aloud written work	18	62.1	6	20.7	5	17.2	0	0.0
9. Whole class activities done on the board	0	0.0	7	24.1	5	17.2	17	58.6
10. Whole class feedback sessions on exercises	3	10.3	1	3.4	25	86.2	0	0.0
11. Peer correction	9	31.0	8	27.6	12	41.4	0	0.0
12. Self correction	4	13.8	8	27.6	17	58.6	0	0.0
13. Teacher correction	1	3.4	1	3.4	21	72.4	6	20.7
14. Journal keeping	24	82.8	3	10.3	2	6.9	0	0.0
15. Brainstorming	0	0.0	5	17.2	23	79.3	1	3.4
16. Dictation	25	86.2	3	10.3	1	3.4	0	0.0

The results shown on Table 4.22 reveal that the only activity that was marked as 'more than necessary' by more than half of the DML instructors (58.6%) was 'whole class activities done on the board'. While pair work was considered to be used at the

right amount by all the instructors, group work (86.2%), whole class feedback sessions on exercises (86.2%) and brainstorming (79.3%) activities were marked as ‘the right amount’ by the vast majority of the instructors. When it comes to teacher correction, a great majority of instructors (72.4%) indicated that this method was sufficiently employed by the instructors.

On the other hand, some activities were regarded as not sufficiently applied at the DML. Games, role plays, projects, reading aloud written work and journal keeping are examples of such activities. As far as the type of correction is concerned, while peer correction was marked as either ‘none’ or ‘not enough’ by 17 (58.6%), it was marked as ‘the right amount’ by 12 (41.4%) instructors.

Table 4.23 below summarizes the results about the DML instructors’ perspectives with regards to the general teaching-learning process followed by the DML instructors.

**Table 4.23 DML instructors’ opinions about the general teaching-learning process**

Items	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Not Sure		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. There was an efficient use of time in class.	0	0.0	0	0.3	3	10.3	19	65.5	7	24.1
2. There was a good student-teacher interaction.	0	0.0	1	3.4	2	6.9	15	51.7	11	37.9
3. The students had cooperative relationships with each other.	0	0.0	0	0.0	4	13.8	21	72.4	4	13.8
4. A variety of activities was used to teach writing.	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	10.3	18	62.1	8	27.6
5. I taught writing in an interesting way.	0	0.0	0	0.0	10	34.5	12	41.4	7	24.1
6. It was easy for students to follow me in writing lessons.	0	0.0	1	3.4	2	6.9	17	58.6	9	31.0
7. My instructions were clear.	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	17	58.6	12	41.4
8. My teaching methodology was effective in students’ learning.	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	10.3	19	65.5	7	24.1
9. I encouraged students to participate in the lessons.	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	14	48.3	15	51.7
10. I used audio-visual aids effectively in the lessons.	1	3.4	0	0.0	2	6.9	19	65.5	7	24.1
11. I used the board effectively.	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	6.9	18	62.1	9	31.0
12. I gave equal attention to all students in the class.	0	0.0	5	17.2	0	0.0	16	55.2	8	27.6
13. I corrected students’ mistakes in an effective way.	0	0.0	1	3.4	1	3.4	19	65.5	8	27.6

**Table 4.23 (continued)**

14. Students helped each other to learn how to write.	0	0.0	6	20.7	10	34.5	12	41.4	1	3.4
15. I helped students to learn how to write.	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	3.4	18	62.1	10	34.5
16. I gave sufficient feedback on students' performance (i.e. written work).	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	3.4	16	55.2	12	41.4
17. Students gave sufficient feedback on each other's performance.	7	24.1	5	17.2	9	31.0	6	20.7	2	6.9

Analyzing the results about the instructors' opinions about the teaching-learning process to teach writing at the DML, one can see that nearly all the items were either agreed or strongly agreed by most of the instructors. There were only two items marked as 'not sure', 'disagree' or 'strongly agree' by some of the instructors. One of these items is 'I taught the writing material in an interesting way' about which 10 instructors expressed uncertainty (34.5%). The other item 'students gave sufficient feedback on each other's performance' was either disagreed or strongly disagreed by 13 DML instructors (44.8%).

Some findings obtained by means of the open-ended questions were found to be relevant to the teaching-learning process at the DML. It was found that out of 17 instructors who commented positively about the activities and methods as well as the general teaching-learning process, 10 instructors indicated that one of the most positive sides of the program was the teacher feedback. Teachers' rapport with students (n=6) and the brainstorming activities (n=6) were found to be the other strengths of the program from the perspective of DML instructors. On the other hand, some instructors (n=5) shared their concerns about students' lack of English background to take ENG 101 and 102 courses. As another negative aspect of the writing program, 5 instructors underlined that there was too much focus on the form while 4 instructors asserted that there was too much guidance and feedback by the teacher in the program. While 3 instructors agreed that ENG 101 and ENG 102 courses were loaded courses and there was not enough time to cover everything, 3 other instructors underlined the fact that the classrooms were crowded. As a suggestion to the latter problem, 3 instructors drew attention to the ideal number of students (15-20 students) as they thought the number of

students was very important for ENG 101 and ENG 102 courses requiring a process-based writing approach. Considering the small number of writing tasks carried out in the students' own departments, 3 DML instructors argued that the departments should emphasize writing in English.

In the interviews and the parallel open-ended surveys, the instructors were asked to describe the way they conduct writing classes in ENG 101 and ENG 102. Despite a few different ways to teach writing, some common teaching practices were named as process-based teaching (n=3) and lecturing (n=3) by the instructors. Three instructors emphasized lecturing as the main teaching method they used while teaching writing. One instructor made the following comment with regards to the conduct of the writing classes:

I can't say that we are very creative in activities actually. It is just lecturing basically and then doing practice and then getting feedback so that they are more ready for their individual writing. These courses are very loaded courses and I don't think teachers have a lot of time for very creative activities. (Instructor 8)

While one instructor argued that they lectured a lot because of students' expectations, another instructor made the following comment to justify the use of lecturing and to list the other activities and methods used in writing classes in addition to lecturing:

There is lecturing unfortunately because of the time constraints. Also, we analyze different types of essays. For instance, it is a reaction paragraph writing, we analyze students' paragraphs from previous semesters. It helps a lot. Students examine those and look at the problems, weaker and stronger parts. Classroom discussions also help. For correction, I underline some parts, correct some parts, use symbols, praise some parts and I use notes and post-its. Also, I have some interviews with the students. (Instructor 4)

One instructor, on the other hand, made the following description about how process-based approach was applied in ENG 101 and ENG 102 courses:

...first of all they bring us their thesis statement, choose their topics and bring us their thesis statement sentence and then students go home and correct it. Then, everybody at the same time comes back again with their first outlines without the sources. They just draw an outline, bring it to us and then we give feedback in terms of organization like "is this minor related to the major", "how is it related".

Some teachers do this orally as face-to-face feedback, some teachers give this written. And then, they go back home, do the necessary changes and then come back to us again with the second outline with the sources in this time. This time, they find relevant sources for relevant places in their outlines, minimum 2 maximum 5. We give feedback again. They actually attach a copy of their sources to this outline underlining the borrowed sentences so that we can check whether they could paraphrase and if the source is reliable. After all this process, they come to class with their second outline with their dictionaries, papers and ideas in their minds and then we give them three hours to write their first drafts. Before this first draft, all the things are done at home but the teacher gives feedback. (Instructor 3)

On the other hand, two instructors mentioned different activities like showing former student papers without showing their names on OHP. Another instructor made the following detailed description of how a combination of deduction and induction was applied in the way writing was taught:

I use a combination of deduction and induction as the needs of the students require. I know where they will be confused or where they will make mistakes. I teach those before they actually start writing. They see models, analyze them and evaluate them in terms of organization and content. They do exercises in isolation to practice writing individual elements before they write whole essays. (Instructor 1)

When asked whether they find the way they teach writing effective, except for only 1 instructor who stated that it would have been more effective if more time had been allocated for each objective, nearly all the instructors responded positively to this question. As one instructor stated as follows, 9 instructors agreed that the way they conduct writing classes was effective:

I think it is effective because I have had no student who did not learn to write a decent essay and students usually include in their feedback they really learnt how to write academic English essays. (Instructor 7)

Moreover, DML instructors were asked to propose activities for the improvement of the teaching-learning process in ENG 101 and ENG 102 classes. Two instructors complained about the fact that certain activities like conferencing as a means to give feedback and blogging could not be incorporated into the program due to crowded classrooms and there is a need to include such activities into the program. One of these

instructors made the following relevant comment:

The high number of students blocks the application of some good activities like and feedback types such as conferencing. I would also give oral feedback to students when I had the time. (Instructor 1)

While one instructor proposed more use of pair and group work, small group discussions and real writing tasks to teach writing, another instructor commented as follows to suggest using more assignments, journal keeping and articles or podcasts as ideal activities in these courses:

I think, we are not giving so much homework. If we could give some extra writing tasks like journal writing exercises and blog reading, it would be better. We can send them articles or podcasts for them to listen and discuss and write about later. (Instructor 4)

To conclude the results regarding the activities and the methods used in writing-focused lessons as well as the general teaching process, it would be fair to state that the application of the whole class activities done on the board in writing-focused lessons was evaluated as more than necessary while group work, whole class feedback sessions on exercises and brainstorming were considered to be sufficiently employed by the instructors. On the other hand, pair work, games, role plays, projects, reading aloud written work and journal keeping were regarded as the least commonly employed activities. As for the teaching-learning process in general, there was common agreement with the effectiveness of the teaching-learning process, but a lower percentage of agreement can be seen as for items regarding the interesting way of teaching writing and the cooperation among students to learn how to write. Also, the qualitative data obtained from the questionnaires revealed that the teacher feedback, teachers' rapport with students and the brainstorming activities were the strong points of the teaching-learning process.

On the contrary, some negative points that can be related to the teaching-learning process were focused on by some instructors. These points were as follows: the lack of students' English background to take ENG 101 and 102 courses, too much focus on the form and too much guidance and feedback, the load of these courses, the lack of time to

cover everything and the crowded classrooms. About the last point, some instructors suggested reducing the number of students to 15-20 at the DML as they believed that there should not be more students in a class where the teaching of writing mostly depended on a process-based approach requiring many stages like outlining and drafting. Finally, it was recommended that the departments should also emphasize English writing.

Through the interviews, it was found that some instructors used lecturing most of the time because of time constraints and the expectations of the students. Generally, instructors agreed that the way they conduct their writing classes was effective. Among activities and methods instructors thought might be useful for students were conferencing as a means to give feedback, blogging, more use of pair and group work as well as small group discussions, more assignments, journal keeping and articles or podcasts. According to the instructors, the common reason why these activities could not be done in the class was the lack of time allocated for ENG 101 and ENG 102 courses and the large class size.

#### **4.5.4 DML Instructors' Opinions about the Assessment of the Writing Skills**

Now that the other components, such as objectives, materials and content and the teaching learning processes were evaluated by the DML instructors, Table 4.24 summarizes the findings about instructors' views about the assessment of the writing skills in ENG 101 and ENG 102. The results obtained via the relevant parts of the questionnaire are presented first. Findings obtained from the interviews and the open-ended surveys are presented later.

**Table 4.24 DML instructors' opinions about the assessment of the writing skills**

Items	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Not Sure		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. Students were assessed on the things (i.e. skills) they practiced in the lessons.	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	3.4	11	37.9	17	58.6
2. Before the tests (i.e. mid-terms and final exams), students were given information about the scope of the tests.	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	3.4	9	31.0	19	65.5
3. The directions in the exams were clear.	0	0.0	1	3.4	1	3.4	9	31.0	18	62.1
4. The materials used in the lessons and the test materials were similar in terms of difficulty level.	0	0.0	2	6.9	7	24.1	11	37.9	9	31.0
5. The assignment/homework (i.e. paragraph and essay writing) results demonstrate students' actual ability/proficiency in writing skills.	0	0.0	0	0.0	9	31.0	14	48.3	6	20.7
6. The exam results demonstrate students' actual ability/proficiency in writing skills.	0	0.0	3	10.3	7	24.1	13	44.8	6	20.7
7. Students' writing skills have been correctly measured in ENG 101 and ENG 102.	0	0.0	1	3.4	9	31.0	16	55.2	3	10.3
8. The grading was fair.	0	0.0	1	3.4	6	20.7	15	51.7	7	24.1
9. Homework/assignments were relevant to the course objectives.	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	6.9	17	58.6	10	34.5
10. Students' performance in ENG 101 and ENG 102 was good.	0	0.0	2	6.9	14	48.3	13	44.8	0	0.0
11. Students' writing skills have improved after these courses.	0	0.0	0	0.0	7	24.1	17	58.6	5	17.2
12. Students received sufficient feedback on their assignments.	0	0.0	1	3.4	0	0.0	16	55.2	12	41.4
13. Students received sufficient feedback on their class work.	0	0.0	0	0.0	4	13.8	16	55.2	9	31.0
14. Students received sufficient feedback on their performance in the exams.	0	0.0	2	6.9	5	17.2	14	48.3	8	27.6

The findings about the DML instructors' perspectives both about the assessment of the writing skills in ENG 101 and ENG 102 and about students' writing performance indicate that while instructors generally evaluated the assessment and the students' writing performance positively, some issues were *strongly agreed* by more than half of the instructors. These items were as follows: 'before the tests (i.e. mid-terms and final

exams), students were given information about the scope of the tests' (65.5%), 'the directions in the exams were clear' (62.1%) and 'the directions in the exams were clear' (58.6%). On the contrary, the item intended to reveal instructors' views about the students' writing performance in ENG 101 and ENG 102 was marked as 'not sure' by nearly half of the students (48.3%).

The open-ended part of the questionnaire revealing findings with regards to the assessment of the writing skills, it was found that 7 instructors (out of 13 instructors who made comments relevant to the assessment dimension of the program) recommended that the assessment criteria should be more comprehensive and standard. In addition, 3 instructors suggested that they needed product-based assessment along with process-based writing. Also, it was revealed that 2 instructors agreed on the idea that double rater is a necessity while grading students' papers.

The interviews and the open-ended surveys conducted with 10 DML instructors, on the other hand, revealed that 8 instructors were satisfied with the assessment aspect of the program and made no relevant suggestions for the improvement of the assessment procedure used to test writing. Only one teacher drew attention to the importance of skills other than writing and made the following suggestion for the improvement of the assessment of the writing skills in ENG 101 and ENG 102:

I think during the first semester, we just grade a lot of writing activities so in the mid-term and final exams; we don't need to do it again. I think, we are over grading and overemphasizing writing in ENG 101. There are other goals like speaking, listening and reading. We have to pay attention to those things, too. (Instructor 3)

As revealed through the questionnaire, another instructor held the idea that product-based writing assessment could be included in the assessment procedure applied to test writing in ENG 101 and ENG 102.

...it shouldn't be like sacrificing a better thing for something small but maybe, we could add another component like a TOEFL for example or like IELTS writing. More context is given, timed writing without the process, without the goings and comings to the teacher to get feedback. (Instructor 5)

On the other hand, when asked whether instructors were generally satisfied with the students' writing performance in general, 3 instructors responded positively while all the others commented that it depends on the department as they thought that writing performance of students in some departments was better than the writing performance of students in some other departments.

Overall, instructors were very positive about the assessment of the writing skills in ENG 101 and ENG 102; nevertheless, many instructors expressed uncertainty about the improvement of their students' writing performance in ENG 101 and ENG 102. The qualitative data, on the other hand, revealed that some instructors suggested that the assessment criteria used for these courses should be more comprehensive and standard and there is a need for product-based assessment along with process-based writing. Furthermore, it was recommended by a few instructors that the double rater was a necessity while marking students' papers. While the majority of the interviewed instructors expressed their agreement with the current assessment practices, a few instructors made some recommendations. That the assessment of the other skills should not be neglected for the sake of writing is one of these suggestions. Moreover, it was suggested that product-based writing assessment should be tried at the DML. This last point was also revealed through the open-ended parts of the questionnaire. Finally, when asked whether they were generally pleased with the students' writing performance in general, most of the instructors explained that the answer to this question changes from department to department.

#### **4.5.5 Preparation of the DML Students for their Departments**

For the overall evolution of the writing program of the ENG 101 and ENG 102 courses, the DML instructors were asked to respond to interview or open-ended survey questions like "Do you think the writing program at the DML has prepared students sufficiently for their departmental courses? Why/ Why not?". In the same way, they were asked the following questions in the questionnaire and the results obtained from the questionnaire are shown in Table 4.25.

1. How well do you think the writing program at the Department of Basic English prepares students for the writing components of ENG 101 and ENG 102 at the DML?
2. How well do you think ENG 101 and ENG 102 courses prepare DML students to produce written responses in their own departments?

**Table 4.25 DML instructors' opinions about the writing program in general**

		<i>F</i>	%
1. How well do you think the writing program at the DBE prepares students to successfully participate in the DML courses like ENG 101 and ENG 102?	<b>Very good</b>	0	0.0
	<b>Good</b>	6	20.7
	<b>Average</b>	13	44.8
	<b>Just a little</b>	7	24.1
	<b>Poor</b>	3	10.3
2. How well do you think ENG 101 and ENG 102 courses prepare DML students to produce written responses in their own departments?	<b>Very good</b>	2	6.9
	<b>Good</b>	17	58.6
	<b>Average</b>	8	27.6
	<b>Just a little</b>	1	3.4
	<b>Poor</b>	1	3.4
<b>TOTAL</b>		29	100

In terms of the preparation of students by the DBE for DML courses like ENG 101 and ENG 102 with regards to the writing skill, most of the instructors (44.8%) gave the answer 'average'. When asked how DML instructors thought ENG 101 and ENG 102 courses prepared DML students to produce written responses in their own departments, more than half of the instructors marked 'good'.

In the interview and in the open-ended surveys conducted with 10 instructors, the question whether DBE prepares students sufficiently for the DML courses like ENG 101 and ENG 102 were commented positively as follows by 4 instructors:

...they (the DBE instructors) do prepare students well because they teach very mechanical formulaic paragraph writing. We stretch those paragraphs and make them write a little longer, they can easily turn it into essay. Students already know what a topic sentence is, that they have to have majors and minors and that they have to have some sort of organization which is linear. They already have an idea about academic writing. (Instructor 7)

On the other hand, 6 instructors expressed their concerns about the question. As commented by one of these instructors, the lack of knowledge about the basics of writing skills is one of these concerns:

When students come to DML, they have difficulty in differentiation between a topic sentence and a thesis statement so it takes some time to familiarize students to the organization principle of academic essay. It would be very good if the DBE can teach at least some terminology like what a thesis statement is and how to start and end an essay. Such an introduction to essay writing would be wonderful for a smooth transition to the DML courses. (Instructor 5)

Similarly, one of these DML instructors argued that students coming from the DBE had some problems by exemplifying the argument with examples from DBE students' written works:

Students coming from the DBE start their paragraphs with a long introduction. We say that the paragraph should start with a main idea. Either we have to change our attitude or the DBE teachers should change theirs. We are evaluating the proficiency papers together with DBE teachers, one teacher from DBE and one for DML so we have a chance to see what they think about writing. On some papers written by DBE students, I have seen expressions like 'according to the research' but what that research is about is not clear in the written product and students have problems in expressing their own ideas. I think, such false supports could be eliminated. (Instructor 6)

The second question, whether ENG 101 and ENG 102 courses prepared students sufficiently for their departmental courses in terms of writing was answered as follows by more than half of the instructors (n=6) who drew attention to the different writing needs for students of different departments:

We teach a wide range of students in different departments. In some departments, we teach exactly what they need. In some departments, we teach something to their needs. For example, engineering departments, I don't think they ever write essays and I don't think they will ever write essays. The format they are using is not the format we are teaching them. So for some departments, we don't really serve their needs. But, when it comes to social sciences, I can say that we prepare students better. (Instructor 9)

Another instructor made a similar comment summarizing the general feeling of most of the other participants by focusing on the relationship between students' departments and the writing program offered by the DML:

It changes from department to department because in the department of sociology or history for instance, what we do in the writing course could be more useful. But, for engineering departments, I cannot say the same thing because students may not use these writing skills in their departmental courses. (Instructor 1)

In response to the same question, believing that ENG 101 and ENG 102 prepared students sufficiently for their departments, two other instructors made positive comments as follows emphasizing some of the specific skills students gained through DML courses:

Although each department has different needs, I believe the writing program at the DML provides the students with general knowledge on writing essays and conveying ideas through organized forms of writing. More importantly, the students are familiarized with the idea of giving credit to the scholars who they ‘borrow’ information from, and learn about academic integrity, which definitely helps their research/studies in departmental courses. (Instructor 10)

In order to better prepare DML students for their departments, one instructor stated the problem with the preparation of students for their future writing needs in their departments was that all the departments have different writing needs. Therefore, the instructor pointed out as follows that although an English for Specific (ESP) writing program would be an ideal solution, there were some concerns arising from the instructors’ expertise, the logistics and the financial support to implement an ESP program:

Students’ needs in their departments have always been on our agenda. But we have a problem because all the departments have different needs, kinds of writings like report writing, argumentative, reaction-response. We try to have all of them in the same course book although it is a little bit difficult. That is why, we change our books frequently. I mean, we don’t do ESP; we do EAP here. So that’s why we have to have some common grounds, some middle grounds among all the departments. The issue of ESP always arises during the meetings and students also want some help for their departments in their writings, in their vocabulary and so and such. But we can’t do that. I mean, we don’t have that much expertise, logistics and financial support. It is a totally different area. I don’t think we will do that soon. (Instructor 3)

In short, instructors were asked to respond to two critical questions to realize whether the DBE writing program prepared students sufficiently for the DML courses and whether the DML writing program prepared students sufficiently to produce written responses in their own departments. As for the data obtained from the questionnaire, it can be seen that most of the instructors ranked ‘average’ about the question ‘How well do you think the writing program at the Department of Basic English prepares students

for the writing components of ENG 101 and ENG 102 at the DML?’ When asked to respond to how well ENG 101 and ENG 102 prepared DML students to produce written responses in their own departments, more than half of the instructors responded as ‘good’. The interviews and the open-ended surveys showed that while less than half of the instructors argued that the paragraphs formats taught at the DBE can easily be turned into essay at the DML, more than half of the instructors agreed that students come to the DML with the lack of knowledge about the basics of writing. When it comes to the second question whether DML prepared students sufficiently for their departments, most of the instructors thought that the answer to this question changes depending on the department as they agreed that their program is more in line with departments, especially the ones in the field of social sciences. To better prepare students for their department one DML instructor argued for an ESP model of writing instruction.

#### **4.5.6 Overall**

This part of the analysis focused on the research question “How do DML instructors and the program coordinator evaluate the writing component in terms of program objectives, materials and content, teaching-learning process and the assessment of the writing skills at the DML?”.

As far as the objectives of the ENG 101 and ENG 102 courses are concerned, it was found that most of the instructors considered their students competent in all the given skills. Still, some objectives caused uncertainty or disagreement among the instructors. One of these objectives was related to using correct, appropriate use of language structures, vocabulary and discourse markers. Other objectives in which students could not become competent from the perspective of their instructors were the ones connected to paraphrasing, process writing, evaluating sources for relevance and reliability. The reasons why these objectives might not have been fully achieved by the students were listed by some instructors as the large class size or the students’ low proficiency level. The interviews also revealed that process-based writing approach, outlining, borrowing ideas, the awareness of plagiarism, writing thesis statement and

academic writing were the positive points regarding the program objectives. Besides these good points, some suggestions were made to improve the list of program objectives. For instance, the need for the diversification of writing genres and the citation rules on the basis of students' departments was underlined by many instructors. More focus on paraphrasing, synthesizing, summarizing, acknowledging the sources and the mastering of appropriate language structures, vocabulary and discourse markers were mentioned as skills in need of more attention.

Although the instructors evaluated the materials and content very positively in general, some instructors expressed doubts about whether the course materials were suitable for students' proficiency level. Besides, the thematic nature of the course books was evaluated negatively by some instructors, and it was suggested that a variety of topics and topics relevant to students' departments and visually attractive materials should be used in the program.

As for the activities and methods as well as the general teaching-learning process, it can be concluded that whole class activities done on the board were applied more than sufficiently while group work, whole class feedback sessions on exercises and brainstorming were employed at the right amount. On the contrary, pair work, games, role plays, projects, reading aloud written work and journal keeping were the least commonly applied ones. When it comes to the teaching-learning process in general, most of the instructors thought that the process was effective. Still, a certain level of disagreement and uncertainty can be seen with items regarding the interesting way of teaching writing and the cooperation among students to learn how to write. Moreover, while the teacher feedback, teachers' rapport with students and the brainstorming activities were regarded as the positive aspects of the teaching-learning process, the following issues were expressed as rather negative ones: the lack of students' English background, too much focus on the form and on the guidance and feedback, the load of these courses, the lack of time to cover everything and the crowded classrooms. Suggestions to make the teaching-learning process more effective revealed that there was a need to reduce the number of students in ENG 101 and ENG 102 classes. It was also implied by some DML instructors that some departments at METU should focus

more on English writing. About the way writing was generally taught, it was found that lecturing was more commonly used by the instructors because of students' expectations and lack of time. While it was realized that the instructors evaluated their conduct of writing lessons positively, the instructors believed that activities like conferencing, blogging, more use of pair and group work, group discussions, more assignments, journal keeping and articles or podcasts would add to the quality of instruction.

While it is true that the assessment and the students' performance in writing were generally evaluated positively, some issues were rather negatively responded to. For example, a considerable number of instructors indicated that they were not sure about improvement of their students' writing performance in ENG 101 and ENG 102. For the improvement of the assessment procedure, some instructors urged for a more comprehensive and standard assessment scale, product-based assessment besides process-based writing and double rater. The issue of product-based assessment was brought up by one of the instructors in the interview as well. In the interviews, most of the instructors stated that they were generally pleased with the current assessment practices.

Finally, to the question how well the DBE writing program prepared students for ENG 101 and ENG 102, most of the instructors gave the answer 'average' while the question whether the ENG 101 and ENG 102 prepared students sufficiently for their own departments were generally responded as 'good'. While some of the DML instructors expressed satisfaction with the writing program at the DBE, the majority of them complained about students' lack of knowledge about the basics of writing. As for the other question, most of the instructors thought that the answer to this question changes from one department to another. In order to better prepare students for their departments, an ESP model of writing instruction was recommended.

#### **4.6 Results of the Content Course Instructor Survey**

In this part of the study, the research question “How do content course instructors at different departments evaluate the writing program at the SFL (the DBE and the DML)?” is dealt with focusing on the program objectives (DBE and DML writing objectives) as well as materials and content considering that the content course instructors might not have sufficient information about the teaching-learning process and the assessment dimension of the writing skills at the SFL. The findings obtained from the open-ended surveys are analyzed below after a brief analysis of how often writing is emphasized and what type of writing is generally required by the participating content course instructors. Findings obtained through the part of the survey dealing with the DBE and DML program objectives are presented in Table 4.26.

Analyzing instructors’ responses to the open-ended survey question how often they require their students to write in English, it was found that while two instructors claimed that they asked their students to write in English very frequently, the rest of the content course instructors abstained from responding to this question as they thought that their answer could change depending on the course they offer. When asked to write about the kinds of writing tasks involved in their courses, 4 instructors mentioned written answers to exam (mid-term and final) questions, 3 instructors listed term papers and the other 3 instructors drew attention to research proposals, especially for third and fourth year students. Two instructors also stated that they asked students to write essays for their courses. The following writing tasks required in the courses offered by these instructors teaching at different faculties of METU were mentioned by only one of these instructors: reflection papers, reports (e.g., lab. reports) and book reviews.

After these background questions to reveal the writing practices at different departments, the content course instructors marked how competent their students were in the given skills transferred to the survey from the list of writing objectives at the DBE and the DML. Table 4.26 illustrates results obtained from the closed items in the part of the survey about the objectives:

**Table 4.26 Content course instructors' opinions about the writing objectives of the SFL**

	<b>Highly Competent</b>	<b>Competent Enough</b>	<b>Not Competent Enough</b>	<b>Not Competent At all</b>	<b>Not Applicable</b>
<b>Items</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>N</b>
1. Writing simple sentences	1	6	2	1	0
2. Writing compound sentences	1	4	0	5	0
3. Writing complex sentences	1	4	2	3	0
4. Using correct and appropriate vocabulary	1	4	5	0	0
5. Using appropriate discourse patterns	0	2	6	2	0
6. Writing academic paragraphs with appropriate topic, supporting and concluding sentences	0	4	4	2	0
7. Achieving cohesion in writing via referencing, maintaining focus and looking out for old/new information	0	5	3	2	0
8. Achieving unity in writing through the use of appropriate signal words	0	3	5	2	0
9. Using appropriate register in writing	1	4	3	2	0
10. Writing paragraphs	0	6	3	1	0
11. Writing an expository essay	0	4	4	2	0
12. Using correct, appropriate language structures, vocabulary and discourse markers.	0	3	5	2	0
13. Writing a documented expository essay	0	5	2	2	1
14. Writing a documented essay	1	4	3	1	1
15. Writing a reaction-response essay	0	5	3	1	1
16. Evaluating sources for relevance and reliability	0	5	3	2	0
17. Identifying reference information	1	2	4	2	1
18. Researching on the Internet	4	4	2	0	0

**Table 4.26 (continued)**

19. Researching in the library	0	4	6	0	0
20. Identifying and selecting relevant sources	2	6	2	0	0
21. Practicing using APA citation rules	2	4	3	1	0
22. Practicing borrowing ideas by paraphrasing, summarizing, quoting, and synthesizing	1	4	4	1	0

As can be seen from Table 4.26 illustrating content course instructors' perspectives about how competent their students were after studying at the DBE and the DML, the instructors were generally positive about the students' performance in most of the skills. The department students were thought to be competent ('highly competent' and 'competent enough') by more than half of the content course instructors in the skills 'writing simple sentences', 'writing paragraphs', 'identifying and selecting relevant sources', 'practicing using APA citation rules'.

On the contrary, more than half of the instructors indicated that their students were not competent ('not competent enough' and 'not competent at all') in the following skills: 'using appropriate discourse patterns', 'writing academic paragraphs with appropriate topic, supporting and concluding sentences', 'achieving unity in writing through the use of appropriate signal words', 'writing an expository essay', 'using correct, appropriate language structures, vocabulary and discourse markers', 'identifying reference information' and 'researching in the library'.

When asked what the main objective of the writing program at the SFL should be, 4 instructors emphasized the place of grammar and syntax in writing. The following comments were made by these instructors:

Students usually translate the sentences that they write from Turkish. They should be more able to express themselves in appropriate "non-Turkish" grammar and syntax. (Instructor 5)

Please teach them the grammar. In my education at the TED Ankara College I had had five years (1957-1961) of English based on grammar. Mr. Barlow's examinations were simple: Make a complex sentence to show the meaning of - at least ten words or phrases. (Instructor 3)

Students should be able to write not as a mere translation of their ideas in Turkish to English. (Instructor 7)

Students should be able to write their ideas in complete statements which express their ideas. (Instructor 1)

Four instructors described the ideal main objectives of the writing program at the SFL as follows: ‘to prepare students to express their ideas and findings in an academic way’ (Instructor 7), ‘to support students to write correctly, fluently and with a logical sequence’ (Instructor 8), ‘to express themselves and tell clearly what they observed’ (Instructor 1) and ‘report writing, formal English’ (Instructor 2).

When asked whether the SFL prepared students sufficiently for the writing requirements of their courses, the instructors expressed different opinions. Among ten instructors, three responded positively to this question by writing comments like ‘I think SFL helps a lot’ (Instructor 10) and ‘students can express their views and opinions in written English and SFL prepares them sufficiently for the departments’ (Instructor 4). On the other hand, three other instructors were negative about the preparation of students for their departments in terms of writing. One of these instructors asserted that it was difficult to understand students’ written responses and made the following comment justifying the switch from essay-type exams to multiple-choice tests:

I am having hard time to understand what my students have written for their assignments. I have developed a sense of guessing and an understanding of how they are expressing ideas, and this helps me in making sense of their assignments. I have big problems in the examinations since they don’t even complete a statement most of the time. I see Turkish expressions in the exam papers since they did not know how to write in English in a short time. I feel that they need to write a lot under continuous supervision. Their sentence structure reflects Turkish sentence structure more than it reflects English sentence structure. I don’t know how this tendency could be eliminated or reduced, but this is how they write. I am preparing more multiple choice examinations in my classes in the past two years since I cannot understand what they write when I administer an essay type examination. In the last examination I administered the second year students asked me the meaning of the following words: Narrowest, chance, synonymous, array, plausible, occasionally, enhancing, certify, halves. I can’t imagine the responses if I had conducted an essay type examination in which questions would include the above words. They don’t try to learn much about new words, new terminology, and this seems to impact their writing in a negative way. (Instructor 7)

Responding negatively to the same question, another instructor illustrated some of the most common written errors students made in their written works:

When writing the mistakes start from simple grammar use, to conceptual frameworks. When talking on concepts the problem is clear. The essays very often become incomprehensible. And at that moment plagiarism appears. Only those students who have already had proper English in High school can manage it. Mistakes go as simple as gender, plurals, tenses, incorrect use of words. One big mistake is that they use the passive voice very extensively (Ankara the Capital of Turkey, rather than simply Capital Ankara). I also hate 'it is tried to be done' (yapmaya çalışmak), or wrong use of 'take place' to mean 'yer almak' instead of 'olmak' or 'determination' for 'belirlemek' instead of 'kararlılık'. (Instructor 3)

Rather than focusing on the relationship between students' writing performance in their departments and the writing program applied at the SFL, three other instructors focused more on the improvement of students' writing skills in their own departments. One comment made by one of these instructors is as follows:

In my opinion it won't be fair to judge SFL's success based on a year's education since developing the writing skill requires hard work which could last a few years. We need to be in touch with SFL's instructors during a student's whole undergrad education. In addition, we should encourage students to write papers more often. With the increased amount of writing and the detailed feedbacks provided by instructors, the writing styles of the students will be improved sufficiently. This process takes time, and needs collaboration and effort. (Instructor 1)

Similar comments made by the instructors were as follows: 'I think, writing skills improves with readings in the departmental courses' (Instructor 2) and 'In general, students are not that bad when they become third or fourth year students' (Instructor 7).

On the other hand, three instructors drew attention to the speaking skill in addition to writing. Following comments were made by the instructors who believed that speaking was another serious challenge for their students:

Majority of them are very competent in writing, but not so much in speaking. Certainly missing a lot in terms of speaking skills. (Instructor 9)

Most of the students are poor in writing also in speaking, asking questions in the lectures. (Instructor 2)

I have given exams and papers to the undergraduate students of architecture and paper tasks to graduate students in the urban design program. I have then noticed that they understand when reading, but when speaking, they cannot communicate and presentations turn into nightmare. (Instructor 3)

Moreover, content course instructors were asked to comment on the materials and content used at the SFL to teach writing after reading the short introduction about what kind of materials and content were used at the DBE and the DML. While six instructors urged for writing contents and materials that have some relevance to their departments, one instructor made the following general suggestions for the improvement of the material and content dimension of the writing program at the SFL:

I generally have one or two assignments for each class in which I ask students to write their feelings/ideas/expectations/reflections/experiences about the course content and the tasks. It is difficult for them to talk about themselves. Describing an event, a physical setting, a relationship is also difficult. The themes mentioned above looks good, but I don't think they really understand the readings or the theme of "Change" or the "Power". Writing is very much related with reading and understanding. They don't read much in English and they can't produce quality writing in English. They approach the text as something they need to handle in some way for the moment, rather than something they can understand by using the suggested strategies. Text becomes something in which they should find answers for the given questions even without understanding. This is reflected in their writing. They don't really produce any idea about the text and they can't write what they can't produce. Instead, they write something, anything. And they never care about the sentence structure or the meaning. I often read statements which does not have verb so I don't know what is done in their statements. I am assuming that history, life style, science, accomplishments, and certain other events that took place especially in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century would be interesting for them. Local history and important events (such as the history of METU) or knowledge that they can use in their daily lives and conversations would be even more interesting. (Instructor 7)

Among 6 instructors, who suggested that the SFL should use contents and materials related to students' own departments, 2 listed topics, such as social and political cultures and concepts of space considering the departments where they were teaching. Similar suggestions made by other 4 content course instructors for the improvement of materials and content to better prepare students for their future departments were as follows: 'if possible, the topics that are relevant to students' majors

can be chosen' (Instructor 2) and 'use parts of the text books that students will be using in their departments'. Another instructor made the following similar comment:

I also learned English during the prep school of my university. At that time, I was also complaining that model texts were too general and were not appropriate for providing me the necessary language skills for my department (Political Science and International Relations). I think both general and department-specific model texts and writing materials should be provided to students. (Instructor 5)

Moreover, considering students' writing needs at the Department of International Relations, one instructor suggested that authentic materials like journals (e.g., *the Economist*, *Newsweek*, *the Times*) can be used to improve students' writing ability.

The final question in the open-ended survey was about content course instructors' general suggestions to make the writing program at the SFL more effective, useful and better adjusted to students' needs at their departments. Two instructors underlined the importance of cooperation between the SFL instructors and the content course instructors at department departments. As one of these instructors justified it as follows, this cooperation was considered to be important for the improvement of the writing program at the SFL:

The instructors in language departments can get in touch with the instructors of other departments to learn more about the writing tasks given to students. In that way, the English teaching model (case studies, model writing exercises, etc.) can be more in line with the requirements of the departments that the prep students are going to study. (Instructor 5)

While one of the instructors suggested that 'similar to academic advisors in the departments, students may have writing advisors' (Instructor 1) at the SFL, another teacher proposed that 'in science departments exam questions should have writing tasks besides problem solving' (Instructor 2).

One of the instructors highlighted the importance of attitudes towards the writing skill in general to draw the SFL' attention to affective issues and to process leading students to formal writing:

Our students, probably as a result of the general education system, do not like writing much and they don't think much while writing. This seems to be an issue of experience in writing as well as attitude towards writing. I don't know what can be done about initiating positive attitude towards writing, but SFL needs to work on affective issues as well. What if they start writing by writing about themselves and their interests and go through more formal writing? (Instructor 7)

In conclusion, after analyzing the results regarding the evaluation of the DBE and the DML writing programs from the perspectives of both students and instructors, the research question "How do content course instructors at different departments evaluate the writing program at the SFL (the DBE and the DML)?" was focused on in this part of the analysis. The background questions revealed that in some courses, content course instructors required their students to carry out more written works while some courses do not require much English writing. As for the type of writing generally needed by different departments, it would be true to suggest that students needed writing for the following purposes: to give written answers to exam questions, to write term papers, research proposals, essays, reflection papers, reports (e.g., lab. reports) and book reviews.

When the content course instructors were asked to rank their students in terms of the skills which were taken from the list of DBE and the DML writing objectives, while a general positive feeling about department students competency in the given objectives of the DBE and the DML writing programs was found, the following objectives received reasonably more negative responses by the instructors: 'using appropriate discourse patterns', 'using correct, appropriate language structures, vocabulary and discourse markers', 'writing academic paragraphs with appropriate topic, supporting and concluding sentences', 'identifying reference information' and 'achieving unity in writing through the use of appropriate signal words'.

In response to the question how well the SFL prepared students for the writing tasks carried out in the departments, three common viewpoints were found. While three instructors responded positively to this question as they thought that some of the basic skills students learnt at the SFL would be helpful for students' writing in their department, three other instructors commented about their negative experiences with

students' written works and the common written errors students committed in their courses. About the same issue, three other instructors emphasized that it was not the SFL's fault if students could not write very well and suggested that more written work should be done in the departments. As far as materials and content of the writing program at the SFL, more than half of the instructors were found to have a positive attitude towards integrating writing contents and materials that have some relevance to students' departments. For the betterment of the writing program at the SFL, some instructors drew attention to the importance of cooperation between SFL and content course instructors so that the SFL instructors can identify students' future departmental writing needs. Finally, it was underlined by one instructor that students have negative attitudes towards writing in their departments; therefore, the SFL should encourage students to start writing by first writing about themselves before proceeding to formal writing.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **CONCLUSION**

This chapter includes the discussion of the results and implications of the evaluation findings. While the first section presents the summary and discussion of the findings from the perspectives of students and instructors at the DBE and the DML as well as the content course instructors at different departments at METU, the second section deals with the implications for the improvement of the writing program at these departments. The final section provides the limitations of the study and recommendations for further research.

#### **5.1 Summary and Discussion of Results**

The last step of the context-adaptive evaluation model (Lynch, 1990) is formulating the evaluation report. The findings of this evaluation study are reported with special focus on the participants' views about different dimensions of the program called by Brown (1995) as the elements of a language curriculum (i.e. program objectives, materials, teaching and testing). The results obtained from different data collection tools are discussed below in light of the research questions focusing on each of the above-mentioned elements of the writing program separately. In addition to these elements, the findings related to the question how sufficiently the DBE and the DML prepare students for their departmental writing needs are discussed.

Before proceeding to the elements of the writing programs at both departments, it would be better to mention some of the common results found both in the present study and in Erozan's (2005) study whose data collection instruments were adapted for the evaluation of the writing components of the DBE and the DML at METU. Although her study aims to evaluate the language improvement courses, including the writing courses (i.e. Writing Skills I, II and Advanced Writing Skills) at an undergraduate ELT department, the current study yields results similar to her findings.

To exemplify, as in this study, participants in her study were found to be generally positive with program objectives, materials and content, the teaching-learning process and the assessment dimensions of the writing courses. In addition to this, in both studies, participants made some similar suggestions to improve the writing programs. For instance, Erozan found that there was a perceived need for various methods, activities and materials to teach writing, inter-rater reliability for more objective and consistent scoring, more quizzes, more use of audio-visual aids, more pair and group work activities, more student-centered activities like journal keeping and fewer students in the classroom. Moreover, as in this study, Erozan revealed that some of the strong points of the writing courses she evaluated were process writing method and the teacher feedback.

### **5.1.1 Program Objectives**

The analysis of the syllabus of the writing programs both at the DBE and the DML revealed the objectives of the program and these objectives were listed as skills in the instructor and the student questionnaires to obtain data about how competent students became in these skills. Both students and instructors at the DBE held the idea that these objectives were generally achieved by the students. Similarly, there was a high level of agreement among DML participants (DML students and instructors) with the idea that students became competent in the given skills which were the writing program objectives of ENG 101 and ENG 102. For instance, outlining and the process-based approach were considered to be most positive points with regards to the objectives of the DML writing program.

However, there were some concerns raised by some participants at both departments. To illustrate, at the DBE, there was an objective (using appropriate register in writing) responded more negatively than others by DBE participants (DBE students and instructors). The importance of writing in an appropriate register was emphasized in the literature as well. For instance, as one of the characteristics for an effective writing course, Holbrook (1984) emphasized the skill of writing appropriately for many audiences. At the DML, on the other hand, while instructors indicated that fewer

students became competent in researching in the library, students perceived themselves less competent in using correct, appropriate use of language structures, vocabulary and discourse markers. A few DML instructors also felt the need to focus more on teaching appropriate language structures, vocabulary and discourse markers. Moreover, DML participants agreed on the need to spend more time on paraphrasing and summarizing.

The DML and the DBE instructors who thought that some of the skills were not fully achieved were asked why some of these objectives might not have been mastered by the students. Similar to DBE instructors, some DML instructors agreed on the problems arising from the large class size and the students' low proficiency level. In addition, some DBE instructors claimed that the reason for this failure might have to do with the lack of consensus among DBE instructors on what to emphasize in the program and the lack of time allocated for each objective.

Among many comments made for the improvement of the writing programs at the DBE, the major ones agreed upon by the majority of the DBE participants were mainly about the prescriptive nature of writing instruction and the discourse patterns students had to memorize. As the classroom observations confirmed, most of the time allocated to the writing program at the DBE is spent on teaching various discourse patterns, such as cause-effect, compare-contrast and problem-solution. Tarnopolsky and Kozhushko (2007) describe this prescriptive writing pedagogical approach as *textual approach* requiring students to read sample texts and then write by using the linguistic and the stylistic patterns they learnt through the sample texts. They underline that in this approach, there are strict regulations as for issues like thesis statement and topic sentences. From their perspective, such an approach hinders the creativity of the academic writing and turns it into a process of imitating the sample texts. With regards to the prescriptive nature of discourse-level writing at the DBE, DBE participants recommended that a free writing approach should be adopted to avoid focusing too much on the discourse patterns. In other words, they expressed that free-writing should be included as an objective in the writing program of the DBE.

Similarly, some DBE instructors suggested that the number of discourse types taught at the DBE should be reduced and more emphasis should be placed on the content

of the written text rather than the fixed discourse patterns. As Mohamed (2004) points out, students should investigate the language and experiment freely with it to write more creatively. The need for less controlled and guided tasks was supported by some Turkish researchers as well. For instance, Atay and Kurt (2006) recommended that writing in English should not be restricted to controlled writing exercises. The reason why Turkish students are not very good at expressing their original thoughts in writing in L2 (Alagözlü, 2007) might also be related to the controlled and guided manner followed in teaching writing.

Another common suggestion made by DBE participants to improve the writing objectives of the writing program at the DBE was related to the need to emphasize essay writing as an objective. The same issue was suggested in the sharing and feedback sessions held at the DBE last year (Retrieved on September 1, 2010 from <http://www.dbe.metu.edu.tr/port/documents>). In that meeting, some instructors argued that essays are more realistic than condensed paragraph writing. As for preparing students better for their departments, essays can be favored more than paragraphs as some of the content course instructors who participated in this study also stated that they mostly required their students to write essay type written works, rather than paragraphs. Furthermore, some DML instructors underlined the need for DBE students to be familiarized with at least some of the basics of essay writing so that they can feel more confident when they take courses like ENG 101 and ENG 102. The self-evaluation report of the SFL at METU in 2007 (Retrieved on September 2010 from <http://www.dbe.metu.edu.tr>) also revealed that the content course instructors in various departments at METU thought that their students had problems in expressing themselves in writing and similarly, the DML instructors believed that students had problems with composition writing in the ENG 101 course as they were only taught writing paragraphs at the DBE.

On the other hand, many DML participants suggested that the DML should diversify the writing genres, topics and the citation rules on the basis of students' departments. This suggestion made by DML participants is supported by Kocaman (1983, cited in Özkanal and Hakan, 2010) and Özkanal and Hakan (2010) emphasizing

the need for an ESP model suitable for use in addition to general objectives in foreign language teaching. In the same way, Kellogg (1994) highlights the need to investigate students' motivation for writing in order to design meaningful and purposeful writing tasks in accordance with students' motivation. For example, if students need to write research papers in their departments, the writing tasks at the DML should be closely related to such task types in order to make students realize the meaningful purposes of their writing. As suggested by Schwarz and Nazarenko (2010), students should be given written text samples in different genres to familiarize students with the genre of writing they will need most when they start their departments. Therefore, for DML to better prepare students for their departments, an ESP model of writing instruction could be suggested.

Although the application of ESP at the DBE seems difficult because it is claimed that ESP should only begin when students are intermediate or advanced (Dudley-Evans and St. John, 1997), the DML could begin revising their writing programs more in line with the defining features of ESP by seeking answers to the following questions proposed by Dudley-Evans (2001):

1. What do students need to do (write) with English?
2. Which of the (writing) skills do they need to master and how well?
3. Which (writing) genres do they need to master either for comprehension or production purposes?

Gillett (1996) refers to Robinson (1991) who pointed out that the very first step to develop an EAP (English for Academic Purposes) or an ESP course is the needs analysis aiming to reveal why the students are learning English and what they have to do by means of their knowledge of English. As rightly argued by Daloğlu and Işık-Taş (2007), ESP courses designed to meet students' specific needs are becoming more popular in Turkey to meet university students' needs for their current departments. As a means of designing an ESP course, the researchers stated that "the concept of needs assessment is considered as the backbone for ESP instructional design" (p. 65). Therefore, one of the best ways to turn ENG 101 and ENG 102 into ESP courses is to conduct a needs analysis in students' departments as Daloğlu and Işık-Taş carried out to

devise an ESP writing syllabus for the second year students of International Relations and Political Science at Başkent University, Ankara.

In addition to the opinions of DBE and the DML participants about the program objectives, the views of content course instructors about the issue were also focused on in this study. In order to evaluate the writing objectives at both the DBE and the DML from the perspective of the content course instructors, they were first asked to indicate how competent their students were in the given skills. Most of the content course instructors were found to hold positive attitudes towards their students' competencies in English writing. Still, the following objectives can be listed as skills receiving comparatively more negative responses by the content course instructors: 'using appropriate discourse patterns', 'using correct, appropriate language structures, vocabulary and discourse markers', 'writing academic paragraphs with appropriate topic, supporting and concluding sentences', 'identifying reference information' and 'achieving unity in writing through the use of appropriate signal words'. Some instructors made additional claims about students' speaking performance as well since they thought that speaking skill should be emphasized more at the SFL. A similar suggestion was also made by a couple of DML students.

### **5.1.2 Materials and Content**

The second element of the writing program investigated in both departments is the materials and content. This dimension of the program was generally evaluated positively by both DBE and DML participants. The results with regards to the evaluation of the materials and content used to teach writing at the DBE demonstrate that the majority of the participants held the idea that the current materials and content was rather effective despite some points to consider for the improvement of the materials and the relevant content. Among these points, the visual unattractiveness of the materials (i.e. hand-outs) was the common concern for participants at both departments. As observed in writing-focused lessons at the DBE and as realized after the analysis of some of the hand-outs provided to the students, hand-outs were the major materials to teach writing at the DBE

and these hand-outs were not visually attractive as there were not any pictures or graphs, only written texts. As for ideal writing materials to be used in EFL classrooms, Qian (2010) asserts that writing materials should provide stimulating activities by means of audiovisual aids, such as tapes, pictures, and diagrams, though. On the other hand, expressing concerns about the thematic nature of the course books (ENG 101-Change and ENG 102-Power), some DML participants argued for topics relevant to students' departments and some of the DML instructors recommended that contemporary issues, non-academic and more daily life topics would be more useful in writing materials at the DML.

Parallel to some DBE students' opinions, some DML instructors argued that the content of the materials to teach writing should have some relevance to the students' own departments. The issue of topics relevant to students' own departments was also brought up by more than half of the content course instructors at different departments. Long ago, Enginarlar (1982) worked on the identification of the writing needs of freshmen students in social sciences so as to propose a writing syllabus for the preparatory class at METU. As one of the basic principles of the syllabus, he recommended that the writing syllabus should be based on reading texts relevant to students' fields. He even argued that the readings from the students' field textbooks could be used as the content of writing materials. He made the following statement to draw attention to the importance of content in writing programs:

Since writing cannot be practiced in a vacuum and since the greatest difficulty reported by the freshmen first-term students was in content and vocabulary, it is strongly recommended here that this syllabus be based on relevant reading texts. In practice, this calls for an integration of the writing syllabus with the reading syllabus. For this to be a fruitful integration, the reading syllabus must be based on sound foundations from the point of academic needs (pp. 75-76).

Although Gerede (2005) stated that it is not very likely for preparatory programs to focus on students' language needs relevant to each subject area because of the variety of students at different departments, it could be argued that students at the DBE could be grouped according to their departments and students can at least be familiarized with the terminology relevant to their fields through relevant contents. As emphasized by Mirici

and Demirel (1999), students at the preparatory classes should be provided with general English knowledge as well as some terminology related to their departments. As stated by Mirici and Saka (2004), the English preparatory programs should include Technical English. They point out that especially students of engineering faculties should learn English both for general and for specific purposes so that they can keep up with the developments in their field using the Technical English background. As suggested by Leki (2003), the common characteristic in most L2 academic writing classes is that they are freestanding and detached from students' academic lives. Therefore, it can be argued that students should be taught writing skills through topics about their departments.

In addition, both students and instructors reached the consensus as to the need to give students the flexibility to choose the topics to write about. As revealed through the DBE questionnaire, some DML students recommended that they should be free to choose the topic to write about. Cunningsworth (1995:58) favored the idea that "topic can be of great value in keeping learners' interest and maintaining or increasing their motivation". Similarly, as stated by Tribble (1996), students should be assigned writing tasks that are related to their real problems to increase students' motivation to start writing. Analyzing the writing needs of ELT students at METU, Özbek (1995) also found that students would like to be given a variety of optional topics in order that they can choose the topic that interests them.

Favoring the idea of a writing course book, some DBE students suggested that the hand-outs should be compiled in the form of a book or a writing course book available should be used to teach writing at the DBE. In the sharing and feedback sessions at the DBE last year (Retrieved from <http://www.dbe.metu.edu.tr/port/documents>), some instructors also favored a writing course book rather than hand-outs.

Some of the DBE instructors voiced their concerns about the number of sample texts in the hand-outs and suggested that there was a need to include more sample paragraphs to analyze. On the other hand, some DBE instructors believed that although the writing sections of the *Language Leader* were good to practice students' free-writing skills, they could not focus on these tasks due to time constraints and the inconsistency between the writing parts of the book and the writing exam questions.

### 5.1.3 Teaching-Learning Process

Teaching-learning process embodying the activities and the methods used to teach writing at both departments is the third dimension dealt with in this study. With regards to the teaching-learning process, it would be fair to say that most of the DML and the DBE participants thought that the process was effective in general except for a few issues brought up by the participants. For instance, an issue evaluated more negatively by participants at both departments was about the way of teaching writing. There was a higher level of uncertainty and disagreement among participants at both departments about the item indicating that the instructor taught writing in an interesting way. While DBE and DML participants agreed on the issue of teacher feedback and whole class feedback sessions on exercises as the strengths of the teaching-learning process, there was a common belief that activities like games, role plays and journal keeping were not sufficiently used.

Also, the following activities and methods were proposed by some instructors at the DBE for the improvement of the teaching-learning process in writing-focused lessons: integration of the writing skill to the other basic skills, use of process-based writing activities like drafting and outlining, activities integrating technology, more self-correction, the analysis of poor, adequate and good written samples, projects and student presentations; more use of pair and group work activities, more student-centered tasks and more peer-to-peer feedback applied with the use of relevant checklists. As for peer feedback using a checklist, Fearn and Farnan (2001) warned that the teacher should train their students to use the checklists effectively, which will enable teachers and students to work collaboratively. As one can realize from the list of activities and methods listed above by DBE instructors, the proposed activities and methods were mostly student-centered activities that were not adequately done in the lessons, which was verified by the classroom observations at both departments. Similarly, in his evaluation of the theme-based curriculum at the DBE, Topçu (2005) found that pair/group work was considered as ineffective due to time constraints in the program. Some other research studies conducted in different preparatory schools in Turkey also revealed the need to

incorporate more student-centered activities. To illustrate, Gökdemir (2010) carried out an evaluation study in 5 different universities and found that the lessons at preparatory classes are generally teacher-centered. Furthermore, Demirtaş and Sert (2010) drew attention to the teacher-centered traditional approaches as the cause of the low proficiency level of students in Turkish universities.

At the DML, on the other hand, students and instructors proposed more use of peer and group work activities in writing-focused lessons while some of the DML instructors thought that conferencing, blogging, group discussions, more assignments, journal keeping, articles and podcasts would improve the teaching-learning process. Besides, while a few students pointed out that there was a need for more interactive conduct of the writing classes, some DML instructors argued that the departments at METU should also focus on English writing as this skill improves by practicing. Looking into the activities suggested by DBE and DML participants, one can draw the conclusion that there is a need for more student-centered teaching at both departments.

Finally, related to the teaching-learning process, DML instructors complained about the students' English background, too much focus on the form, the guidance and the feedback, the load of these courses, the lack of time to cover everything and the crowded classrooms.

#### **5.1.4 Assessment**

The fourth element of the writing program evaluated by the students and instructors at both departments was the assessment. Despite a high level of agreement with the effectiveness of the assessment procedure to test writing at both departments, the item indicating that the exam results demonstrate the students' actual ability was not agreed by most of the participants at both departments. Moreover, many of the DML and the DBE participants drew attention to the need for the standardization of the assessment and it was indicated that two raters should mark students' written works. For standardization purposes, some participants at both departments argued for checking inter-rater reliability while some instructors underlined the need for a more detailed

marking scale and the training of the instructors by means of workshops related to the standardization of the assessment.

With regards to the inter-rater reliability, Coombe (2010) underlined the importance of double marking as a means to maintain writing test reliability. On the other hand, for a more dependable assessment procedure for writing, Enginarlar (1991) suggests the following three factors to take into account: established scoring systems, tested writing prompts and carefully trained raters. At the end of the same study, he presented some invaluable recommendations for scoring students' written works with a holistic scoring key. He suggested that instructors "should first read the papers quickly and place them in batches, ranging from 'very good' to 'nil' according to first impressions" (p. 43). He added that the instructors should then read and reassess the written works again. In addition, it was proposed in his study that "instructors should not grade papers for longer than one hour in one session (i.e., give a break when you are tired)" (p. 44). These guidelines can pave the way for a more reliable testing procedure for both departments.

Similar to DBE students who expressed that they needed more time for paragraph writing in the exams, some DML students held the idea that they need more time for the essay writing process. Another suggestion for the improvement of the assessment dimension of the writing program was that while some DBE instructors suggested using portfolios, a few DML instructors agreed that a product-based assessment should be implemented along with portfolios although it is believed that the timed impromptu essay tests cannot actually predict students' abilities to write under natural conditions (Silva & Brice, 2004; Qinghua, 2010).

Specifically about the assessment of the writing skills at the DBE, another suggestion made by DBE participants was that writing tasks as tested in the EPE should be included in the program because the EPE includes some parts (e.g., responding to a reading text in a written form) that are hardly ever covered in the lessons. It was also recommended by a few instructors that there was no need to teach discourse-level writing to DBE students as the writing section of the EPE does not necessitate any use of discourse patterns. Considering that the mean of preparatory students' writing scores in

the EPE administered in June 2009 and in September 2010 was the lowest among other sections, it would be fair to suggest that more writing tasks relevant to the EPE should be incorporated into the writing program at the DBE.

On the other hand, complaining about the lack of writing pop-quizzes and the lack of time allocated for the writing parts of the mid-terms, some DBE students underlined the need for more pop-quizzes and more time for writing tasks in the exams. Similarly, Coombe and Evans (2000) stated that instead of testing writing only in mid-term or final exams, students' writing ability should be assessed more frequently for a more fair assessment. When it comes to the frequent assessment of the writing skills, the issue of portfolio assessment comes into play and this assessment tool was favored by a few DBE instructors who held the idea that portfolio assessment should be a part of their assessment procedure applied to test writing at the DBE. In informal interviews with an instructor, the researcher was informed that portfolios were used in the past to test students' writing ability and because the instructors were not trained enough, this alternative assessment tool was abandoned. Still, it can be maintained that portfolio assessment could be a good solution to deal with validity and reliability concerns expressed by some participants of the current research (Enginarlar, 1994b) on the condition that the necessary training could be provided to writing instructors at the DBE.

### **5.1.5 Preparation of the SFL Students for their Departments**

In addition to the program dimensions summarized above, some valuable findings were revealed about whether the DBE writing program prepared students sufficiently for the DML as well as their departmental courses and whether the DML courses prepared students sufficiently to produce written responses in their own departments. As for the first question, the majority of the DBE instructors responded by stating that they were not fully aware of the writing program at the DML or the writing requirements at different departments at METU. For this reason, it would be fair to suggest that cooperation between the instructors at the DBE and the DML is necessary to raise instructors' awareness of the common goal of both departments to prepare

students for their departments. When asked whether the DBE writing program prepared students for ENG 101 and ENG 102 and how well these courses prepared students sufficiently for their own departments, most of the DML instructors responded to the former question as ‘average’ while the latter question was generally responded as ‘good’. While some of the DML instructors were pleased with the writing program at the DBE, most of them complained about students’ lack of knowledge regarding the basics of writing (e.g., differentiating between a topic sentence and thesis statement). As for the preparation of DML students for their departments, most of the instructors argued that the answer to this question depends on the department.

The content course instructors who have firsthand experience with the written works of students who completed the DBE and the DML writing programs also yielded some invaluable data about whether the SFL prepared students well for students’ own departments. The survey question intended to reveal the context of the departments with regards to L2 writing demonstrated that while some courses require a lot of L2 writing, some others do not. Also, it was realized that English writing was commonly required to give written answers to exam questions, to write term papers, research proposals, essays, reflection papers, reports (e.g., lab. reports) and book reviews. When asked how well the SFL prepared students for the writing requirements of the courses they offered, instructors held different views. Three instructors responded positively to this question whereas three other instructors shared their bad memories about their students’ written works and the written errors students made in their courses. As to the preparation of SFL students for their departments, three other instructors stated that it was not the SFL to put the blame on if students could not write very well in their departments. Instead, these instructors recommended that more written work should be done in the departments. The same suggestion was also made by a few of the DML instructors.

In order to improve the writing program at the SFL, some instructors highlighted the importance of cooperation between SFL and content course instructors in order that the SFL instructors could be more aware of students’ departmental writing needs. As most of the DBE and the DML instructors expressed that they were not totally aware of the writing needs of their students, there is a need for more cooperation between the

instructors at the SFL and content course instructors at different departments at METU.

## **5.2 Implications of the Study**

The current study has some implications for the improvement of the writing program at the SFL (DBE and DML). Firstly, the implications for the writing program at the DBE and the DML are presented on the basis of the most commonly agreed opinions of the participants about each of the following program dimensions: program objectives, materials and content, teaching-learning process and assessment. Secondly, limitations and implications for further research are presented.

### **5.2.1 Implications for the improvement of the writing program at the SFL**

As identified in the first step of the context-adaptive evaluation model, the main goal of this evaluation was to evaluate and make recommendations for the improvement of the program so that the Administration, the Curriculum Core Committee, the Research Committee and the instructors at the SFL can utilize the findings of this study and make necessary changes to better prepare students for their departments in terms of writing in English. Considering the findings of the current evaluation study, the following recommendations can be made on the basis of the most common results obtained from both student and instructor questionnaires and interviews as well as open-ended surveys at both departments. The recommendations below about each dimension of the writing programs at both departments could be taken into account for the improvement of the writing program at the SFL.

#### **5.2.1.1 Implications for the Program Objectives**

- The writing program at the DBE was generally considered to be prescriptive in nature. Therefore, it is suggested that the writing program should be less focused on different types of discourse and the discourse patterns students generally

memorize. Instead, more attention should be paid to the content of the written texts. In other words, the importance attached to the objective ‘using appropriate discourse patterns (cause-effect, compare-contrast, problem-solution, argumentation)’ should be switched to free writing. As a reaction to controlled writing at the DBE, a free writing approach on the basis of a process-based approach including stages like drafting and outlining could be recommended for the DBE as this approach is more likely to contribute to the quality of the writing program at the DBE.

- In order to implement process-based writing as an objective of the writing program at the DBE, one of the best possible ways is to use portfolios showing students’ progress in a certain period of time through their written assignments, diary entries, written comments from peers as well as from their instructors. It is important to underline here that the necessary training on how to effectively exploit portfolios should be provided to instructors at the DBE.
- As it was suggested by some DBE participants and some of the content course instructors, essay writing should be a part of the objectives of the writing program at the DBE.
- For the achievement of the DBE writing objectives, it is recommended that more time should be allocated for each objective. Moreover, among the writing objectives at the DBE, the one pertaining to students’ use of appropriate register in writing should be more emphasized in the program as students felt they were not competent in this skill. At the DML, on the other hand, more attention should be given to paraphrasing and summarizing as these were the most needed skills in the students’ own departments.

#### **5.2.1.2 Implications for the Materials and Content**

- In terms of the materials of the writing program at both the DBE and the DML, the common concern for students and instructors was that there should be more visually attractive materials. As for the topic to write about, there is a need for

both departments to give students the flexibility to choose the topics to write about. Rather than asking students to write about the topic in the hand-outs or the course books, the instructors should either provide students with a list of a variety of topics to choose from or ask them to write a list of five topics they would like in order to reveal the common topics to be included in the program.

- The content of the materials to teach writing at the DBE and the DML should be relevant to the students' own departments. As tried at the DBE in the past, DBE students could be grouped according to their future departments and after a careful need analysis involving both the students and their content course instructors, the topics and themes found to be related to students' departments can be incorporated into the writing materials.
- A common concern voiced by DML participants is connected to the main themes of the course books used in ENG 101 and ENG 102. The thematic nature of these books should be reconsidered as the recycling of the same topics related to two broad themes (Power and Change) may be causing boredom among students.
- The writing sections of the main course book *Language Leader* should be focused on in the class by all the DBE instructors as these sections provide DBE students with chances to practice their free writing skills. It would be better if the hand-outs could be redesigned as only supplementary materials complementing the main course book.

### **5.2.1.3 Implications for the Teaching-Learning Process**

- In addition to the implications regarding the program objectives as well as the materials and content, the current study provides implications with regards to the teaching-learning process applied in writing-focused lessons at both departments. It can be recommended that the conduct of the writing instruction ought to be more interesting and a variety of more student-centered out-of-class activities like journal keeping should be encouraged to increase students' interests in writing. Specifically at the DBE, self-correction and peer-to-peer feedback

should be applied more with the use of relevant checklists.

- As for the teaching-learning process at the DML, it is suggested that the writing genres, topics to write about and the citation rules should all be department-specific. To illustrate, it was found that the DML instructors generally taught how to write essays, the topics of which were centered on the themes of Power and Change and the writing style taught in the program was mainly the APA style. However, as argued by DML participants (students and instructors), it can be recommended that if a department requires lab report writing about experiments rather than essays or if the preferred writing style is MLA instead of APA, students should be prepared to carry out such tasks through the writing program of ENG 101 and ENG 102. In other words, an ESP model of writing instruction could be tried and tested by the DML on the condition that the required instructor expertise, logistics and the financial support are provided.
- A variety of activities and methods as follows is suggested for an effective teaching-learning process at the DML: more use of peer and group work conferencing, blogging, group discussions, more assignments, journal keeping, articles and podcasts.

#### **5.2.1.4 Implications for the Assessment**

- As far as the assessment dimension of the writing program at the DBE and the DML, one of the most commonly commented issues was related to the standardization of the assessment practices. For the standardization of the assessment procedure for the writing ability at both departments, there is a need for double rating to ensure a satisfactory level of inter-rater reliability. It is also suggested that the instructors should be trained on the standardization of the assessment of the writing skills by means of workshops.
- As for the EPE administered by the DBE at the end of the students' first year at the preparatory school, it can be recommended that the writing tasks as tested in the EPE should be included in the writing program because the EPE includes

some parts (e.g., responding to a reading text in a written form) that are hardly ever emphasized in writing-focused lessons at the DBE. Moreover, as the discourse-level writing is not tested in the paragraph writing section of the EPE, it can be recommended that there is no need for too much focus on certain discourse patterns. The sharing and feedback sessions about the program of the DBE last year (Retrieved from <http://www.dbe.metu.edu.tr/port/documents>) also implied that students unfamiliar with discourse patterns were more successful in the writing section of the EPE while DBE students got confused trying to fit their writing to a *discourse* rather than answering the question.

- As suggested by DBE participants, assessment of the writing skills at the DBE should be more frequent. To test writing more frequently, more pop-quizzes could be given or portfolio assessment should be implemented as an alternative assessment tool along with the current mid. On the other hand, in addition to testing writing in process-writing fashion, product-based assessment as in the DBE is worth trying at the DML

#### **5.2.1.5 Implications for the SFL in general**

- For the betterment of the writing program at the SFL in general, there is a need for the cooperation between SFL and content course instructors so that the SFL instructors could be more aware of the students' departmental English writing needs. The same cooperation is necessary between instructors working at the DBE and the DML as they expressed that they were not very aware of each others' writing programs. Regular meeting could be held between the DBE and the DML instructors in order to discuss procedures and outcomes as for their writing programs.
- There is a need for more focus on the speaking skills at both departments because speaking was described by both some content course instructors and some DML students as another serious challenge for department students at METU.

- As suggested by some content course instructors who believed that the writing skill in general requires hard work which could last a few years, it would be fair to suggest that content course instructors should also encourage students to write papers more often in their departments.
- There is a need for a comprehensive needs analysis aiming to reveal SFL students' future departmental needs so that the writing programs at both departments could be based on relevant objectives aiming to prepare DBE and DML students for their departments. Although Erozan (2005) claims that such evaluation studies revealing students' and instructors' suggestions for the improvement of a program can be considered as an indirect way of identifying students and instructors' needs, a larger scale needs analysis conducted with a larger student and instructors sample in both DBE and the DML as well as in various departments could add to the quality of the writing program at the SFL.
- Finally, even though a needs analysis about freshman students' writing needs and lacks at METU was carried out by Enginarlar (1982), who revealed the types of writing activities required by social science-based departments and the difficulties students encountered while writing in their departments, similar studies should be done today to be able to make more sound recommendations for the improvement of the current writing program at the SFL.

### **5.3 Limitations of the Study and Implications for Further Research**

The current study is a situation analysis focusing mainly on the DBE and the DML students' and instructors' opinions about the evaluation of the writing program at the SFL at METU in the 2010-2011 academic year. Although the results of the current case study revealing results unique to the context of the research may not be generalized to all similar SFLs in Turkey, the findings are believed to shed some lights on the common problems other SFLs using similar programs encounter with.

The main limitation of the current study is related to human data sources involved in this study. For example, despite the fact that five faculties at METU are

equally represented with 2 content course instructors from each faculty, more content course instructors could have added new dimensions to the evaluation of the writing programs at the DBE and the DML in addition to yielding more comprehensive data about whether the writing program at the SFL prepares students sufficiently for the writing requirements of various departments. Moreover, if the researcher had been able to administer interviews instead of open-ended surveys with content course instructors, richer data could have been collected about the effectiveness of the writing program at the SFL.

In addition to freshmen students, involving sophomore, junior and senior students who had successfully completed the preparatory classes and had taken ENG 101 and ENG 102 could have revealed different findings about the quality of the writing program at the SFL. As the current study is only limited to the evaluation of the writing program at the DBE and the DML on the basis of different stakeholders' opinions, the analysis of various productions written by DBE, DML and department students could have been made so as to fortify the findings on the perception level. Similarly, as only the students' perceptions of their writing competencies were revealed in this study, their scores in the achievement tests could also have been collected.

Therefore, it can be suggested that future studies at the SFL at METU could include the learning outcomes at the end of the writing program at both departments. Further studies can involve more content course participants and DBE and DML instructors. Besides, rather than focusing only on the writing component, future studies can approach the ELT program at both the DBE and the DML from a wider perspective evaluating their programs as a whole. Also, graduates of METU who are current doing MA or PhD could be included in future evaluation studies in order to evaluate the effect of the SFL writing program in the long run. As suggested by some content course instructors and the DML students, speaking is another major challenge in the English medium environment at METU. As a result, it would be fair to suggest that future studies may focus specifically on the speaking component of the program at the SFL and propose ways to improve it. A comparative analysis of perceptions of the SFL students' and the same students' perceptions when they are second or third year students can be

made by researchers to evaluate how well the program prepared students for their departments.

Moreover, it is recommended that the SFL at METU and its counterparts in Turkey should continuously get involved in such evaluation studies in order to improve the whole university-level English education system in the country. Moreover, good practices to teach writing could be shared among different universities for the betterment of overall writing programs in Turkish universities.

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- <http://www.ncte.org/positions/statements/writingbeliefs>
- <http://www.ncte.org/cccc/resources/positions/writingassessment>
- <http://www.mld.metu.edu.tr/node/24>
- <http://www.dbe.metu.edu.tr/port/documents/sharing-feedback-sessions.pdf>
- <http://www.ecml.at/efsz/files/Trim.pdf>
- <http://www.adb.org/evaluation/about/program-evaluation-standards.pdf>

<http://www.nflrc.hawaii.edu/evaluation/files/Roles%20and%20Responsibilities%20booklet>

<http://www.nflrc.hawaii.edu/evaluation/example1.htm>

<http://www.ncte.org/positions/statements/teacherseducatingell>

<http://www.yok.gov.tr/en/content/view/557/238/>

<http://www.dbe.metu.edu.tr>

<http://www.dbe.metu.edu.tr/port/documents>

<http://www.slideshare.net/camayora/materials-for-writing-in-efl>

## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A

#### DBE STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

**Dear DBE Student,**

The aim of this questionnaire is to collect your opinions about the writing component of the program at the Department of Basic English (DBE) for evaluation purposes. Writing program objectives, content and materials, teaching and the assessment aspects will be evaluated. **Please put a cross (X) in the box that best represents your opinion.** Thank you very much for your participation and cooperation and for expressing your opinions realistically and objectively. The collected data will be of great value for the improvement of the writing program at the DBE, METU. Your responses will be kept confidential, and the results of the questionnaire will merely be used for research purposes. The questionnaire takes around 20 minutes.

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#### **I. Background Information**

**1. Gender:** Male\_\_\_ Female\_\_\_\_\_

**2. Age:** \_\_\_\_\_

**3. Type of high school you graduated from:**

Anatolian High School \_\_\_\_\_ Super High School \_\_\_\_\_ Science High School \_\_\_\_\_

Vocational High School \_\_\_\_\_ Private High School \_\_\_\_\_ Mainstream High School \_\_\_\_\_

Anatolian Teacher High School \_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**4. Proficiency level in the second term:** \_\_\_\_\_

**5. First Term Grade:** \_\_\_\_\_/45

**II. Objectives**

**6. In your opinion, how competent have you become in the below given writing skills as a result of the writing program at the DBE?**

	<b>Highly Competent</b>	<b>Competent Enough</b>	<b>Not Competent Enough</b>	<b>Not Competent At all</b>
1. Writing simple sentences				
2. Writing compound sentences				
3. Writing complex sentences				
4. Using correct and appropriate vocabulary				
5. Using appropriate discourse patterns (cause-effect, compare-contrast, problem-solution, argumentation)				
6. Writing academic paragraphs with appropriate topic, supporting and concluding sentences				
7. Achieving cohesion in writing via referencing, maintaining focus and looking out for old/new information				
8. Achieving unity in writing through the use of appropriate signal words				
9. Using appropriate register in writing (formal / informal language)				

**7. Comment: Considering your needs and expectations, briefly list the changes (e.g., additions, omissions) you would like to be made in writing skills given above. You can propose maximum 3 changes.**

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**III. Content and Materials**

**8. Please express your opinion about the writing materials and the content covered in these materials at the DBE by marking (X) as appropriate.**

5                      4                      3                      2                      1

*SA: Strongly agree / A: Agree / NS: Not sure / D: Disagree / SD: Strongly disagree*

	SA 5	A 4	NS 3	D 2	SD 1
1. The materials to teach writing at the DBE (e.g., hand-outs and the focused writing parts in the main course book) provided me with what I needed to know or do.					
2. The materials were appropriate to my interests.					
3. The materials fit my long term goals in terms of writing skills.					
4. The topics and themes in the materials were interesting.					
5. The materials offered continuity (between earlier and later parts).					
6. The writing skills taught in the program were useful for improving my general writing ability in English.					
7. The writing skills were taught sequentially (i.e. building upon prior learning).					
8. The materials were sufficient to improve my writing skills.					
9. Hand-outs were effective in improving my writing skills.					
10. The writing sections focused in the main course book <i>Language Leader</i> were effective in improving my writing skills.					
11. The materials had variety.					
12. The materials helped me to improve my writing skills.					
13. The materials were visually attractive.					
14. The materials were appropriate to my proficiency level in English.					

**9. Comment: Briefly list 3 suggestions at most about the writing materials and the content used at the DBE.**

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#### **IV. Teaching-Learning Process**

**10. Which of the below activities and methods were used to teach writing at the DBE. Mark (X) where appropriate.**

	More than Necessary	The Right Amount	Not Enough	None
1. Student presentations				
2. Pair work				
3. Group work				
4. Discussions				
5. Games				
6. Role plays				
7. Projects				
8. Reading aloud written work				

	More than Necessary	The Right Amount	Not Enough	None
9. Whole class activities done on the board				
10. Whole class feedback sessions on exercises				
11. Peer correction				
12. Self correction				
13. Journal keeping				
14. Brainstorming				
15. Dictation				
16. Other (please specify):				

**11. Please express your opinion considering the teaching-learning process in writing lessons at the DBE by marking (X) as appropriate.**

5                      4                      3                      2                      1

**SA: Strongly agree / A: Agree / NS: Not sure / D: Disagree / SD: Strongly disagree**

	SA 5	A 4	NS 3	D 2	SD 1
1. There was an efficient use of time in writing lessons.					
2. There was a good student-teacher interaction in writing lessons.					
3. We had cooperative relationships with each other.					
4. A variety of activities was used to teach writing.					
5. Writing lessons were taught in an interesting way.					
6. It was easy to follow the teacher.					
7. The teacher's instructions were clear.					
8. The teacher's teaching methodology was effective in my learning.					
9. The teacher encouraged me to participate in the lessons.					
10. The teacher used audio-visual aids (OHP, video, tape-recorder, etc.) effectively in the lessons.					
11. The teacher used the board effectively.					
12. The teacher gave equal attention to all students in the classroom.					
13. The teacher corrected my mistakes in an effective way.					
14. The teacher helped me to learn how to write.					
15. The teacher gave sufficient feedback on my performance (i.e. written work).					
16. We gave sufficient feedback on each other's performance.					

**12. Comment: Briefly list 3 suggestions at most about how the teaching-learning process should be to teach writing more effectively at the DBE.**

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**V. Assessment and Student Performance**

**13. Please express your opinion about the assessment of the writing skills at the DBE and your performance in writing. Mark (X) where appropriate.**

5                      4                      3                      2                      1

***SA: Strongly agree / A: Agree / NS: Not sure / D: Disagree / SD: Strongly disagree***

	SA 5	A 4	NS 3	D 2	SD 1
1. We were assessed on the things (i.e. skills) we practiced in the lessons.					
2. Before the tests (i.e. mid-terms), we were given information about the scope of the tests.					
3. The directions in the mid-term exams were clear.					
4. The materials used in the lessons and the test materials were similar in terms of difficulty level.					
5. The mid-term exam results demonstrate my actual ability/proficiency in writing skills.					
6. My writing skills have been correctly measured.					
7. The grading was fair.					
8. My performance in writing was good.					
9. My writing skills have improved after the writing program.					
10. I received sufficient feedback on my assignments.					
11. I received sufficient feedback on my class work.					
12. I received sufficient feedback on my performance in the mid-term exams.					

**14. Comment: Briefly list 3 suggestions at most about how the writing performance should be assessed at the DBE.**

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**VI. Overall Evaluation**

**15. List 3 *positive* things in the writing program that helped you the most to improve your writing skills.**

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**16. List 3 *negative* things in the writing program that *did not* help you to improve your writing skills.**

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**17. List 3 of your *suggestions* to make the writing program more useful and better adjusted to your needs.**

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## APPENDIX B

### DBE STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE (in Turkish)

#### Değerli Hazırlık Öğrencisi,

Bu anketin amacı, değerlendirme amacıyla ODTÜ hazırlık sınıflarında uygulanan programın İngilizce yazma boyutuyla ilgili görüşlerinizi öğrenmektir. Yazma programının hedefleri, içerik ve materyaller, öğretme ve ölçme boyutları değerlendirilecektir. **Lütfen görüşünüzü en iyi yansıtan kutuya çarpı (X) işareti koyunuz.** Katılımınız, işbirliğiniz ve görüşlerinizi gerçekçi ve objektif olarak belirttiğiniz için çok teşekkür ederiz. Elde edilecek veriler ODTÜ hazırlık biriminde uygulanan yazma derslerinin geliştirilmesi için çok önemlidir. Cevaplarınız gizli tutulacak ve anketin sonuçları sadece araştırma amaçlı kullanılacaktır. Bu anket yaklaşık 20 dakika sürecektir.

Abdullah COŞKUN, İngiliz Dil Eğitimi Doktora Öğrencisi, ODTÜ  
E-Posta Adresi: [abdullahenglish@gmail.com](mailto:abdullahenglish@gmail.com)

#### **I. Özgeçmiş Bilgileri**

1. Cinsiyetiniz: Kadın \_\_\_ Erkek\_\_\_

2. Yaşınız: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Mezun olduğunuz lise türü:

Anadolu Lisesi\_\_\_ Süper Lise\_\_\_ Fen Lisesi\_\_\_

Meslek Lisesi\_\_\_ Özel Lise\_\_\_ Düz Lise\_\_\_

Diğer\_\_\_\_\_

4. İkinci Dönem kurunuz: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Birinci Dönem not ortalamanız: \_\_\_\_\_/45

## **II. Hedefler**

**6. Sizce, hazırlıktaki yazma programının sonucunda aşağıda verilen becerilerde ne kadar yetkin oldunuz?**

	<b>Çok Yetkin</b>	<b>Yeterince Yetkin</b>	<b>Pek Yetkin Değil</b>	<b>Hiç Yetkin Değil</b>
1. Basit cümle kurma (Yalnızca bir fiilin kullanıldığı cümlelerdir. Örneğin “The man <i>walked</i> home”)				
2. Bağlı cümle kurma (İki fiili cümlelerdir. İki cümlecik arasına giren “fakat, veya, ve, bu yüzden” gibi bağlaçlarla bağlanan cümlelerdir. Örneğin, “I <i>opened</i> the door so she could <i>come</i> inside”)				
3. Birleşik cümle kurma (Bir ana ve bir yan cümleden oluşur. Yan cümleler kendi başında bir anlam ifade etmez. “Ragmen, çünkü, eğer” gibi bağlaçlarla bu cümleler ana cümleye bağlanır. Örneğin, “I couldn’t pass the exam although I studied hard”)				
4. Sözcükleri doğru anlamda ve doğru yerde kullanma				
5. Yazı türüne (discourse) uygun söylem yapıları kullanma (cause-effect, compare-contrast, problem-solution, etc.)				
6. Yazı kurallarına uygun paragraf yazma (giriş cümlesi, gelişme ve sonuç)				
7. Metin içerisindeki cümleler arasında mantıksal bağlantıyı sağlama				
8. Gerekli bağlaçları kullanarak metin içerisinde bütünlük sağlama				
9. Metnin hitap ettiği okuyucu kitlesine göre yapı ve sözcük seçebilme (formal / informal language)				

**7. Yorum: İhtiyaç ve beklentilerini göz önünde bulundurarak, yukarda verilen yazma becerileri ile ilgili yapılmasını istediğiniz değişiklikleri (ekleme, çıkarma) listeleyeniniz. En fazla 3 değişiklik önerisinde bulunabilirsiniz.**

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### **III. İçerik ve Materyaller**

**8. Lütfen hazırlıkta yazma derslerinde kullanılan materyaller ve işlenen materyal içerikleri hakkındaki görüşlerinizi aşağıda gösterildiği şekilde uygun numaranın altındaki kutuya X koyarak belirtiniz.**

**5: Kesinlikle Katılıyorum**

**4: Katılıyorum**

**3: Kararsızım**

**2: Katılmıyorum**

**1: Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum**

	5	4	3	2	1
1. Hazırlıkta yazma öğretiminde kullanılan ders materyalleri (dağıtılan fotokopi materyaller ve ana ders kitabının işlenen yazma bölümleri), bilmek veya yapmak istediğim her şeyi kapsadı.					
2. Ders materyalleri ilgi alanlarıma uygundu.					
3. Ders materyalleri, yazma becerileriyle ilgili uzun vadeli hedeflerime uyuyordu.					
4. Ders materyallerindeki konular ilgi çekiciydi.					
5. Ders materyallerinde önceki ve sonraki bölümler arasında süreklilik/ilişki vardı.					
6. Öğretilen yazma becerileri benim genel yazma yetimi ilerletmemde yararlı oldu.					
7. Beceriler sırayla öğretiliyordu (yeni bir şey öğrenirken bir önce öğrendiklerimize bir şeyler ekleniyordu).					
8. Ders materyalleri yazma becerilerimi ilerletmem için yeterliydi.					
9. Dağıtılan fotokopi materyaller (hand-out) yazma becerilerimi geliştirmemde etkili oldu.					
10. <i>Language Leader</i> kitabındaki işlenen yazma bölümleri yazma becerilerimi geliştirmemde etkili oldu.					
11. Ders materyallerinde çeşitlilik vardı.					
12. Ders materyalleri yazma becerilerimi geliştirmeme yardımcı oldu.					
13. Ders materyalleri görsel olarak çekiciydi.					
14. Ders materyalleri İngilizce seviyemize uygundu.					

**9. Yorum: Hazırlıkta kullanılan yazma materyalleri ve bu materyallerin içeriğiyle ilgili en fazla 3 önerinizi kısaca listeleyiniz.**

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#### **IV. Öğretim-Öğrenim Süreci**

**10. Aşağıdaki etkinlik ve yöntemlerden hangileri hazırlıkta yazma öğretimi için kullanılıyor? Kullanım sıklığıyla ilgili görüşünüzü uygun kutuya X koyarak belirtiniz.**

	<b>Gereğinden Fazla</b>	<b>Olması Gerektiği Kadar</b>	<b>Yeterli Değil</b>	<b>Hiç</b>
1. Öğrenci sunuları				
2. İkili çalışma				
3. Gurup halinde çalışma				
4. Tartışmalar				
5. Oyunlar				
6. Rol yapma				
7. Projeler				
8. Yazılanların yüksek sesle okunması				
9. Tahtada tüm sınıfça yapılan çalışmalar				
10. Tüm sınıf olarak alıştırmaların cevaplarını kontrol etme				
11. Öğrencilerin birbirlerinin hatalarını düzeltmesi				
12. Öğrencilerin kendi hatalarını düzeltmesi				
13. Günlük tutma				
14. Beyin fırtınası				
15. Öğretmenin bir metni sesli okuyup öğrencilere yazdırması				
<b>16. Diğer (Lütfen belirtiniz):</b>				

**11. Lütfen hazırlıktaki yazma derslerindeki öğrenme-öğretme sürecini düşünerek, görüşlerinizi aşağıda gösterildiği şekilde uygun numaranın altındaki kutuya X koyarak belirtiniz.**

**5: Kesinlikle Katılıyorum**

**4: Katılıyorum**

**3: Kararsızım**

**2: Katılmıyorum**

**1: Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum**

	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
1. Yama derslerinde, sınıfta zaman iyi kullanıldı.					
2. Yazma derslerinde öğrenci-öğretmen ilişkisi/etkileşimi iyiydi.					
3. Sınıftaki arkadaşlarla birbirimize yardımcı olduk.					
4. Yazma öğretiminde çok çeşitli aktiviteler kullanıldı.					
5. Yazma dersleri ilgi çekici bir şekilde anlatıldı.					
6. Öğretmeni takip etmek kolaydı.					
7. Öğretmenin ne yapmamız gerektiğiyle ilgili açıklamaları anlaşılırdı.					

	5	4	3	2	1
8. Öğretmenin öğretme yöntemi öğrenmemizde etkiliydi.					
9. Öğretmen derse katılmamı teşvik etti.					
10. Öğretmen tepegöz, video, kasetçalar gibi araç gereçleri etkili bir şekilde kullandı.					
11. Öğretmen tahtayı etkili bir biçimde kullandı.					
12. Öğretmen sınıftaki tüm öğrencilerle eşit olarak ilgilendi.					
13. Öğretmen yaptığım yanlışları etkili bir şekilde düzeltti.					
14. Öğretmen nasıl yazmam gerektiği konusunda öğrenmeme yardımcı oldu.					
15. Öğretmen yaptığımız çalışmaların (yazdıklarımızın) nasıl olduğuyla ilgili olarak yeterli dönüt/bilgi verdi.					
16. Sınıftaki arkadaşlarla birbirimize yaptıklarımız çalışmaların (yazdıklarının) nasıl olduğuyla ilgili dönüt/bilgi verdik.					

**12. Yorum:** Hazırlıkta yazma becerilerini daha etkili öğretmek için öğretim-öğrenim sürecinin nasıl olması gerektiğiyle ilgili en fazla 3 önerinizi kısaca listeleyniz.

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### **V. Değerlendirme ve Öğrenci Performansı**

**13. Lütfen hazırlıktaki yazma dersinin değerlendirilmesi ve sizin yazmadaki performansınızla ilgili görüşlerinizi aşağıda gösterildiği şekilde uygun numaranın altındaki kutuya X koyarak belirtiniz.**

**5: Kesinlikle Katılıyorum**

**4: Katılıyorum**

**3: Kararsızım**

**2: Katılmıyorum**

**1: Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum**

	5	4	3	2	1
1. Derslerde alıştırma yaptığımız şeylerden sınav olduk/değerlendirildik.					
2. Sınavlardan (ara sınav) önce sınavların içeriğiyle ilgili bilgilendirildik.					
3. Ara sınavlardaki açıklamalar açık ve anlaşılırdı.					
4. Ders ve sınav materyalleri zorluk derecesi açısından birbirleriyle aynıydı.					
5. Ara sınav sonuçları benim yazma becerilerindeki gerçek yetimi/başarımı yansıtıyor.					
6. Yazma becerilerim doğru bir şekilde ölçüldü.					
7. Değerlendirme adilci.					
8. Yazma derslerindeki performansım/başarım iyiydi.					
9. Yazma derslerinden sonra yazma becerilerim gelişti.					

	5	4	3	2	1
10. Ödevlerdeki performansıyla/başarıyla ilgili yeterli dönüt/bilgi aldım.					
11. Sınıf içi çalışmalarındaki performansıyla/başarıyla ilgili yeterli dönüt/bilgi aldım.					
12. Ara sınavlardaki performansıyla/başarıyla ilgili yeterli dönüt/bilgi aldım.					

**14. Yorum: Hazırlıktaki İngilizce yazma performansının nasıl ölçülmesi gerektiğiyle ilgili en fazla 3 önerinizi kısaca listeleyiniz.**

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#### **VI. Genel Değerlendirme**

**15. Yazma derslerindeki, yazma becerilerinizi geliştirmenize en çok yardımcı olan 3 olumlu noktayı listeleyiniz.**

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**16. Yazma derslerindeki, yazma becerilerinizi geliştirmenize yardımcı olmayan en olumsuz 3 noktayı listeleyiniz.**

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**17. Hazırlıktaki yazma programının daha yararlı ve öğrencilerin ihtiyaçlarına daha iyi cevap verir bir duruma getirilebilmesi için 3 öneri yazınız.**

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## APPENDIX C

### DBE INSTRUCTOR QUESTIONNAIRE

**Dear DBE Instructor,**

The aim of this questionnaire is to collect your opinions about the writing component of the program at the DBE for evaluation purposes. Writing program objectives, content and materials, teaching and the assessment aspects will be evaluated. **Please put a cross (X) in the box that best represents your opinion.** Thank you very much for your participation and cooperation and for expressing your opinions realistically and objectively. The collected data will be of great value for the improvement of the writing program at the DBE, METU. Your responses will be kept confidential, and the results of the questionnaire will merely be used for research purposes. The questionnaire takes around 20 minutes.

Abdullah COŞKUN, PhD Student, ELT, METU  
E-mail to: [abdullahenglish@gmail.com](mailto:abdullahenglish@gmail.com)

#### **I. Background Information**

1. **Gender:** Male\_\_\_ Female\_\_\_

2. **Years of work experience at the DBE:** \_\_\_\_\_

3. **The proficiency level you are currently teaching:** \_\_\_\_\_

4. **How well do you think the writing program at the DBE prepares students to successfully participate in DML courses like ENG 101 and ENG 102?**

Very good \_\_\_ Good \_\_\_ Average \_\_\_ Just a little \_\_\_ Poor \_\_\_

5. **How well do you think the writing program at the DBE prepares students to produce written responses in their own departments?**

Very good \_\_\_ Good \_\_\_ Average \_\_\_ Just a little \_\_\_ Poor \_\_\_

**II. Objectives**

**6. In your opinion, how competent have the students become in the below given writing skills as a result of the writing program at the DBE?**

	<b>Highly Competent</b>	<b>Competent Enough</b>	<b>Not Competent Enough</b>	<b>Not Competent At all</b>
1. Writing simple sentences				
2. Writing compound sentences				
3. Writing complex sentences				
4. Using correct and appropriate vocabulary				
5. Using appropriate discourse patterns (cause-effect, compare-contrast, problem-solution, argumentation)				
6. Writing academic paragraphs with appropriate topic, supporting and concluding sentences				
7. Achieving cohesion in writing via referencing, maintaining focus and looking out for old/new information				
8. Achieving unity in writing through the use of appropriate signal words				
9. Using appropriate register in writing (formal / informal language)				

**7. Comment: Considering your students’ profile and needs, briefly list maximum 3 changes (e.g., adding a new objective, omitting an objective or rewording an objective) you would like to be made in writing skills listed above.**

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**III. Content and Materials**

**8. Please express your opinion about the writing materials and the content covered in these materials at the DBE by marking (X) as appropriate.**

5                      4                      3                      2                      1

*SA: Strongly agree / A: Agree / NS: Not sure / D: Disagree / SD: Strongly disagree*

	SA 5	A 4	NS 3	D 2	SD 1
1. The materials to teach writing at the DBE (e.g., hand-outs and the focused writing parts in the main course book) provided students with what they needed to know or do.					
2. The materials were appropriate to students' interests.					
3. The materials fit students' long term goals in terms of writing skills.					
4. The topics and themes in the materials were interesting.					
5. The materials offered continuity (between earlier and later parts).					
6. The writing skills taught in the program were useful for improving students' general writing ability in English.					
7. The writing skills were taught sequentially (i.e. building upon prior learning).					
8. The materials were sufficient to improve students' writing skills.					
9. Hand-outs were effective in improving students' writing skills.					
10. The writing sections focused in the main course book <i>Language Leader</i> were effective in improving students' writing skills.					
11. The materials had variety.					
12. The materials helped students to improve their writing skills.					
13. The materials were visually attractive.					
14. The materials were appropriate to students' proficiency level in English.					

**9. Comment:** Briefly list your suggestions about the writing materials and the content used at the DBE (maximum 3 suggestions).

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#### **IV. Teaching-Learning Process**

**10. Which of the below activities and methods were used to teach writing in your lessons at the DBE? Mark (X) as appropriate.**

	More than Necessary	The Right Amount	Not Enough	None
1. Student presentations				
2. Pair work				
3. Group work				
4. Discussions				
5. Games				
6. Role plays				

	More than Necessary	The Right Amount	Not Enough	None
7. Projects				
8. Reading aloud written work				
9. Whole class activities done on the board				
10. Whole class feedback sessions on exercises				
11. Peer correction				
12. Self correction				
13. Journal keeping				
14. Brainstorming				
15. Dictation				
16. Other (please specify):				

**11. Please express your opinion about the teaching-learning process in your writing lessons at the DBE by marking (X) as appropriate.**

5                      4                      3                      2                      1

*SA: Strongly agree / A: Agree / NS: Not sure / D: Disagree / SD: Strongly disagree*

	SA 5	A 4	NS 3	D 2	SD 1
1. There was an efficient use of time in writing lessons.					
2. There was a good student-teacher interaction in writing lessons.					
3. Students had cooperative relationships with each other.					
4. A variety of activities was used to teach writing.					
5. I taught writing in an interesting way.					
6. It was easy for students to follow me in writing lessons.					
7. My instructions were clear.					
8. My teaching methodology was effective in students' learning.					
9. I encouraged students to participate in the lessons.					
10. I used audio-visual aids (OHP, video, tape-recorder, etc.) effectively in the lessons.					
11. I used the board effectively.					
12. I gave equal attention to all students in the classroom.					
13. I corrected students' mistakes in an effective way.					
14. I helped students to learn how to write.					
15. I gave sufficient feedback on students' performance.					
16. Students gave sufficient feedback on each other's performance.					

**12. Comment: Briefly list the changes you suggest about how the teaching-learning process should be to teach writing more effectively at the DBE (maximum 3 suggestions).**

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**V. Assessment and Student Performance**

**13. Please express your opinion about the assessment and your students' performance in writing. Mark (X) where appropriate.**

5                      4                      3                      2                      1

***SA: Strongly agree / A: Agree / NS: Not sure / D: Disagree / SD: Strongly disagree***

	SA 5	A 4	NS 3	D 2	SD 1
1. Students were assessed on the things (i.e. skills) they practiced in the lessons.					
2. Before the tests (i.e. mid-terms), students were given information about the scope of the tests.					
3. The directions in the mid-term exams were clear.					
4. The materials used in the lessons and the test materials were similar in terms of difficulty level.					
5. The mid-term exam results demonstrate students' actual ability/proficiency in writing skills.					
6. Students' writing skills have been correctly measured.					
7. The grading was fair.					
8. Students' performance in writing was good.					
9. Students' writing skills have improved after the writing program.					
10. Students received sufficient feedback on their assignments.					
11. Students received sufficient feedback on their class work.					
12. Students received sufficient feedback on their performance in the mid-term exams.					

**14. Comment: Briefly list 3 changes you suggest about how the writing performance should be assessed at the DBE (maximum 3 suggestions).**

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**VI. Overall Evaluation**

**15. List the most *positive 3 things* in the writing program that you think helped students the most to improve their writing skills.**

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**16. List the most *negative 3 things* in the writing program that *did not* help students to improve their writing skills.**

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**17. List *3 of your suggestions* to make the writing program more useful and better adjusted to students' departmental needs.**

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## APPENDIX D

### DML STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

**Dear DML Student,**

The aim of this questionnaire is to collect your opinions about the writing component of ENG 101 and ENG 102 courses offered by the Department of Modern Languages (DML). Writing program objectives, content and materials, teaching and the assessment aspects of both courses will be evaluated in this study. **This questionnaire is only to be filled in by the students who were enrolled in ENG 101 in the first term and are currently enrolled in ENG102. Please put a cross (X) in the box that best represents your opinion.** Thank you very much for your participation and cooperation and for expressing your opinions realistically and objectively. The collected data will be of great value for the improvement of the writing program at the DML, METU. Your responses will be kept confidential, and the results of the questionnaire will merely be used for research purposes. The questionnaire takes around 20 minutes.

Abdullah COŞKUN, PhD Student, ELT, METU

E-mail to: [abdullahenglish@gmail.com](mailto:abdullahenglish@gmail.com)

#### **I. Background Information**

1. Gender: Male \_\_\_ Female \_\_\_

2. Age: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Did you study at the Department of Basic English? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

4. Please indicate your grade in the ENG 101 course: \_\_\_\_\_

## **II. Objectives**

**5. In your opinion, how competent have you become in the below given writing skills as a result of the ENG 101 and 102 courses at the DML?**

	<b>Highly Competent</b>	<b>Competent Enough</b>	<b>Not Competent Enough</b>	<b>Not Competent At all</b>
1. Writing expository paragraphs				
2. Writing reaction paragraphs				
3. Writing an expository essay				
4. Learning, internalizing, accepting and carrying out the stages in a process writing approach, while writing paragraphs and/or essays				
5. Using correct, appropriate language structures, vocabulary and discourse markers.				
6. Writing a documented expository essay				
7. Writing a documented essay				
8. Writing a reaction-response essay				
9. Evaluating sources for relevance and reliability				
10. Identifying reference information				
11. Researching on the Internet				
12. Researching in the library				
13. Identifying and selecting relevant sources				
14. Practicing using APA citation rules				
15. Practicing borrowing ideas by paraphrasing, summarizing, quoting, and synthesizing				

**6. Comment: Considering your needs at your departments, briefly list the changes (e.g., additions, omissions) you would like to be made in the above given writing skills focused in ENG 101 and 102 courses. You can propose maximum 3 changes (You can write your comments in Turkish).**

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### **III. Content and Materials**

**7. Please express your opinion about the writing materials and related content used to teach ENG 101 and ENG 102 by putting a cross (X) as appropriate.**

5                      4                      3                      2                      1

**SA: Strongly agree / A: Agree / NS: Not sure / D: Disagree / SD: Strongly disagree**

	SA 5	A 4	NS 3	D 2	SD 1
1. The course materials (i.e. <i>Academic English: Survival Skills I and II</i> ) provided me with what I needed to know or do.					
2. The course materials were appropriate to my interests.					
3. The course materials fit my long term goals in terms of writing skills.					
4. The topics and themes in the materials were interesting.					
5. The course materials offered continuity (between earlier and later parts).					
6. The writing skills taught in the program were useful for improving my general writing ability in English.					
7. The writing skills were taught sequentially (i.e. building upon prior learning).					
8. The materials were in line with the writing objectives (see Question 5 for the list of writing objectives for ENG 101 and ENG 102).					
9. The course books were appropriately priced.					
10. Course materials were sufficient to improve my writing skills.					
11. The writing sections in the course books were effective in improving my writing skills.					
12. The course materials had variety					
13. The course materials helped me to improve my writing skills.					
14. The course materials were visually attractive.					
15. The course materials were appropriate to my proficiency level in English.					
16. The supplementary materials the teacher used were useful for improving my writing skills.					

**8. Comment: Briefly list your suggestions about the writing materials and related content used in the ENG 101 and ENG 102 courses (maximum 3 suggestions) (You can write your comments in Turkish).**

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	SA 5	A 4	NS 3	D 2	SD 1
15. The teacher helped me to learn how to write.					
16. The teacher gave sufficient feedback on my performance (i.e. written work).					
17. We gave sufficient feedback on each other's performance.					

**11. Comment: Briefly list 3 suggestions at most about how the teaching-learning process should be to teach writing more effectively in ENG 101 and 102 (You can write your comments in Turkish).**

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#### **V. Assessment and Student Performance**

**12. Please express your opinion about the assessment in writing in the ENG 101 and ENG 102 courses and your performance in these courses. Mark (X) where appropriate.**

5                      4                      3                      2                      1

**SA: Strongly agree / A: Agree / NS: Not sure / D: Disagree / SD: Strongly disagree**

	SA 5	A 4	NS 3	D 2	SD 1
1. We were assessed on the things (i.e. skills) we practiced in the lessons.					
2. Before the tests (i.e. mid-terms and final exams), we were given information about the scope of the tests.					
3. The directions in the exams were clear.					
4. The materials used in the lessons and the test materials were similar in terms of difficulty level.					
5. The assignment/homework (i.e. paragraph and essay writing) results demonstrate my actual ability/proficiency in writing skills.					
6. The exam results demonstrate my actual ability/proficiency in writing skills.					
7. My writing skills have been correctly measured in ENG 101 and ENG 102.					
8. The grading was fair.					
9. Homework/assignments were relevant to the course objectives (see Question 5 for the list of writing objectives for ENG 101 and ENG 102).					
10. My performance in ENG 101 and ENG 102 was good.					
11. My writing skills have improved after these courses.					

	SA 5	A 4	NS 3	D 2	SD 1
12. I received sufficient feedback on my assignments.					
13. I received sufficient feedback on my class work.					
14. I received sufficient feedback on my performance in the exams.					

**13. Comment:** Briefly list 3 suggestions at most about how the writing performance should be assessed in the ENG 101 and ENG 102 courses (*You can write your comments in Turkish*).

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**VI. Overall Evaluation**

**14.** List the most *positive 3 things* about ENG 101 and ENG 102 courses that helped you the most to improve your writing skills (*You can write your comments in Turkish*).

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**15.** List the most *negative 3 things* about ENG 101 and ENG 102 courses that did not help you to improve your writing skills (*You can write your comments in Turkish*).

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**16.** List 3 of your *suggestions* to make the writing program of ENG 101 and ENG 102 courses more useful and better adjusted to your departmental needs (*You can write your comments in Turkish*).

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## APPENDIX E

### DML INSTRUCTOR QUESTIONNAIRE

**Dear DML Instructor,**

The aim of this questionnaire is to collect your opinions about the writing component of ENG 101 and ENG 102 courses offered by the Department of Modern Languages (DML). Writing program objectives, content and materials, teaching and the assessment aspects of both courses will be evaluated in this study. **This questionnaire is only to be filled in by the instructors who taught ENG 101 in the first term and are currently teaching ENG 102. Please put a cross (X) in the box that best represents your opinion.** Thank you very much for your participation and cooperation and for expressing your opinions realistically and objectively. The collected data will be of great value for the improvement of the writing program at the DML, METU. Your responses will be kept confidential, and the results of the questionnaire will merely be used for research purposes. The questionnaire takes around 20 minutes.

Abdullah COŞKUN, PhD Student, ELT, METU

E-mail to: [abdullahenglish@gmail.com](mailto:abdullahenglish@gmail.com)

#### **I. Background Information**

1. **Gender:** Male\_\_\_ Female\_\_\_

2. **Years of work experience at the DML:** \_\_\_\_\_

3. **How well do you think the writing program at the Department of Basic English prepares students for the writing components of ENG 101 and ENG 102 at the DML?**

Very good\_\_\_ Good\_\_\_ Average\_\_\_ Just a little\_\_\_ Poor\_\_\_

4. **How well do you think ENG 101 and ENG 102 courses prepare DML students to produce written responses in their own departments?**

Very good\_\_\_ Good\_\_\_ Average\_\_\_ Just a little\_\_\_ Poor\_\_\_

## **II. Objectives**

**5. In your opinion, how competent have the students become in the below given skills as a result of the ENG 101 and 102 courses at the DML?**

	<b>Highly Competent</b>	<b>Competent Enough</b>	<b>Not Competent Enough</b>	<b>Not Competent At all</b>
1. Writing expository paragraphs				
2. Writing reaction paragraphs				
3. Writing an expository essay				
4. Learning, internalizing, accepting and carrying out the stages in a process writing approach, while writing paragraphs and/or essays.				
5. Using correct, appropriate language structures, vocabulary and discourse markers.				
6. Writing a documented expository essay.				
7. Writing a documented essay				
8. Writing a reaction-response essay				
9. Evaluating sources for relevance and reliability				
10. Identifying reference information				
11. Researching on the Internet				
12. Researching in the library				
13. Identifying and selecting relevant sources.				
14. Practicing using APA citation rules				
15. Practicing borrowing ideas by paraphrasing, summarizing, quoting, and synthesizing.				

**6. Comment: Considering your students' writing needs in their departments, briefly list maximum 3 changes (e.g., adding a new objective, omitting an objective or rewording an objective) you would make in the writing skills given above focused on in ENG 101 and 102 courses.**

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### **III. Content and Materials**

**7. Please express your opinion about the writing materials and related content used to teach ENG 101 and ENG 102 by putting a cross (X) as appropriate.**

5                      4                      3                      2                      1

***SA: Strongly agree / A: Agree / NS: Not sure / D: Disagree / SD: Strongly disagree***

	SA 5	A 4	NS 3	D 2	SD 1
1. The course materials (i.e. <i>Academic English: Survival Skills I and II</i> ), provided students with what they needed to know or do.					
2. The course materials were appropriate to students' interests.					
3. The course materials fit students' long term goals in terms of writing skills.					
4. The topics and themes in the materials were interesting.					
5. The course materials offered continuity (between earlier and later parts).					
6. The writing skills taught in the program were useful for improving students' general writing ability in English					
7. The writing skills were taught sequentially (i.e. building upon prior learning).					
8. The materials were in line with the writing objectives (see Question 5 for the list of writing objectives for ENG 101 and ENG 102).					
9. The course books were appropriately priced.					
10. Course materials were sufficient to improve students' writing skills.					
11. The writing sections in the course books were effective in improving students' writing skills.					
12. The course materials had variety.					
13. The course materials helped students to improve their writing skills.					
14. The course materials were visually attractive.					
15. The course materials were appropriate to students' proficiency level in English.					
16. The supplementary materials were useful for improving students' writing skills.					

**8. Comment: Briefly list your suggestions about the writing materials and related content used in the ENG 101 and ENG 102 courses (maximum 3 suggestions).**

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#### **IV. Teaching-Learning Process**

**9. Which of the below activities and methods were used to teach writing in your lessons in the ENG 101 and ENG 102 courses. Mark (X) where appropriate.**

	<b>More than Necessary</b>	<b>The Right Amount</b>	<b>Not Enough</b>	<b>None</b>
1. Student presentations				
2. Pair work				
3. Group work				
4. Discussions				
5. Games				
6. Role plays				
7. Projects				
8. Reading aloud written work				
9. Whole class activities done on the board				
10. Whole class feedback sessions on exercises				
11. Peer correction				
12. Self correction				
13. Teacher correction				
14. Journal keeping				
15. Brainstorming				
16. Dictation				
17. <b>Other (please specify):</b>				

**10. Please express your opinion about the teaching-learning process in your writing-focused lessons in the ENG 101 and ENG 102 courses by marking (X) as appropriate.**

**5                      4                      3                      2                      1**

***SA: Strongly agree / A: Agree / NS: Not sure / D: Disagree / SD: Strongly disagree***

	<b>SA 5</b>	<b>A 4</b>	<b>NS 3</b>	<b>D 2</b>	<b>SD 1</b>
1. There was an efficient use of time in class.					
2. There was a good student-teacher interaction.					
3. The students had cooperative relationships with each other.					
4. A variety of activities was used to teach writing.					
5. I taught writing in an interesting way.					
6. It was easy for students to follow me in writing lessons.					
7. My instructions were clear.					
8. My teaching methodology was effective in students' learning.					
9. I encouraged students to participate in the lessons.					
10. I used audio-visual aids (OHP, video, tape-recorder, etc.) effectively in the lessons.					
11. I used the board effectively.					

	SA 5	A 4	NS 3	D 2	SD 1
12. I gave equal attention to all students in the class.					
13. I corrected students' mistakes in an effective way.					
14. Students helped each other to learn how to write.					
15. I helped students to learn how to write.					
16. I gave sufficient feedback on students' performance (i.e. written work).					
17. Students gave sufficient feedback on each other's performance					

**11. Comment: Briefly list 3 suggestions at most about how the teaching-learning process should be to teach writing more effectively in ENG 101 and 102.**

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#### **V. Assessment and Student Performance**

**12. Please express your opinion about the assessment in writing in the ENG 101 and ENG 102 courses and students' performance in these courses. Mark (X) where appropriate.**

5                      4                      3                      2                      1

**SA: Strongly agree / A: Agree / NS: Not sure / D: Disagree / SD: Strongly disagree**

	SA 5	A 4	NS 3	D 2	SD 1
1. Students were assessed on the things (i.e. skills) they practiced in the lessons.					
2. Before the tests (i.e. mid-terms and final exams), students were given information about the scope of the tests.					
3. The directions in the exams were clear.					
4. The materials used in the lessons and the test materials were similar in terms of difficulty level.					
5. The assignment/homework (i.e. paragraph and essay writing) results demonstrate students' actual ability/proficiency in writing skills.					
6. The exam results demonstrate students' actual ability/proficiency in writing skills.					
7. Students' writing skills have been correctly measured in ENG 101 and ENG 102.					
8. The grading was fair.					
9. Homework/assignments were relevant to the course objectives (see Question 5 for the list of writing objectives for ENG 101 and ENG 102).					
10. Students' performance in ENG 101 and ENG 102 was good.					

	SA 5	A 4	NS 3	D 2	SD 1
11. Students' writing skills have improved after these courses.					
12. Students received sufficient feedback on their assignments.					
13. Students received sufficient feedback on their class work.					
14. Students received sufficient feedback on their performance in the exams.					

**13. Comment: Briefly list 3 suggestions at most about how the writing performance should be assessed in the ENG 101 and ENG 102 courses.**

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**VI. Overall Evaluation**

**14. List the most *positive 3 things* that you think helped ENG 101 and ENG 102 students the most to improve their writing skills.**

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**15. List the most *negative 3 things* you think did not help ENG 101 and ENG 102 students to improve their writing skills.**

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**16. List 3 of your *suggestions* to make the writing program of ENG 101 and ENG 102 courses more useful and better adjusted to students' departmental needs.**

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## APPENDIX F

### INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR DBE INSTRUCTORS AND PROGRAM COORDINATORS

I am currently writing my PhD dissertation in the department of ELT, METU and the main objective of my dissertation is to evaluate the writing component of the program applied at the DBE. Writing program objectives, content and materials, teaching and the assessment aspects of the program will be evaluated, and as a part of data collection, interviews and open-ended surveys are conducted with program coordinators and department instructors who can provide more in-depth information about the writing program and how it is implemented. The collected data will be of great value for the improvement of the writing program at the DBE, METU.

**Your responses will be kept confidential, and the results of this interview will merely be used for research purposes. I would like to record our conversation if you don't mind. This interview will take some 20 minutes. Is that fine with you?**

#### **I. Background Information**

1. Gender:
2. Years of teaching experience at the DBE: \_\_\_\_\_
3. What level are you currently teaching? \_\_\_\_\_

#### **II. Objectives**

4. What is the aim of the writing program you offer at the DBE?
5. Below is a list of objectives that deal with the teaching of writing at the department. Do you believe that in your courses, all these objectives are achieved? Could you please explain why you think so?

1. Writing simple sentences
2. Writing compound sentences
3. Writing complex sentences
4. Using correct and appropriate vocabulary
5. Using appropriate discourse patterns (cause-effect, compare-contrast, problem-solution, argumentation)
6. Writing academic paragraphs with appropriate topic, supporting and concluding sentences
7. Achieving cohesion in writing via referencing, maintaining focus and looking out for old/new information
8. Achieving unity in writing through the use of appropriate signal words
9. Using appropriate register in writing (formal / informal language)
6. Would you propose any changes (additions, omissions or rewording) in these objectives for the improvement of the program? If yes, please explain your suggestions.

### **III. Content and Materials**

7. What is good and not so good about the materials (mainly the hand-outs and some of the writing parts in the main course book *Language Leader*) used to teach writing at the DBE? What are your suggestions for the not so good points?

8. Which topics/themes are generally focused on in the writing materials?

9. Which other topics/themes should be covered? What changes do you suggest in the content of the writing materials?

### **IV. Teaching-Learning Process**

10. How do you conduct your writing-focused lessons? Do you believe that your conduct is effective? Why/ Why not?

11. What kinds of activities/tasks have been done in writing-focused lessons (e.g., lecturing, silent individual work, pair/group work, discussions, games, whole class feedback sessions on exercises, assignment, peer correction, self correction, teacher correction, journal keeping, brainstorming and dictation)? Are there any other activities/tasks that you think should be included in writing-focused lessons?

### **V. Assessment and Student Performance**

12. Do you think about the assessment tools (e.g., mid-term exams and EPE) used for the assessment of the writing skills at the DBE are effective? If no, how should students' performance/success in writing be measured?

### **Part VI- Preparation for the DML and the Departments**

13. Do you think the writing program at the DBE has prepared students sufficiently for courses like ENG 101 and ENG 102 offered by the DML? Why/ Why not?

14. Do you think the writing program at the DBE has prepared students sufficiently for their departmental courses? Why/ Why not?

*Do you have anything else to add about the writing dimension of the ELT program at the DBE?*

## APPENDIX G

### INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR DML INSTRUCTORS AND PROGRAM COORDINATOR

I am currently writing my PhD dissertation in the department of ELT, METU and the main objective of my dissertation is to evaluate the writing program of the DML. As ENG 101 and ENG 102 are the two compulsory courses integrating writing skills, these courses offered by the DML will be evaluated in terms of course objectives, content and materials, teaching and the assessment. As a part of data collection, interviews are conducted with ENG 101 and ENG 102 instructors who taught ENG 101 in the first term and are currently teaching ENG 102 and the coordinator of these courses who can provide more in-depth information about the writing aspect of both courses. The collected data will be of great value for the improvement of the writing program at the DML, METU.

**Your responses will be kept confidential, and the results of this interview will merely be used for research purposes. I would like to record our conversation if you don't mind. This interview will take some 20 minutes. Is that fine with you?**

#### **I. Background Information**

1. Gender:
2. Years of teaching experience at the DML: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **II. Objectives**

**3.** Below is a list of objectives that deal with the teaching of writing in the ENG 101 and ENG 102 courses? Do you believe that in your courses, all these objectives are achieved? Could you please explain why you think so?

1. writing expository paragraphs
2. writing reaction paragraphs
3. writing an expository essay
4. learning, internalizing, accepting and carrying out the stages in a process writing approach, while writing paragraphs and/or essays
5. using correct, appropriate language structures, vocabulary and discourse markers.
6. writing a documented expository essay
7. writing a documented essay
8. writing a reaction-response essay
9. evaluating sources for relevance and reliability
10. identifying reference information
11. researching on the Internet

12. researching in the library
  13. identifying and select relevant sources
  14. practicing using APA citation rules
  15. practicing borrowing ideas by paraphrasing, summarizing, quoting, and synthesizing
4. Would you propose any changes (additions, omissions or rewording) in these objectives for the improvement of the program? If yes, please explain your suggestions.

### **III. Content and Materials**

5. What is good and not so good about the materials (mainly Academic English: Survival Skills I and II) used to teach writing in the ENG 101 and ENG 102 courses? What are your suggestions for the not so good points?
6. Which topics/themes are generally focused in the writing materials?
7. Which other topics/themes should be covered? What changes do you suggest in the content of the writing materials?

### **IV. Teaching-Learning Process**

8. How do you conduct your writing-focused lessons in the ENG 101 and ENG 102 courses? Do you believe that your conduct is effective? Why/ Why not?
9. What kinds of activities/tasks have been done in writing-focused lessons (e.g., lecturing, silent individual work, pair/group work, discussions, games, whole class feedback sessions on exercises, assignment, peer correction, self correction, teacher correction, journal keeping, brainstorming and dictation)? Are there any other activities/tasks that you think should be included in writing-focused lessons?

### **V. Assessment and Student Performance**

10. Do you think about the assessment tools (mid-terms, final exams and essay writing) used for the assessment of the writing skills in the ENG 101 and ENG 102 courses are effective? If no, how should students' performance/success in writing be measured?
11. Are you satisfied with your students' writing performance/success? Have their writing skills improved as you expected?

### **Part VI- Preparation for the DML and the Departments**

12. Do you think the writing program at the DBE has prepared students sufficiently for ENG 101 and ENG 102? Why/ Why not?
13. Do you think the writing program at the DML has prepared students sufficiently for their departmental courses? Why/ Why not?

*Do you have anything else to add about the writing dimension of the ELT program at the DML?*

**APPENDIX H**  
**OPEN-ENDED SURVEY FOR CONTENT COURSE**  
**INSTRUCTORS**

**Dear Content Course Instructor,**

The main goal of my PhD dissertation is to evaluate the writing program offered by the Department of Basic English (**DBE**) and the Department of Modern Languages (**DML**) coordinated by the School of Foreign Language (**SFL**), METU. As a part of data collection, surveys are conducted with content course instructors in different departments so that in-depth information about how well students can write in English in their departments can be collected. The collected data from content course instructors will be of great value for the improvement of the writing program at the DBE and the DML, METU. Your responses will be kept confidential, and the results of the survey will merely be used for research purposes. This survey takes some 20 minutes.

Abdullah COŞKUN, PhD Student, English Language Teaching, METU  
E-mail to: [abdullahenglish@gmail.com](mailto:abdullahenglish@gmail.com)

1. Title:
2. Department:
3. Years of teaching experience at the department:
4. Course(s) your offer:
  
5. How often do you require your students to write in English?
  
6. What kinds of writing tasks are generally involved in your courses in the department?
  
7. Do you think the writing program at the SFL (the DBE and the DML) is preparing students sufficiently for the writing requirements of departmental courses? Why/ Why not?

8. What should be the main objective of teaching writing at the SFL?

9. In light of your observations so far, how competent do you think your students are in the writing skills below as a result of the writing program at the SFL? Please mark (X) as appropriate:

**HC: Highly Competent**

**CE: Competent Enough**

**NCE: Not Competent Enough**

**NCA: Not Competent at all**

**NA: Not Applicable (I have not observed this writing skill in our department)**

	HC	CE	NCE	NCA	NA
1. Writing simple sentences					
2. Writing compound sentences					
3. Writing complex sentences					
4. Using correct and appropriate vocabulary					
5. Using appropriate discourse patterns					
6. Writing academic paragraphs with appropriate topic, supporting and concluding sentences					
7. Achieving cohesion in writing via referencing, maintaining focus and looking out for old/new information					
8. Achieving unity in writing through the use of appropriate signal words					
9. Using appropriate register in writing					
10. Writing paragraphs					
11. Writing an expository essay					
12. Using correct, appropriate language structures, vocabulary and discourse markers.					
13. Writing a documented expository essay					
14. Writing a documented essay					
15. Writing a reaction-response essay					
16. Evaluating sources for relevance and reliability					
17. Identifying reference information					
18. Researching on the Internet					
19. Researching in the library					
20. Identifying and selecting relevant sources					
21. Practicing using APA citation rules					
22. Practicing borrowing ideas by paraphrasing, summarizing, quoting, and synthesizing					

**10.** Please read the following explanation about the writing materials and the content of the materials used to have an idea about the writing component at the DBE and the DML. Then, please answer the following question:

“At the DBE, mostly hand-outs that introduce writing in model texts are generally used to teach writing and the topics in these materials are not organized around a specific content. They generally prefer **general themes** that they think appeal to most of their students. On the other hand, at the DML, two course books (one is organized around the theme of “**Change**” and the other revolves around the theme of “**Power**”) are used.”

**Question:** What other contents (topics and themes) and materials do you think should be emphasized in the writing materials to better prepare students for their departments in terms of writing skills?

**11.** What are your suggestions for making the writing program at the SFL more effective, useful and better adjusted to students’ needs at their departments?

**APPENDIX I**  
**CURRICULUM VITAE**

**PERSONAL INFORMATION**

Surname, Name: Coşkun, Abdullah  
Date and Place of Birth: 29 November 1983, Ankara  
Phone: + 90 374 215 96 26  
email: [abdullahenglish@gmail.com](mailto:abdullahenglish@gmail.com)

**EDUCATION**

-MA: 2005-2007, Department of English Language Teaching, Faculty of Education, Abant İzzet Baysal University, Bolu.  
-BA: 2001-2005, Department of English Language Teaching, Faculty of Education, Abant İzzet Baysal University, Bolu.  
-High School: 1994-2001, İzzet Baysal Anatolian High School, Bolu.

**WORK EXPERIENCE**

-2005-2006: English Teacher at Yeniçağa 60.Yıl High School, Bolu.  
-2006-2007: General Coordinator of Leonardo Da Vinci Projects, Bolu.  
-2007-..... : English Instructor at Abant İzzet Baysal University, Bolu.

**PUBLICATIONS**

Coşkun, A. (scheduled for Volume 7, 2011). Future English Teachers' Attitudes towards EIL Pronunciation. *The Journal of English as an International Language*.

Coşkun, A. (2011). Investigation of the Application of Communicative Language Teaching in the English Language Classroom – A Case Study on Teachers' Attitudes in Turkey. *Journal of Linguistics and Language Teaching*. 2(1), 85-111.

Coşkun, A. (2010). EIL in an actual lesson. *The Journal of English as an International Language*, 5, 74-80.

Coşkun, A. (2010). Whose English should we teach? Reflections from Turkey. *English for Specific Purposes World Journal*. 1(27), 9.

Coşkun, A. and Daloğlu, A. (2010). *Evaluating an English Language Teacher Education Program Through Peacock's Model*, Australian Journal of Teacher Education. 35(6), 24-42.

Coşkun, A. (2010). The Effect of Metacognitive Strategy Training on the Listening Performance of Beginner Students. *Novitas-ROYAL (Research on Youth and Language)*. 4(1), 35-50.

Coşkun, A. (2010). A Classroom Research Study on Oral Error Correction. *Humanizing Language Teaching Magazine*. 12(3).

Coşkun, A. (2008). An ESP Course for Tourism Students. *English for Specific Purposes World Journal*. 4(25), 8.

Coşkun, A. (2008). Eleştirel Düşünme ve Yabancı Dil Öğretimi. *Çoluk Çocuk Dergisi*, 82, 29-31.

## **PAPER PRESENTATIONS**

Coşkun, A. (2010). *From EFL to ELF in Turkey: Why, Whats and Hows*. Paper presented in the 1<sup>st</sup> International Istek Schools ELT Conference, Yeditepe University, Istanbul, Turkey.

Coşkun, A. (2009). *CLT: Attitudes vs. Classroom Practices (A Case Study of two EFL teachers)*. Paper presented in the 7<sup>th</sup> International METU Postgraduate Conference in Linguistics and Language Teaching, METU, Ankara, Turkey.

Coşkun, A. (2008). *Students' Preferences about Corrective Feedback in L2 Writing Classes*. Paper presented in Assess Thyself, Assess Thy Students: Common Grounds for Secondary School and ELT Professionals, Istanbul Bilgi University, Istanbul, Turkey.

Coşkun, A. (2008). *ELF (English as a Lingua Franca)*. Paper presented in the 1<sup>st</sup> International ELT Conference, Fatih University, Istanbul, Turkey.

Coşkun, A. (2008). *Activities to Develop Children's Critical Thinking Skills*. Paper presented in the 3<sup>rd</sup> School-Home Cooperation Conference, Mimar Sinan Özel Okulları, Istanbul, Turkey.

## **PROJECTS**

-Coordinator: 2009-2011 (Leonardo Da Vinci) Transfer of Audio Haptics for Visually Impaired Information Technology: Functional English for Cognitively Impaired Learners.

-Coordinator: 2009-2010 (Prime Minister's Initiative for International Education) English Language Teaching for Sensory Impaired Learners.

-Coordinator: 2008-2010 (Grundtvig Partnership) English and ICT Competences for the Unemployed.

**APPENDIX J**  
**TURKISH SUMMARY**

**BİR DEVLET ÜNİVERSİTESİ'NİN İNGİLİZ DİL ÖĞRETİMİ**  
**PROGRAMINDAKİ YAZMA BOYUTUNUN DEĞERLENDİRİLMESİ:**  
**BİR VAKA ÇALIŞMASI**

**1. Giriş**

İngilizcenin ülkemizde önem kazanmasıyla birlikte, ilgililer ülkemizdeki İngiliz dil eğitimi programlarını daha etkili hale getirmek için yollar aramaktadırlar. Örneğin, Milli Eğitimi Bakanlığı 1997 yılındaki çalışmasıyla okullarda verilen İngilizce eğitimini daha öğrenci merkezli ve yapılandırmacı bir yaklaşımla Avrupa Birliği standartlarına göre geliştirmeyi hedeflemiştir (Kırkgöz, 2007). Ayrıca, İngilizce dersleri İlköğretim 4. sınıfa kadar çekilerek öğrencilerin İngilizceyi daha erken yaşta öğrenmeye başlamaları sağlanmıştır. Bunun yanı sıra, bazı ortaöğretim kurumlarında uygulanan İngilizce hazırlık programları kaldırılarak yerine tüm orta öğretime yayılmış bir İngilizce programına geçilmiştir. Üniversitelerde ise, öğrencileri bölümlerine hazırlayan İngilizce hazırlık okullarına daha çok önem verilmeye başlanmıştır (Toker, 1999) ve bu bağlamda program değerlendirme çalışmaları hız kazanmıştır.

Birçok araştırmacının da belirttiği gibi, tüm bu gelişmelere ve yatırımlara rağmen, öğrenciler İngilizcede istenilen seviyeye ulaşamamışlardır (Işık, 2008; Tosun, 2006; Çelebi, 2006; Kırkgöz, 2008). Bu nedenle, farklı bağlam ve kademelerde İngilizce program değerlendirme çalışmaları gerçekleştirilmiştir. Örneğin, üniversiteler bünyesindeki hazırlık okullarında yapılan bazı çalışmalar (Gerede, 2005; Örs, 2006; Karataş, 2007; Gökdemir, 2010; Özkanal & Hakan, 2010; Tunç, 2010) ülkemizde daha etkili bir hazırlık eğitimi için geliştirilmesi gereken noktaları açığa çıkarmışlardır.

Bu tezin odak noktası olan Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi (ODTÜ) hazırlık programlarıyla ilgili de bazı çalışmalar gerçekleştirilmiş ve özellikle yazma programıyla ilgili saptamalar ortaya konulmuştur. Örnek vermek gerekirse, Topçu (2005) 2003-2004

yıllarında Temel İngilizce Bölümünde (TİB) uygulanan İngilizce programını değerlendirmiş ve yazma programında iyileştirilmesi gereken bazı boyutlar olduğunu bulmuştur. Diğer yandan, Güntek (2005) aynı üniversitedeki Modern Diller Bölümü (MDB) tarafından verilen ENG 101 programının değerlendirmesini yapmış ve bu dersin yazma boyutuyla ilgili bazı değişiklikler önermiştir. Yine yazmayla ilgili olarak, ODTÜ Yabancı Diller Yüksekokulu tarafından 2007’de gerçekleştirilen öz değerlendirme raporuna göre (<http://dbe.metu.edu.tr>), farklı bölümlerdeki alan dersi öğretim üyeleri hazırlık programını bitiren öğrencilerin kendilerini İngilizce yazı dilinde ifade etmekte zorlandıklarını bildirmişlerdir. Geçen yıl programla ilgili görüşlerin konuşulduğu TİB paylaşım ve geribildirim toplantılarında da (<http://dbe.metu.edu.tr/port/documents>) yazma programıyla ilgili sıkıntılar dile getirilmiş ve çözüm önerileri tartışılmıştır. Ayrıca, Eylül 2010 ve Haziran 2009’da TİB tarafından yapılan İngilizce Yeterlilik Sınavlarında, öğrencilerin yazma bölümünden aldıkları ortalamının diğer bölümlerden daha düşük olduğu görülmüştür.

Program değerlendirme çalışmalarının İngiliz dili eğitimi programları kapsamında daha sık yürütülmesi gerektiği (Murphy, 2000, Norris, 2006) ve İngilizce yazma programlarının yeterince incelenmediği (Badger & White, 2000; Leki 2001; Fujieda, 2006) literatürde vurgulanmıştır. Bu yüzden, hem ilgili çalışmalar hem de ODTÜ’deki genel durum göz önüne alınarak, araştırmacı 2010-2011 akademik yılında ODTÜ TİB ve MDB’de uygulanan programın yazma boyutunu, program hedefleri, materyal ve içerik, öğrenme-öğretme süreci ve yazma becerilerinin ölçülmesi açısından değerlendirmeyi amaçlamaktadır. TİB ve MDB’nin ODTÜ öğrencilerini bölümlerine hazırlama gibi ortak bir amacının olduğunu düşünerek, her iki bölümün de yazma programı belirtilen boyutlar çerçevesinde değerlendirilmiş ve her iki bölümde de öğrenci, öğretim elemanı ve program koordinatörlerinin önerileri açığa çıkarılmaya çalışılmıştır. Ayrıca, farklı bölümlerdeki alan dersi öğretim üyelerinden bölüm öğrencilerinin yazma performansıyla ilgili görüşler alınmıştır. Bu çalışma kapsamında Lynch’in (1990) bağlam uyumlu değerlendirme modelini kullanarak aşağıdaki araştırma sorularına yanıt aranmıştır:

1. Temel İngilizce Bölümü öğrencileri programın yazma boyutunu program

- hedefleri, materyal ve içerik, öğrenme-öğretme süreci ve yazma becerilerinin ölçülmesi açısından nasıl değerlendirmektedir?
2. Temel İngilizce Bölümü öğretim elemanları ve program koordinatörleri programın yazma boyutunu program hedefleri, materyal ve içerik, öğrenme-öğretme süreci ve yazma becerilerinin ölçülmesi açısından nasıl değerlendirmektedir?
  3. Modern Diller Bölümü öğrencileri programın yazma boyutunu program hedefleri, materyal ve içerik, öğrenme-öğretme süreci ve yazma becerilerinin ölçülmesi açısından nasıl değerlendirmektedir?
  4. Modern Diller Bölümü öğretim elemanları ve program koordinatörü programın yazma boyutunu program hedefleri, materyal ve içerik, öğrenme-öğretme süreci ve yazma becerilerinin ölçülmesi açısından nasıl değerlendirmektedir?
  5. Farklı bölümlerdeki alan dersi öğretim üyeleri Yabancı Diller Yüksekokulundaki (Temel İngilizce Bölümü ve Modern Diller Bölümü) yazma programını nasıl değerlendirmektedir?

## **2. Önceki Çalışmalar**

Bu çalışmayla ilgili ana literatür program değerlendirme çalışmalarından oluşturmaktadır. Program değerlendirmeye ilgili en kapsamlı bakış açısı Brown (1995) tarafından ortaya konulmuştur. Brown'a göre program değerlendirme; ihtiyaç analizi, program hedefleri, materyal, öğretim ve ölçme gibi program öğelerini bir arada tutan ve onlara anlam kazandıran bir süreçtir. Bu sürecin değerlendirilmesinde bazı program değerlendirme modelleri kullanılmaktadır. Giriş bölümünde de belirtildiği gibi, program değerlendirme modellerini kullanarak, farklı üniversitelerin İngilizce programları farklı boyutlarıyla değerlendirilmiş ve programların geliştirilmesine yönelik öneriler getirilmiştir.

Genel olarak, bir program değerlendirme çalışması amacına göre farklı modeller kullanılarak yapılır. Worthen ve Sanders (1987), literatürde geçen farklı değerlendirme modellerini aşağıdaki gibi gruplamışlardır:

1. Hedef-Odaklı Değerlendirme Yaklaşımı
2. Yönetim-Odaklı Değerlendirme Yaklaşımı
3. Tüketici-Odaklı Değerlendirme Yaklaşımı
4. Uzman-Odaklı Değerlendirme Yaklaşımı
5. Zıtlık-Odaklı Değerlendirme Yaklaşımı
6. Doğal ve Katılımcı-Odaklı Değerlendirme Yaklaşımı

Ülkemizde, farklı bağlamlarda farklı modeller kullanılarak yapılan bazı çalışmalar olmuştur. Örneğin, Gerede (2005) mülakatlar ve anketler yoluyla Anadolu Üniversitesi hazırlık programını değerlendirmiştir. Çalışmaya katılan öğrencilerin çoğu, İngilizce hazırlık eğitiminin öğrencileri bölümlerine yeteri kadar iyi hazırlamadığını belirtmişlerdir. Örs (2006) ise Gaziantep Üniversitesi hazırlık programını materyaller ve ölçe-değerlendirme gibi boyutları ele alarak incelemiştir ve elde edilen bulgulara göre, programın uzunluğunun tekrar gözden geçirilmesi gerekliliği ortaya çıkmış ve derslerde kullanılan materyallerin yeteri kadar ilginç olmadığı saptanmıştır. Programın ölçme-değerlendirme boyutuyla ilgili, katılımcılar bu boyutun yenilenmesiyle ilgili profesyonel yardıma ihtiyaç duyulduğunu belirtmişlerdir. Tunç'un (2010) Ankara Üniversitesi hazırlık programının değerlendirilmesi çalışmasında içerik, materyal, fiziksel koşullar ve değerlendirme boyutları açısından gerekli iyileştirmelerin yapılması gerekliliği ortaya çıkmıştır. Aynı zamanda, mevcut programın iyi tanımlanmış hedeflerden yoksun olduğu ve sınavların zorluk derecelerinin tutarsız olduğu vurgulanmıştır. Özkanal ve Hakan (2010) Eskişehir Osmangazi Üniversitesi hazırlık programını değerlendirmiş ve programın istenilen nitelikleri bir anlamda kazandırdığı; fakat Teknik İngilizce konusunda eksikliklerin görüldüğü, öğretim yöntemleri ve hazırlık eğitimi modeli alanlarında yeniliklere gereksinim olduğu belirlenmiştir.

Öte yandan, Güllü (2007) Çukurova Üniversitesi Kozan Meslek Yüksekokulundaki İngilizce programının etkililiğini öğrenci görüşlerini inceleyerek değerlendirmiştir. Çalışmanın sonuçlarına göre, öğrenciler ders içeriğinin zor olduğunu,

ders materyallerinin ilgi çekici ve konuyla ilgili olmadığı ve yeteri kadar fiziksel araç-gerecin olmadığını düşünmektedir. Bir başka çalışmada, Karataş (2007) Yıldız Teknik Üniversitesi Modern Diller Bölümü tarafından verilen *English II* dersini değerlendirmiş ve öğretmenler, programın farklı mesleki alanlarda gerekli olan İngilizceyi öğretme noktasında, öğrencilerin yeteri kadar iyi yetiştirilemediğini öne sürmüşlerdir. Bu çalışmaların yanı sıra, İngilizce öğretmeni yetiştirme programlarıyla ilgili de ülkemizde bazı çalışmalar olmuştur. Erozan (2005), Seferoğlu (2006), Şallı-Çopur (2008) ve Coşkun ve Daloğlu (2010) gibi araştırmacılar farklı üniversitelerin İngilizce öğretmeni yetiştirme programlarını farklı boyutları ele alarak değerlendirmişlerdir.

Bu çalışma da yukarıda adı geçen diğer program değerlendirme çalışmaları gibi, ODTÜ TİB ve MDB'deki yazma programlarını öğrenci ve öğretim elemanı görüşlerini inceleyerek değerlendirmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu çalışmada Lynch'in (1990) bağlam uyumlu değerlendirme modeli kullanılmıştır. Bu değerlendirme modeli farklı bağlamlara kolayca uygulanabilen aşağıdaki yedi pratik aşamadan oluşmaktadır:

1. Değerlendirme için hedef kitle ve değerlendirme hedeflerinin belirlenmesi: Bu değerlendirme çalışmasının asıl hedef kitlesi Yabancı Diller Yüksekokulu idarecileri ve öğretmenleridir. Hedef kitle düşünülerek, TİB ve MDB'deki yazma programlarını farklı boyutlar açısından değerlendirmek ve programın gelişmesi için önerilerde bulunmak bu çalışmanın ana hedefi olarak ifade edilebilir.
2. Bağlam envanterinin geliştirilmesi: TİB ve MDB'deki bağlam envanterleri Öğrenciler ve öğretim elemanları, kullanılan materyaller ve programın genel amaçları ile ilgili belgeler analiz edilerek ve idarecilerle görüşülerek ortaya konulmuştur.
3. Ön tematik çerçevenin geliştirilmesi: İlk iki aşamada elde edilen veriler ışığında, bu program değerlendirme çalışmasında neye öncelik verilmesi gerekliliği belirlenmiştir. Bu öncelikler veri toplama araçlarının geliştirilmesi için de önemli olmuştur.
4. Veri toplama tasarımının geliştirilmesi: Hem ilgili literatüre hem de önceki üç aşamaya bakılarak anketler ve görüşme formları düzenlemiş ve uzman görüşlerinin yanı sıra her iki bölümde de yetkililerin geribildirimini alınmıştır.

5. Veri toplama: Veri toplama araçları Etik Komite'den izin alınmasıyla, yönetimin uygun bulduğu zamanlarda uygulanmaya konulmuştur.
6. Veri analizi: Nitel verilerin analizi içerik analiziyle yapılırken anketlerle toplanacak nicel veriler SPSS 15 yardımıyla analiz edilmiştir.
7. Değerlendirme raporunun oluşturulması: Bu değerlendirme çalışmasının sonuçlarını kapsayan bir rapor her iki bölüm yöneticileri ile de paylaşılmıştır.

Bu çalışma, bir yazma programının değerlendirilmesini amaçladığından, ikinci dilde yazma ile ilgili bazı önemli noktaları özetlemek gerekir. Ana dilde olduğu kadar, ikinci dilde yazma eylemi oldukça zor bir eylemdir. Raimes (1983:6)'e göre yazma eyleminin etkili bir şekilde gerçekleştirilebilmesi için bazı hususlara dikkat edilmesi gerekmektedir. Aşağıda belirtilen bu noktaların her biri için birer örnek verilmiştir:

1. Sözdizimi (cümle yapısı)
2. İçerik (tutarlılık)
3. Dilbilgisi (özne-yüklem uyumu)
4. Metin düzeni (paragraflar)
5. Sözcük seçimi (sözcükler)
6. Amaç (yazma amacı)
7. Hedef kitle (okuyucular)
8. Yazarın yazma süreci (taslakları oluşturmak)

### **3. Araştırma Yöntemi**

Bu çalışma, TİB ve MDB yazma programlarını değerlendirmeyi amaçlayan bir durum inceleme çalışmasıdır ve bu bölümlerle sınırlı olması nedeniyle bir vaka analizi olarak adlandırılabilir. Nitel ve nicel yöntemlerin birlikte kullanılması çalışmanın geçerliliğini artırıcı bir özellik taşıdığından (Dörnyei, 2007), hem nicel hem de nitel veriler farklı katılımcılardan elde edilmiştir. Nicel veriler her iki bölümde de öğretim elemanları ve öğrenciler için hazırlanan anketlerle toplanırken niteliksel verilere öğretim elemanları ve program koordinatörleriyle gerçekleştirilen görüşmeler, doküman analizi ve sınıf içi gözlemler sayesinde ulaşılmıştır.

Öğrenci ve öğretim elemanı anketleri Erozan (2005) tarafından geliştirilmiş ve bu çalışma için adapte edilmiştir. Her iki bölümde de komisyon incelemeleri, alanla ilgili uzman görüşleri ve pilot çalışma yapılarak anketlerin son şekli uygulanmaya başlanmıştır. Anketlerin ve görüşme formunun her bir bölümü araştırma sorularında geçen boyutları kapsamaktadır. Örneğin, TİB öğrenci anketinin materyal ve içerikle ilgili olan bölümünde ‘öğretilen yazma becerileri benim genel yazma yetimi ilerletmemde yararlı oldu’ gibi maddeler yer almaktadır. Bu bölümde öğrencilerden görüşlerini düşüncelerine uygun düşen sayının (5:Kesinlikle Katılıyorum, 4: Katılıyorum, 3:Kararsızım, 2:Katılmıyorum, 1:Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum) altındaki kutuyu işaretleyerek ifade etmeleri istenmektedir. Materyal ve içerikle ilgili, TİB öğretim elemanı görüşme formunda ise, materyallerle ilgili öğretim elemanlarının yazma derslerinde kullanılan materyallerin iyi ve iyi olmayan yönlerini açıklamaları istenmektedir. Anketlerin ve görüşme formlarının diğer bölümleri de bu şekilde organize edilmiştir.

Öğrenci anketi her iki bölümde de tüm öğrencilerin yaklaşık %15’ine (TİB: 450, MDB:270) verilmiştir. TİB’de 414, MDB’de ise 241 öğrenci anketi doldurmuştur. TİB’de yazma dersine giren 149 öğretim elemanından yaklaşık üçte biri ve ENG 102 dersine giren 45 öğretim elemanından 29’u anketi doldurmuşlardır. Yine Erozan tarafından hazırlanan görüşme soruları bölümlere adapte edilerek, TİB’de farklı seviyelerde derse giren 6 öğretim elemanı ve 5 program koordinatörüyle görüşmelere gerçekleştirilmiştir. Bunun yanı sıra, 9 öğretim elemanı, görüşme sorularını açık uçlu anket şekliyle doldurmayı tercih etmişlerdir. MDB’de ise farklı bölümlerde ENG 102 dersine giren 5 öğretim elemanı ve program koordinatörüyle görüşmeler yapılmıştır ve 4 öğretim elemanı açık uçlu soruları yanıtlamayı tercih etmiştir. Kısacası, TİB’de toplamda 20, MDB’nde ise toplam 10 öğretim elemanından niteliksel veriler toplanmıştır. ODTÜ’deki 5 farklı fakültenin farklı bölümlerde alan derslerine giren 10 öğretim üyesi de açık uçlu bir anketi yanıtlamışlardır.

Dokuman analizi ile ilgili her iki bölümde de Lynch’in (1990) bağlam envanteri aşamasında vurgulanan programın hedefleri, kullanılan materyal ve kaynaklar gibi boyutlar üzerinde durularak yazma programının bağlamının özellikleri bölüm

başkanlarından veya bölümlerin web sitelerinden sağlanan kaynaklarla ortaya konulmuştur. Sınıf gözlemleri ise programın öğrenme-öğretme sürecinin nasıl gerçekleştiğini anlamaya yönelik olarak TİB’de ve MDB’de üçer öğretim elemanının dersinde gerçekleştirilmiştir.

Niteliksel verilerin analizi içerik analizi yöntemiyle yapılırken anketlerle toplanan veriler SPSS 15 yardımıyla analiz edilmiştir.

#### **4. Sonuçlar**

Lynch’in (1990) program değerlendirme modeline göre, son aşama değerlendirme raporunun oluşturulmasıdır. Bu değerlendirme çalışmasıyla öğrencilerden ve öğretim elemanlarından toplanan bulgular ile Brown (1995) tarafından belirlenen program hedefleri, materyal ve içerik, öğrenme-öğretme süreci ve yazma becerilerinin ölçülmesi gibi boyutlar göz önünde bulundurularak araştırma sorularına cevap verilmeye çalışılmıştır. Bu boyutlara ek olarak TİB ve MDB’nin öğrencilerin bölüm içi yazma ihtiyaçlarına ne kadar cevap verdiği de TİB, MDB ve farklı bölümlerdeki öğretim üyelerinin görüşleri ile ortaya çıkarılmıştır.

#### **Program Hedefleriyle İlgili Sonuçlar:**

TİB ve MDB’nin yazma programı hedefleri bu çalışma için geliştirilen ölçeklerde beceri olarak sıralanmıştır. Bu becerilerle ilgili öğrencilerin ne kadar yetkin olduğunu belirlemek için öğrencilerin ve öğretim elemanlarının bu becerilerle ilgili görüşleri toplanmıştır. Her iki bölümde de, katılımcılar (öğrenci ve öğretim elemanları) bu becerilerin genellikle öğrenciler tarafından kazanıldığını ifade etmişlerdir. Ancak, her iki bölümde de, bazı beceriler hakkında olumsuz değerlendirmeler yapılmıştır. Örneğin, TİB’deki katılımcılar tarafından öğrencilerin ‘metnin hitap ettiği okuyucu kitlesine göre yapı ve sözcük seçebilme’ becerisinde daha az yetkin olduğu düşünülmektedir. MDB’de ise öğretim elemanları daha az öğrencinin kütüphanede araştırma becerisinde yetkin olduğunu belirtirken öğrenciler dil yapılarını, kelime bilgisini ve söylem belirleyicileri doğru ve uygun bir şekilde kullanma becerisinde kendilerini daha az yetkin

görmektedirler. Ayrıca, MDB katılımcıları bir cümleyi başka sözcüklerle tekrar yazabilme ve özetleme becerilerinde daha fazla zaman harcanması gerektiği konusunda hemfikirdirler. Bunun yanı sıra, TİB ve MDB öğretim elemanları öğrencilerin bazı becerileri neden kazanamadığı ile ilgili bazı sebepler öne sürmüşlerdir. Belirtilen nedenler arasında kalabalık sınıf mevcudu ve hedeflere ayrılan zamanın yetersizliği gibi nedenler vardır.

TİB'deki yazma programının geliştirilmesi için yapılan yorumlar arasında yazma programının kuralcı ve öğrenciler tarafından ezberlenmesi gereken söylem kalıplarına dayalı olduğu fikri pek çok katılımcı tarafından desteklenmiştir. Sınıf gözlemlerden de anlaşıldığı üzere, TİB'de yazma programı için ayrılan sürenin çoğu paragraflarda kullanılması gereken söylem kalıplarının öğretilmesi ile geçmektedir. Bu yüzden, TİB katılımcıları söylem kalıpları üzerinde çok fazla durulmamasını ve daha çok serbest yazma alıştırmalarının yapılmasını önermişlerdir. Başka bir deyişle, katılımcılar serbest yazma becerisinin TİB yazma programına bir hedef olarak dâhil edilmesi gerektiğini ifade etmişlerdir. Bazı TİB öğretim elemanları yazma derslerinde öğretilen söylem türlerinin sayısının azaltılması gerektiğini ve söylem kalıpları yerine daha fazla önemin yazılı metnin içeriğine verilmesi gerekliliğini savunmuşlardır. Muhammed'in (2004) de belirttiği gibi, daha yaratıcı yazı yazabilmeleri için öğrencilerin öğrenilen dil becerilerini yazı yazarken serbestçe kullanmaları gerekmektedir. Daha az kontrollü ve güdümlü İngilizce yazma becerilerinin gerekliliği bazı Türk araştırmacılar tarafından da desteklenmektedir. Örneğin, Atay ve Kurt (2006) İngilizce yazma sürecinin kontrollü yazılar ile sınırlı olmaması gerektiğini öne sürmüştür. Alagözlü'nun (2007) da belirttiği gibi, Türkiye'de eğitim almış öğrenciler İngilizce olarak özgün düşüncelerini yazılı ifade etmede çok yetkin değillerdir ve bunun da nedeni yazı öğretimimizin kontrollü ve güdümlü bir şekilde olmasıyla ilişkili olabilir.

TİB katılımcıları tarafından getirilen diğer bir öneri ise kompozisyon yazma hedefinin programa eklenmesiyle ilgili olmuştur. Aynı konu, geçen yıl TİB'de düzenlenen paylaşım ve geribildirim oturumlarında gündeme gelmiştir (Eylül 1, 2010 <http://www.dbe.metu.edu.tr/port/documents>). Bu oturumlarda bazı öğretim elemanları, kompozisyon yazmanın paragraftan daha gerçekçi olduğunu savunmuşlardır. Aynı

şekilde, bu çalışmaya katılan farklı bölümlerdeki alan dersi öğretim üyeleri paragraf yerine öğrencilerden daha çok kompozisyon yazmalarını istediklerini ifade etmişlerdir. Ayrıca, bazı MDB öğretim elemanları, öğrencilerin ENG 101 ve ENG 102 derslerine daha hazır hale gelebilmeleri için kompozisyon yazımıyla ilgili en azından temel bilgilerin TİB’de verilmesi gerekliliğini vurgulamışlardır.

Öte yandan, MDB ile ilgili, katılımcılar ENG 101 ve ENG 102 derslerinde işlenen yazı türü, yazı yazılacak konular ve atıf kurallarının öğrencilerin bölümlerine göre çeşitlilik göstermesi gerekliliğini önermişlerdir. Önerilen bu özel amaçlı İngilizce öğretim (ESP) şekli, Özkanal ve Hakan (2010), Kellogg (1994) ve Schwarz ve Nazarenko (2010) gibi araştırmacılar tarafından da desteklenmektedir. Özel amaçlı yazma programı orta ve ileri İngilizce yeterlilik seviyelerinde etkili olduğu düşünüldüğünden (Dudley-Evans ve St. John 1997), bu programın TİB’de uygulanması zor görünmektedir; fakat MDB, yazma programını aşağıdaki sorulara cevap vererek daha özel amaçlı bir hale getirebilir.

1. Öğrencilerin İngilizceyi kullanarak ne yapması (yazması) gerekmektedir?
2. Hangi becerileri (yazma becerilerini) ne kadar iyi öğrenmeleri gerekmektedir?
3. Hangi türleri (yazı türü) anlama veya anlatma amacıyla öğrenmeleri gerekmektedir? (Dudley-Evans, 2001).

Gillett (1996), Robinson’a (1991) atıfta bulunarak Akademik Amaçlı (EAP) veya Özel amaçlı İngilizce programı geliştirmenin ilk adımının öğrencilerin neden İngilizce öğrendiklerini ve bu öğrendikleriyle ne yapması gerektiğini ortaya çıkaracak olan bir ihtiyaç analizi olduğunu belirtmiştir. Daloğlu ve Işık-Taş (2007)’in da ifade ettiği gibi, Türkiye’de özel amaçlı İngilizce programları daha popüler hale gelmekte ve bu tip programların hazırlanmasında ihtiyaç analizinin büyük bir rolü bulunmaktadır. Bu nedenle, Daloğlu ve Işık-Taş tarafından Başkent Üniversitesi Uluslararası İlişkiler ve Siyaset Bilimi ikinci sınıf öğrencileri için ihtiyaç analizi yöntemiyle geliştirdikleri özel amaçlı İngilizce öğretimi programında olduğu gibi, MDB tarafından verilen ENG 101 ve ENG 102 dersleri için de bir ihtiyaç analizi yapılmalıdır.

Program hedefleri hakkında TİB ve MDB’deki katılımcıların yanı sıra, konuyla ilgili alan dersi öğretim üyelerinin de görüşleri sorulmuştur. Hem TİB hem de MDB

program hedefleri beceriler şeklinde sıralanarak bölüm öğrencilerinin bu becerilerde ne kadar yetkin olduğu araştırılmıştır. Çoğu beceride yetkin bulunan öğrencilerin, öğretim üyelerinin yarısından fazlasının düşüncesiyle bazı becerilerde yetkin olmadıkları düşünülmüştür. Bu beceriler şu şekildedir: 'uygun söylem kalıpları kullanma', 'doğru ve uygun dil yapıları, kelime bilgisi ve söylem belirleyicileri kullanma', 'uygun konu cümlesi, destekleyen ve sonuçlandıran cümleleri kullanarak akademik paragraf yazma', 'referans bilgilerini belirleme' ve 'uygun sinyal kelimeler aracılığıyla yazıda bütünlük sağlama'.

### **Materyal ve İçerikler ilgili Sonuçlar:**

Her iki bölümde de üzerinde durulan program boyutu materyal ve bu materyallerde kullanılan içeriklerdir. Programın bu ikinci boyutu genellikle TİB ve MDB katılımcıları tarafından olumlu değerlendirilmiştir. Ancak bazı noktalarda endişeler dile getirilmiştir. Örneğin, her iki bölümde de materyallerin görsel olarak çekiciliği noktasında olumsuz değerlendirmeler yapılmış. Özellikle TİB’de dağıtılan fotokopi materyaller çoğu zaman sadece yazılı metin içermekte ve herhangi bir görsel malzemeyi kapsamaktadır. Hâlbuki, İngilizce yazma dersi materyalleri resim ve diyagram gibi görsel öğeleri içinde barındırmalıdır (Qian, 2010).

MDB katılımcılarının ders kitaplarındaki tematik yaklaşımla ilgili (ENG 101 dersi için ‘değişim’ teması ve ENG 102 için ‘güç’ teması kitaplarda işlenmiştir) endişelerini dile getirmelerinin yanı sıra, hem TİB hem de MDB katılımcıları, materyallerde geçen konuların öğrencilerin bölümleri ile ilgili olması gerekliliğini savunmuşlardır. Bölümlerle ilgili konuların materyallere dâhil edilmesi gerekliliği araştırmaya katılan alan dersi öğretim üyeleri tarafından da vurgulanmıştır. ODTÜ’de birinci sınıf öğrencilerinin İngilizce yazma ile ilgili ihtiyaçlarının belirlenmesi amacıyla araştırma yapan Enginarlar (1982), hazırlık sınıfları için önerdiği müfredatın temel ilkelerinden birisi olarak, yazılı metinlerin öğrencilerin bölümleri ile ilgili metinlere dayanması gerekliliğini vurgulamıştır. Benzer şekilde, Mirici ve Demirel (1999), Leki (2003) ve Mirici ve Saka (2004) gibi araştırmacılar da özellikle hazırlık amaçlı İngilizce

programlarında öğrencilerin bölümlerine yönelik konuların üzerinde durulmasının önemine dikkat çekmişlerdir.

Buna ek olarak, her iki bölümde de katılımcılar öğrencilerin yazma konuları hakkında konu seçme esnekliği sağlanmasını önermişlerdir. Bazı TİB öğrencileri de, dağıtılan fotokopi materyallerin bir kitap şeklinde derlenmesini veya piyasadaki bir İngilizce yazma kitabının kullanılmasını tavsiye etmişlerdir. Bazı TİB öğrencileri dağıtılan fotokopi materyallerdeki örnek metnin ile alakalı endişelerini dile getirmişlerdir ve daha çok örnek metnin materyallere eklenmesi gerekliliğini ifade etmişlerdir. Öte yandan, bazı TİB öğretim elemanları, *Language Leader* ders kitabının serbest yazı yazma pratiği için iyi bir kaynak olduğunu; fakat kitaptaki alıştırmalar için yeteri kadar zaman ayrılmaması ve bu alıştırmalarla sınavdaki yazma sorular arasındaki tutarsızlık olması nedeniyle kitaptaki ilgili bölümlerin çoğu zaman atlandığını belirtmişlerdir.

### **Öğrenme-Öğretme Süreciyle İlgili Sonuçlar:**

Bu çalışmada ele alınan üçüncü boyut, aktivite ve metotları da içine alan öğrenme-öğretme sürecidir. TİB ve MDB katılımcılarının bu sürecin genel olarak bazı sorunlar dışında etkili olduğunu düşündüğünü söylemek yanlış olmayacaktır. Her iki bölümde de, yazma öğretiminin şekliyle ilgili olarak, katılımcılar tarafından daha olumsuz değerlendirmeler yapılmıştır. Örneğin, katılımcılar, yazma öğretiminin ilginç olduğunu ifade eden madde ile ilgili olumsuz değerlendirmelerde bulunmuşlardır. TİB ve MDB katılımcılarına göre, öğretme-öğrenme sürecinin öğretmen geribildirimi gibi güçlü yönleri olmasına rağmen, oyunlar, rol yapma ve günlük tutma gibi faaliyetler yeterince kullanılmamaktadır.

Ayrıca, MDB’de önerilen öğrenci-merkezli aktivitelerin yanı sıra, TİB’de yazma becerilerinin diğer temel becerilerle entegrasyonu, süreç temelli yazma alıştırmalarının yapılması, teknoloji kullanımını içeren alıştırmalara zaman ayrılması, öğrencinin kendi hatasını kendisinin düzeltmesi, ikili ve grup çalışması faaliyetlerinin daha fazla kullanımı gibi daha çok öğrenci merkezli çalışmalar programın güçlendirilmesi için önerilmektedir. İkili veya grup çalışmalarıyla ilgili olarak, Topçu (2005) TİB’de

uygulanen tema tabanlı müfredat üzerine yaptığı değerlendirmede programdaki zaman kısıtlılığından dolayı bu çalışmaların etkili olmadığını bulmuştur. Gökdemir (2010) ise beş farklı üniversitede yaptığı değerlendirme çalışmasında hazırlık sınıflarında, derslerin daha çok öğretmen merkezli olduğunu ortaya çıkarmıştı. Demirtaş ve Sert (2010) de Türk üniversitelerindeki öğrencilerin düşük İngilizce yeterlilik düzeyinin nedeni olarak geleneksel öğretmen-merkezli yaklaşımlara dikkat çekmiştir. İlgili literatüre ve her iki bölümde de önerilen öğrenci merkezli aktivitelere bakılarak, yazma derslerinde öğrenci-merkezli bir atmosfere ihtiyaç duyulduğu sonucuna varılabilir.

Son olarak, bazı MDB öğretim elemanları, öğrencilerin düşük İngilizce seviyelerinden, çok fazla yapı odaklı ve kontrollü geribildirim yönetiminden, ENG 101 ve ENG 102 derslerinin yükünden, zaman azlığı ve kalabalık sınıflardan dolayı öğretme-öğrenme sürecinin daha etkili yapılamadığını savunmuşlar ve ilgili öneriler de bulunmuşlardır.

### **Yazma Becerisinin Ölçülmesiyle İlgili Sonuçlar:**

Her iki bölümde de katılımcılar tarafından ele alınan dördüncü boyut yazma becerilerinin ölçülmesi ile ilgilidir. Hem TİB hem de MDB bölümlerinde yazma becerilerinin ölçülmesi genel anlamda olumlu değerlendirilmesine rağmen, sınav sonuçlarının yazma becerilerindeki gerçek başarıyı yansıtmadığı konusunda, her iki bölümde de katılımcılar tarafından olumsuz değerlendirmeler yapılmıştır. Aynı şekilde, her iki bölümde de katılımcılar, ölçme standardizasyonu gerekliliğine dikkat çekmiştir. İki öğretim elemanının öğrencilerin yazılarını puanlandırması sınavların güvenilirliğini artırmak için her iki bölümde de önerilmiştir. Puanlayıcılar arası güvenilirlikle ilgili olarak, Coombe (2010) iki puanlayıcının varlığının yazma becerisinin ölçülmesine güvenilirlik kattığını ifade etmiştir. Ayrıca, bazı öğretim elemanları daha ayrıntılı bir puanlama ölçeği ve öğretim elemanlarının ölçme standardizasyonu kapsamında eğitilmesi ile ilgili ihtiyacın altını çizmiştir.

TİB öğrencileri, paragraf yazmak için sınavlarda daha fazla zamana ihtiyacı olduğunu ifade ederken bazı MDB öğrenciler kompozisyon yazma süreciyle ilgili daha fazla zamanın gerekli olduğunu belirtmişlerdir. Yazma becerilerinin ölçülmesi

boyutunun geliştirilmesi için bazı TİB öğretim elemanları, yazma portföylerinin kullanılmasını önerirken, bazı MDB öğretim elemanları ise ENG 101 ve ENG 102 derslerinde kullanılan portföylerle birlikte TİB'deki gibi tek oturumda yapılan ürün bazlı değerlendirmelere de ihtiyaç olduğunu savunmuşlardır. TİB'de daha sık ölçme uygulamaları yapılabilmek için portföy uygulamasına geçilmesi ve öğretim elemanlarının bu konuda eğitilmesi gerekliliği birkaç öğretim elemanı tarafından dile getirilmiştir.

TİB katılımcıları tarafından yapılan bir başka öneri de İngilizce Yeterlilik Sınavı'nda (İYS) yazma bölümünde sorulan bazı sorularla ilgili olmuştur. Örneğin, İYS'nin yazma bölümünde çıkan verilen bir okuma metniyle ilgili yazı yazabilme tarzındaki alıştırmaların üzerinde sınıflarda pek fazla durulmamakta ve üzerinde yoğun bir şekilde durulan sebep-sonuç gibi söylem seviyesindeki yazılar yerine, sınavda serbest paragraf yazılması öğrencilerden istenmektedir. Bu da TİB öğrencilerinin aleyhine olmaktadır.

#### **TİB ve MDB Öğrencilerinin Bölümleri için Hazırlanmasıyla İlgili Sonuçlar:**

Araştırma sorularında belirtilen program boyutlarına ek olarak, TİB ve MDB yazma programlarının öğrencileri bölümlere ne kadar iyi hazırladığı ile ilgili sorulara cevap aranmıştır. TİB öğretim elemanlarının çoğunluğu MDB'deki yazma programı ve ODTÜ'de farklı bölümlerdeki yazma gereksinimlerinin tam olarak farkında olmadıklarını ifade etmişlerdir. Bu nedenle, TİB ve MDB öğretim elemanları arasında her iki bölümün de ortak amacının öğrencileri bölümlerine hazırlamak olduğu bilincini artırmak için işbirliğine ihtiyaç olduğu söylenebilir. MDB öğretim elemanlarının bazıları TİB'de uygulanan yazma programı hakkında memnuniyetini ifade ederken, çoğu öğretim elemanı TİB'den gelen öğrencilerin İngilizce konu cümlesi yazmak gibi bazı temel noktalarda eksikliği olduğunu belirtmişlerdir.

Alan dersi öğretim üyeleri de konuyla ilgili değerlendirmeler yapmışlardır. Öğrencilerin bölüm derslerinde daha çok yazılı sınavlar, dönem ödevleri, araştırma önerisi, laboratuvar raporları ve kitap değerlendirmelerinde İngilizce yazı yazdığını ifade eden alan dersi öğretim üyeleri, TİB ve MDB'nin öğrencileri bölümlerine ne kadar iyi

hazırladığı konusunda farklı görüşler paylaşmışlardır. Araştırmaya katılan 10 öğretim üyesinden, üçü yazma programını genel itibarıyla olumlu değerlendirirken, diğer üç öğretim üyesi öğrencilerin İngilizce yazılarıyla ilgili olumsuz deneyimlerin aktarmışlardır. Diğer üç öğretim üyesi ise öğrencilerin istenen düzeyde yazamamasının nedeni olarak TİB ve MDB'yi görmediklerini ve yazma becerisinin bölümlerde geliştiğini ifade etmişlerdir. Bu yüzden, bazı MDB öğretim elemanları gibi, alan dersi öğretim üyeleri de bölümlerde daha çok İngilizce yazı yazılması noktasında tavsiyelerde bulunmuşlardır.

TİB ve MDB'de uygulanan yazma programının geliştirilmesi ve öğrencilerin bölümlerindeki yazma gereksinimlerinin daha iyi anlaşılabilmesi için, alan dersi öğretim üyeleri, bu bölümlerdeki öğretim elemanlarıyla farklı bölümlerdeki öğretim üyeleri arasındaki işbirliğinin önemini vurgulamışlardır.

## **5. Uygulama Önerileri**

Bu çalışma her iki bölümde de yazma programının geliştirilmesi için bazı sonuçlar ortaya çıkarmıştır. Bölüm yöneticileri ve öğretim elemanları bu çalışmanın bulgularından yararlanabilirler. Çalışmanın bulgularına göre, her iki bölümden de anketler ve görüşmelerle elde edilen en yaygın öğrenci ve öğretim elemanı görüşleri doğrultusunda aşağıdaki uygulama önerilerinde bulunulabilir:

1. TİB'de serbest yazma alıştırmalarını içeren süreç odaklı bir yazma programına geçilip söylem seviyesinde yazılan yazılarda geçen klişe yazma kalıplarına daha az zaman ayrılması tavsiye edilebilir.
2. TİB'de süreç odaklı bir yazma programına geçiş için öğrencilerin süreç içindeki gelişimini gösteren portföyler kullanılabilir ve öğretim elemanlarına etkili portföy uygulamaları noktasında eğitimler verilmesi portföy kullanımının etkililiğini artırabilir.
3. Bölümlerde daha çok kompozisyon tarzı yazılar yazıldığından, kompozisyon yazma becerisi TİB'de yazma program hedeflerinin bir parçası olabilir.

4. TİB’de ‘metnin hitap ettiği okuyucu kitlesine göre yapı ve sözcük seçebilme’ becerisi üzerinde daha fazla durulması gerekmekte ve MDB’de özet yapma ve bir cümleyi başka sözcüklerle tekrar yazabilme gibi becerilere daha fazla odaklanılmalıdır.
5. Her iki bölümde de görsel çekiciliği olan materyallere ihtiyaç vardır ve öğrencilere yazı yazılacak konularla ilgili konu seçme esnekliği tanınmalıdır.
6. ENG 101 ve ENG 102 derslerindeki kitapların tematik yapısı tekrar gözden geçirilmeli ve materyallerin içerikleri her iki bölümde de öğrencilerin bölümleriyle ilgili konuları kapsamalıdır.
7. TİB’de kullanılan *Language Leader* kitabındaki yazma alıştırmalarının serbest yazma pratiği sağladığı için tüm öğretim elemanları tarafından sınıfta yapılmasında yarar vardır.
8. Her iki bölümde de yazma dersleri daha ilgi çekici hale getirilmeli ve öğrenci merkezli etkinliklere daha çok yer verilmelidir. Sınıf dışında ise öğrenciler İngilizce günlük tutma gibi etkinliklere teşvik edilmelidir.
9. Öğretim elemanlarına gerekli eğitim verilebilir ve bölüme gereken lojistik ve mali destek sağlanabilirse, MDB’de yazma dersi için özel amaçlı bir İngilizce (ESP) yazma programı geliştirilebilir.
10. TİB ve MDB öğrencilerinin bölümleriyle ilgili ihtiyaçlarını ortaya çıkarmak amacıyla kapsamlı bir ihtiyaç analizine ihtiyaç vardır. Bu konuda gelecekte yapılacak çalışmalar, TİB ve MDB’nin öğrencileri bölümlere daha iyi hazırlamasına olanak sağlayacaktır.
11. Sınavlarda yazılan metinlerin değerlendirilmesinin her iki bölümde de iki öğretim elemanı tarafından yapılması sınavın güvenilirliğini artıracaktır.
12. TİB’de İYS sınavına yönelik çalışmalara daha sık yer verilmelidir.
13. TİB ve MDB öğretim elemanları arasında gerekli olan işbirliği, bu bölümlerde çalışan öğretim elemanlarıyla alan dersi öğretim üyeleri arasında da sağlanmalıdır.