

# 12.

## Developing L2 English Essay Writing Skills at the C1 Level: A Focus on the Process

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### 1. Introduction

It is a general understanding in the EFL teaching profession that, of the four language skills (i.e., speaking, listening, reading and writing), the acquisition of writing seems to be the most challenging for L2 English learners, especially in the case of formal genres such as different types of essays (see, e.g., Godwin-Jones 2022; Hyland 2003; Matsuda and Silva 2020). Indeed, this is the skill which, even in the learners' L1, requires much effort and perseverance to develop, and can become effective in both L1 and L2 educational contexts with the active support of professional instruction (Leki 2000; Matsuda and Silva 2020).

This applies to the Hungarian higher education context as well, where one of the main objectives of the BA in English Studies programme is to further develop B2 English language proficiency (as described in Council of Europe 2001) so that students are able to reach a minimum C1 level before graduation. This achievement is usually demonstrated by the successful completion of an English language proficiency examination, where the proficient use of language, including writing, is measured following the descriptors of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Council of Europe 2001). This is the procedure at the university where I conducted a case study focusing on students' L2 English writing skills enhancement preceding the examination. In the case of this particular BA programme, the writing component of the C1 proficiency examination is an argumentative essay on a general issue, and one of the aims of the English Language Practice courses preceding the examination is to help students improve their essay writing skills focusing on different types of essays (i.e., expository, comparative and argumentative).

The starting point of the research was that my teaching experience at the course was mixed. Since the Language Practice courses have a number of language skills-related aims other than writing, and the students are also required to attend two essay writing courses (one general, one academic), only a limited amount of time was devoted

ed to writing during my course. I found that the quality of the essays produced in my seminars often fell short of what was expected.

This problem may be explained by a number of reasons. Firstly, some students found it difficult to directly apply the knowledge and skills they had focused on during the essay writing courses because of the differences in expectations regarding the topic, focus, aims, text length and evaluation criteria. Secondly, the students' motivation for completing the task was mainly instrumental: work was required in order to achieve a seminar grade and credit points as well as to successfully complete the C1 proficiency examination. While these requirements served as a sufficient incentive to carry out the writing assignments, they were not powerful enough to motivate all students to strive for the best possible results. Thirdly, the structure and efficiency of the essay writing tasks in my seminars did not appear to be adequate. Because of time constraints, the assignment was largely product-oriented: relatively little time was devoted to relevant classroom discussions before, during and after task completion; students produced their texts as individual work outside class; and revision work based on the teacher's comments and evaluations was only a recommendation on my part, which students often did not follow.

Recently, the situation has been further complicated by the widespread accessibility of chatbots (e.g., ChatGPT), which use generative artificial intelligence systems to maintain conversations and create natural language texts online. The use of chatbots enable students to create texts in line with the essay writing task description without having to go through the process of written text creation: the chatbot does the work for them in a matter of seconds. In line with the principle of least effort (Zipf 1949), which states that people usually choose the least effortful way, among possible options, to achieve a given goal, the amount of attention and time students spent on the task has been significantly reduced, thus the chances of developing effective essay writing skills have decreased. As a consequence, the number of failed proficiency examinations, due to a failure in passing the requirements of the essay writing component, has increased.

In the light of the above experiences, I decided to carry out a small-scale case study where my aim was to develop and evaluate the perceived usefulness of an experimental essay writing task within the framework of my language practice course. During the design and implementation of the writing task, special focus was given to the process of writing. To fulfil this aim, I asked the following research questions.

1. To what extent did a focus on the writing process contribute to successful task completion according to the students?

2. To what extent was teacher guidance during the different phases of the process perceived as effective by the students?
3. To what extent did the experimental task enhance essay writing skills according to the students?

Given the already inescapable presence of chatbots in education (Folmeg, Fekete and Kóris 2024), one possible direction of research could have been to investigate the applicability of ChatGPT in this context. However, since this direction would not reflect the writing process expected in the C1 proficiency examination, I decided to design a task that would help students further develop their existing knowledge and skills in a targeted way, which they could then utilise in exam situations where the possibilities provided by artificial intelligence are not available.

The theoretical framework for the empirical research is discussed below. This is followed by a description of the research design, and a presentation and discussion of the results.

## **2. Textuality, writing skills and the writing process**

According to de Beaugrande and Dressler (2000, 23–36), a piece of language can be defined as text if it satisfies the conditions of textuality: (1) coherence and cohesion; (2) intentionality on the part of the author and acceptability on the part of the audience, thus allowing cooperation between the two parties; (3) newsworthiness and relevance; and (4) realisation of genre requirements. Widdowson (2007) adds that meeting the textuality criteria also ensures that the text is communicative. A text is regarded as communicative if it is created in a way that enables writers and readers to participate in the interpretation, expression, and negotiation of meaning conveyed in it (Savignon 2017, 3).

Kellogg (2008) maintains that students' improvement of writing skills is closely linked to a development in their rhetorical literacy, by which he means the broadening of learner's knowledge of the world together with an enhancement of problem-solving skills, creativity and emotional intelligence. If we look at written text production as a rhetorical problem-solving task, it follows that the creation of the text can be regarded as an integrated process, where the production and the comprehension of the text are interrelated, and where the development of L2 English writing skills may be enhanced by using relevant techniques and subtasks not only in writing but in speech as well (Candlin and Hyland 2014).

Text production, understood as an integrated process, may be supported by a form of writing instruction that emphasises the process of writing alongside its end-product (Hyland 2003, 10–13). Process-oriented writing, as defined by Zamel (1983, 165), is

a ‘non-linear, exploratory, generative process whereby writers discover and reformulate their ideas as they attempt to approximate meaning’. Thus, a process approach to writing instruction builds on the consideration that writing is a recursive process, and that conditions for becoming a good writer include writing extensively and in a reflecting way, because this is how learners may gain experience in going through the steps that are essential for the creation of an effective, communicative text (Matsuda and Silva 2020). Steps of the process include data collection, planning, drafting, multiple revisions of the text in preparation, editing the final version of the text, and dissemination (see, e.g., Gilliland 2016; Graham and Sandmel 2011).

Taking the above theoretical considerations into account, my language pedagogical principles for the experimental writing task were as follows:

1. The purpose, audience, genre and style of the essay should be well-defined and realistically imaginable by the students.
2. In parallel with the end-product, the process of writing should also receive focused attention during the design and implementation of the task.
3. Teacher guidance, both individually and in groups, should support successful task completion throughout the writing process.
4. Reading comprehension and oral discussion should also support the writing process.
5. The emphasis should be on the ability to create own text rather than the skilful use of artificial intelligence. To this end, time should be made available for the individual completion of some of the subtasks in class.

### **3. Research design**

My case study aimed to investigate the perceived effectiveness of an experimental essay writing task with a particular focus on the process of writing. Effectiveness was evaluated with a focus on the student perceptions. To achieve this aim, I designed a writing task in line with the pedagogical principles described in Section 2 above. (See Appendix 1 for the task description.)

Within the framework of the experimental task, I asked students to write a 350-word comparative essay in English about one of the general English topics we covered during the semester (i.e., arts, entertainment, health, lifestyles). The target audience of the essay was defined as Hungarian and international students in the English Studies programmes (BA, MA, Teaching English as a Foreign Language) at the university, and I asked students to select a topic and decide on the focus, elements to be compared and criteria for comparison in a way that their essay might attract the attention of this audi-

ence. The ultimate goal was to write an essay for publication in the university's online student magazine.

My participants were second-year BA students, aged between 20 and 22 years, in three parallel English language practice courses. The number of students in each course was 14. The language proficiency of the participants was at a B2+ level or above. All in all, 37 students participated in the research: they submitted their essay and completed the questionnaire. Out of the 37 participants, 13 were male (35.1%) and 24 were female (64.9%).

The process leading to the completion of the writing task consisted of five phases. Students were required to complete one subtask in each phase supported by teacher guidance before and after the completion of the subtask (for a summary see Table 1). Phase 1 (giving an in-class presentation about the topic selected by the students) consisted of an oral subtask, while the subtasks in Phases 2–5 required writing. Only in Phases 1 and 5 were students asked to spend time on the task outside the classroom; Phases 2–4 required individual work in class. Class time spent on individual subtasks was flexible: students could use the amount of time necessary within the 90-minute seminar, while the remaining time was devoted to other language practice tasks in the form of individual and group work activities. Subtasks in Phases 1–4 were compulsory, while the final subtask (preparing the essay for publication) was optional.

Teacher guidance preceding the subtasks was provided in groups, while guidance proceeding task completion focused on individual students in speech and/or writing. The experimental task was divided into phases in order to facilitate the process of writing, and teacher guidance focused on both the process and the product. Phase 1 (giving an in-class presentation) formed an integral part of the writing task, because this was the stage where students were encouraged to work on their selected topic content-wise while collecting, analysing and interpreting background information. Also, this subtask gave students the opportunity to think about and experiment with the structure of comparison. My pedagogical aim here was to facilitate subsequent writing-related work during Phases 2–5. The above decisions are in line with my pedagogical principles as described in Section 2.

Phases of the writing process: Subtasks	Teacher guidance in preparation for the subtask (group focus)	Teacher guidance proceeding subtask completion (individual focus)
1. Developing and giving a presentation on the selected topic (individual work at home and in class) ↓	Discussing the general characteristics and requirements of the comparative essay incl. purpose, audience, style, structure, content	Providing feedback on the aims, structure, content, and style
2. Developing the outline of the essay (individual work in class) ↓	Discussing the process of writing and relevant writing strategies	Providing feedback on the outline (title, structure, content elements, comparability)
3. Creating the first draft (individual work in class) ↓	Analysing sample essays focusing on structure and style	Providing feedback on structure, style and language use in the first draft
4. Revision and creating the final version of the essay (individual work in class) ↓	Analysing sample essays focusing on coherence and cohesion	Providing feedback on task achievement
5. Optional: Preparing the essay for publication (individual work at home)	Revising the characteristics and requirements of comparative essay	Providing feedback on overall task accomplishment

Table 1. Phases and characteristics of the process-oriented essay-writing task.

To answer the research questions, I asked students to provide feedback, with the help of a questionnaire, on the perceived usefulness of the writing task upon completion (see Appendix 2). The working language of the questionnaire was English. To avoid misinterpretation, I allocated time for a brief discussion on technical vocabulary in the questions (e.g., audience, cohesion, coherence, punctuation, purpose). The students' participation was voluntary and anonymous. To ensure this, I asked for their written consent. The data in the questionnaires were coded and analysed using the Excel 2013 program with the help of descriptive statistical indicators.

4. Research results

Below, the findings of the questionnaire are described first. Section 4.1 looks at individual time spent on task and the perceived usefulness of each writing phase. Section 4.2 discusses participants’ opinion regarding the usefulness of teacher guidance in the phases. Section 4.3 gives an account of the relationship between the experimental task and perceived improvement of essay writing skills according to the respondents. This is followed by a discussion of the findings in Section 4.4.

I decided not to include responses related to the optional work phase (Phase 5: preparing the essay for publication) in the data analysis, because only five participants indicated that they would take advantage of this option, and the majority (n=30) of the respondents did not answer the relevant questions in the survey.

4.1 Phases of writing: time spent on subtasks and perceived usefulness

In Questions 1 and 2 of the questionnaire, students were asked to estimate how much time they spent on completing each subtasks individually from ‘0–15 minutes’ to ‘longer than 60 minutes’, and to evaluate the usefulness of each phase from ‘not at all’ to ‘very much’. Looking at mode values, results in Table 2 show that both in terms of time spent on task and perceived usefulness, developing an outline is at the bottom of the rank order. Most students spent 0–15 minutes on this subtask (mode 1), and ranked its usefulness the lowest (mode 2). In the case of the other three subtasks, the majority of the students spent 46–60 minutes on each (mode 4). Mean comparison indicates that most students spent the longest time on developing the presentation (3.73) This is closely followed by writing up the final essay (3.48) and the first draft (3.43). These figures indicate that, on average, students needed approximately 1 hour’s individual work to complete each of these subtasks.

Subtasks	Time spent on task individually		Perceived usefulness	
	mean	mode	mean	mode
Presentation	3.73	4	2.8	3
Outline	1.68	1	2.7	2
First draft	3.43	4	2.94	3
Final essay	3.48	4	3.27	4

Table 2. Student’s evaluation of the phases of the writing task.



The perception of usefulness is in line with the time spent on the subtasks. Developing the final version of the essay was ranked as ‘very useful’ by most respondents (mode 4), becoming the most highly rated of the four compulsory phases, while giving a presentation and developing the first draft were rated as ‘to a large extent useful’ by most respondents (mode 3). By looking at these results, it can be concluded that the majority of students spent a minimum of 195 minutes on the complete assignment in the form of individual work.

#### 4.2 Teacher guidance during the essay writing task

The successful fulfilment of each subtask was facilitated by different types of teacher guidance. Question 3 of the questionnaire inquired about the extent to which students found the focus and form of the guidance useful from ‘not at all’ to ‘very much’. The results are summarised in Table 3.

	Focus of teacher guidance	mean	mode
Group work	Characteristics of comparative essay (discussion)	3.5	4
	Structure (sample text analysis)	3.1	3
	Coherence and cohesion (sample text analysis)	2.88	3
	Writing process and writing strategies (discussion)	2.72	3
	Social context: purpose, audience, style (discussion)	2.57	3
Individual attention	Content	3.62	4
	Structure	3.62	4
	Use of English	3.56	4
	Coherence and cohesion	3.51	4

Table 3. Usefulness of teacher guidance as perceived by the students.

The results show that, regardless of the focus of guidance, there is a noticeable difference in the students’ evaluation in relation to group instruction preceding and individual attention following the completion of a subtask. On the one hand, guidance types in the ‘group work’ category were rated as useful ‘to a large extent’ by most respondents (mode 3). The only exception is the focus on the ‘characteristics of comparative essay’ (mode 4). However, while the latter was regarded as ‘very useful’ by most participants, its mean value (3.5) is not higher than the lowest mean value in the ‘individual atten-



tion' category (3.51). On the other hand, all guidance types requiring individual attention were rated as 'very useful' by most respondents (mode 4).

Looking at the results in terms of the mean, individual attention directed to the content and the structure of the essay were rated as the two most useful foci of guidance (3.62), closely followed by a focus given to use of English (3.56) and coherence and cohesion (3.51). Every focus in the 'group work' category ranked lower than those in the 'individual attention' category. In the former, the discussions on the characteristics and structure of the comparative essay were regarded as the two top-rated foci (3.5 and 3.1 respectively). Students evaluated the usefulness of group discussion on the writing process as relatively low (2.72), making this focus the second least useful category. Discussions focusing on the purpose, audience and style of the essay were found the least useful (2.57), and the relatively low mean value indicates that this focus proved only partially useful from the students' point of view.

### ***4.3 Impact of task on essay writing skills enhancement***

In the survey, I also wanted to know how satisfied the students were with the enhancement of their essay writing skills in the light of their task experience. First, I asked about the subskills that we explicitly focused on in each phase. Second, I inquired about students' perceived level of overall improvement in essay writing. In both cases, answers could be given ranging from 'not at all' to 'very much'.

The results in Table 4 show that most students felt they were satisfied 'to a large extent' (mode 3) in terms of the impact each subtask had on their subskills development as well as on overall essay writing skills development. However, a comparison of mean values reveals a rank order, indicating that the experimental task was regarded as the most beneficial in the case of the subskill 'developing the structure of a comparative essay' (3.35). This is followed by 'achieving coherence within and between paragraphs' (3.18) and 'formulating a relevant and informative thesis statement' (3.16). Two subskills (creating and maintaining the content focus in the text, and using English accurately) scored 3 in terms of the mean, while respondents felt that the experimental task helped them increase their abilities to go through the phases of writing using relevant writing strategies slightly more (3.05) than in the previously mentioned cases. The subskill 'using English appropriately' is at the bottom of the ranking (2.91). At the same time, students' satisfaction with the task in terms of their overall essay writing skills enhancement scored somewhat higher (2.97) indicating that, all in all, they felt the task was helpful to a large extent.

Essay writing subskills	mean	mode
Developing the structure of a comparative essay	3.35	3
Achieving coherence within and in between paragraphs	3.18	3
Forming a relevant and informative thesis statement	3.16	3
Going through the phases of writing using relevant strategies	3.05	3
Creating and maintaining the content focus throughout the text	3.00	3
Using English accurately (grammar, vocabulary, punctuation)	3.00	3
Using English appropriately (purpose, audience, style)	2.91	3
Overall satisfaction with own essay writing skills development	2.97	3

Table 4. Impact of task on essay writing skills enhancement as perceived by the students.

Students were also asked to elaborate, in an open-ended question, on their experiences and opinions in relation to the essay writing task. Responses (n=8) show that students tended to link the extent of writing skills improvement to their existing level of abilities. Also, they appreciated individualised spoken comments from the teacher. At the same time, individualised feedback provided in writing did not always prove perfectly clear, and they felt not enough time was spent on the clarification of teacher suggestions in this type of feedback. Responses also indicate that students found the inclusion of a subtask which required oral performance (i.e., giving a presentation) useful, because it provided the opportunity for background research in terms of content, and for trying their hand at developing the structure of the comparative essay.

## 5. Discussion

Below, I will discuss the findings with the help of my research questions. First, I investigated the extent to which a focus on the writing process contributed to successful task completion according to the students (Research Question 1). I sought answers to this question by looking at the time spent on task and the perceived usefulness of each subtask. Results show a link between the amount of time participants individually spent on a subtask and the perceived usefulness of any given writing phase. This may suggest that students regarded the subtasks on which they spent relatively more time as more

useful from the point of view of successful task accomplishment. Thus, all phases, with the notable exception of ‘developing an outline’, were ranked as ‘very useful’ according to most respondents. At first glance, this may suggest that students see the outline as the least crucial part of the process. These results, however, may also be explained by the fact that students had already spent considerable time on the structure of the essay by the time we reached the outline phase. In order to develop and give a presentation on the selected topic, creating an outline is essential. This suggests that students could use their previous work while creating the essay outline, which may, at least partly, explain the low ranking of the outline.

Individual time spent on overall task completion was relatively high, an average of 195 minutes (3 hours 15 minutes). While this time length is not available during the proficiency examination since students are given only 75 minutes there, spending an extended period of time on task provides practice opportunities for writing extensively and in a recursive way. This may serve the purposes of becoming a more experienced and skilful writer, increasing the students’ chances for success in the C1 proficiency examination.

Effectiveness is also supported by the finding that the phases focusing on the first draft and the final text were ranked as the most useful by the participants. This view is in line with the consideration that experienced writers treat text production as a recursive process rather than a linear one. Furthermore, the relatively high rating of the phase ‘giving a presentation’ indicates that the participants also found the oral subtask valuable, because it created an opportunity to focus on the content and the possible structure of their future essay, to do background research, talk about ideas in front of their peers and receive relevant feedback.

In my research, I also examined the extent to which different forms of teacher guidance were regarded as effective during task phases (Research Question 2). Findings clearly indicate that students need professional instruction and help in every phase of the writing process. Results show that individualised feedback following subtask completion proved the most useful according to the respondents. A reason for this may be that students could more successfully link this type of guidance to particular aspects of their work in which they had already made progress and gained direct experience. This assumption also seems to be supported by the finding that students found teacher guidance in relation to the final text the most useful. This may be because by the time they arrived at the writing up phase of the final version, they had already gained considerable experience during the process.

At the same time, relevant findings also point to the perceived usefulness of teacher guidance preceding subtasks. Indeed, group-focused instruction prior to individual

subtask completion was also regarded as beneficial to a large extent by the students. The difference between the two types of guidance lies in the degree of their perceived usefulness.

Responses to the open-ended question point to a difference in the perceived helpfulness of teacher guidance between oral and written feedback. Students found oral feedback more beneficial, because of its clarity and the possibility to discuss and clarify comments and suggestions immediately. While it would be highly desirable for the teacher to provide individualised oral feedback on each subtask, this is not a realistic option due to time constraints. Nonetheless, this is an important finding that needs to be taken into consideration within the framework of similar future tasks.

Research Question 3 inquired about the relationship between the experimental writing task and students' essay writing skills enhancement according to the participants. More specifically, questions focused on the subskills which received focused attention during the task on the one hand, and on overall essay writing skills improvement on the other. Focus on most subskills had a direct link to product (i.e., the context, content, structure, formal features of the essay), while the process of writing also received explicit attention.

During the experimental task, a focus on the process was ensured in two ways: partly by the design of the task itself (i.e., the requirement of going through four plus one phases leading to task completion), and partly by the explicit focus on the writing process in the form of teacher guidance. According to the participants, both the process-oriented task design and explicit focus contributed to a heightened awareness and capability of going through the various phases of the writing process. The results clearly indicate that students could benefit from the process focus of the experimental task.

At the same time, findings also show that respondents needed more than a sole focus on the process for their writing skills improvement. They found an explicit focus on product-related features such as text structure, coherence, use of English, content and social context beneficial, and also experienced a considerable improvement in their abilities to write an essay in terms of dealing with product-oriented text features more effectively, accurately and appropriately. Students' overall positive responses in terms of usefulness regarding an explicit focus on product-related features suggest that they were willing to make a noticeable effort to improve the quality of their texts. This finding also supports the perceived effectiveness of the experimental writing task in general.

It also needs to be mentioned, however, that the social context (i.e., purpose, target audience and relevant stylistic features) ranked the lowest in the experimental task both in terms of usefulness of teacher guidance and perceived helpfulness in writing

skills development. There seems to be a link between this finding and the fact that 32 of the 37 participants completed the obligatory phases of the task only, making the decision not to take advantage of the possibility to submit a revised and edited version of the essay for publication in the university's online student magazine. Thus, it is likely that, for most students, the realistic aim of writing the essay remained to complete the assignment for the language practice course, in which case the purpose of writing was to fulfil the requirements laid down in the course description, and the sole audience of the comparative essay remained the teacher. While my initial assumption was that a wider audience and a tangible publishing platform may increase students' motivation and help the writing process, these results may also indicate that students find it challenging to imagine a communicative function for their essays beyond the immediate classroom context<sup>1</sup>. Despite the fact that my findings do not justify this assumption, students went through the phases, completed the task and reportedly benefited from the experience. This is an issue which I will take up below in relation to the pedagogical implications of the results.

## **6. Conclusion**

This paper reported on the findings of a case study looking at the impact of a C1 level experimental writing task on the improvement of L2 English students' essay writing skills at a Hungarian university. The task was designed and implemented in a way to give a strong focus on the process of writing while also providing explicit attention to aspects of product, the text itself, including content, structure, language and social context.

All in all, results suggest that focusing on the process could effectively contribute to successful writing task completion. At the same time, the study also found that a focus on the product cannot be overlooked, since explicit instruction, guidance and feedback on structural, formal and content- and context-related text features are regarded as indispensable to improvement according to the students. The findings carry a number of pedagogical implications. These are summarised below.

1. Both the process and the product of writing need focused attention during the design and implementation of the writing task. The degree of attention depends on the actual language needs and learning needs of the students.
2. Teacher guidance is crucial, because it is strongly required by the students. There is a place for group-focused and individual guidance both before and after the writing task. The relative proportion depends on the needs of the students.

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<sup>1</sup> I am grateful to Andrea Reményi for drawing my attention to this aspect of the results.

3. Written feedback on individual work needs to be provided in a way that is clear for the students. To ensure this, students could benefit from training in decoding and making sense of relevant terminology in language pedagogy. Also, time could be allocated to consultation outside class to clarify unclear points.
4. Careful task design is needed to provide enough time for each phase, the individual completion of subtasks, and feedback.
5. Purpose and audience need to be more realistic so that students become motivated enough to pursue the task to the final phase of publication. This may further increase students' interest in the assignment, while also helping them to meet the expectations of the social context. For example, the Teams group of the Language Practice course could be a realistic place of publication, where the uploaded essays could also be used in follow-up tasks.

A limitation of the study is that it looked at the experimental task from the students' perspective only. Thus, as a possible direction for further research, it would be informative to evaluate a revised version of the writing task from the teachers' and a neutral observer's perspective. Also, text analysis of the different versions of the essays (i.e., first draft, final essay, publication) would be instrumental in gaining a deeper insight into the extent to which improvement takes place across the phases of the writing process.

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## Appendix 1: Description of the essay writing task

Write a comparative essay in English about one of the general English topics we are dealing with in this semester: arts, entertainment, health, lifestyles. Select a particular focus within your topic and compare two (or more) items that are relevant in this context.

The final aim of the task is to write up a text to be published in the online magazine EDZine, the English Department blogroll of students (<https://btk.ppke.hu/anglisztika-edzine>). EDZine publishes shorter papers written by students, and the readers include students and faculty members at the university and elsewhere.

I divided the essay writing task into subtasks, and you are required to submit your work in each phase. Deadline for the submission of each subtask can be found in the Course Description. The word limit of the final text is 350 words. Completing the essay is a requirement for this course, and your work will be graded.

## Appendix 2: Questionnaire about the perceived effectiveness of the writing task according to students

*1. The comparative essay writing assignment consisted of five tasks. How much time did you spend working on each task individually? Please write the appropriate number next to each task below.*

**1** = 0-15 ms    **2** = 16-30 ms    **3** = 31-45 ms    **4** = 46-60 ms    **5** = more than 60 ms

Task 1 Presentation: .....

Task 2 Essay outline: .....

Task 3 First draft: .....

Task 4 Final text: .....

Task 5 Preparing essay for publication: .....

*2. To what extent did the five tasks contribute to the development of your essay writing skills? Please write the appropriate number next to each task below.*

**1** = not at all    **2** = to some extent    **3** = to a large extent    **4** = very much

Task 1 Presentation: .....

Task 2 Essay outline: .....

Task 3 First draft: .....

Task 4 Final text: .....

Task 5 Preparing essay for publication: .....

*3. While working on your essay, to what extent did you find the teacher's guidance useful in relation to the following? Please write the appropriate number next to each category below.*

**1** = not at all    **2** = to some extent    **3** = to a large extent    **4** = very much

- (1) characteristics of comparative essay (group discussion): .....
- (2) social context: purpose, audience, style (group discussion): .....
- (3) process of writing and writing skills (group discussion): .....
- (4) structure of essay (sample text analysis): .....
- (5) coherence and cohesions (sample text analysis): .....
- (6) essay content (individual focus): .....
- (7) essay structure (individual focus): .....
- (8) use of English: grammar, vocabulary, punctuation (individual focus): .....
- (9) coherence and cohesion (individual focus): .....
- (10) other (*please specify*): .....

4. *To what extent do you agree with the following statements? Please write the appropriate number next to each statement below.*

**1** = not at all    **2** = to some extent    **3** = to a large extent    **4** = very much

The comparative essay writing task helped me to

- (1) find and maintain the content focus in a 350 word comparative essay: .....
- (2) form a relevant thesis statement: .....
- (3) develop a logical text structure: .....
- (4) create coherence within and in between paragraphs: .....
- (5) use English correctly: .....
- (6) use a style appropriate to the aims and audience of the essay: .....
- (7) other (*please specify*): .....

5. *Overall, to what extent are you satisfied with the development of your essay-writing skills in light of your experience during the comparative essay writing task? Please underline the answer you agree with the most.*

**1** = not at all    **2** = to some extent    **3** = to a large extent    **4** = very much

*Please explain your choice.*

6. *If you have any other comments about the essay writing assignment, please write them below.*

Thank you for your help.