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## Review of *Classroom Writing Assessment and Feedback in L2 School Contexts* (1st edition), by Icy Lee, 2017

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# RW

JOURNAL OF RESPONSE TO WRITING

## Review of *Classroom Writing Assessment and Feedback in L2 School Contexts* (1st edition), by Icy Lee, 2017

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Writing classrooms focused on summative assessment are likely to lack formative feedback components that contribute to more motivated, confident, and autonomous writers, notes Icy Lee (2017), author of *Classroom Writing Assessment and Feedback in L2 School Contexts*. Ranging from \$66.02 (Kindle) to \$69.49–\$102.24 (hardcopy), this 157-page work presents a strong case for school second-language (L2) writing education to shift away from traditional, score-based assessment. Though Lee targets L2 writing teachers and teacher trainers, she also appeals to researchers of L2 writing. Ten chapters provide thorough theoretical and research-based justification for a student-centered, learning-oriented feedback and assessment system and also provide practical suggestions for implementation. These chapters begin with the purpose, theory, and practice of L2 writing assessment and then explore various types of assessment and feedback, as well as the use of portfolios for assessment. The text concludes with chapters on technology in L2 writing assessment and classroom assessment literacy for L2 writing teachers. As a whole, the research-based guidance that Lee offers encourages writing teachers and educators to implement assessment, so it can “bring improvement to student learning and is supported by self-, peer-, and teacher-feedback” (p. 5).

Icy Lee, professor at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, is an internationally recognized educator and researcher on L2 writing. She has dedicated years of research to understand feedback and assessment and how they can be harnessed to improve learning and teaching in the L2 writing context. Lee aims for this work to “provide useful classroom assessment and feedback training for L2 writing teachers, as well as new insights about promising avenues for future investigations for L2 writing researchers” (2017, p. vi). She emphasizes that shifting the focus of assessment from performance to the improvement of learning is fundamental to revisualizing the purpose of evaluation. Feedback and assessment work together in that the former informs progress to the latter by responding to one or more of the following feedback questions: Where am I going? How am I going? Where to next? (Hattie & Timperley, 2007, p. 101). The concepts of feedback and assessment are instrumental for learning in the L2 writing classroom and should be conceived around the objective of enhancing student growth.

Throughout this work, Lee emphasizes how assessment for learning (AfL) and assessment as learning (AaL) practices contribute to effective feedback and assessment. AfL aims to use assessment to inform how “to promote learning and improve learning” while AaL supports student autonomy through self-reflection, self-assessment, and self-regulated learning, all of which support critical thinking skills (Lee, 2017, p. 25). Rather than placing emphasis on a final product, also known as assessment of learning (AoL), assessments take the form of activities that provide feedback on the learning process in relation to objectives. How to give effective feedback is another point of emphasis throughout the book. Feedback should be goal-specific, so learners are aware of their performance and know how to address their gaps in relation to success criteria. The outcomes of summative-centered assessment pale in comparison, limited both in terms of feedback and student engagement, in the development process.

For school L2 writing educators, the highlights of this book are the suggestions provided for pedagogical application in the school context. Regarding peer feedback, educators may need to convince students that each participant’s input and training is valuable in the process, and Lee

encourages incorporating the practice because it is invaluable in cultivating critical thinking and self-assessment. In terms of written corrective feedback (WCF), Lee (2017) recommends “that teachers adopt a selective, focused approach to WCF, so that students can be helped to develop their written accuracy in a focused and incremental manner” (p. 67). AaL is made approachable through feasible classroom additions that aim to increase student engagement and metacognition. Teachers do not need to overhaul their curriculum or receive extensive training in order to communicate success criteria, set generic and specific goals, or keep reflection logs, but they and the other research-backed moves Lee suggests encourage learning by raising awareness through facilitated self-reflection and self-assessment.

The theoretical and research-based support of the book is extensive, providing ample justification for stakeholders, administration, and instructors. This book provides the rationale that L2 school writing teachers will need if they encounter pushback while attempting to shift toward AfL- and AaL-oriented methods. In future editions of this book, L2 writing educators may be keen on seeing additional data on classrooms that have successfully adopted the suggested assessment and feedback strategies.

The rise of English language learning demands, and consequently writing competence, on school-age learners beckons the adjustment of classroom practices. Assessment ultimately measures how well learning of success criteria is achieved and how effectively feedback informs the learning process. Because of this, the implementation of assessment and feedback must be designed with careful consideration. For L2 writing teachers and teacher educators looking to create a more efficient assessment and feedback loop and cultivate stronger L2 writers, *Classroom Writing Assessment and Feedback in L2 School Contexts* is a resource that should not be ignored.

## References

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