

## A COMPARISON BETWEEN TEACHER'S ASSESSMENT AND STUDENTS' SELF-ASSESSMENT IN AN IELTS WRITING COURSE

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ARTICLE INFO		ABSTRACT
<b>Received:</b>	<b>14/6/2025</b>	The field of language testing and assessment has undergone significant changes due to the far-reaching reforms in education, particularly those relating to the involvement of students in the learning process. Accordingly, there was a significant transition in the position of assessors, which traditionally was reserved for teachers. Students are now encouraged to actively participate in the self-assessment process. Being assessors themselves enables students to become more aware of their strengths and weaknesses, promotes learner autonomy and develops self-directed learning strategies. This study aims to discover the correlation between students' self-assessment and teacher's assessment in English writing skills through an IELTS writing test and IELTS marking rubric by investigating how 30 Vietnamese students at a Hanoi university practiced rubric-based self-assessment skills. The results indicated that the advanced students had higher accuracy of self-assessment than the intermediate ones and closely matched the teacher's evaluations whereas intermediate learners tended to overestimate their performance. Based on the findings of the research, the study suggests several implications to improve students' self-assessment.
<b>Revised:</b>	<b>23/9/2025</b>	
<b>Published:</b>	<b>23/9/2025</b>	
<b>KEYWORDS</b>		
Comparison		
Teacher's assessment		
Students' self-assessment		
Writing course		
English language teaching		

## SO SÁNH GIỮA VIỆC ĐÁNH GIÁ CỦA GIÁO VIÊN VÀ SỰ TỰ ĐÁNH GIÁ CỦA SINH VIÊN TRONG MỘT KHÓA HỌC VIẾT IELTS

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THÔNG TIN BÀI BÁO		TÓM TẮT
<b>Ngày nhận bài:</b>	<b>14/6/2025</b>	Lĩnh vực kiểm tra và đánh giá ngôn ngữ đã có những thay đổi đáng kể do những cải cách sâu rộng trong giáo dục, đặc biệt là những cải cách liên quan đến sự tham gia của sinh viên vào quá trình học tập. Theo đó, đã có một sự chuyển đổi đáng kể trong vị trí của người đánh giá, vốn theo truyền thống được dành riêng cho giáo viên. Học sinh hiện được khuyến khích tích cực tham gia vào quá trình tự đánh giá. Việc tự mình trở thành người đánh giá cho phép học sinh nâng cao nhận thức hơn về điểm mạnh và điểm yếu của mình, thúc đẩy tính tự chủ của người học và phát triển các chiến lược học tập tự định hướng. Nghiên cứu này nhằm mục đích khám phá mối tương quan giữa việc tự đánh giá của học sinh và đánh giá của giáo viên về kỹ năng viết tiếng Anh thông qua bài kiểm tra viết IELTS và thang điểm chấm điểm IELTS bằng cách điều tra 30 sinh viên Việt Nam tại một trường đại học ở Hà Nội thực hành kỹ năng tự đánh giá dựa trên thang điểm. Kết quả nghiên cứu chỉ ra rằng sinh viên trình độ nâng cao có độ chính xác trong việc tự đánh giá cao hơn so với sinh viên trình độ trung cấp và tự đánh giá của họ gần như khớp với đánh giá của giáo viên, trong khi đó sinh viên trình độ trung cấp có xu hướng đánh giá quá cao về khả năng của mình. Dựa trên những kết quả này, nghiên cứu đề xuất một số hướng đi nhằm cải thiện kỹ năng tự đánh giá của sinh viên.
<b>Ngày hoàn thiện:</b>	<b>23/9/2025</b>	
<b>Ngày đăng:</b>	<b>23/9/2025</b>	
<b>TỪ KHÓA</b>		
So sánh		
Đánh giá của giáo viên		
Tự đánh giá của sinh viên		
Khóa học viết		
Giảng dạy tiếng Anh		

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.34238/tnu-jst.13060>

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## 1. Introduction

Assessment plays a crucial role in teaching and learning [1]. Assessment includes tasks done by teachers and those undertaken by students themselves in order to provide useful feedback for making necessary modification of the teaching and learning activities. This was supported by Cheng and Fox [2], who supposed that assessment activities could be carried out between either teachers and students or students and their peers, even by students themselves.

In Vietnamese English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom setting, which has heavily relied on measuring student's language competence through testing or other forms of summative assessment, there is little room for classroom-based assessment activities, which results in a limitation of student self-assessment practices. For this reason, this study was conducted to investigate how English language learners practiced and perceived self-assessment in relation to a particular skill. The English skill to be chosen in this research was writing that was believed to manifest a marked improvement with the aid of self-assessment [3]. Among four English skills, proficient writing skills are essential for overall language mastery [4]. Teacher assessment and feedback play a central role in writing instruction. Many researchers agree that feedback from teachers has a positive impact on students' writing skills. Studies have consistently shown that teacher feedback helps improve the quality of students' writing and their overall language abilities [5]. Furthermore, students themselves often view teacher feedback as valuable and helpful for their learning [6]. The role of self-assessment and its impact on students' writing abilities have been examined in numerous studies [7], [8]. Writing is often considered the most challenging to the learner. To complete a writing task, the learner need to consider several important aspects such as the format, content, type of writing, vocabulary, grammar, tone, pragmatics, spelling and writing mechanics. In addition, they may refer to the writing criteria or rubrics. This is statistically illustrated by the writing results of Vietnamese students taking IELTS exam (Vietnamese writing candidates achieved the average band of only 6.0, lower than reading, listening) [9]. Writing scores are commonly lower than other skills and it is hard for many test takers to reach a high band score in writing as compared to the remaining skills which they may achieve the maximum score of 9 in reading or listening. There are many factors attributing to this limitation in writing ability achievement. These include a lack of academic English proficiency, difficulty understanding or thinking critically about the topics in the writing tasks, and differences between a learner's first language (L1) and English (L2) in terms of grammar, style, and culture. Besides, many students are not familiar with the IELTS test format or the scoring rubrics, which can also negatively affect their performance.

Although academic English writing proficiency is essential in higher education, there has been limited research on how teacher-led assessment compares to student-involved assessment in influencing writing performance [4]. In addition, how well students clearly perceived the writing test requirements publicly shown in the writing band descriptors can have a significant impact on their scores. Therefore, if students can accurately assess their own writing in ways that closely align with their teachers' evaluations, this can serve as a strong indicator of their learning progress and their readiness for the exam.

The study was conducted at a university in Hanoi, which is a national leading institution of training foreign language teachers in Vietnam. In order to meet the requirement of language proficiency, students will have to complete their first foreign language practicing courses in the period of two academic years, from the first to the second academic year. Within the framework of this study, it aims to answer the following questions:

1. To what extent is there a correlation between teacher's assessment and students' self-assessment in IELTS academic writing skill at a university in Hanoi?
2. How does the correlation between the teacher' assessment and students' self-assessment differ among the two groups of students (intermediate and advanced)?

## 2. Research methodology

### 2.1. Research design

To achieve this objective, the research methodology was designed to discover how accurately and effectively students implemented self-assessment in writing in comparison with the results marked by the teacher. This study was carried out using a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods. The target participants are second-year university students. The research focused on interviewing 10 students and using an IELTS writing test to gather data from 30 second-year students majoring in English Language Teacher Education at a university in Hanoi. They are required to achieve level 5/6, which is equivalent to level C1 in Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), an international standard for describing language ability. By comparison, the participants were divided into two groups: intermediate (Based on the CEFR, those who reach level 4/6, equivalent to B2 or band 5.5-6.0 in IELTS) and advanced (those who gain level 5/6 and above (equivalent to C1+ or band 6.5-7.5+ in IELTS) when doing the writing test and practicing self-assessment. In fact, all the participants have been exposed to IELTS writing format and their quality of writing compositions have been evaluated in varying range of band scores; yet none of them had taken an official IELTS examination. In order to examine accurately the correlation between teacher's assessment and students' self-assessment in the study, the criteria for choosing the writing marker included being an IELTS expert with high band score in IELTS writing and having direct experience in teaching academic writing.

### 2.2. Research instruments

*The IELTS writing test:* In this study, students' writing performance was measured by an IELTS writing test. An IELTS writing test includes two tasks: Task 1 and Task 2 (the tasks were selected from Test 2 in the book Cambridge English IELTS Academic 13 by Cambridge University Press). The exam lasted 60 minutes. After completing the writing task, participants received 40 minutes of training and instruction on using the IELTS Task 1 and Task 2 Writing band descriptors from the teacher in order to self-evaluate the quality of their work. In order to examine accurately the correlation between teacher's assessment and students' self-assessment in the study, the criteria for choosing the writing assessor include being an IELTS expert with high band score in IELTS writing and having direct experience in teaching academic writing. In the present study, an experienced teacher who is currently working in Faculty of English Language Teaching Education at a university in Hanoi and has a deep understanding of IELTS writing was invited to participate. She has rich experience in IELTS teaching and has scored 8.5 in IELTS writing, which is considered sufficiently qualified enough to mark and give accurate evaluation on students' essays.

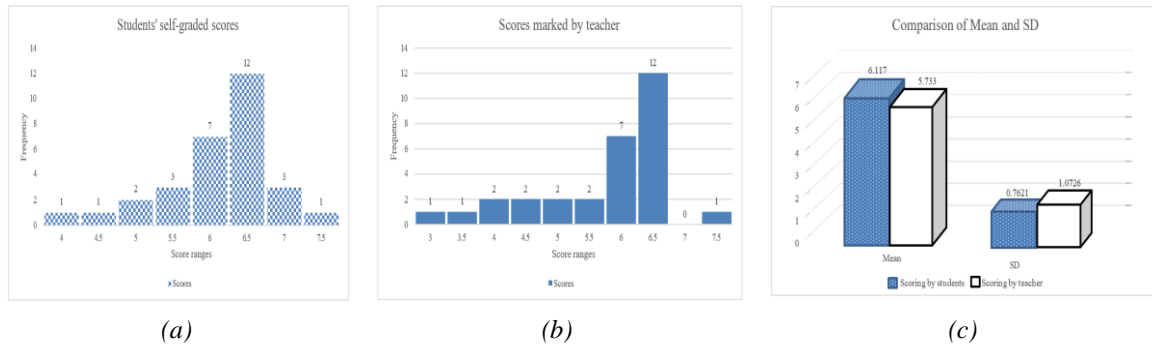
*IELTS writing band descriptors:* In language assessment research, scales are considered one of research instruments [10]. IELTS writing band descriptors utilize four criteria for assessment, namely task achievement (TA), coherence and cohesion (CC), lexical resource (CC), and grammatical range and accuracy (GRA) [11], [12]. Each criterion is described on a 0–9 scale of band score. In this study, students need to be well-trained with the rubric when they practice self-assessment. Participants were provided with a simplified, student-friendly self-assessment rubric derived from the official descriptors. The instructor guided students on how to align their writing with the descriptors, use the rubric to assign provisional band scores, and justify their ratings with concrete examples from their own writing.

*Interviews:* the questions in the interview were designed to explore the positive effects and issues of self-assessment, students' attitude towards self-assessment skills, particularly in writing.

## 3. Findings and discussions

### 3.1. Students' self-graded scores versus scores marked by teacher

The students' self-graded scores and teacher's scores are presented in Figure 1.



**Figure 1.** (a) The students' self-graded scores and (b) Writing scores marked by teacher (c) Comparison of mean and standard deviation

Figure 1 showed both the students' self-graded scores and teacher's scores, as well as the frequency distribution of those scores. In addition, it illustrates the discrepancies between mean (M) and standard deviation (SD) of the students' scores and the teacher's scores. The findings revealed that the mean of scores given by the teacher (M = 5.733) was slightly lower than the mean score given by the students (M = 6.117). However, SD of scores from the teacher (SD = 1.0726) was moderately higher than that from themselves (SD = 0.7621). This indicates that students overestimated themselves in self-marking. In addition, there appeared some lower writing scores marked by the teacher than students had expected.

In order to examine whether the difference in means was significant ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) or not, the Paired sample t-test and Pear Correlation were used. The comparison between students' self-assessment and teacher's assessment using T-test and Pear Correlation are presented in Table 1 and Table 2.

**Table 1.** Paired Sample T-Test result for students' self-graded scores and teacher's scores

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
				Lower	Upper			
				Pair 1				
Student scores	0.3833	0.4086	0.0746	0.2308	0.5359	5.139	29	0.000
Teacher scores								

Table 1 illustrated the T-statistics for Pair 1 ( $t = 5.139$ ), the degree of freedom for the test ( $df = 29$ ) and the Sig. (2-tailed) value ( $p = 0.000$ ). As the p-value was less than 0.05, it is possible to conclude that there is an extremely statistically significant difference between two variables.

**Table 2.** Pearson correlations between students' self-assessment and teachers' assessment

		Student scores	Teacher scores
		Student scores	Pearson Correlation
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	30	30
Teacher scores	Pearson Correlation	0.957**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	30	30

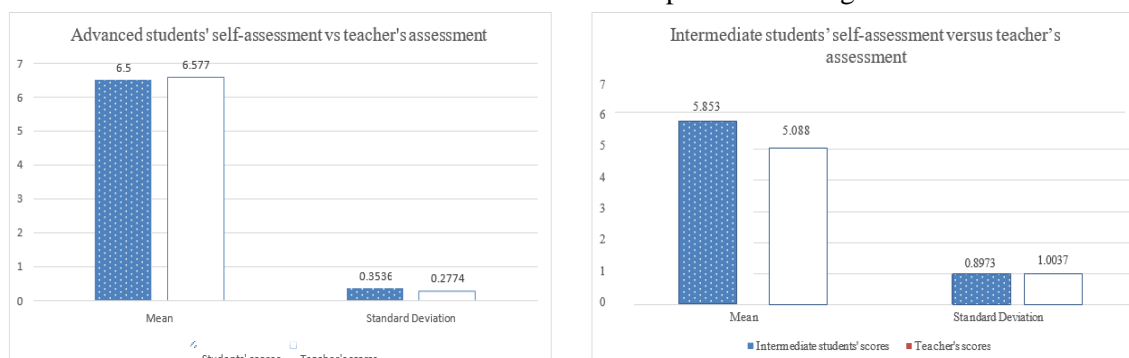
Note: \*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

As indicated in Table 2, the correlation between students' self-assessment and teachers' assessment was statistically significant. That the correlation index (0.957) was close to +1 means that there was a positive relationship between two variables.

### 3.2. Teacher's assessment versus self-assessment of two student groups

Based on the description of English competency level mentioned in the methodology part, the students who got 6.5-7.5 in writing are considered as the advanced learners and the students who

got 4.0-6.0 in writing are considered as the intermediate learners. When the writing results were released, some students even got marks below 4.0. Therefore, in order to measure the differences between teacher’s scores and self-marked scores from the high level group and the lower one, the number of students getting below 4.0 was still counted for analysis. The statistic description of the advanced students and the intermediate students was presented in Figure 2.



**Figure 2.** (a) Advanced students’ self-assessment versus teacher’s assessment and (b) Intermediate students’ self-assessment versus teacher’s assessment

Figure 2a shows that there was a high similarity in the mean and standard deviation of their scores between the advanced student group’s self- assessment and the teacher’s assessment. However, Figure 2b shows that the mean score given by the intermediate students was slightly higher than that assigned, while the standard deviation of students’ score was slightly lower than that of the teacher’s score. This contrast suggests that the advanced students' self-assessment is highly consistent with the teacher's assessment, while intermediate students’ self-assessment tend to rate themselves slightly higher than the teacher's assessment.

In order to examine whether the difference in means was significant ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) or not, the Paired sample t-test and Pear Correlation were used. Comparison between students’ self-assessment and teacher’s assessment using T-test is presented in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Paired Sample T-Test result for intermediate students’ self-graded scores, advanced students’ self-graded scores and teacher’s scores

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Paired Differences		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
			Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Lower Upper			
* Intermediate students’ self-graded scores and teacher’s scores							
Pair 1							
Student-scores teacher-scores	-0.0769	0.3444	0.0955	-0.2850 0.1312	-0.805	12	0.436
* Advanced students’ self-graded scores and teacher’s scores							
Pair 1							
Student-scores teacher-scores	0.7647	0.3587	0.0870	0.5803 0.9491	8.790	16	0.000

Table 3 presents the paired sample statistics for the self-graded scores of intermediate students and their teacher-assigned scores ( $t = -0.805$ ,  $df = 12$ ,  $p = 0.436$ ). As P-value is greater than 0.05, it is possible to conclude that there is no statistically significant difference between two variables. For advanced students, the results of paired sample t-test comparing self-graded scores and teacher-assigned scores showed  $t = 8.790$ ,  $df = 16$ ,  $p = 0.000$ . As the p-value is less than 0.05, it indicates an extremely statistically significant difference between two variables.

Comparison between students’ self-assessment and teacher’s assessment using Pear Correlation is presented in Table 4.

**Table 4.** *Pearson Correlations between intermediate students' self-assessment, advanced students' self-assessment and teachers' assessment*

		Student scores	Teacher scores
<i>* Intermediate students' self-graded scores and teacher's scores</i>			
Student scores	Pearson Correlation	1	0.935**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	17	17
Teacher scores	Pearson Correlation	0.935***	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	17	17
<i>* Advanced students' self-graded scores and teacher's scores</i>			
Student scores	Pearson Correlation	1	0.425
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.148
	N	13	13
Teacher scores	Pearson Correlation	0.425	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.148	
	N	13	13

Note: \*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

As shown in Table 4, the correlation between intermediate students' self-assessment and their teachers' assessment was statistically significant. The correlation coefficient of 0.935, which is close to +1, indicates a strong positive relationship between the two variables. Similarly, the correlation between advanced students' self-assessment and teachers' assessment was also statistically significant. The correlation coefficient of 0.425, which falls within the moderate range (0.3 to 0.49), suggests a moderate correlation between the two variables.

To sum up, by looking at the statistics of self-assessment from both advanced and intermediate groups of students presented in the above tables, it is clear that the advanced writers had higher accuracy of self-assessment than the intermediate ones. In addition, the advanced students were somewhat likely to underestimate their ability while the intermediate learners tended to overestimate their performance. Meanwhile, if lower-level students had had more time being trained with self-assessment, they would have probably self-evaluated accurately as compared with teacher's assessment.

#### 4. Conclusion

The research is an attempt to investigate the relationship between teacher's assessment and students' self-assessment in writing skill. The first finding which answered the two research questions helped reveal the degree of accuracy in students' self-assessment. The results indicated that the participating students, who were mostly intermediate writing learners according to their actual scores, overestimated themselves in self-grading to a certain degree which was significantly different from teacher's assessment. This meant that at the intermediate level, students generally had difficulty self-evaluating their work and identifying mistakes mentioned in the marking rubrics. This lack of precision got more serious even though students had been trained about the marking criteria and re-assessed themselves. In contrast, the advanced learners were inclined to underestimate themselves when self-assessing. Besides, a high accuracy and strong correlation between students' self-grading and teacher's marking were recorded in this group of students.

These findings suggest several implications to improve students' self-assessment. First and foremost, it is advisable for English teachers to properly engage students in self-assessment activities concerning varying English levels, different ages and two potential skills of speaking and writing. Second, there may be a variety of models for self-assessment, yet it is suggested to consider using assessment rubrics as a crucial and effective tool in self-assessment to deliver a clear, systematic, and straightforward instruction. Nevertheless, teachers and students should carefully design easy-to-use marking rubrics with detailed requirements in simple language in order for students to make optimal use of it.

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