

An Investigation of L2 Motivational Strategies in the Algerian Context of Teacher Education

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تُخْص

يهدف هذا البحث إلى دراسة الممارسات التعليمية التحفيزية المطبقة من طرف أساتذة اللغة الانجليزية كلغة أجنبية في الجزائر لتدريس مقياس التعبير الكتابي للطلبة. تركز الدراسة على الاستراتيجيات الأكثر والأقل استعمالا كما تهدف الدراسة إلى استكشاف مستوى التطابق بين التكرار في استعمال الاستراتيجيات التحفيزية كما هي مطبقة من طرف الأساتذة وأهميتها لدى الطلبة المتربصين، وتحديد أثر درجة التطابق على تحصيل وتحفيز الطلبة المتربصين في التعبير الكتابي. تم جمع المعلومات عن طريق استبيان مكون من ثلاثة أجزاء واختبار تحصيلي في التعبير الكتابي، حيث كشف التحليل الإحصائي للبيانات أن الأساتذة يميلون إلى المبالغة أو التقليل في استعمال بعض الاستراتيجيات التحفيزية. كما تبين كذلك من النتائج وجود نقاط عدم تطابق هامة بين التكرار في استعمال الاستراتيجيات التحفيزية والأهمية التي يوليها لها الطلبة المتربصون. وأخيرا تجدر الإشارة إلى أن نتائج البحث تبين أن مستوى التطابق بين التكرار والأهمية له أثر على تحفيز الطلبة المتربصين وتحصيلهم في التعبير.

Introduction

Motivation is generally conceived as a set of 'internal processes and external incentives which spur us on to satisfy some need' (Child, 2004, p.345). In educational settings, motivation has indubitably been acknowledged as one fundamental pillar of academic learning and success. Motivated students tend to

work harder, exhibit greater perseverance, invest more time on learning activities, and perform consistently better than their classroom unmotivated counterparts. In second language learning, motivation is a sine qua non condition for success since it is held to 'serve as the initial engine to

generate learning and later functions as an ongoing driving force that helps sustain the long and usually laborious journey of acquiring a foreign language' (Cheng & Dörnyei, 2007, p.153). Virtually every aspect of the learning environment is believed to influence students' motivation, ranging from the teacher's behaviour to the language syllabus. It follows, then, that it is partly incumbent upon teachers to enhance and sustain their foreign language students' motivation for learning. The question then arises of how to stimulate uninterested learners and keep those interested engaged in language learning. In fact, the answers to this question have emerged relatively recently, in response to Crookes and Schmidt's (1991) call to explore new horizons in the study of motivation and consider conceptual alternatives to the social-psychological approach prevailing in the 1990's. Ensuing

theoretical developments in the study of second language motivation, in parallel with those occurring independently in the field of educational psychology, have informed some of the most important frameworks of motivational teaching practice. For the first time in L2 education, motivational strategies were formulated explicitly. However, much of the research conducted within the area of L2 motivational strategies has been concerned with identifying and elaborating techniques for classroom application. Empirical studies that centre on motivational strategies in L2 research are scanty (Cheng & Dörnyei, 2007). With this in mind, it was decided to explore uncharted research directions by investigating questions that have not been addressed yet. Indeed, no single study has yet looked into the frequency of use of L2 motivational strategies as implemented by Algerian EFL teachers as well as the

match/mismatch between the frequency of strategy use and students' strategy perception. Moreover, none of the previous studies conducted in Algeria or elsewhere has tried to determine whether the level of match between

the frequency of use of L2 motivational strategies as implemented by EFL teachers and the relative importance attached to them by their students affects students' motivation and achievement.

Method

Participants

The sample consisted of first- and second-year students enrolled as middle and secondary school teacher-trainees at the teacher training college of Bouzaréah. The participants totaled 120 students, selected from a population of approximately 530 students. 18 male students and 102 female students took part in the present study.

Instruments

Analysis and interpretation of the findings is largely based on data collected through a three-part questionnaire. The first part aims to obtain data on how important EFL

teacher-trainees perceive L2 motivational strategies. Part two looks into how frequently EFL teachers use the same set of strategies as reported by EFL teacher-trainees. The last part is used to investigate teacher-trainees' motivation in the EFL writing classroom. The 39 motivational strategies included in the questionnaire are largely derived from Dörnyei's (2001) motivational teaching taxonomy. A number of motivational strategies were adapted to fit the situated context of the L2 writing classroom. More specifically, these strategies were redefined with reference to the L2 writing skill. The questionnaire was assessed for internal consistency and

pre-tested to check for potentially unclear language. Students' L2 writings achievement was evaluated on the basis of their examination papers. In order to enhance the reliability and validity of the scores attributed to students' written production, the present study employed a slightly modified version of Weir's (1990) analytic scoring rubric. Minor changes were brought to the original version of the scale, consisting mainly in redefining the compositional organization rubric in terms of essay/paragraph components. Designed for test in English for educational purposes (TEEP), Weir's (1990) rating scale has been extensively piloted and revised to render its application reliable (Weigle, 2009).

Procedure

The questionnaire was handed to twenty (20) students in each class. The participating students were

chosen through stratified random sampling. The questionnaire was administered in April 2016, during the 40 last minutes of class time. On the day of the writing examination, students' exam papers were photocopied before being returned to the teachers in charge of the module. In order to proceed with the analysis of the questionnaire responses, descriptive statistics were generated and further calculations were performed.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Investigating the 1st Research Question

1. How often do Algerian EFL teachers use L2 motivational strategies?

Sub-questions:

1.1. What motivational strategies do EFL teachers use the most frequently?

1.2. What motivational strategies do EFL teachers use the least frequently?

In order to determine the frequency of motivational strategy use, the mean difference of each scale and microstrategy were calculated (cf. appendix). It is performed by subtracting the mean difference of all the strategies from the mean difference of one strategy. The mean difference represents the frequency of each strategy relative to the frequency of all the strategies.

1.1. The Most Frequently Used Strategies

The macrostrategies '*finished products*' (0.82), '*proper presentation of the task*' (0.69), and '*goal-orientedness*' (0.52) have the highest mean difference, suggesting that these are the most frequently used strategies among the participating teachers.

Analysis at the microstrategy level indicates that both strategies subsumed under 'proper presentation of the task', i.e. 'state the purpose or utility of the task' (*mean-diff* = 0.27) and 'give clear instructions about how to carry out the task' (*mean-diff*

= 1.11) are used above the average frequency of strategy use. The latter strategy is used particularly frequently since it obtains a significant mean difference score of 1.11.

Three out of the six strategies comprised within 'goal-orientedness', namely 'state the lesson objectives or review progress made toward achieving the lesson objectives' (*mean-diff* = 1.12), 'mention the latest time/date by which the task should be completed' (*mean-diff* = 1.17), and 'walk around the class to check on students' progress while on task' (*mean-diff* = 1.13) are clearly overutilized. The microstrategies 'draw students' attention to the activities that can help them make progress' (*mean-diff* = 0.06) and 'raise students' awareness of the factors that can contribute to successful English writing' (*mean-diff* = 0.32) are reported to occur with moderate frequency. Finally, the strategy 'encourage students to select

learning goals and work toward them' appears to be a low-frequency strategy (-0.62).

1.2. The Least Frequently Used Strategies

The results show that '*autonomy*' (-0.68), and '*task-related interest*' (-0.55) exceed the critical threshold level of -0.50, which, from a statistical point of view, suggests the quasi-inexistence of these motivational strategies in the current context of study. Moreover, '*L2-related values*' (-0.37) and '*group cohesiveness*' (-0.29) have a low mean difference score, indicating that these strategies are relatively underutilized, albeit to a lesser extent compared with the former strategies.

With a mean difference in the order of 0.1, the scores associated with 'peer assessment' (-0.13), 'evaluation' (-0.17), and 'recognition of effort' (-0.16) seem to suggest that these strategies are used with nearly moderate frequency relative

to the average frequency of all the strategies.

Analysis at the microstrategy level reveals that the strategies subsumed within 'task-related interest', i.e. 'include challenging tasks' (-0.82), 'include tasks that incorporate creative elements' (-0.38), 'vary the learning tasks' (-0.52), and 'include tasks that allow students to express their opinions/feelings/experiences' (-0.46), are used below the mean frequency of strategy use.

The same applies to the microstrategies comprised within 'autonomy', namely 'involve the students in preparing and presenting the course' (-0.82), 'allow learners to make choices about aspects of their learning' (-0.33), and 'raise students' awareness of the strategies they can use to motivate themselves' (-0.88).

Two out of the three strategies defining 'L2-related values', i.e. 'remind students of the benefits of successful English writing' (*mean-diff* = -1.11) and 'encourage students

to explore the British/American culture' (*mean-diff*=-0.92) are critically underused. With a mean difference falling barely below zero (-0.08) the strategy 'use authentic texts' is used at moderate rate.

The first two strategies included within 'group cohesiveness', 'encourage students to share academic knowledge' (*mean-diff*=-0.84) and 'involve small group competition games' (*mean-diff*=-1.34), are virtually non-existent. The strategy 'use pair/group work' (*mean-diff* = 0.34), on the other hand, is somehow overused, but obviously not enough to tip the balance in the opposite direction since the scale remains overall underutilized.

2. Investigating the 2nd Research Question

Does the frequency of use of L2 motivational strategies as implemented by EFL writing teachers match the relative

importance attached to them by EFL teacher-trainees?

In line with Cheng and Dörnyei's (2007) recommendations, the difference of the importance z-score and the frequency z-score of each scale and microstrategy were calculated (cf. appendix). The z-score represents the number of standard deviations a data point is from the mean and can be calculated using the formula $z = (X - \mu) / \sigma$, where X stands for the value of the element, μ for the population mean, and σ for the standard deviation. The findings allowed us to identify: 1) the motivational strategies that are overused relative to the importance attached to them (positive values), 2) the motivational strategies that are used in line with the importance attached to them (values approximating zero), and 3) the motivational strategies that are underused relative to the importance attached to them (negative values).

2.1. Motivational Strategies Overused Relative to the Importance Attached to Them by EFL Teacher-trainees

The calculated z-differences demonstrate a significant overuse of two motivational strategies relative to the importance attached to them by EFL teacher-trainees. These strategies are '*goal-orientedness*' (2.15) and '*relevance of the lesson*' (1.23). A closer inspection of the results reveals underutilization of two microstrategies defining 'goal-orientedness' compared to their attached importance: 'draw students' attention toward the activities than can help them make progress' (-0.58) and 'raise students' awareness of the factors that can help them make progress' (-0.5). However, these results do not seem to affect the general tendency of the scale, with only two out of six strategies scoring a negative z-difference value.

A less marked discrepancy seems to exist between the actual use of the

macrostrategies 'recognition of effort' (0.44), 'display of performance' (0.57), 'classroom climate' (0.61), 'proper presentation of the task' (0.82), 'finished products' (0.84) and 'teacher behavior' (0.96) and their perceived importance, suggesting that they are slightly to moderately overused, depending on the strategy. A detailed investigation uncovers important areas of discordance between motivational strategy use and perceived importance: 'give clear instructions about how to carry out the task' (1.14) and 'encourage risk taking in the classroom' (1.30). Moreover, these strategies contribute largely to inflating the score obtained by the corresponding macrostrategies. Despite the positive scores obtained by the six macrostrategies, one microstrategy turns out to be underused relative to its attached importance: 'use an interesting opening activity' (-0.29) (classroom climate).

2.2. Motivational Strategies Used in Line with the Importance Attached to Them by EFL Teacher-trainees

With a z-difference approximating zero, there seems to be an overall match between the frequency of use of the motivational strategies '*self-confidence*' (0.04) and '*peer assessment*' (0.01) and their perceived importance. A closer investigation indicates that, except for the microstrategy 'teach English writing strategies' (0.09), no other strategy is used in consonance with EFL teacher-trainees' perception. In fact, the motivational strategy 'explain to students that they are able to succeed if they work hard' (0.72) is employed above the level of importance ascribed to it. However, the z-difference score obtained by this strategy counterbalances the single negative value identifiable at the microstrategy level ('draw

students' awareness of their strengths and abilities' (-0.69)).

2.3. Motivational Strategies Underused Relative to the Importance Attached to Them by EFL Teacher-trainees

Further analysis reveals a serious mismatch between four motivational strategies and the importance ascribed to them by EFL teacher-trainees. Scoring below the -0.5 threshold, these strategies are '*task-related interest*' (-2.6), '*autonomy*' (-2.12), '*L2-related values*' (-1.6), and '*evaluation*' (-1.18). It also turns out that '*group cohesiveness*' (-0.29) is underused relative to the importance attached to it but in a less significant manner compared with the former strategies. It is interesting to note that nearly all the microstrategies subsumed by these scales obtain a negative z-score value below -1, which explains the considerable level of disparity between the reported use of the

corresponding macrostrategies and their importance as perceived by EFL teacher-trainees. Only two microstrategies seem to be implemented slightly below the level of importance attached to them: 'use

3. Investigating the 3rd Research Question

Does the level of match between the frequency of use of L2 motivational strategies and the relative importance attached to them by EFL teacher-trainees affect teacher-trainees' writing motivation?

Question 3 was converted into the following null hypothesis:

H₀: The level of match between the frequency of use of L2 motivational strategies and the relative importance attached to them by EFL teacher-trainees does not affect teacher-trainees' writing motivation

A simple linear regression analysis was run in order to ascertain the extent to which EFL teacher-trainees' motivation is affected by

authentic texts' (-0.33) (L2-related values) and 'use pair/group work' (-0.28) (group cohesiveness).

the level of match existing between the frequency of use of L2 motivational strategies and the relative importance attached to them. In order to determine the level of match, the five response options used in the frequency and the perception questionnaires were merged into three parallel categories and assigned numerical values to code each categorical response. The responses to the 39 items were subsequently added. A number of statistical tests were performed prior to conducting the regression analysis. The aim of these tests is to ensure that the four prerequisites to running a regression analysis, namely homoscedasticity, normality, independence, and linearity are not violated.

	B	SE B	β
Level of Match	20.570	1.916	
Writing Motivation	.287	.026	.714

Note. $R^2 = .509$; Adjusted $R^2 = .505$

* $p < .01$

Table 1 The Effect of the Level of Match on Writing Motivation Estimated by the Simple Linear Regression Model

B = the unstandardized beta. It represents change in the value of y (dependent variable) when the value of x (independent variable) increases by one unit.

SE B = the standard error for the computed value of the unstandardized beta. It represents the deviation of a sample mean from the mean of a population. It is used to assess the accuracy of the prediction. The smaller the spread, the more accurate the dataset is said to be.

β = The standardized beta. It represents the coefficient obtained when the independent variable and dependent variable have been standardized to have variance = 1. In simple linear regression (one independent variable), the absolute value of the standardized coefficient equals the correlation coefficient.

The results of the simple linear regression analysis show that the coefficient of the correlation between the level of match and writing motivation is 0.71 ($p = .000 < .01$), which is significant at the 0.01 level of probability. The coefficient is greater than 0.5, which suggests that the two variables are strongly correlated. The unstandardised slope coefficient for writing motivation is statistically significantly different from 0 ($t = 11.066, = .000 < .01$), with writing motivation scores increasing by .287 for each change of one unit in the level of match. The R^2 value indicates that 50.9% of the variation in writing achievement scores is explained by variation in the level of match, which suggests a fairly large effect. The F-test of overall significance equals 12.471,

which confirms that the linear regression with a line representing the prediction of mean for each data point (line of best fit) is presented in figure 1.

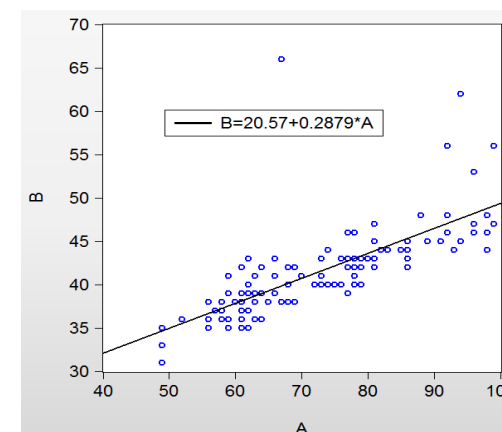


Figure 1 Scatter Plot of Writing Motivation vs. Level of Match

The scatter plot above shows that the spotted values obtained are somehow close to the line. This suggests a strong relationship. The slope of the line rises from lower left to upper right, with data displaying a linear pattern. This indicates a positive linear association between the two variables. This is consistent with the numerical value of the correlation (.71). The regression equation is:

$$\text{Writing Motivation (value)} = 20.57 + 0.2879 * \text{Level of Match (value)}$$

The regression equation is used to predict the approximate unknown value of writing motivation (B) using the known value of the level of match (A).

In light of these findings, we can reject the null hypothesis and conclude that the level of match between the frequency of use of classroom motivational strategies as

4. Investigating the 4th Research Question

Does the level of match between the frequency of use of L2 motivational strategies and the relative importance attached to them by EFL teacher-trainees affect teacher-trainees' writing achievement?

Question 4 was converted into the following null hypothesis:

implemented by EFL writing teachers and the relative importance attached to them by teacher-trainees affects teacher-trainees' writing motivation.

H₀: The level of match between the frequency of use of L2 motivational strategies and the relative importance attached to them by EFL teacher-trainees does not affect teacher-trainees' writing achievement.

	B	SE B	β
Level of Match	6.156	.843	
Writing Achievement	.057	.010	.383

Note. $R^2 = .209$; Adjusted $R^2 = .188$

* $p < .01$

Table 2 The Effect of the Level of Match on Writing Achievement Estimated by the Simple Linear Regression Model

As illustrated in table 2, the correlation between the level of correspondence and writing achievement turns out to be significant, with a coefficient of 0.38 ($p = .000 < .01$). The correlation coefficient is in the order of 0.3, which means that the two variables

are moderately correlated. The slope coefficient for writing motivation is significantly different from 0 ($t = 5.380$, $p = .000 < .01$), and indicates that writing achievement scores increase by .057 for each change of one unit in the level of match. The

R^2 value indicates that 20.9% of the variation in writing achievement scores was predicted by variation in the level of match. The model was a good fit for the data ($F = 10.228$, $p = .000 < .01$). The scatter plot of the regression is presented below.

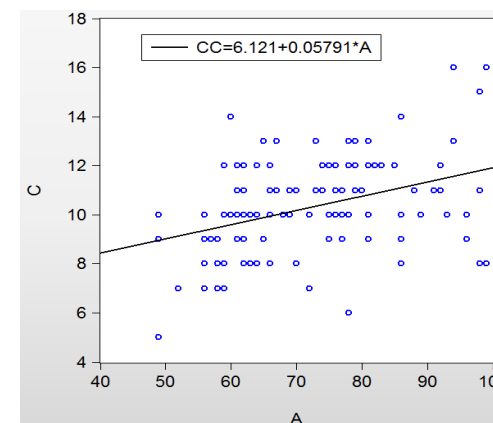


Figure 2 Scatter Plot of Writing Achievement vs. Level of Match

Figure 2 shows a roughly linear association between the variables, with no discernible curve or underlying form in the data points. The values scatter rather widely about the regression line, with the slope of the line rising from lower left to upper right. This suggests that

the correlation between the spotted values is positive but very moderate. Once again, the strength and direction of the relationship, as indicated by the correlation coefficient (.38), are reflected in the trend line. The regression equation is:

$$\text{Writing Achievement (value)} = 6.121 + 0.05791 * (\text{Level of Match})$$

On the basis of these findings, we can reject the null hypothesis and draw the conclusion that EFL teachers-trainees' writing achievement is affected by the level of match existing between the importance they attach to L2 motivational strategies and the frequency with which these strategies are implemented by their

Summary of the Findings

All in all, quantitative data analysis revealed that 'proper presentation of the task', 'finished products', and 'goal-orientedness' are the most frequently occurring strategies among EFL writing teachers in the context of the current study. Moreover, a number of motivational strategies were found to be underused. More specifically, 'autonomy', 'task-related interest', and 'L2-related values' rank in the top three of the least frequently used strategies. Furthermore, statistical analyses of the data enabled the identification of eight overused and five underused strategies relative to

writing teachers. However, their achievement is affected to a far lesser extent compared to their motivation. Teacher-trainees can be, indeed, well motivated by the strategies that their writing teachers use in class, but their achievement lags behind, i.e., falls away in strength as compared to their motivation.

the level of importance attached to them by EFL teacher-trainees. Only two strategies appear to be implemented in line with their perceived importance. These findings suggest that the frequency of use of classroom motivational strategies as implemented by EFL writing teachers does not match the relative importance attached to them by EFL teacher-trainees. Finally, the level of match between the frequency of use of L2 motivational strategies and the relative importance attached to them was found to affect EFL teacher-trainees' writing motivation and achievement.

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Appendix

(The mean difference and z-difference scores of L2 motivational strategies)

N°	L2 Motivational Strategies	Mean-diff	Z-diff
1.	Encourage students to share academic knowledge.	-0.84	-1.02
2.	Involve small group competition games.	-1.34	-2.48
3.	Use pair/group work.	0.34	-0.28
GROUP COHESIVENESS		-0.29	-0.29
4.	Use humor in the classroom.	0.42	0.44
5.	Encourage risk taking in the classroom (e.g. encourage students to express their ideas or tell students not to worry about their mistakes).	0.8	1.30
6.	Use an interesting opening activity to start each class (e.g. crossword activity)	-0.75	-0.49
CLASSROOM CLIMATE		0.15	0.61
7.	Teach English writing strategies (e.g. brainstorming, outlining).	0.77	0.09
8.	Draw students' awareness of their strengths and abilities.	-0.15	-0.69
9.	Explain to students that they are able to succeed if they work hard.	0.34	0.72
SELF-CONFIDENCE		0.31	0.04
10.	Include challenging tasks.	-0.82	-1.89
11.	Include tasks that incorporate creative elements (e.g. poems).	-0.38	-1.26
12.	Vary the learning tasks.	-0.52	-1.21
13.	Include tasks that allow students to express their opinions/feelings/experiences.	-0.46	-1.11
TASK-RELATED INTEREST		-0.55	-2.6
14.	State the lesson objectives or review progress made toward achieving the lesson objectives.	1.12	1.62
15.	Draw students' attention to the activities that can help them make progress.	0.06	-0.58
16.	Raise students' awareness of the factors that can contribute to successful English writing.	0.32	-0.5
17.	Mention the latest time/date by which the task should be completed.	1.17	2.22
18.	Encourage students to select learning goals and work toward them.	-0.62	0.07
19.	Walk around the class to check on students' progress while on task.	1.13	2.22
GOAL-ORIENTEDNESS		0.52	2.15
20.	State the purpose or utility of the task.	0.27	0.43
21.	Give clear instructions about how to carry out the task.	1.11	1.14

L2 Motivational Strategies (continued)		Mean-diff	Z-diff
PROPER PRESENTATION OF THE TASK		0.69	0.82
22.	Remind students of the benefits of successful English writing.	-1.11	-1.84
23.	Use authentic texts (e.g. English magazines/newspapers)	-0.08	-0.30
24.	Encourage students to explore the British/American culture (e.g. read English novels)	-0.92	-0.79
L2-RELATED VALUES		-0.37	-1.6
25.	Have students correct their own written production.	-0.28	-0.43
26.	Check students' understanding of previously covered material through questioning, assigning homework, etc.	0.71	-0.02
27.	Provide students with feedback about their progress.	-0.92	-1.95
EVALUATION		-0.17	-1.18
28.	Share personal interest in the English writing skill with the students.	-0.27	0.46
29.	Show availability to help students with all things academic.	0.24	0.66
30.	Assist students when they work on task.	0.54	0.82
TEACHER BEHAVIOUR		0.17	0.96
31.	Involve the students in preparing and presenting the course.	-0.82	-1.83
32.	Allow learners to make choices about aspects of their learning (e.g. Choice of the topic or the activity).	-0.33	-1.56
33.	Raise students' awareness of the strategies they can use to motivate themselves (e.g. self-encouragement)	-0.88	-1.06
AUTONOMY		-0.68	-2.12
34.	Offer rewards for successful accomplishments/progress.	-0.93	0.02
35.	Offer praise for effort or successful achievement.	0.73	0.70
RECOGNITION OF EFFORT		-0.16	0.44
36.	Give students the opportunity to display good written productions in front of the class.	0.46	0.57
DISPLAY OF PERFORMANCE			
37.	Relate the lesson to the everyday experiences of the students.	0.21	1.23
RELEVANCE OF THE LESSON			
38.	Include tasks that require students to write finished paragraphs/essays or constituent parts.	0.82	0.84
FINISHED PRODUCTS			
39.	Have students correct their classmate's written production.	-0.13	0.01
PEER-ASSESSMENT			