

# TEACHING WRITING SKILLS IN UNIVERSITY LARGE CLASSES IN PAKISTAN: ISSUES, CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

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**Abstract:** This study aims to investigate the concept of a large class, challenges and issues faced by the teachers while teaching writing skills courses in large classes along with the strategies they use in order to cater to the problems. Therefore, in-depth interviews with nine private and public sector university teachers were conducted. The thematic analysis of the data revealed that a large class, in the Pakistani context, consists of 30 to 35 students and teachers particularly face the problems in assessment, giving feedback, ensuring individual attention, maintaining discipline, and controlling noise factor, etc. The assessment and feedback issues can be catered to by using peer assessment and peer feedback as they are viable strategies to deal with the large writing classes. In order to reduce the noise factor, some related activities can be practised to ensure maximum involvement of learners and ultimately, it reduces the disruptive noise. Identification of students in terms of their behaviour and seriousness towards learning paves the way for choosing appropriate teaching techniques which in turn helps to manage large writing classes having mixed ability students to achieve objectives of the course.

**Keywords:** assessment; feedback; large class; writing skills.

## INTRODUCTION

A large class is a phenomenon associated not only with the developing world but also with the developed ones. In the case of English language teaching, large-sized classes have been reported around the globe, particularly in Asia and Africa (Shamim & Coleman, 2018). Quantitative definition of a large class might be different across contexts (Shehu & Tafida, 2016; LoCastro, 2001; Xu, 2001). In many western countries, a class size of 30 students would be considered large and need to be adjusted or reduced. The overcrowded classroom is defined as situations where the proportion of students to teacher is over 40:1 (Bendow, Mizrachi, Oliver & Said-Moshiro, 2007). However, in developing countries, such as China or Nigeria, a class with 50 to 100 students would seem common and typical (Shehu & Tafida, 2016).

Teachers, in large-sized classes, might face numerous challenges like in paying individual attention, providing feedback, engaging students in multiple class activities, maintaining discipline, managing pair/group work, controlling noise level and course management (Shamim & Coleman, 2018). The biggest hurdle in smooth teaching/learning is the ever-increasing want of order in the class. As such, a teacher's entire capacity is exhausted in the maintenance of discipline, and they have to keep shouting, which results in their de-motivation towards teaching. Some researchers claim that reduced class size has an optimum effect on learners' achievement than in over-sized classes (Blatchford, Bassett, & Brown, 2011), whereas a few argue that the number of students in the class has nothing to do with learners' performance (Ehrenberg, Brewer, Gamoran, & Willms, 2001; Bendow et al., 2007).

The teaching and learning of writing skills are far more challenging, tiresome and demanding when the class is overcrowded. At the higher education level, students face problems in grammar, vocabulary, organization of ideas, and selection of register and understanding of the genre. These problems could be eradicated by incorporating context-specific reading material (Atique & Khan,

2015). In a large class, the teacher can only cast a bird-eye-view on the scripts of students. In order to cater to this challenge, students are trained to check the scripts of their peers. This technique not only reduces teachers' burden but also boosts students' morale helping them write independently (Dar, Zaki & Kazmi, 2014).

The purpose of this study is to investigate the perceptions of language teachers teaching writing skills at tertiary level on a large class, the challenges they face, and what approaches, strategies and techniques they apply in their classes for ensuring the achievement of course objectives in the Pakistani context.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

In Pakistani public sector universities' context, English language teaching and learning takes place in complicated circumstances (Khurram, 2018) which include large-sized classes, non-availability of adequate teaching and learning resources, and lack of student engagement (Bughio, 2012). In Xu's (2001) article about teaching College English in China, a large class refers to the number of students ranging from 60 to 150. However, sometimes language classrooms in developing countries can have 150 to 300 learners and beyond (LoCastro, 2001). What constitutes a large class has remained under debate in the literature for a long time.

Owing to the large enrollment of students in English class at tertiary level, problems like noise level, assessing students' written scripts, giving feedback on written and oral presentations, the rapport between the teacher and students, and sometimes the limited space of classrooms etc. raise their heads (Fatma, 2016). In the year 2000, a conference titled "The World Education Forum" in the capital city of Senegal, Dakar and most recently United Nations Millennium Development Goals intended to acquire international primary education by 2015. Resultantly, the registration of learners has massively enhanced during the last three to four decades. Though the enhancement of learners' registration was centred on elementary education, further education in colleges and universities has turned

into yet another initiative for the huge increment in the registration in elementary school and large classes (Shehu & Tafida, 2016).

Most students preferred to small class sizes, whereas some of them indicated no preference for class size. However, a few of the students favoured to have large classes (Carpenter, 2006) and some studies favour small class environments which reflects that small classes hold an advantage (Arias & Walker, 2004). There is a small literature on class size in higher education (Bandiera, Larcinese & Rasul, 2010; Martins & Walker, 2006; Monks & Schmidt, 2011; Sapelli & Illanes, 2016).

Khurram (2018) suggests that students in a large class can be engaged while using active teaching modes (McGroarty et al. 2004; Teixeira-Dias et al. 2005; Clark et al. 2008). In large classes with limited teaching and learning resources, teachers' motivation and a positive attitude can cater the challenges faced by the learners, and students' engagement can be increased to ensure better learning of students. Similarly, Chan (2010) highlights the issues faced by the teachers in large class such as fair assessment, individual attention, heavy workload, and ensuring thoughtful learning. In a large class, feedback create positive motivation among the students, and written feedback encourages students to produce high-quality work, self-assessment promote students' involvement, and peer assessment elevates the status of a student from passive to active learner (Awan & Kamran, 2018).

Regardless of profession, enhancement of writing skills is the first central part of any English for Academic purpose courses. Nevertheless, it is more important for a student to develop writings skills, as most of the assessments are based on written assignments (Atique & Khan, 2015). Quite often students at tertiary level cut a sorry figure in planning, writing and revising a paragraph. They also faced greater problems in writing cause & effect paragraph and comparison & contrast paragraph than writing a listing paragraph (Karim, et al, 2018). A study in Saudi High School context revealed that class size does impact learning and teaching the English

language. It also explored that the ways and means to deal with an over-sized class can and cannot be applied to different situations as the challenges and solutions vary from context to context. In other words, the teacher has to work out his particular strategy to encounter his large classes (Bahanshal, 2013).

Crowded classes affect students' learning along with teachers' performance at the higher education level. Indeed, enrollment per class should be limited to a logical proportion in order to enhance teachers' performance as well as to reap the optimum learning outcomes (Monks & Schmidt, 2010). A large class is a common feature in both developed and under-developed countries. It also has a negative mental, pedagogical and societal impact on students and it casts negative impact on teaching and learning of English at tertiary level, it does have some positive points as well that teachers can utilize to their benefits (Thafer, 2004). Interaction in large classes needed skillful qualities to manage and to ensure that learning is taking place. It was necessary on the teachers' part to monitor that interaction, which enables students to understand the target language/skill (Bughio, 2012).

According to Cooper and Robinson (2000), it is not surprising that teaching sessions with large college classes are frequently referred to as 'large lecture' or 'large lecture sessions' as most teaching staff teaches via the lecture. According to Good and Brophy (2003), most of the criticisms of lecturing as a teaching approach are due to the inappropriate use and/or overuse of lectures and not to any problems inherent in the approach itself. Both Bligh (2000) found that completely relying on one teaching approach is not desirable and that some combination of lecturing and other approaches is likely to be more effective.

A large class has some merits also as it helps teachers to improve their managerial skills. In order to cope with the situation, group work, jigsaw and discussion were proved to be the most effective tools (Rohin, 2013). However, large classes do have merits along with demerits. Human and material resources can be saved and

can be utilized to cater to a large populace at the same time. Moreover, different teaching strategies and techniques can be better incorporated into an oversized class to optimize learning (Xu, 2001). The teacher-centred approach can benefit the students in a limited way. Hence there is a need to modify the strategy. Therefore, the student-led approach is applied these days, particularly in large classes of English. Students' need analysis is of paramount importance to the instructions should be according to the needs of the students. If the teaching is student-centred and according to their needs, it will improve their grammar, vocabulary, comprehension, etc. (Li & Lu, 2012).

Based on this principle, another method of learning English was introduced that is called Cooperative Learning. This model helps greatly in teaching and learning English in large classes. Moreover, it also creates motivation among students and helps them in order to develop a sense of cooperation in any venture, particularly learning (Nan, 2014). In the same manner, Qiang & Ning (2011) are of the view that large classes do have advantages for learning and teaching English. The quality of teaching is not dependent on the number of students in the class. Therefore, teachers need to incorporate novel techniques and trends in their teaching according to the attributes of their respective classes. The challenges involved in using more active teaching approaches in the teaching of large college and university classes can, of course, be overcome through careful planning, commitment and belief in the advantages that will accrue to students, administrative and collegial support, and the provision of adequate and appropriate resources (Mulryan-Kyne, 2010).

Classroom writing practices are influenced by teachers' beliefs and knowledge (Graham & Harris, 2018). Teachers devote more time and attention to teaching writing if they are better prepared to teach it, feel more confident in their capabilities to teach it, and consider it an important skill (Hsiang & Graham, 2016; Troia & Graham, 2016; Brindle et al., 2016; Rietdijk et al., 2018). Many undergraduate

students become accustomed to learning in large group settings and often experience confusion (Cullen, 2011).

Project-based Learning (PBL) is a wonderful approach to teach English in large classes as it guarantees enhanced learners' morale, exposes them to real-life English, inculcates in them the habit of independent learning and develops rapport among students and also between students and the teacher (Sarwar, 2001). Using Project-based Learning, students learnt different aspects of English language like grammar, contextualized vocabulary and sentence pattern as they worked freely within their groups and gave feedback to one another while revising their written works (Sukerti & Yuliantini, 2018). The Application Response and Collaboration Approach (ARC) ensure the achievement of learning outcomes in large classes. Moreover, the ARC model motivates learners to participate in classroom activities and helps teachers introduce various teaching strategies in the class (Hourigan, 2013). The Arab EFL students at tertiary level fall short of grammar, word choice, pronouns and organization. An increasing number of writing activities, exploiting multiple teaching techniques and rectifying grammatical errors committed by the students could help remedy the situation (Al-Khasawneh, 2010).

In writing skills, different kinds of writing called 'genre' are taught. When students undertake a genre-specific writing task in an interactive mode, they discuss the choice of words, spelling, sentence patterns and other conventions of the language. It is also evident that the students' proficiency in the language and their respective role in the activities has a great correlation (Loewen & Basturkmen, 2005). Students are worried about instructors' de-motivating feedback, little language competence, the paucity of time and resources, lack of writing drills and the complexity of topics. The teachers should encourage students to write by giving positive feedback in spite of their mistakes. Secondly, teachers should exploit multiple techniques to teach writing skills. Furthermore, the writing tasks should be limited so that learners do not feel overburdened and take up their assignments wholeheartedly (Younus et al., 2014). Traditionally the

teachers used to assume the role of a didactic instructor, while these days their roles are more of a facilitator, motivator, counsellor and the like. Following this perception, another strategy known as task-based teaching was experimented. According to this approach, tasks and its series are not pre-determined by the teacher but according to the demands of the class. However, the teacher has to be flexible to administer it to every student. The method has proved to be particularly viable for teaching writing at tertiary level where classes are over-sized (Hai-yan, 2014)

Meng (2009) holds that in order to boost students' confidence to speak English in large classes, the teacher-centred approach of teaching has to be converted to a student-focused approach. Furthermore, by incorporating group activities, students will have chances to listen to authentic language and to use it to get their messages across, which will result in fluency. Peer review is beneficial for the writing skills of students; however, it is more advantageous for the students giving feedback on their peers' written works than the ones who only receive the feedback. Through peer assessment, various aspects of reviewers' writing like coherence, paragraphing, overall development, etc. can greatly be improved (Lundstorm & Baker, 2009).

In view of the above discussed literature, what makes a class large is varying from context to context, depending upon the facilities available in the class. Likewise, strategies used in one context may not be useful for another. Therefore, this study investigates the problems faced by the teachers in large writing classes, use of appropriate strategies and approaches in Pakistani private and public sector universities in order to ensure the achievement of objectives and it will definitely help the novice as well as practising teachers to teach writing skills in large classes. In this regard, the following research questions have been set:

1. What are the challenges of teaching writing skills in large classes in Pakistani private and public sector universities?



2. What are the useful strategies and approaches to teaching writing skills in large classes in Pakistani private and public sector universities?

## **METHOD**

The study is based on case study research. The basic case study entails the detailed and intensive analysis of a single case, such as a single community etc. (Bryman, 2008). In this study, semi-structured interviews were conducted from public and private sector university teachers teaching writing skills in large classes. The aim was to know their perceptions about large class problems they face, and the approaches, strategies and techniques they adopt to achieve the course objectives. Indeed, the qualitative method involves obtaining a holistic picture of what goes on in a particular situation or setting and includes exploratory description and analysis (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2000). The interview questions were completely based on research questions, and standardized open-ended questions were asked in a sequence from all the respondents.

This study was based on the private and public sector university teachers, teaching writing skills in large classes. Hence, 15 teachers were approached for data collection through universities' management; however, nine teachers participated in the interviews. The participants consisted of five male and four female teachers teaching writing skills in large classes. The interviews of the teachers were recorded and transcribed for initial coding; focused coding and then themes were extracted through thematic analysis to answer the research questions. All respondents had their master degrees in English linguistics, and some of them were pursuing their MS/M.Phil degree programs. The teachers were English language specialists with teaching experience ranging from 4 to 23 years, and their age was ranging between 26 to 43 years.

**Table 1 Respondents' Description**

Respondent	Gender	Age	Experience	University	Writing Class Frequency
R-1	Female	26 Years	4 Years	Private Sector	3 Hours/ Week
R-2	Female	29 Years	7 Years	Private Sector	2 Hours/ Week
R-3	Female	26 Years	5 Years	Public Sector	3 Hours/ Week
R-4	Female	30 Years	5 Years	Private Sector	3 Hours/ Week
R-5	Male	37 Years	10 Years	Public Sector	3 Hours/ Week
R-6	Male	43 Years	23 Years	Public Sector	3 Hours/ Week
R-7	Male	31 Years	6 Years	Private Sector	6 Hours/ Week
R-8	Male	26 Years	4 Years	Private Sector	2 Hours/ Week
R-9	Male	40 Years	19 Years	Private Sector	6 Classes / Week

This study extracted data through seven in-depth interview questions in order to know the concept of large classes according to the teachers' concerned, the problems or hurdles they encounter while teaching writing skills in their large classes, strategies and approaches they apply to facilitate the students' learning environment to achieve objectives. Open-ended questions, along with probing questions, were devised and shared with the respondents in advance to minimize the anxiety level. They were provided enough time to think and express their opinions without any hesitation.

It is mandatory for researchers to observe the code of ethics. Before conducting the interviews, the researchers sought the consent of the respondents. Furthermore, they made it clear that the respondents had the right to quit at any stage if they were uncomfortable. In this way, all the participants were willing to take part in and shared their views. Their responses were recorded with their permission, and strict confidentiality and anonymity were ensured.

## **FINDINGS**

After conducting in-depth interviews with nine teachers, the interviews were transcribed to extract themes while conducting initial and focused coding process. In this regard, five themes were established as a result of the thematic analysis.

### **Teachers' perceptions of a Large Class**

The first theme was based on the concept of a large class. Majority of the respondents believed that a class having 35 and above students is considered as a large class. One of the respondents said that *"I believe that above 30 or 35 students is a large class"* (R-1). However, a few of the teachers believed that a class of 60 plus students is considered a large class. In this regard, a respondent stated that *"When you have 60 plus students in your class is said to be a large class"* (R-3). The teachers' perception depended upon their experience. Similarly, another respondent described it as, *"A large class might consist of 30 to 35 students or 50 plus students in Pakistani context"* (R-4). In fact, majority of the respondents believed that a large writing class consists of above 30 students. In this way, one of the respondents described it as *"more than thirty students in a writing class is considered a large class"* (R-5).

Furthermore, majority of the respondents opine that only the number of students primarily do not make a class large, there are some other factors as well, which make a class large. One of the respondents explained that *"When the teacher is unable to give individual attention to students because of time constraint and lack of resources, it is considered a large class"* (R-1). The available resources are also one of the factors to make a class large. In this regard, one of the respondents said that *"We have limited sources and limited mindsets"* (R-2). According to the respondents, the context-wise difference is always there, where the number of students varies to make a class large. In fact, developing and developed countries, both are different contexts. One of the respondents stated that *"It varies from place to place, context to context and even from continent to continent"* (R-5).

### **Problems of Teaching Large Writing Classes**

The second theme explains the problems faced by the teachers while teaching large writing classes in the Pakistani context. Majority of the respondents reported the feedback issue as it becomes challenging for them to give feedback to all the students and

discussed their limitations to deal with a large number of students, specifically in writing skills course. One of the respondents stated that *"Being a human, I cannot give feedback to 60 or 70 students at a time, I want to give feedback to every individual about the topic, but not possible"* (R-2). Similarly, another respondent explained it as, *"Giving appropriate feedback on an individual basis is beyond the human capacity"* (R-6).

Furthermore, the majority of teachers explained the problem of giving individual attention in large writing classes and considered it as a challenging task as it requires a lot of time. Dealing with a huge number of students simultaneously and providing individual attention is much difficult as stated by one of the respondents that, *"One of the major problems, as a teacher, I feel is individual feedback"* (R-4). Another respondent shared his views regarding giving individual attention as, *"I do not think that you can give individual attention when sixty students are sitting in the class, and you are teaching them writing skills"* (R-5).

A few respondents stated that giving feedback in the same class is much important as it affects students' learning positively. One of the teachers explained, *"I believe that feedback should be given at the same time in class"* (R-1). Without giving feedback, teaching is, therefore, ineffective as the majority of the respondents explained it and specifically, they believed that feedback plays a key role in students' learning. In this regard, one of the respondents stated, *"Certainly, this is the primary problem; I would like to give feedback because I feel without giving them feedback it is just useless to teach the students"* (R-2).

### **Managing Large Writing Class is Difficult**

The third theme deals with the management issues of large classes as the majority of the respondents explained it as a difficult task, specifically in writing skills courses. They generally believed that management issues appear when the number of students is 50 or 60 plus in a class. Assessing the work and providing feedback in large

writing classes is quite difficult to manage as much time is required to check the work produced by the students. One of the respondents opined that *"Regarding giving feedback and individual attention, it takes enough time when students produce some sort of written stuff"* (R-9).

A majority of respondents believed that if the instructions given by the teacher are not clear to all the students, it becomes difficult to manage the activities for the involvement of learners. One of the respondents stated, *"In order to manage the students in large classes, if the instructions are not clear to all the students, they will not pay attention, and therefore, it becomes impossible to manage the large classes"* (R-4). In fact, the appropriate strategies cannot be applied to the time, and the teacher knows the students in terms of their behaviour and interest in learning. One of the respondents said, *"You cannot understand and apply strategies without knowing the students"* (R-3).

A few respondents stated that dividing the students in groups is an effective strategy to manage the large writing classes. If the students are not formed into the groups, the problem of management may appear because it becomes difficult to manage the students individually. In this regard, one of the teachers explained it as, *"If you do not divide students and they sit individually, then it becomes a problem to manage"* (R-7). Management of large writing classes depend on the experience of the teacher as few of the respondents believed that they generally do not have management issues in large writing classes. One of the teachers described, *"With writing skills, it is not a problem to manage large classes, it depends on a teacher that how she deals with a class"* (R-8).

It is, nevertheless, an important activity to keep the students on task and ensure that instructions are clearly understood at the back. A few of the respondents explained that the problem arises when the teacher is unable to move around the class due to non-availability of space in large writing classes. In this regard, one of the teachers stated that *"Some of them are paying more attention, whereas, others are not; therefore, it requires more attention for a teacher"* (R-4).

The majority of teachers highlighted that disciplinary issues generally arise when dealing with large classes, specifically teaching writing skills and it becomes difficult to control the disruptive noise. In fact, the identification of students in terms of their behaviour is an important task for the teacher to control the large writing classes. One of the respondents explained that *“Students identification in terms of their behaviour, noisiness etc. once you have identified them, you need to deal with them differently but not with bias”* (R-2).

### **Assessment Issues in a Large Writing Classes**

The fourth theme established to represent the assessment and feedback issues of large writing classes. Most of the respondents reported that assessment and feedback issues are always there when talking about large writing classes and were considered as major problems according to their experiences. One of the respondents said, *“Teacher cannot give feedback to individual learners and s/he cannot go and see each student’s work, it will literally be a difficult task for the teacher to handle all of them”* (R-7). In fact, giving feedback to all students in a large writing class is a difficult task for a teacher to manage, and it requires enough time to check the writing works produced by the students. Similarly, another respondent opined, *“Enough time is required to check copies and assignments, and I cannot give feedback to 70 students on assignments, midterm papers, and final papers”* (R-8).

In fact, assessment of the students’ writing in large writing classes and giving them feedback is an extremely difficult task. Respondents described the problems of assessment and giving feedback as a challenging task for the teachers. They believed that assessment and feedback activities require much more time in large writing classes than the available time in the class. One of the respondents expressed it as *“Giving feedback and assessment is also difficult for one teacher to deal with 90 students’ assignments”* (R-3). On the same issue, another respondent commented *“Once a writing piece is produced by 60 students, it becomes more difficult to give them feedback on those written essays”* (R-4).

### **Suggestions for Teaching Large Writing Classes Effectively**

A large class is not a unique phenomenon in Pakistan, as it is a worldwide issue. A few of the respondents explained that use of appropriate strategies play a vital role in large writing classes as it affects the learning environment and it is recommended to identify the students according to their behaviour and abilities in the start of the class. One of the respondents stated, "*Initially when the class starts, teacher's job is to identify good students, average students and below-average students for the purpose of using appropriate strategy and contents should be relating the topic*" (R-9). Indeed, large classes are challenging, but the goals can be achieved once there is effective planning and teacher delivers her maximum for the sake of students' learning. One of the respondents suggested, "*Enjoy what you teach so that you can deliver in a better manner*" (R-1). Peer feedback is a useful strategy of large writing class as the majority of the respondents stated that it reduces the burden of a teacher for assessment purpose. One of the teachers expressed her views as, "*I would like to give my colleagues the use of peer feedback, as I consider it one of the most useful strategies in teaching writing skills in large classes*" (R-4).

On the other hand, planning to teach in large classes becomes an effective strategy to overcome the learning problems and to deliver the maximum. In this regard, a respondent suggested, "*One has to go with proper lesson planning and use different strategies according to the situation*" (R-3). In addition to this, knowing the students according to their abilities, definitely helps you to reset your plans and strategies for teaching-learning purpose, as it was suggested, "*Try to identify the students' weaknesses and strengths before you start teaching them writing skills*" (R-5).

No doubt, giving individual feedback is a challenging task in large writing classes. In order to reduce the burden of giving feedback; it becomes more comfortable for a teacher to provide collective feedback to the whole class. In this regard, one of the teachers suggested, "*Instead of pinpointing individual student, I should*

*give collective or generalized feedback" (R-6).* In fact, using technology creates a comfort zone for both teachers and students, specifically in large writing classes. The effective use of available teaching aids may reduce the issues of large classes and definitely it will increase the involvement of students. Therefore, one of the respondents advised, *"As it is the era of technology, instructors should also include multi-media projectors in their writing classes"*(R-7). Majority of the respondents believed that peer checking is an effective strategy used in large writing classes applied for multiple-choice questions (MCQs) and ineffective for checking of subjective material. One of the teachers explained it as, *"I do believe in peer checking, but it generally depends on the topic and is not reliable for all topics" (R-1).* The long-term benefits and objectives should be communicated to the students for the sake of their future concerns, such as to become a good writer, etc. Another respondent suggested, *"We must let the students know their goals, we have to highlight their benefits" (R-8).* In this way, involvement increases and ultimately, leaning part of large writing class heightens to the maximum.

Based on the findings of the study, as reported by the teachers, it is recommended that the class size for a writing course should not exceed twenty-five to thirty students. Moreover, all material resources like sound system, computers, facilities of printing and photocopying and most importantly, a well-stocked library should be provided to every language class in particular large classes. Besides it, classes should be held in spacious and well-ventilated rooms to avoid congestion and suffocation. As far as discipline is concerned, teachers of large writing classes should formulate the code of behaviour with the consultation of students concerned and ensure its implementation. As regards the conduct of class, they should incorporate pair and group activities making smart students the group leaders/monitors for their respective groups, so that they can manage the entire class through these leaders. By implementing these, disciplinary issues can be reduced to the minimum level.



As feedback is the backbone of any teaching and especially of teaching writing skills, therefore, it is highly recommended that teachers should formulate assessment criteria, explain them to the students and provide each student with a copy of the criteria for their reference. This will help them in self-assessment of their works. Besides, teachers could select the subject chiefs for each group according to the calibre of the students in their classes. These chiefs will go through the scripts of their group mates, making it convenient for the teacher to give them feedback. Furthermore, teachers can assess just one or two aspects of the assessment criteria at a time. This will yield multi-pronged benefits. First of all, teachers can check all the scripts in a short span of time. Secondly, students will feel encouraged when they have their marked scripts back with fewer red-markings. The third one is that teachers' energy and resources are also saved this way.

## **DISCUSSION**

Findings of this study resulted that teachers were uncomfortable while giving feedback to all the students due to a large number of students and shortage of time. Furthermore, a few respondents declared that, in the large writing class, paying individual attention becomes impossible. It was further highlighted that managing large class becomes a challenge due to disruptive noise factor, which causes disciplinary issues and sometimes, the teacher is unable to pass the instructions to the rest of the class. Assessment problems were also highlighted by the majority of the respondents as it becomes more difficult to assess a large writing class. The respondents candidly expressed their concerns that teachers have limited time to deal with a large number of students in writing large class and assess their produced written work for the purpose of feedback in general and improving their writing skills in particular (Shamim & Coleman, 2018).

This study further investigated the teaching strategies and approaches used by the teachers to deal with feedback issues;

individual attention and overall management of large writing classes in Pakistani context (Awan & Kamran, 2018). In fact, strategies used in one context may not be effective for the other one. Therefore, the use of appropriate strategy would affect the learning outcome of the students. Despite the fact that it is difficult to deal with a huge number of students in the large writing class, an effective planning and strategies can overcome the issues as teachers use different strategies based on learners' mixed abilities. In fact, weak, average and outstanding students cannot be dealt together; therefore, separate techniques should be used accordingly. Use of peer assessment technique reduces the burden of teacher, but can only be used for MCQs type question, not for subjective assessment as it becomes unreliable. Furthermore, the findings of this study revealed that the identification of learners, according to their abilities and behaviour, helps to manage large writing classes as it becomes a source to know the interest of students. Therefore, in order to deal with large writing classes, comprehensive planning and effective strategies have to be ensured according to the context to make teaching in large writing classes a promising venture.

## CONCLUSION

Dealing with large writing class is a challenging task, and the majority of the respondents reported some concerns about the problems connected with teaching writing skills to large classes, which include failure to attend individual queries of students, difficulty in offering feedback, controlling the class, coping with the paucity of material resources and identification of learners in terms of their behaviour and seriousness towards learning. Based on the opinions of the concerned respondents, a few remedial measures for handling large classes in an effective manner were offered. For example, they were incorporating pair/ group activities to maximize students' engagement, using best students to mark the copies of a few students, utilizing students' latent talents, setting class rules in consultation with the entire class, to name a few. In the end, the

respondents presented their recommendations to other teachers, administrators and policy-makers for countering the situations emerging in large classes.

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