MOTIVATING LEARNERS TO WRITE THROUGH TECHNOLOGY

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Abstract
This article discusses the methods and ways of incorporating technology in order to engage students in writing.

Keywords: writing skills, online platforms, online apps, technology, feedback.

Language: English

Introduction

"Either write something worth reading or do something worth writing."

Benjamin Franklin.

Writing skills are more important than ever in today's society because of technological advances and the increased access to technology for students. Writing is very important in any foreign language learning process. However, it must be acknowledged that many foreign language learners have no interest in writing and prefer other ways of conveying their ideas because it takes a lot of time. Writing and written speech in the methodology of teaching a foreign language is always not only a means of teaching, but also as a goal of teaching a foreign language.

The students are growing impatiently enough to revise, recopy and edit their written piece of works. Computers can offer an easier way for them to express their ideas on sheets of paper and revise them more effortlessly. Thus, the educators should involve them in writing during the lesson. It is recommended to use various interactive methods to achieve this goal. In today's advanced world, involving students in writing exercises using a variety of technologies has become a requirement of the times. These times, language learners have sufficient opportunities and access to the internet where they can be connected to creativity, publishing chances and content. Elyse and Cantrill highlighted the significance of teachers' role in aiding students to raise an understanding of social platforms and ethical matters in written communication. Yet, many teachers have not understood the importance of digital writing and practices of

writing in online tools. Online media is developing swiftly and thus, the ways of writing practices in social platforms are rapidly varying alike. Educators should consider to turn to more challenging methods of writing practices and curriculum design than traditional ways of teaching writing.

Literature Review

Traditional method of teaching requires predetermined location and exact schedule, which might limit the scope of learning process. Whereas, computers, laptops internet, websites and online platforms brought flexibility which increased the effect of language teaching and accessibility to learning materials in the 20th century (Burston, 2013).

Writing possesses a collaborative nature and thus, web-based applications can facilitate the teaching process by providing practical ramifications. Below are studies conducted applying technologies in developing writing skills of students.

Zarei (2015) carried out a study in which advanced L2 learners have been provided with feedback vie social media private group in Telegram massenger. The purpose was to find out if there would be any increase in the students' level of writing accuracy. The experiments brought significant results causing the higher and better works of the participants.

Abram (2016), Vithanage (2016), and Amiryousefi (2017) experimented Google Docs, Wikis, and private E-mail in their studies and their conclusions were that these web-based tools led to major developments in teaching writing increasing students' self-reflection, self-esteem and linguistic knowledge. The researchers highlighted the role of achieved opportunities for language learners to interact and collaborate outside the classroom as well.

Based on the above -mentioned studies, this research aims to view and evaluate the advances in technologies, particularly, the online application- draft, and to further inform researchers, practitioners and educators on the efficiency of web-based instruction and practice in writing.

Methods of Research

To carry out the present investigation, two groups including 20 students each, whose level are intermediate, were selected. The purpose was to see if online platforms, specifically, Draft, (draftin.com) an online writing app can help students develop their skills of writing accurately by collaborating and editing their work. It is possible to share your document using Draft, any changes your collaborator makes are on their

own copy of the document, and you get to accept or ignore each individual change they make.

The First group is named control group as they were given traditional task. Whereas, the second group has been called "experimental group" since they were asked to deal with the task by using draftin.com. Each group is divided into 4 groups and write an essay with their group members.

Time allocated for the control group was 90 minutes; they wrote their essays in 45 minutes, then in the next 45 minutes teacher corrected their mistakes and gave relevant feedback. While, experimental group took 45 minutes to write their essay and revise it with the help of the functions of assigned platform. Leaders of mini groups shared their documents online via Draft, collaborators made their changes some of which were accepted while others were not by the leader since to accept it or not was up to the leaders of the group.

Data Collection

The Opinion essays were checked using IELTS Band Descriptors (Public version) considering task response, coherence and cohesion, lexical resource, grammatical range and accuracy. Overall, 4 essays were submitted by each group and the results are graded with the help of IELTS bands score in order to reveal the level of students' writing skills. The results of control group (table 1) and experimental group (table 2) has been recorded and find out an average score (table 3) for each group.

Table 1. Results of Control group (product)

	Coherence and Cohesion 9	Task Response 9	Grammatical range and Accuracy 9	Lexical Resource 9	Overall score 9
Essay	6,5	7	7	6	6,5

Table 2. Results of Experimental group(Process)

	Coherence and Cohesion	Task Response	Grammatical range and Accuracy	Lexical Resource	Overall score
Draft #1	6	6	7	7	6,5
Draft #2	6,5	6,5	7,5	7	7
Draft #3	7,5	7	7,5	7,5	7,5
Draft #4	8,5	8	8	8	8

Table 3. Average score

Control group	Experimental group
6,5	7

Results and Discussion

It can be seen that the average scores of experimental group was higher than that of the other group. It is noticeable that the lexical resource and grammatical range of experimental group showed higher results. It is assumed that this is because the target students have also taken advantage of the features of assigned web-based platform.

The use of Draft Software could definitely assist students in improving their writing skills by building up a piece of work altogether by checking one another's expressions. Besides, teacher conducted a questionnaire in order to find out the students' ideas about their experiences with studying by an online platform. Students showed great interest, positive feelings and attitude towards this way of innovative teaching and assessing the student's work.

Conclusion

This study aimed to investigate the effect of "Draft.com" in comparison with the traditional way of paper-based instruction in developing the intermediate level of learners' writing skills. Results revealed that there is a noticeable difference between the results of control and experimental groups. The average scores of the students who worked on the assigned task via the online platform was higher than that of the other group. In addition, target population asked to conduct this type of teaching procedures more in the future as it was very intriguing for them.

According to this conclusion, it is suggested to further continue and increase the use of web-based writing practices in foreign language teaching. It is also recommended to develop the existing technical opportunities and internet access since the studied learning method depends highly on the use of computers and stableness of the internet network.

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