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Scrutinising Padlet to Enhance Students' Collaborative Writing in a Virtual Learning Environment

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ARTICLE INFO ABSTRACT This study examines the utilisation of Padlet as a collaborative writing platform to Volume: 3 augment students' collaborative writing skills within a Virtual Learning Environment (hereafter VLE). The study employs case studies involving observations, document **KEYWORD** analysis, and interviews to investigate the real-world implementation of Padlet in VLE. Evidence from research suggests that Padlet provides constructive feedback, Collaborative Writing; Padlet; involvement focused on assessing the Comments, is highly effective in fostering Virtual Reality Environment collaborative engagement through Padlet-facilitated writing sessions, Improvement in (VLE). grammar, vocabulary, and coherence in writing, and enhances essay quality through collaborative engagement on Padlet. Nevertheless, there is still a requirement to exploit its potential further. The non-appearance of dedicated text highlighting and commenting functionalities on the platform impeded its capacity to offer focused feedback, thus constituting a noteworthy constraint. Despite certain limitations, Padlet significantly improves multiple aspects of students' writing skills. Padlet's collaborative platform enables the exchange of peer feedback, enhances grammar, vocabulary, and coherence, and increases student motivation in the learning process. However, students' limited exploration of Padlet's features emphasises the difference between its potential and how it is currently used in VLE settings. Additional research should prioritise addressing the functional limitations of Padlet by advocating for feature enhancements that enable more accurate and specific feedback.

1. Introduction

Technology has revolutionised the educational process in the digital era (Fatimah & Santiana, 2017; Santiana et al., 2021; Santiana & Marzuki, 2022), as digital tools are increasingly employed to enhance the experience of learning (Dudar et al., 2021; Garlinska et al., 2023; Santiana et al., 2024), especially in Virtual Learning Environments (hereafter VLE). One platform that has garnered attention is Padlet, a web-based collaborative tool that enables students and teachers to share content in a variety of formats in real-time (Marzuki & Santiana, 2020; Rashid, et al, 2019). Padlet provides an interactive and collaborative learning environment to enhance student engagement in the learning process. The platform enables students to immediately provide feedback and post text, images, videos, and links, enhancing the learning experience (Frison & Tino, 2019).

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In higher education contexts, writing skills are essential (Gupta et al., 2022), as they are essential for foreign language acquisition (Hummel, 2021). Suskie (2018) said that written work is the foundation for evaluating students' intellectual capabilities and determining their academic success. University students must submit final assignments or theses after their

academic careers, they must develop writing skills that are among the most critical competencies (Castillo & Ramirez, 2021). Consequently, the continuous encouragement of students to enhance their writing abilities should be a focal point of writing courses. In contrast to acquiring other language skills, acquiring writing skills is more complex. Ferris and Hedgcock (2023) have both asserted that writing necessitates the comprehension of the purpose of the work, as well as the application of various language components (Graham et al., 2013). In this study, students may perceive writing in English as more intricate due to the distinctions in vocabulary, the differences in text structures and grammar standards between the original language and English. Therefore, students require support in surmounting obstacles in English writing and should be allowed to modify their work to enhance it. In light of this, it is imperative to implement a method that encourages students to collaborate in writing. Devi & Puspitasari (2023), suggest that collaborating with peers can enhance the quality of their writing and provide assistance and support during the writing process.

2. Literature Review

Due to its numerous advantages, collaborative writing is considered a practical instructional approach. Among these advantages are the following: the ability to improve students' comprehension of their writing strengths and limitations (Challob et al., 2016), the provision of potential for correction of errors through the use of feedback from others the reduction of writing anxiety, and the enhancement of student's confidence. Furthermore, the current VLE presents a novel challenge in implementing collaborative writing techniques (Santiana et al, 2024), necessitating that teachers identify user-friendly online platforms that facilitate collaboration between learners and teachers in the field of writing. Padlet has become a widespread alternate tool for facilitating collaborative writing education. Therefore, this research aims to overcome this deficit by examining the implementation of Padlet for collaborative writing in VLE.

2.1 Collaborative Writing Technique

Collaboration is described as the reciprocal contact of people in a group collaboration in a structured approach to address challenges collectively. Collaborative writing is defined as two or more students engaged in an activity to create an integrated writing result (Van Steendam, 2016; Storch, 2019). Collaboration in writing is a social activity in which collaborators focus on common goals, negotiate, communicate, and discuss while producing text (Storch, 2021). Collaborative writing activities allow students to learn from one another, resulting in better-written work. Numerous academics regard collaborative writing as an excellent teaching tool in writing classrooms. It helps students recognise their writing talents and limitations (Challob et al., 2016), as well as develop competence, comprehension, and student participation through social interactions. Furthermore, collaborative learning helps to lessen writing anxiety and boosts confidence among students (Ahmed et al., 2023). Learning through collaboration is widely employed in education at the university level because it is a student-centred strategy that provides numerous advantages to learners, specifically students who learn languages (Bogamuwa et al., 2023).

2.2 Social Interaction and Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)

Foreign language learning is significantly influenced by the educational environment and the social interactions of peers (Getie, 2020). As a result, it affirms the importance of collaborative activities in language classrooms to help students enhance their proficiency in the language, particularly in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) writing environments where students frequently require a better comprehension of English text structures. As a result, collaborative learning and peer evaluation can help students enhance their understanding as well as writing skills. Furthermore, in the context of writing collaboration, students are provided with feedback from their classmates. By examining members of group can contribute to the writing of one another by providing varied perspectives and helpful feedback for each other's writing. Peer feedback is critical in encouraging the development of students as autonomous learners, particularly in the present online learning environment. Moreover, peer comment improves critical thinking abilities of students by teaching them how to investigate material, evaluate it, and explain their ideas while commenting on each other's draft work (Charles & Boud, 2018). Implementing collaborative writing approaches in a VLE using digital media can make writing collaborative learning easier to access, more productive, and more interesting. The use of Padlet in Instruction Digital tools has improved contemporary teaching procedures by helping students grow their ideas, talents, and motivation for learning (Dianati et al., 2020; Boateng & Nyamekye, 2022). Providing students with opinions and concepts via various technology forms helps pupils internalise new knowledge and facilitates greater learning.

2.3 Padlet as a Web-Based Application

Padlet is one of the most extensively utilised digital learning tools. Padlet is a free internet-based program that allows users to publish posts with text, pictures, links, and videos, remark on them, and make them visible to anybody possessing a link or address to the relevant wall (Silas, 2022). As a result, Padlet provides an online environment that facilitates both collaboration and individual learning across different physical locations. Padlet offers a variety of purposes in the learning process, including performing in the capacity of a digital whiteboard and offering space for taking notes, asking questions, and providing comments. It has the potential to be used for the following purposes: reviewing, summarizing content, assigning out-of-class activities due to time constraints in the classroom (Suryani & Daulay, 2022), reflection, online conversations, and cooperation. Numerous studies have demonstrated that practices that involve collaboration using web-based applications have a favourable impact on students' language learning, particularly language learning. Padlet allows teachers and students to collaborate, seek assistance, and receive constructive feedback while adopting collaborative writing activities. Teachers' and classmates' comments and criticisms assist pupils in reflecting on and correcting faults. They provide various advantages to students, specifically individuals who are learning a new language. The social interaction of colleagues and their educational environment have a substantial impact on foreign language learning. Collaborative exercises are essential in language classrooms to help students enhance their language abilities, especially in the context of writing in EFL where students frequently require a better comprehension of English text structures. Therefore, collaboration and constructive criticism from peers can enhance students' comprehension and writing proficiency (Damanik, 2022).

Furthermore, during collaborative writing, students are given comments from their group members. Group members can provide varied perspectives and helpful feedback on each other's writing by reviewing it (Zhang, 2019). Peer feedback is critical in encouraging students' progress in becoming independent learners, particularly in the present online learning environment. Furthermore, peer feedback improves students' critical thinking skills by teaching them how to explore information, and assess and explain their ideas via interactions when providing commentary on one another's writing in drafts (Silvani et al., 2023). Implementing collaborative writing strategies via digital media in contemporary online education has the potential to increase the accessibility, productivity, and engagement of collaborative writing. Padlet provides an educational platform that facilitates both independent and collaborative learning across different sites of physical presence. Padlet offers a variety of purposes in the learning process, including portraying it as a digital platform for collaborative writing and drawing and offering space for taking notes, asking questions, and providing comments. Because of the restricted time in class for reflection, online conversations, and cooperation, it can be used to review, summarise information, and assign out-of-class assignments. Padlet allows teachers and students to collaborate, seek assistance, and receive constructive feedback while adopting collaborative writing activities. Teachers' and classmates' comments and criticisms assist pupils in reflecting on and correcting faults.

3. Methodology

This investigation aimed to ascertain how collaborative writing techniques are implemented using Padlet and the extent to which the integration of Padlet into instruction within the context of writing in collaboration aids students in developing their collaborative writing abilities in VLE. The researcher is responsible for the design and execution of instructional activities in this qualitative program evaluation study. Furthermore, this investigation may be classified as a case study investigating a particular learning issue occurs in a natural environment.

Research instruments, such as interviews, student document analysis, and observation, were implemented to guarantee the data's reliability and robustness. Observation is critical for capturing the comprehensive implementation of collaborative writing techniques using Padlet in a virtual learning environment. Students are responsible for evaluating their classmates' written work and offering constructive criticism during this session. Additionally, students must edit their written work related to the feedback they receive from their peers and the lecturer. To evaluate and observe the enhancement of students' proficiency in collaborative text composition, this revision must be completed at least twice.

Digital space was made available to them through a "wall" on Padlet to enable submitting their edited manuscript. In addition, a study was conducted to analyse the writing of students. to ascertain how the integration of Padlet into collaborative writing activities influenced and enhanced their English writing. At the same time, interviews were employed to verify and enhance comprehension of the advantages, as they are perceived and obstacles related to the use of the written collaboration technique utilising Padlet, from the student's perspective. The findings of the research were strengthened by enhancing their validity, and the risk of data limitations was reduced by using multiple research instruments in a triangulation approach. The issues being investigated were answered by assessing, classifying, and interpreting the data collected from each instrument using relevant theories. The observational data contained comprehensive documentation and recordings of the application of techniques for

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collaborative writing that utilise Padlet in classroom activities. An analysis was conducted to identify patterns that occurred repeatedly, critical behaviours, and nuances in the manner in which students actively participated in the process of writing collaboratively. Moreover, students' written work was included in the collection of documents. This entailed a comparative analysis of the initial manuscripts, successive modifications and ultimate submissions to observe significant alterations and enhancements in the writing. Additionally, the perspectives of the participants regarding collaborative writing techniques using Padlet were extensively analysed through the examination of recordings of interviews conducted with a select group of students.

4. Results and Discussion

The lecturer stipulated clear instructions for providing constructive feedback to the submissions of their peers in order to facilitate collaborative writing. These instructions allowed students to offer incisive comments and suggestions that would improve the quality of each other's essays. The inquiry into the implementation of Padlet in the classroom setting revealed a wide range of uses for its features, specifically the wall and commenting system. The students should have used the platform's potential to incorporate multimedia elements. The students' limited investigation of Padlet's functionalities is the cause of this underutilisation. The research highlighted a noteworthy finding as follows:

4.1 Providing Constructive Feedback

The students primarily focused on completing the assignment of providing helpful feedback to their peers' submissions, following the lecturer's explicit instructions. Because of this limited interpretation, they perceived their role as merely identifying and commenting on the flaws in their peers' writing. Interviews amplified this perception, with most students acknowledging their need to understand Padlet's multimedia feature. They stated that their participation was sufficient as long as they rigorously followed the lecturer's directive to provide constructive feedback without investigating additional functionalities.

4.2 Involvement Focused on Assessing the Comments

It was clear that the student's involvement with Padlet was primarily focused on assessing the comments made by their classmates. This approach to a peer evaluation was the outcome of a need for more research and investigation of Padlet features other than the commenting system. The students' focus on analysing their classmates' evaluations appeared to restrict their inquisitiveness and investigation of Padlet's more significant potential. Primarily, the data revealed a considerable disparity in the students' perceptions and use of Padlet's functions. Considering the potential for multimedia integration on the platform, the students' primary attention was on completing the specific goal of providing constructive comments, ignoring the more extensive range of capabilities provided. The observed behaviour pattern suggests a possible discrepancy between the intended purpose of Padlet and the students' actual involvement. This highlights the necessity for more specific guidance or training to promote a more thorough exploration and utilising of Padlet's diverse competencies in enlightening contexts, ultimately leading to enhanced collaborative interaction and writing skills.

4.3 Fostering Collaborative Engagement through Padlet-Facilitated Writing Sessions

Although students reported underutilisation of Padlet's features, an exciting conclusion emerged: a considerable there has been a rise in the level of involvement and active contribution during writing sessions that are facilitated by Padlet. The platform catalysed fruitful cooperation between students, allowing them to be involved in expressive, constructive criticism and severe debates about many aspects of essay writing, such as topic, structure, and persuasive methods. One notable element was the broad range of input supplied by students throughout these collaborative sessions. Aside from typical factors such as syntax, vocabulary, and essay structure, students provided comments and commentary on the substantial content of their peers' essays. Furthermore, students actively expressed gratitude and recognition for the merits of their peers' work, creating a supportive and encouraging environment favourable to collaborative learning. Interviews with participants confirmed the observational findings and substantiated the favourable impact on collaborative engagement. Most respondents stated increased satisfaction with the quality of their collaborative interaction enabled by Padlet. They attributed this improvement to the valuable feedback they received from both their peers and the professor, which they said helped them refine and revise their argumentative essays to make them better. The data suggest that, although Padlet's functions were underutilised, its role in promoting collaborative writing activities significantly increased student interaction quality. The platform's capacity to facilitate inclusive and diverse feedback led to a more stimulating collaborative environment, enabling students to enhance their work through support from peers and constructive criticism. This cultivated a culture of continuous enhancement and acquisition of knowledge in the learning environment.

4.4 Improvement in Grammar, Vocabulary, Coherence and Increases Student Motivation in Writing

Padlet significantly impacted student engagement in classroom activities. Padlet effectively encourages collaborative work outside the classroom (Zainuddin et al., 2020; Sætra, 2021). Furthermore, this study discovered that collaborative writing using Padlet enhanced students' writing abilities, particularly in terms of perceived enhancements in grammar, vocabulary, coherence, and overall essay quality. These improvements were attributed to the collaborative engagement and feedback provided during the process. Participants expressed a greater sense of improvement in their understanding of grammar usage. The collaborative platform provided by Padlet allows students to obtain constructive feedback from peers on grammatical faults, resulting in enhanced awareness and refining of their grammatical proficiency. In addition, pupils reported expanding their word repertoire. Furthermore, students reported greater coherence in their essays.

4.5 Enhancing Essay Quality through Collaborative Engagement on Padlet

Padlet's collaborative nature facilitated conversations on essay structure, allowing students to improve their coherence by incorporating peer criticism. The practice of iterative refinement considerably improved the overall quality of their articles. Participants consistently expressed a desire to improve the quality of their essays. Padlet's collaborative writing exercises provided students with a forum for constructive critique, insightful debates, and the opportunity to improve their work based on peer feedback. As a result, students indicated qualitative improvements in their argumentative essays' overall writing and presentation. Furthermore, qualitative data from interviews corroborated these findings, with students indicating satisfaction and development in their writing skills. Many students recognised the benefit of Padlet-facilitated collaborative involvement, attributing their apparent improvements to constructive criticism from peers and subsequent essay modifications. The document analysis of the writing drafts submitted by students during collaborative writing sessions demonstrated improvements in several aspects of writing skills. The study of essays written before and after a collaborative writing activity revealed significant gains in writing coherence. Essays written after participating in collaborative writing sessions via Padlet had a more coherent structure, with a better and more logical succession of writing. Moreover, the study identified improvements in the structural organisation of writing. Essays generated via cooperative writing exercises exhibited a higher level of sophistication and a more effective presentation of ideas, as evidenced by the organised structure. In addition, the investigation found that essays written collaboratively had higher grammatical precision. Students demonstrated improved grammar skills, with fewer grammatical errors than in previous essays.

4.6 Potential and Limitations of Padlet in Enhancing Student Writing Skills

The findings of research indicate a good relationship between the development of students' writing skills and collaborative writing using Padlet. Padlet's collaborative environment facilitated peer interaction, constructive feedback exchange, and iterative edits, significantly enhancing the quality of the essay, including grammar, vocabulary, coherence, and overall composition. This highlights the opportunities presented by writing collaborative platforms such as Padlet as excellent tools for developing and honing students' writing skills in educational contexts—limitations in delivering tailored feedback. The findings from the observation and interviews revealed that students face limitations when providing focused feedback on their peers' writings through Padlet, specifically in their inability to pinpoint specific sections of the text for commentary. This restriction limited students' capacity to deliver complete response because they could only remark on the full text rather than individual areas.

The data suggested that students preferred a more sophisticated approach to feedback, with the opportunity to emphasise and provide commentary on particular sections or lines within the essay. However, Padlet's interface needed to support this functionality, forcing students to provide feedback on the total work rather than specific bits, limiting their ability to provide precise and focused remarks. As a result of this constraint, students needed help communicating various points of feedback effectively. Despite their goal to provide extensive feedback, the platform's constraints forced them to focus on only a few essential topics. This limitation caused students to prioritise specific critical aspects for commentary, reducing the range and depth of input they could provide.

Moreover, this study uncovered that students faced challenges in expressing a variety of comments that they wished to convey. Padlet imposes restrictions on specific forms of emphasis and feedback posting, which leads students to concentrate solely on critical feedback points. As a result, their comments are limited to what they perceive as the most significant aspects of the entire text. The findings of research primarily emphasised the challenge of Padlet's inability to allow students can emphasise and provide commentary on particular sections of an essay. This constraint could have improved the student's capacity to provide thorough, comprehensive input, forcing them to focus solely on essential topics and limiting the richness and depth of their feedback.

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5. Conclusion

The analysis of Padlet's implementation for collaborative writing in a VLE uncovered both its advantages and disadvantages in educational settings. While Padlet's ability to create cooperation and improve specific writing skills was recognised, the research found significant underutilisation of its features, particularly the platform's need to offer tailored feedback. The study found that Padlet enhanced student collaborative engagement and improved grammar, vocabulary, coherence, and overall essay quality. It demonstrated how the platform fostered significant collaboration among peers, allowing for constructive critique and iterative modifications, significantly improving students' writing skills. However, a fundamental problem emerged regarding Padlet's inability to allow students to highlight certain sections of provided text intended for feedback. This limitation hindered the provision of complete feedback, forcing students to focus on general elements rather than targeting individual portions for enhancement. Future work should address Padlet's functional restrictions by pushing for or implementing features that enable tailored provision of feedback. Furthermore, developing various instructional tactics to foster students' curiosity and promote their exploration of Padlet's extensive functions would help close the gap between its potential and actual use. In conclusion, while Padlet shows potential as a platform for collaborative writing, knowing and addressing its limitations is critical for maximising its usefulness in developing students' writing skills in educational settings. To fully realise Padlet's potential for facilitating writing collaboration and improving the comprehensive educational endeavours of students, future research should focus on optimising its functionality and exploring creative educational techniques.

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