Implementing the Writing Process through the Collaborative Use of Padlet

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Abstract

This research study aimed at improving English language learners' writing skills through collaborative writing facilitated by Padlet. The intervention involved five weeks of practicing the stages of the writing process. Forty high school students participated in the study. They had a CEFR A1 – A2 level of proficiency and faced challenges at writing complete and consistent paragraphs. The researcher carried out a pretest-posttest layout to measure students' writing improvement. Pre-post surveys were applied to collect the perspectives of students towards the innovation. Observation checklists were filled during the group tasks to analyze students' interactions and engagement in writing activities. The scores from the post-tests were significantly higher than the scores of the pre-test revealing a Cohen's $d= 3.36$ The findings revealed that following the writing process helped learners improve the quality of their writing pieces and the collaborative use of Padlet contributed to increase their levels of confidence and motivation in writing activities. The study has implications for language teachers and learners since it can bring positive considerations about the importance of following a writing process in a collaborative manner to help students improve the quality of their writings.

Keywords: collaborative writing, writing process, Padlet, high school level

Resumen

Esta investigación tuvo como objetivo mejorar las habilidades de escritura de estudiantes del idioma inglés mediante la escritura colaborativa facilitada a través de Padlet. La intervención duró cinco semanas de práctica de las etapas del proceso de escritura. Cuarenta estudiantes de secundaria participaron en el estudio. Tenían un nivel de competencia de MCER A1 − A2 y enfrentaban desafíos para escribir párrafos completos y consistentes. El investigador realizó un diseño de prueba previa y posterior para medir la mejora en la escritura de los estudiantes. Se aplicaron encuestas previas y posteriores para recopilar las perspectivas de los estudiantes hacia la innovación. Las listas de verificación de observación se llenaron durante las tareas de grupo para analizar las interacciones y el compromiso de los estudiantes en las actividades de escritura. Los resultados de las pruebas posteriores fueron significativamente más altos que los puntajes de la prueba previa que revelaron Cohen's $d= 3,36$. Los hallazgos revelaron que implementar el proceso de escritura ayudó a los alumnos a mejorar la calidad de sus piezas de escritura y el uso colaborativo de Padlet contribuyó a incrementar sus niveles de confianza y motivación en las actividades de escritura. El estudio tiene implicaciones para profesores y estudiantes de idiomas, ya que puede aportar consideraciones positivas sobre la importancia de seguir un proceso de escritura de manera colaborativa para ayudar a los estudiantes a mejorar la calidad de sus escritos.

Palabras clave: escritura colaborativa, proceso de escritura, Padlet, educación secundaria.

Implementing the Writing Process through the Collaborative Use of Padlet

Educators around the world have noted the importance of learning English, which has become a widespread international language. There is an increasing emphasis on making learners manage the four basic skills to be competent in its use. The Ecuadorian Ministry of Education is also aware of its importance and has taken some actions to reinforce this subject in the country. Some of those actions are, for example, having English as a compulsory subject for all students from second grade until the end of high school and promoting teachers' training abroad. Authorities have focused on the communicative approach to guide the teaching and learning process for the development of the necessary language skills (Ministerio de Educación, 2016).

Based on the Ministry's guidelines, high school students are expected to reach an exit profile of B1 level of English proficiency (Independent users of language) according to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). In order to meet the required standards, the communicative approach proposed for the Ecuadorian English curriculum emphasizes real-world contexts, the relationship of language forms, and the productive use of the language for meaningful purposes (Ministerio de Educación, 2012).

Despite the widely-known importance of English language learning, some studies have revealed that language learners face and share common problems such us apprehension, fear or resistance, factors that can account for student's unsatisfactory writing skills (Javadi-Safa, 2018). These perceptions of failure affect their performance and motivation (Belhabib, 2014; Dooey, 2006; Matsuya, 2003). Yau (2007) explained that producing effective and interesting writing pieces is an overwhelming task for English language students, revealing a lack of knowledge, organization, and motivation in their assignments.

A similar reality has been shown in the Ecuadorian context. Specifically, in the rural zone of Manabí, where 2nd Bachillerato students from a public school are expected to have a

B1.1 level of English and to reach a B1.2 level when they finish high school. They are between 16 to 18 years old and their current proficiency ranges are between A1 and A2 level of English language proficiency. The students have shown deficiency addressing essential components in their writing pieces such as the development of an introduction, topic sentence, coherent organization of the supporting details, concluding ideas and accurate spelling, grammar, and punctuation. They are not aware of the development of a writing process in their written tasks. Moreover, students show reluctance and lack of motivation to participate in writing activities.

Faraj (2015) emphasized the use of the writing process with teacher's scaffold as a basis to help students write good pieces of writing meaningfully and accurately. Additionally, researchers have studied the use of technology as a powerful tool to engage students in the practice of writing skills. Godwin-Jones (2018) emphasized the importance of technology and collaborative learning activities as contributors to motivate students to write more and better. Fuchs (2014) found that one technological tool, Padlet, has real-time benefits in participation and provides a space for the collection and correction of collaborative written work. This researcher affirmed that by using Padlet, all students had the ability to contribute and learn from one another.

However, there is a gap in research related to the collaborative use of Padlet and the implementation of the writing process in the Ecuadorian context at the high school level. For this reason, this research study aims to provide more information to improve the writing skills of students of English as a foreign language and how to increase their levels of engagement, participation, and motivation in English language learning and writing.

More detailed explanations of the main concepts explored in this action research are displayed in the following section.

Literature Review

Studies related to the writing process, collaborative writing, technology, and motivation in language learning have been made for many years. This section intends to provide deeper considerations on the principal concepts of this research and the different perspectives researchers have expressed about them.

Writing Process

According to Harmer (1998), writing skill has been recognized as fundamental for language learning. While traditional practices focused on the finished work, new methodologies began to expand their writing practices in the classroom, emphasizing processes of writing, and giving learners the experience of writing as writers (Faraj, 2015; Laksmi, 2006). Consequently, instead of merely correcting the final written work, there is a priority in guiding learners' writing through several stages including:

Prewriting: Gather and organize ideas, outline the writing.

Drafting: Write a rough draft.

Revising: Reread the writing piece, share with the teacher and classmates, discuss.

Editing: Identify and correct the errors.

Publishing: Write the final product and publish.

Laksmi (2006) affirmed that these stages are recursive instead of linear, allowing the writer to go back and forth from one stage to another. Considering what was observed in the participants of this study, guiding the writing process might meet students' needs and motivate them to create better pieces of writing. Godwin-Jones (2018) emphasized the growing practice of integrating multimedia, including the use of Web 2.0 tools like Padlet, into writing processes.

Collaborative Writing

Concerning collaboration, McWhaw, Schnackenberg, Sclater, and Abrami, (2003) noted that college and university students are increasingly being asked to work cooperatively and learn collaboratively. In addition, Godwin-Jones (2018) stressed the recognition of writing as a social act which has led to a growing interest in collaborative writing.

Online written collaboration can motivate learners to do more (Davies, 2010), including research a topic in more depth and try to improve the language (grammar and vocabulary), because the posts (i.e., answers or comments to other answers) will be read by other students in the group as well as by the teacher or tutor. Moreover, online collaboration tools not only enable active learning but also facilitate peer learning (Mallon & Bernsten, 2015). Students benefited from the collaborative work, observing, reflecting, and using the ideas their classmates' posts in Padlet and improved their writing pieces.

Motivation and engagement

Motivation has been considered a fundamental factor for teachers and researchers in a variety of fields of study as stated in Rivera (2018). Her study on the benefits of technology as motivation for English language use revealed that collaborative work along with the use of technology helped to capture the interest of students, support their learning, and produce a positive attitude towards language learning. Following this line of inquiry, Flowers (2015) studied motivation in the context of computer-supported collaborative learning. The results of his study confirmed the motivational profiles of successful collaborative learners. In addition, a study conducted by Chen (2018) revealed that through collaborative learning tasks, students were satisfied by peer coaching and peer review.

Padlet

Padlet is a virtual board that allows students to upload a variety of files, including pictures, documents, videos, presentations, and voice recordings. It is a collaborative tool, which means that everyone with a link to the board can access it and add comments (De

Berg, 2016). In the classroom setting, Padlet provides a platform for students to actively

participate in their learning with a variety of activities such as brainstorming, vocabulary

lists, multimedia projects, assignment postings, collaborative group work, teacher and peer

feedback (Manowong, 2017; Haris, Yunus, & Badusha, 2017). Furthermore, Fuchs (2014)

emphasizes Padlet as an excellent tool in the classroom because it works on a variety of

different devices and does not require participants to create accounts to use it.

In collaborative writing, Fuchs (2014) remarked the multiple benefits of using Padlet,

for instance the novelty of the real-time technology and the anonymous option for posting

encourages students' participation. Even though it has important benefits, there might be

some risks when using the tool, however. Among these risks, Fuchs's study (2014) pointed

out the unpredictable feature of internet access, students' inadequate use of the tool and the

questioning of its value for teaching.

Based on the use of Padlet, this study intended to take advantage of its facilities to

improve writing skills in 2nd Bachilllerato students. Considering that students show

difficulties and lack of motivation when asked to participate in writing activities and the

benefits technological tools have shown in a variety of studies, this answered the following

questions:

1. Will implementing the writing process through Padlet improve students'

writing skills?

2. To what extent will collaboration using Padlet impact students' engagement in

writing?

3. What will students' perspectives be towards the use of technology and

collaborative writing activities in class?

This research focuses on the process of writing and the integration of collaborative

practices to improve participants' writing skills. Padlet was implemented as a tool for the

collection of ideas and feedback among English language learners to improve performance, motivation, and engagement. The following section aims to provide information related to the pedagogical practices implemented in the action research.

Innovation

The innovation took place as part of a regular unit of study with 25 periods of class during the 5 weeks of implementation with forty 2nd Bachillerato participants. The goal of the innovation was to get students to produce well-written, longer, and more detailed paragraphs. In order to reach that goal, students went through the stages of the writing process and worked collaboratively through Padlet's platform.

After a pre-test to measure the students' preliminary abilities on writing paragraphs, students were introduced to the stages of the writing process and how to use Padlet. There were spaces for discussions where students reflected about the importance of writing in language learning, what good writers do, and how to meet the needs of a particular audience. The teacher showed examples of advanced and beginner paragraphs and graded them with the rubric used in the pre-test to teach students how complete and well-written paragraph are constructed. The stages of the writing process (brainstorming, drafting, revising, editing, publishing) were developed in Padlet, where the students' participation was evident and shared with the whole class.

Students worked in groups of four with three different writing activities during the second, third, and fourth week of implementation. During each lesson, students' posts on Padlet were revised and given feedback by the teacher. The teacher modeled the writing process for each stage for students, providing examples, encouraging participation, and emphasizing the categories of performance for a well-written paragraph.

According to the five-week plan, once a week, students had to work on a topic assigned collecting information from different sources like the web, newspapers, and magazines to

gather enough facts. Every week a group leader created a group Padlet to share the information with the rest of the group members. Students created vocabulary lists with pictures related to the topic assigned as part of the brainstorming activities. Students made use of a variety of Padlet's features in order to organize their ideas, choose the most relevant ones, and write the first draft of their paragraphs (Appendix A).

Students' first draft were checked and given both oral and written feedback. Additionally, students got feedback on the organization of the paragraph, topic sentence, supporting details and concluding idea, to improve their written pieces of work. Students re-read their writings and edited their drafts based on the feedback given by the teacher. The process described above was equally implemented during the two following weeks with a new topic each week.

Participants' interactions within the groups were collected using an observation checklist (Appendix B) every week. The observations revealed how much students were interacting, participating, giving feedback and exhibiting positive attitudes during the lessons. Finally, a post-test was implemented in order to measure a possible improvement in students' writing skills.

Methodology

Based on the purpose of this action research, to improve students' writing skills by implementing the writing process through Padlet, this study was carried out with qualitative and quantitative methods. It is quantitative since the data collection measured the improvement in students' writings and collaboration through the use of Padlet. Additionally, it is qualitative due to the interpretation of data based on observation about how students collaborated using the tool.

Participants

The study involved a convenient sample of 40 students (16 females and 24 males) from a public high school in a rural zone of Manabí. The participants were students assigned to the researcher and were chosen from two other classes considering the number and the availability of students. They were in 2nd Bachillerato in a range of 16-18 years old in an A1 – A2 level of English proficiency.

The participants have been studying English as a foreign language for several years; however, they show a lack of confidence and motivation when asked to speak or write in the target language.

Variables of the Study

According to the research questions of this study, the operational definition and variables are described as follow:

Implementing the writing process: A recursive process that involves five stages: prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, publishing.

Writing skills: Abilities to communicate with proper standards, topic sentence, body, concluding idea, organization, fluency, and mechanics.

Collaboration: The action of working with someone to create or produce something.

Engagement in writing: Degree of attention, motivation and interest students show participating in written tasks.

Instruments

In order to answer the research questions, this study involved four kinds of data collection methods.

For the first research question: *Will implementing the writing process through Padlet improve students' writing skills? ,* a pre and post-test (Appendix C) were applied to assess learners' writing skills at the beginning and at the end of the intervention period to measure

improvement. These tests graded four categories of performance from beginner to exemplary with the following components:

1. *Topic sentence:* Strong and clearly stated

2. *Body:* Development of the main idea

3. *Concluding sentence:* Complete, restates the main idea

4: *Organization/fluency:* Logical flow, focus

5: *Mechanics:* Spelling, grammar, punctuation

To answer the second research question: *To what extent will collaboration using Padlet impact students' engagement in writing?,* the researcher filled observation checklists (Appendix B) during the development of group tasks. This instrument facilitated the data collection of the frequency of students *1) staying on task*, *2) participating in group discussions, 3) commenting and providing feedback*, and *4) exhibiting positive attitudes* while collaborating in Padlet. The checklist measured quantitatively the levels of frequency with a rating scale (*4 = Always, 3 = Usually, 2 = Sometimes*, and *1 = Rarely).*

The third research question: *What will students' perspectives be towards the use of technology and collaborative writing activities in class? ,* was answered with the use of two surveys. The pre-post surveys (Appendix D) asked 13 questions and were applied before and after the implementation to collect and analyze the students' thoughts, feelings and perspectives about:

1) *Writing*

2) *Generating, revising, feedback*

3) *Collaboration*

The pre-post surveys used a qualitative scale: *Always*, *Sometimes*, *Rarely*, and *Never*. Additionally, a Post survey (Appendix E) about Padlet was applied at the end of the implementation. This survey presented seven different statements about Padlet and its

implications in English language learning with a qualitative scale: *Strongly agree*, *Agree*, *Disagree*, and *Strongly disagree*.

Ethical standards

The execution of this study involves several ethical standards. Firstly, it is important to implement the research with honesty and integrity. There is consistency between the aims of the study and the actions the researcher does to ensure reliable results.

Additionally, the research was conducted with objectivity, avoiding bias in the procedures, data collection, and data analysis. Moreover, participants' confidentiality was respected during the different stages of the study.

Finally, this research was developed giving the proper acknowledgment to its contributors and their intellectual property and it is open to criticism and new ideas, showing and sharing the data, tools, results, and resources used.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed according to the research questions explained below.

RQ#1: Will implementing the writing process through Padlet improve students' writing skills?

The researcher used a rubric to analyze and grade the writing pieces from the Pre-test and Post-tests, assessing the evidence of a strong and clear topic sentence, the consistent development of the main idea, complete concluding idea, organization, and mechanics. The scores obtained were entered in an Excel spreadsheet. Later, they were imported to the SPSS program to get descriptive statistics: minimum, maximum, mean, and standard deviation. Averages of the tests, overall grades, and individual components were used for analysis. The effect size was calculated on the Social Science Statistics web site.

RQ#2: To what extent will collaboration using Padlet impact students' engagement in writing?

Group observation checklists were filled once a week during the second, third and fourth week of implementation to analyze the frequencies in which group members stayed on task, participated in group discussions and exhibited positive attitudes while writing their paragraphs in Padlet. The data was tabulated in Excel and entered in the SPSS software in order to obtain the frequencies of each component of the observation checklist during the implementation.

RQ#3: What will students' perspectives be towards the use of technology and collaborative writing activities in class?

Surveys were applied at the beginning and at the end of the implementation. Questions in the surveys were organized quantitatively with Likert scales of frequency and agreement. The data collected from both surveys were tabulated in Excel and entered in the SPSS software to obtain the frequencies of each survey and compare the results.

Results

In reference to the first research question: *Will implementing the writing process through Padlet improve students' writing skills?,* the results of the post-tests indicated that the collaborative use of Padlet in writing activities helped students achieve better performance, improved their writing skills and increased the quality of their writings.

According to the results, during the pre-test, students showed evidence of difficulties expressing their ideas with clarity and organization in a paragraph. Students faced challenges at establishing a topic sentence as well as a concluding idea in their initial paragraphs. Additionally, there were many errors in grammar and spelling and very limited use of vocabulary in the evaluation of the pre-test. However, the results of the post-test support that the intervention helped students write more consistent, complete and clear paragraphs.

Table 1.

Overall results of Pre-test and Post-test

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pre-Test	40	5	14	9,10	2,437
Post-Test	40	14	18	15,73	1,358

Table 1 shows the minimum and maximum grades as well as the means and Standard

Deviation obtained from the Pre and posts-tests The mean from the pre-test (9,10)

significantly improved in the Post-test (15,73).

The result indicated a Cohen's d (Mean of pre-test - Mean of post-test/ pooled SD) =

3,36 which means a medium effect size, a criterion that, according to Bialo and Sivin-

Kachala (1996), represents a point at which educational interventions are considered to have

achieved educationally meaningful gains over the course of a school year.

Table 2.

Results according to the categories of performance Pre and Post-Test

	Pre-Test				Post-Test			
	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD
Topic Sentence	1	3	1,83	,844	1	4	3,30	,791
Body/ Supporting details	1	3	1,87	,607	2	4	2,93	,474
Concluding sentence	1	3	1,58	,675	2	4	3,23	,577
Organization/ fluency	1	3	1,85	,580	2	4	3,18	,501
Mechanics	1	3	1,97	,698	2	4	3,10	,545

Table 2 shows the values of the individual categories of performance collected from the

pre and post-tests. The results show that the groups improved in all the categories after the

implementation concluded. The *"topic sentence"* category increased from (M=1,83) to

(M=3,30) as the highest value among the other categories in the post-test. This category

demonstrated that students were able to write stronger and state more clearly the topic sentences.

The *"concluding sentence"* category got an improvement of 1,47 points from the pre-test (M=1,58) to the post-test (M=3,23) as the maximum improvement over all the categories of performance. This result shows that students were able to write a more complete concluding sentence, which was almost inexistent in the pre-test.

The *"body/supporting details"* (M=2,93) category as well as the *"mechanics"* (M=3,10) component had the lowest values in the post-test results. The results indicated that some students had a limited use of details in the body structure of their writings to establish interest in the topic. In addition, students' choice of words was not always correct. Furthermore, some students' sentences lacked flow and there were, in some cases, more than five errors in spelling and grammar.

For the second research question: *To what extent will collaboration using Padlet impact students' engagement in writing?* , results are displayed in figure 1.
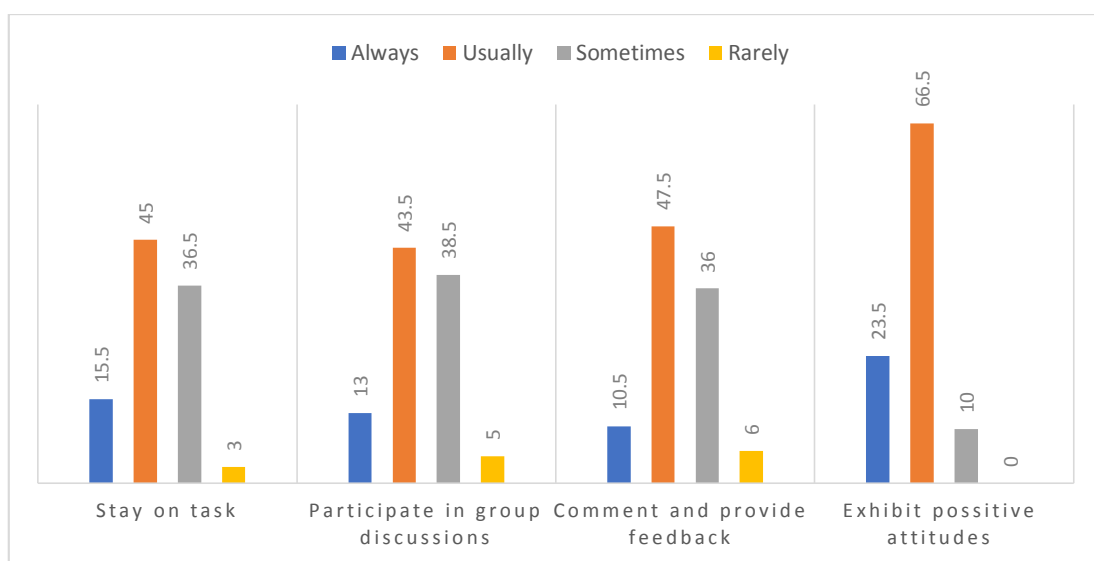
Figure 1. Observation Checklists results.

This figure illustrates the frequencies of the Observations Checklists related to the students' engagement in writing through the collaborative use of Padlet.

The observations revealed that during the development of the group work students stayed on task (45% usually and 36,5 % sometimes). In relation to the participations of students in group discussions, students (43,5% usually and 38,5% sometimes) participated in group discussions. Moreover, students commented and provided feedback (47,5% usually and 36% sometimes). Finally, students exhibited positive attitudes during the group work (66,5% usually and 23,5% always).

It was observed that the students who showed the highest levels of engagement were the ones chosen as team leaders by their peers. These students exhibited great abilities for leadership, research, and technologies use. On the other hand, the students that showed the lowest levels of engagement were students with the biggest necessities in terms of technology management and research skills. However, as the sessions progressed, students were able to face technology issues and manage the tool more easily, increasing their engagement levels.

In relation to the third research question: *What will students' perspectives be towards the use of technology and collaborative writing activities in class?* , the results of the surveys showed that the students' perspectives changed positively.
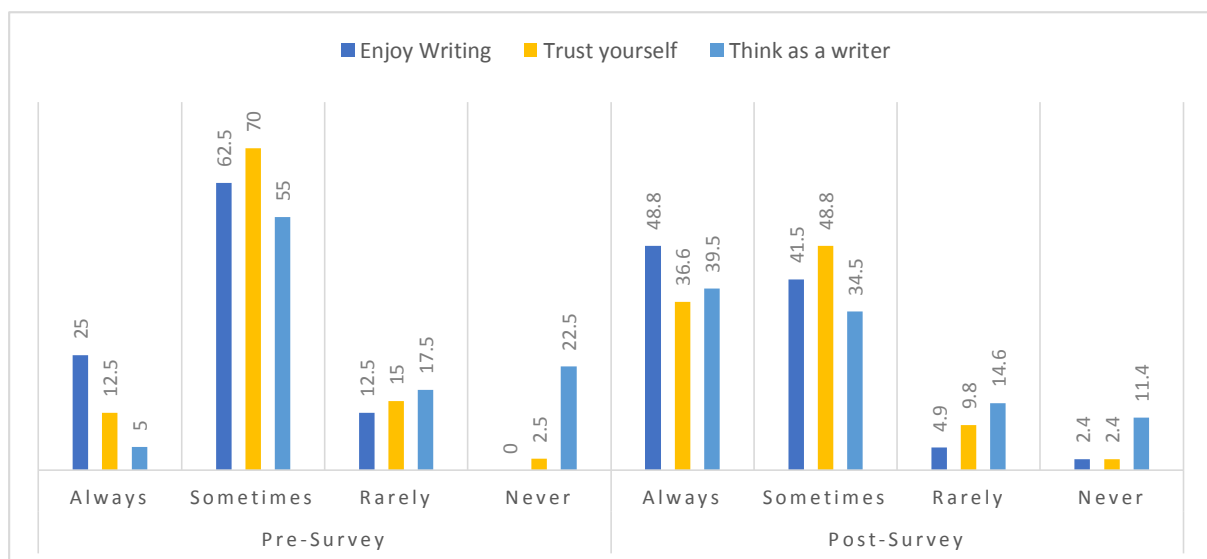

Figure 2. Pre-post Survey attitudes towards writing.

This figure illustrates the frequencies of the pre and post-surveys related to the students' attitude towards writing. The results of the post-survey revealed that after the implementation students enjoy writing more (post-survey= 48% always and 41,5% sometimes) than they used to (pre-survey= 25% always and 62,5% sometimes). They trust themselves more as people who can find good words and ideas to express themselves (post-survey= 36,6% always and 48,8% sometimes). Additionally, students think of themselves as writers (post-survey= 39,5% always and 34,5% sometimes).
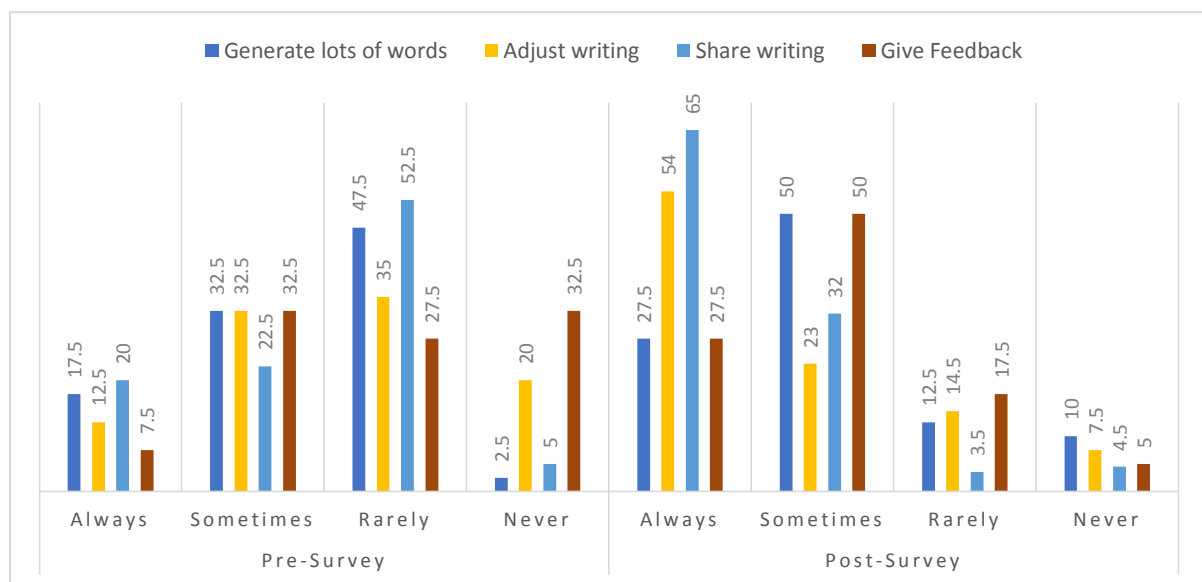
Figure 3. Pre-post Survey: Generating, revising, feedback.

This figure illustrates the frequencies of the pre and post-surveys related to the students' abilities to generate words, revise their work and provide feedback. The results revealed that students' perspectives about the generation of words, revision and feedback changed positively from the pre to the post survey. According to the post-survey, students agreed that after the implementation they can generate lots of words fairly quickly, and freely (27,5 % always and 50% sometimes), adjust or edit their written work to fit the needs of a particular reader (54% always and 23% sometimes), enjoy sharing with friends a draft of

what they have written (65% always and 32% sometimes), and provide feedback (27,5% always and 50% sometimes).
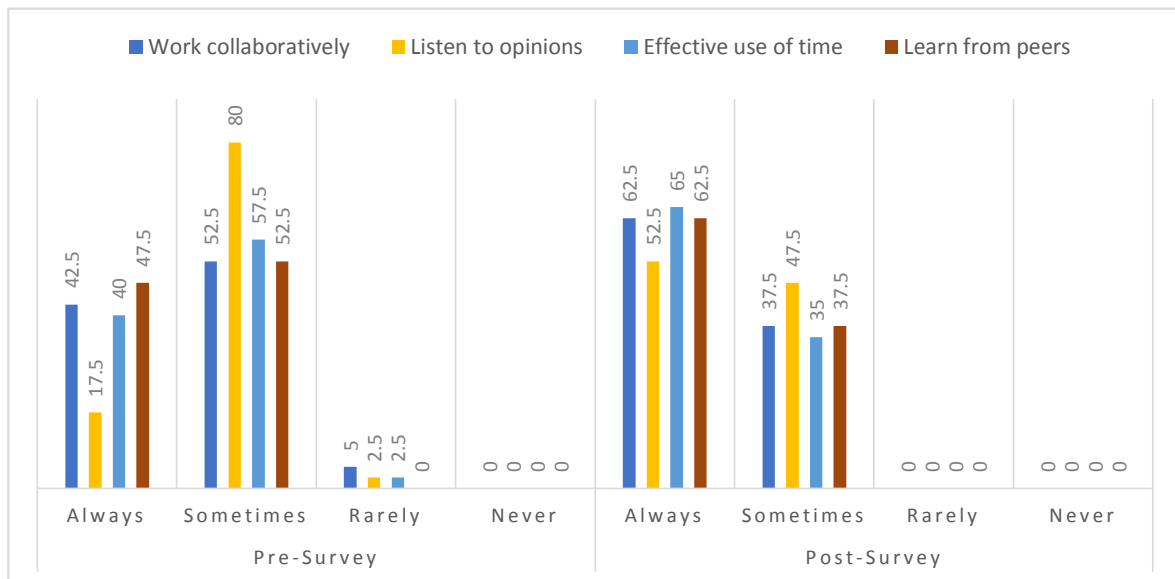
Figure 4. Pre-post survey: Collaboration.

This figure illustrates the frequencies of the pre and post-surveys related to the students' collaboration. In terms of collaboration, students manifested very optimistic attitudes towards the implementation. According to the result of the post-surveys students agreed that they can work on a task collaboratively with a small group, pitch in, share the work, and keep the group on task (62,5% always and 37,5% sometimes), listen to each other's opinions and ideas (52,5% always and 47,5% sometimes), use their time effectively while working in groups (65% always and 35% sometimes), and learn from their peers while working collaboratively (62,5% always and 37,5% sometimes).
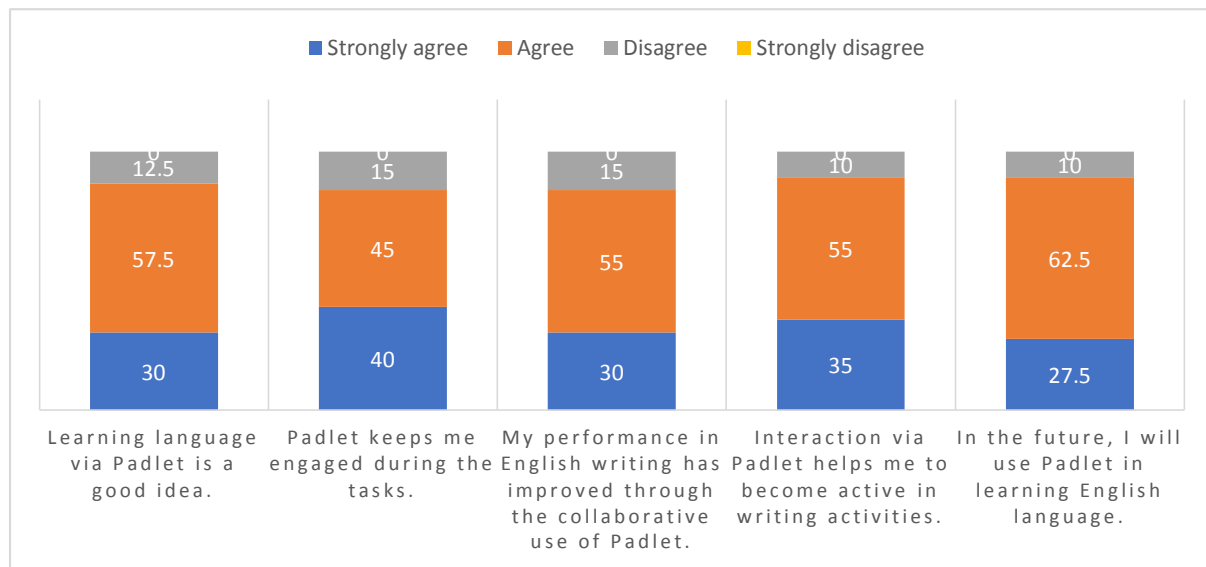
Figure 5. Post-survey: Padlet.

This figure illustrates the results of the surveys related to the use of Padlet after the implementation. In general, Figure 5 shows that the majority of students favored incorporating Padlet in English language learning. Most of the students (87,5%) agreed that language learning through Padlet is a good idea. Accordingly, 85% agreed that the work on Padlet kept them engaged during the tasks. In addition, 85% of students manifested that their performance in English writing has improved through the collaborative use of Padlet. Similarly, 90% agreed that the interactions through Padlet helped them to become active in writing activities. Finally, 90% of participants will use Padlet in English language learning in the future.

Discussion

Findings in this study have shown consistency with the concepts exposed in the literature review. As in the studies conducted by (Godwin-Jones, 2018; Mallon & Bernsten, 2015; Fuchs, 2014) students' participation, motivation, and engagement increased through the implementation of technology as well as collaboration during the lessons.

Moreover, learners' writing skills had a significant improvement due to the integration of the writing process in a variety of activities with different topics. As mentioned in (Faraj 2015; Laksmi, 2006) implementing the writing process approach met the students' needs in EFL writing improving their writing skills. Students were able to express their ideas in a more organized way. Their writings presented complete topic sentences and conclusions with the use of more descriptive vocabulary.

Collaboration among students was crucial for the success of the action research. As well as the findings of the research done by Chen (2018), collaborative learning helps both teacher and learners to develop a supportive learning environment, motivates students to produce, participate, and interact within the groups. Collaborative writing gave students the opportunity to share their ideas, provide feedback and improve, sharing their efforts as a team and taking responsibilities for the job done.

Finally, Padlet, as claimed in (Fuchs, 2014; De Berg, 2016) provided a platform for students to actively participate in their learning. The use of Padlet could result in a positive impact on students reducing their inhibitions and reluctance to share or show their written work with a bigger audience. Padlet confirmed to be a stage for collaboration, interaction for language learners.

Conclusion

The present action research explored a way for helping students meet the standards and the goals of the EFL learning in the Ecuadorian context, as well as increasing their engagement and willingness towards language learning. Additionally, this study aimed to discover how implementing the writing process through the collaborative use of Padlet could positively change students' mindset about writing, group work, and the use of technology to enhance their work.

The results from descriptive statistics showed a significant improvement in learners' writing skills between the pre and the post-test. Before the implementation, the pre-test and pre-survey revealed students' unfamiliarity with the writing process and the stages involved in it. They were not used to writing drafts of their written tasks and rarely showed their work to someone before they submitted it. The post-survey showed that these conditions changed positively. Students were aware of the importance of writing through a process of several stages that is not linear, so they can go back, review and edit their work as much as needed, just as professional writers do.

Similarly, post-tests' results indicated a significant improvement in specific components of students' writings. Modeling a well-written paragraph and providing constant and effective feedback helped students become aware of the necessity of 1) expressing strong and interesting topic sentences, 2) developing consistency in the body with supporting ideas and 3) concluding their writing pieces restating the main idea effectively.

Padlet was a very useful tool for pre-writing activities, especially. Making lists, uploading pictures, commenting and even giving likes to the posts, provided students the opportunity to express themselves without fear or apprehension. Moreover, collaborative writing in Padlet motivated and promoted students' participation. Because of the low-risk nature of Padlet's platform, even the more introverted students showed a readiness to participate in group discussions and give their opinions and ideas.

The findings in this study demonstrated that implementation of the writing process through the collaborative use of Padlet helped improve language learners' writing skills, increased their levels of motivation, and exposed them to meaningful and communicative activities through an innovative tool.

Limitations

Despite its positive results, there were some limitations during the development of this research that should be considered in future studies.

First, the necessity of internet connection for Padlet's proper function. As it was developed in a public rural institution, some difficulties were presented with the internet connection of the school. Thus, some classes had to be canceled, shortening the planned time for the implementation.

Second, the limited sample of participants in the study. The results of this study cannot be generalized to a bigger population. However, working with small groups might be helpful for individual guidance and feedback.

Third, students' lack of knowledge in the use of technology. It was necessary for students to learn these abilities previously. It took more time than expected to have students working autonomously due to the technological issues students had to face such as: computers that did not turned on properly, disconnected keywords, students not having or not knowing how to access to their e-mail accounts, among others.

Recommendations

According to the aforementioned limitations, future researchers should anticipate a variety of technological issues and train learners in the correct use of the computer and internet prior to the implementation.

Further studies should explore more deeply students' insights about engagement in writing activities in collaborative settings. Personal interviews might help future researchers to get deeper understanding of students' perspectives towards the implementation of the writing process and language learning.

It is recommended to have a control group to compare the results and increase the reliability of the effects of the implementation.

Finally, Padlet's platform can be useful for teaching a variety of language components. Future researchers should explore its use for the improvement of other English language skills, like reading, speaking, and listening, as well as to enhance self and peer feedback.

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Appendix A

Design from Your Goals[1]

Instructional design of units for transfer of learning to real life contexts

Institution:	**Unidad Educativa Fiscal Siglo XXI Dr. Daniel Acosta Rosales**
Year of study:	**2BGU**
Student description:	**40 students, A1 – A2 level**
Professor:	**Helen Moreira Olives**
Unit title:	**For old times' sake**
Weeks:	**5 weeks**
Hours:	**25 periods of class /40 minutes each period**

I. Transfer Goal (Stage 1)
Standards the unit will work with:
Goal:

I want my students to learn how to *write about old traditions and the modern world, as well as changes over time, so* that, in the long run and on their own, they *can create compare and contrast paragraphs evidencing accuracy and the use of writing process in the target language through the collaborative use of Padlet.*

Breakdown of transfer goal

A. If we see and hear them do this, they CAN transfer this learning.	B. If we see and hear them do this, then they CANNOT (yet) transfer:	C. What I will commit to doing differently in my classroom to ensure my results look like Column A.
-Use vocabulary accordingly *-Use transition words* *-Communicate simple ideas in a consistent way* *-Write a topic sentence* *-Express supporting details* *-Express a concluding idea* *-Follow the writing process* *-Written tasks are well-organized and coherent*	*-Weak vocabulary* *-Poor sentence structure* *-No transition words* *-Inconsistency of ideas* *-Can't express a topic sentence* *-There are no supporting details* *-There is not a concluding sentence* *-Require prompting of the teacher*	*-Make use of authentic material (newspaper, magazines, internet) for new vocabulary* *-Collaborative writing activities* *-Model the process of writing a paragraph* *-Provide feedback as needed* *-Assess students authentically*

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[1] This unit design process was adapted from the Guillot Design Process worksheet (2017) *Design from Your Goals* based on Wiggins-McTighe Backward Design.

II. Summative Performance Assessment Task (Stage 2)

Goal	Write a paragraph about their favorite traditional celebration around the world and in Ecuador.
Role	Writer
Audience	Community members
Situation	There are several customs and traditions that have changed over the time, around the world as well as in Ecuador. Write about your favorite celebration expressing the reasons why you prefer it before another one.
Performance	-Create a mind map, list or brainstorming about the celebrations you know or have researched about. -Choose your favorite and add more information about that celebration (supporting details, reasons for you to prefer that celebration over other ones) - Write a first draft of your paragraph -Revise your writing, share it with a classmate for feedback if needed -Edit and present your paragraph with the evidence of the followed process
Standards	The paragraph should meet the following criteria: Topic sentence, body/supporting details, concluding idea, organization, mechanics.

III. Knowledge and skills the students need to succeed in the assessment. (Stage 1)

What students will need to know	The skills students will need to be able to do
KNOWLEDGE (concepts, knowings) *-Grammar tenses* *-Transitional words* *-Development of topic sentence* *- Development of supporting details* *-Use of technological tools* *-Writing process* *-Well-written paragraph rubric* *-Appropriate use of organization, grammar and mechanics*	**SKILLS (know how to do)** *-Write a paragraph for a specific purpose* *-Work collaboratively* *-Use the target language with confidence* *-Provide support for their opinions and ideas* *-Apply vocabulary to write coherent paragraphs* *-Pre-writing activities as lists, brainstorms, mind maps*

IV. Essential Questions (Stage 1)

Essential questions support the transfer goal, signal inquiry, guide instruction, and can be asked over and over throughout the unit without reaching a final answer.
1. What do good writers do? *2. How can writing be an appealing experience?* *3. How can I write collaboratively?*

V. Learning Activities

Transfer goal: At the end of the unit the students will be able to use autonomously what they have learned to: *communicate their ideas using new vocabulary, transition words, appropriate word order, follow a structure, write a topic sentence and a concluding idea* **So that, in the long run and on their own,** they *can produce organized, complete and consistent paragraphs evidencing accuracy and the use of writing process in the target language.*

Abbreviated Performance Task: *Create a paragraph about your favorite special celebration. Include a topic sentence, at least three supporting ideas and a concluding sentence in your paragraph.*

Learning Activities	**Intention**	**A**	**M**	**T**
Week 1 (5 hours)				
Introduction of the unit. Students review the vocabulary (words related to customs and traditions). Students watch videos about a variety of traditional celebrations around Ecuador and the world. Students discuss in small groups: What do these traditions and customs refer to? What traditions do you celebrate? How do you celebrate holiday traditions?	**Review** **Hook**	✓ ✓	 ✓	

Students take the pre-test: Write a paragraph about your favorite special celebration. Students take the pre-survey: First impressions about writing, collaborative work, Padlet.	**Summative assessment**			
Week 2 (5 hours)				
Introduction about Padlet, features and how to post, comment and upload pictures. Teacher creates a Padlet for the whole class interaction. Students participate posting on Padlet their favorite special or traditional celebrations around the world. (e.g. Christmas, New Years' eve, Carnival) as well as in Ecuador. (e.g. Inti Raymi, festivals, Christmas). Students must include a picture of their favorite celebration and comment or give a "like" to the post of another classmate. Students form groups of four people, choose one international and one national celebration from the class Padlet. A group leader creates a new Padlet page for the group. The group Padlet must include two columns: Similarities and differences. Students search on the web, newspapers, and magazines the celebrations they have chosen. Students interact in Padlet writing down the similarities and differences they have found between the international and the national celebration. Teacher introduces the writing process, explains to students the stages involved in the writing process and how the lists they have made are part of the pre-writing activities.	**Initiating** **Development** **Research** **Formative assessment**	✓ ✓ ✓	✓ ✓ ✓	 ✓

Teacher models the process of organizing the ideas students posted in Padlet (similarities and differences). Teacher explains how to use those ideas in order to make a comparison and contrast paragraph. Students will be given examples of different contrast-compare paragraphs and determine the possible ways the texts are structured. Teacher models a paragraph writing using the examples given by the students. Teacher provides students with a list of linking words so they can connect their ideas in a more organized way. Students individually choose one similarity and one difference from their group Padlet and write the first draft of their paragraph on Padlet. Students share the link to their group Padlet in a whole class Padlet page. Students are encouraged to revise and comment on the paragraphs of the other groups by accessing to the links. Teacher revises and provides written feedback for the paragraphs by posting a comment on each group Padlet. Students improve their drafts based on the feedback from their partners and the teacher.	**Formative** **assessment** **Review** **Closure**	✓ ✓	✓ ✓	✓ ✓
Week 3 (5 hours)				
Teacher presents some pictures about a variety of popular holiday destinations (Dubai, Hollywood, Paris, Disneyworld, etc.) Students discuss about the pictures: What are the people in the pictures doing? Where are they? What sort of clothes are they wearing? Have you ever gone to the beach? Which has been your best vacation? What activities did you do	**Hook** **Initiating**	✓ ✓	✓ ✓	

there? Where did you go on your last vacation? Teacher introduces the vocabulary (words related to holiday destinations, weather, typical food, activities, and attractions) Students form groups of four people and choose a team leader. The group leader creates a new Padlet page for the group. The group Padlet must include four columns to post: 1) Holiday destination, 2) Activities, 3) Weather, and 4) Typical food.	**Developing**		✓	
Students search on the web, newspapers, and magazines information about their favorite holiday destination. Students interact in Padlet writing down the information they have found according to the column. Students upload a related picture with their posts. Students read a short promotional article about the Iguazu Falls. In pairs, students label the sections of the article (Location, What to do, When to go, What to eat).	**Formative assessment**		✓	✓
Students participate discussing: What is the purpose of the article? How does it catch readers' attention? Teacher focuses students' attention to the introduction of the article and the topic sentences found in each paragraph. Teacher introduces the writing process, explains to students the stages involved in the writing process and the importance of including a topic sentence that states the main idea of the text. Teacher models the process of stating a strong and clear topic sentence in a paragraph using the information students posted in Padlet about holiday destinations.	**Review**		✓	

Within the groups, students vote and choose their favorite holiday destination using Padlet. (E.g. Create a new column where each group member writes his/her note or uses he "Like" tool and selects the destination with majority of "Likes") Students write a draft of a paragraph promoting the chosen destination and inviting the reader to visit it. Students use the information they have researched and posted on Padlet.	**Formative assessment**		✓	✓
Students share the link to their group Padlet in a whole class Padlet page. Students are encouraged to revise and comment on the paragraphs of the other groups by accessing the links.	**Review**		✓	
Teacher revises and provides written feedback for the paragraphs by posting a comment on each group Padlet. Students improve their drafts based on the feedback from their peers and the teacher.	**Closure**		✓	✓
Week 4 (5 hours)				
Whole-class discussion about the concept of communication. Students create a mind map using clue words related to communication.	**Initiating**	✓	✓	
In pairs, students share their mind maps and try to come up with a definition of the word communication. Students form groups of four, choose a group leader and create a Padlet. Students work in groups and think of different means of communication (e.g. the Internet, newspaper, radio, telephone, television).	**Hook**	✓	✓	
Students discuss in their groups: Is face-to-face communication better than other types of communication? Students read an essay about old and new communication means.	**Developing**	✓	✓	

Students scan the text and circle the words that show contrast among the ideas in the essay. In their group Padlet, students create two columns and list new and old communication means. Students include a related picture to each post. Teacher explains to students the categories of performance in a well-written paragraph and the importance of including a concluding idea in their paragraphs. Teacher models the process of stating a clear concluding idea that restates the main idea effectively using the information from the essay.	**Review**	✓	✓	
Students choose the two communication means they want to compare (new and old). Students research the features of each communication mean they have chosen.	**Research**	✓	✓	
Students write a paragraph comparing and contrasting the aspects of the communication means they have chosen one at a time.	**Formative assessment**			✓
Students share the link to their group Padlet in a whole class Padlet page. Students are encouraged to revise and comment the paragraphs of the other groups by accessing the links.	**Review**			
Teacher revises and provides written feedback for the paragraphs by posting a comment on each group Padlet.			✓	
Students improve their drafts based on the feedback from their peers and the teacher.	**Closure**		✓	✓
Week 5 (5 hours)				
Students take the post-test: Paragraph about your favorite special celebration.	**Summative assessment**			

Students take the post-survey: Attitudes towards writing, collaborative work, and Padlet.				

Appendix B

Observation checklist

Group number: _____

Date: _____

Time: _____

Rating Scale:
4 = Always
3 = Usually
2 = Sometimes
1 = Rarely

Member number	Stay on Task	Participate in Group Discussion	Comment and Provide Feedback	Exhibit Positive Attitude
1				
2				
3				
4				

Adapted from Manitoba Education and Training (1998)

Comments: _____

_____

_____

Appendix C

Paragraph Rubric – Pre/Post Test

Student name: _____ **Date:** _____

Categories of Performance	Exemplary (4)	Intermediate (3)	Basic (2)	Beginner (1)
Topic sentence/ main idea	Topic sentence is strong and clearly stated. The main idea stimulates interest.	Topic sentence is complete. The main idea is clearly stated.	Topic sentence is present but poorly written. The main idea is not entirely clear.	No evidence of a main idea. The paragraph lacks clarity and cohesion.
Body/ supporting sentences (3-5 related sentences)	Consistent development of main idea. Creates interest through details and varied sentence structure.	Body contains 3+ sentences, Most related detail. Not all sentences are complete and focused.	Limited details to establish interest in the topic. Short, choppy sentences that lack flow.	Random ideas are hard to follow. Less than 3 complete sentences.
Concluding sentence	The sentence is complete and restates the main idea effectively.	The sentence is complete and adequately sums up the paragraph.	The sentence is incomplete and does not sum up the paragraph.	There is no concluding sentence that connects to a main idea.
Organization/ fluency	Well-organized with clear topic, body, and conclusion. Flows logically. Consistent focus on topic.	Appropriate choice of words. More care needed to create fluency.	Limited details. Shows effort to create order using simple language to express ideas.	Paragraph lacks a clear focus. Confusing order of ideas.
Mechanics/ word choice presentation	Accurate spelling, grammar, and punctuation. Uses descriptive language.	Less than 5 errors in spelling and grammar. Shows variety of words.	More than 5 errors in spelling and grammar. Words not always used correctly. Needs revision.	Many errors in grammar and spelling. Run-ons and lack of punctuation. Limited new vocabulary. Disorganized.

Appendix D

Pre-Post survey

Questions	*Always*	*Sometimes*	*Rarely*	*Never*
ATTITUDES TOWARD WRITING				
Do you enjoy writing?				
In general, do you trust yourself as a person who can find good words and ideas to express yourself?				
Do you think of yourself as a writer?				
GENERATING, REVISING, FEEDBACK				
On a *topic of interest to you*, can you generate lots of words fairly quickly, and freely--not be stuck?				
On a topic that *doesn't* much interest you (perhaps an assigned topic), can you generate lots of words fairly, quickly, and freely--not be stuck?				
Can you adjust something you've written to fit the needs of particular readers?				
Do you enjoy sharing with friends a draft of what you've written?				
Can you give noncritical feedback-telling the writer what you would like and summarizing or reflecting what you hear the words saying?				
COLLABORATION				
Can you work on a task collaboratively with a small group, pitch in, share the work, help the group cooperate, keep the group on task?				
Can you listen to each other's opinions and ideas?				
Can you complete an assigned task within the given amount of time?				
Do you use your time effectively while working in groups?				
Do you learn from your peers while working collaboratively?				

Adapted from Elbow, P. & Belanoff, P. (1995)

Appendix E

Post Survey - Padlet

Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Learning language via Padlet is a good idea.				
My interactions in Padlet are clear.				
Padlet keeps me engaged during the tasks.				
My performance in language learning has improved through the use of Padlet.				
My performance in English writing has improved through the collaborative use of Padlet.				
Interaction via Padlet helps me to become active in writing activities.				
In the future, I will use Padlet in learning English language.				

Adapted from Haris, M., Yunus, M., & Badusha, J. (2017)