

Collaborative Writing and Peer-Editing in EFL Writing Classes

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Abstract

This paper reports a research carried out in two classrooms to investigate a) effect of collaborative writing and peer-editing on students' writings and b) changes to teacher's role in the classroom when peer-editing is involved, and c) students' opinions of this process. This research is an extension of Mangelsdorf's study where no collaborative writing was involved. It was carried out with Second-year English department students at the Teachers College, King Saud University in Saudi Arabia. Either after the treatment, they were asked to write either collaboratively or individually a well-organized paragraph on a given topic. Peer-editing was applied to students' writings, which was repeated several times. Questionnaires, samples of students' edited drafts and teachers' observations were used to collect data. The study found these techniques enhanced in-class interaction and improved students' writings by raising their awareness on a text writer's choices. On the part of the teachers, however, their role was only to give instructions and observe students, along with some other relevant steps. It spurs students to be cooperative rather than competitive, a way deemed instrumental to the success of peer-editing.

Keywords: collaborative writing, peer-editing, writing skill, EFL Learners, EFL Saudi university students.

INTRODUCTION

University students usually complain of their poor writing and allege constraints impede their unawareness whether a given written material sounds appropriate or not. The saga also covers their ignorance of relevant writing strategies, and the topic to write about as well. However, writing, as broadly defined, is rewriting. It is a circular process in which both writer and text are involved. The process of editing bolsters the students' due interest in the mooted issues and provides a basis to exchange inter-student views and discuss alternatives.

"Readings help expand the world of the classroom by bringing subject matter into it. Students then have more to react to than the room, chalk, and homework. They can get interested in controversial issues... They can react to a reading assignment by discussing it, writing about it... We can use this power of readings to generate reactions in two ways in our writing lesson: we can provide readings that stimulate the need for written communication, or we can ask our students to write (opinions, instructions, and the like) so that other students in the class have subject matter to react to" (Raimes, 1983: 63-64).

So, in-class editing assignments help students interact more comfortably. However, putting aside the teacher as an editor of his students' writings, the audience and the instructor simultaneously, he/she can ask them to do the editing. In a study carried out by Mangelsdorf

(1992), Peer Reviews in the ESL Composition Classroom: What Do the Students Think?, peer reviewing is introduced as a supporting component of writing classes. Mittan (1989), cited by Mangelsdorf (1992), states "peer reviews achieve the following: provide students with an authentic audience; increase students' motivation for writing; enable students to receive different views on their writing; help students learn to read critically their own writing; and assist students in gaining confidence in their writing" (Mangelsdorf, 1992: 275).

Editing, whether the teacher's or classmate's, relates re-reading to writing. Therefore, writing becomes subject to rereading the text and editing throughout rewriting. Editing here raises students' awareness of writing strategies and stages of the writing process. A student in Mangelsdorf's study states, "with enough practice [of peer reviews] we'll be able to be critics of our own papers" (1992: 279). The key notions emerge here as reading likely defined as a complicated process, which mainly requires contextualizing, organizing and grammaticalizing: contextualizing through learning new vocabulary and matching it with one's cultural knowledge to reach a better understanding of the word as a micro unit and the text as a macro unit; organizing through discovering the development of the target text; and grammaticalizing through breaking the text down into smaller structures and units grammatically linked to each other to convey the proposed meaning. Similarly, editing requires these processes of re-

contextualizing, re-organizing and re-grammaticalizing:

“When students examine a piece of writing closely, they can make discoveries not only about the cohesive devices the writer uses but also about the rules of punctuation and grammar that the writer employs. Close reading of a short passage lets the students scrutinize the choices the writer has made and the rules he has followed” (Raimes, 1983: 50).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Students at the English Department, Teachers College, King Saud University, study general English skills for the first four semesters of their 4-year study before they pursue discipline-related subjects such as TEFL and Approaches to Language Teaching. The researcher reports students' dissatisfaction with writing classes, and noticed most of their writings were markedly disorganized and full of grammatical errors, though the content was better. In fact, students were taught to use various ways to develop their ideas in writing, yet they very often made several mistakes. Their products had concrete examples of their failure in this area, luckily their content is quite better. Hardly did the receptacle suit the content or was it correct. Thus, the major task of this study was to raise their awareness of writing strategies and skills.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

Collaborative writing and peer-editing are supposedly an important part of the university curriculum, yet still unexplored well. This study attempts to investigate their effect on the writing skill of Saudi EFL university students, hopefully to help them improve their writing.

QUESTIONS OF THE STUDY

This study attempts to answer the following questions:

- 1- How do collaborative writing and peer-editing influence students' writings?
- 2- What changes does peer editing impose on the role of the teacher in classroom?
- 3- What do students think of peer-editing?

HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

This study attempts to test the following hypothesis: Collaborative writing and peer-editing have a positive effect on writing achievement of Saudi EFL university students and eventually lead to creating a positive attitude towards writing.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study investigates effect of collaborative writing and peer editing on students' writings ; b) changes to teacher's role in the classroom when peer-editing is implemented; and c) students' opinions on these techniques, which is an issue previous studies conducted in KSA, did not tackle at all. Therefore, the researcher hopes his study will have the following advantages:

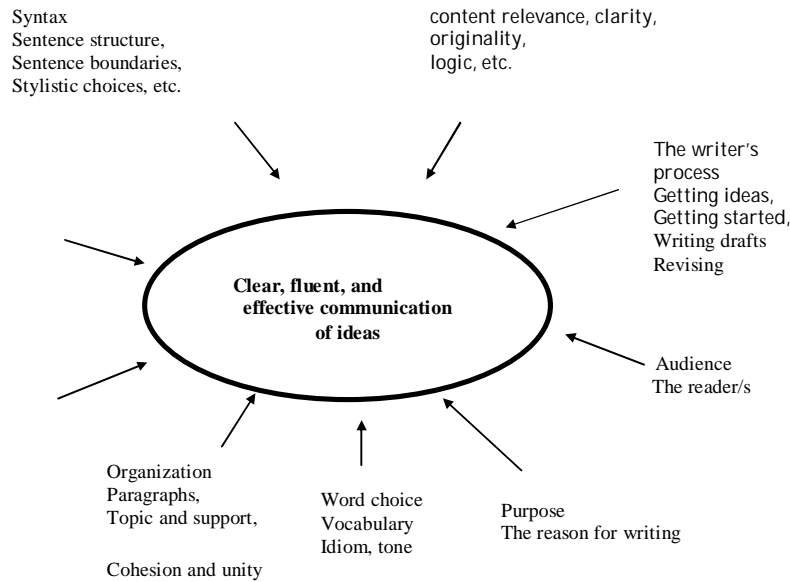
- 1- It will help educational researchers gain insights into collaborative writing and peer-editing and seek to improve them overtime.
- 2- It may encourage further research on these issues, which in turn, will enrich relevant teaching fields.
- 3- It will help teachers integrate these techniques into their classroom routines.
- 4- The information elicited from this research will help proponents of these techniques to better understand the educational effects of their craft.
- 5- This , to my knowledge, is the first attempt to determine whether or not Saudi EFL university students' writing skill will significantly improve collaborative writing and peer-editing.

LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This study is limited to second-year English department students at the Teachers' College, King Saud University in Saudi Arabia, so generalization of its findings is limited to its targeted population, which does not allow generalizing them on a larger scale.

Initial Reflection

Being introduced to Mangelsdorf's study (1992), a pilot study was conducted on two classes to investigate the effect of peer- editing on writing. Results were presented in a seminar held at the college's English department, then a discussion appreciated peer editing, and criticized its time-consuming trend. Students showed interest in it, because they, for the first time, managed to read their mates' papers and exchanged comments.



Weak students, as noticed, could not accomplish the task properly and their peers did not benefit from their comments, which were, in some cases, useless. Therefore, the researcher's alternative was to compensate for students' poor performance by integrating collaborative writing and peer editing (Mangelsdorf, 1992: 282). Therefore, peer editing was re-applied, but this time to level-3 students.

Method, Sample, Instrument and Procedures

The present study was carried out with second-year English department students at the Teachers' College, King Saud University in Saudi Arabia during the first semester of the academic year 2012-2013. In order to answer the question of the study, the researcher used three instruments: questionnaires, a sample of students' edited drafts, and teachers' observations. The researcher applied the following methodology in conducting the study:

Planning

Work was divided into the following stages:

Stage 1

- a) Applying Oxford Placement Test (2004).
- b) Introducing collaborative writing in class. The researcher and teachers of the two classes left students free to work, either collaboratively or individually, on their assignments, with preference to similar ability levels and specialty (Mangelsdorf, 1992: 282).
- c) Introducing peer editing to help students get familiarized with why it is carried out; then the process was unified by marking students' papers with editing symbols to avoid misunderstandings and discrepancies while and after editing (Mangelsdorf, 1992: 282).

- d) Distributing Questionnaire Sheet 1 to ask students about their expectations of peer editing.

Stage 2

- a) Asking students to write on a general topic and then apply peer editing to their writings. One pair would edit for another if students were working collaboratively; if not, one student would edit for another. The aim was to ensure students understood peer-editing well.
- b) Giving students several samples of authentic writings on a specific topic as pre-writing tasks to raise students' awareness of organization, style, writing strategies, and other elements that constitute a text.
- c) Asking students to write paragraphs on specific topics, either collaboratively or individually.
- d) Applying peer editing to their writings.
- e) Asking students to rewrite their paragraphs after editing and then applying editing again by giving papers either to the same previous editor(s) or to another pair or student.
- f) Repeating steps (a) to (e) several times.
- g) Distributing Questionnaire Sheet 2 to ask students about their opinions of peer editing after they have experienced it.

This plan was subject to change throughout the research provided that we adhere to the main axes of the research: peer editing, reading and writing.

Action

On the first day of the course, students sat for Oxford Placement Test and their scores showed their levels almost ranged between pre- to upper-intermediate. In another meeting, a passage was presented (see Appendix 1) with its key words replaced by codes; which students were asked to read and then answer the questions. The aim was to test students' ability of

reading comprehension and let them discover how to approach a passage semantically, using its grammatical structure to grasp its diverse constituents.

“Reading is a psycholinguistic guessing game that involves an interaction between thought and language ... the reader not only has to thoroughly understand what he has read, he also has to analyze and synthesize it so as to form his own opinions and judgment” (Goodman, 1967).

Although students were first surprised, most of them could answer the questions about the passage. They were then asked to write a paragraph on a general topic to assess the match between their diagnostic test results and their writing ability, which was an in-class controlled writing task. Papers were corrected and commented upon. Spelling and punctuation errors were dominant in students’ writings compared to grammatical ones, which also lacked layout and strategies.

Students were next informed of their writing assignments, possibility to work individually or collaboratively, and selection of their partners. There were 16 pairs working collaboratively to submit an assignment each, and 6 students individually. They were also introduced to peer-editing and editing symbols*. Afterwards, Questionnaire Sheet 1 was distributed to elicit students’ expectations of peer-editing before encountering it (see Appendix 2).

Stage 2 focused on asking students to write a paragraph on a general topic related to their daily life and to apply peer editing to it. They were given special sheets designed by the researcher for such kind of tasks and were asked to be rather cooperative than competitive (Whitman, 1988: 37) to facilitate achieving the purpose(s) of peer editing. After the task was completed, teachers conferenced writer and editor students to confirm correct editing changes and refute meager ones. This experience was hard for both teachers and students and time-consuming as well. Then, the researcher and teachers assigned a day to moot students’ writings and ways to help them improve their suggestions and comments. Students were told to avoid ungrounded comments and be more specific in pinpointing their mates’ incorrect language and organization. Concentrating on some of the students’ writings and eliciting the way to edit and write suggestions supported this editing process.

The following step was to choose suitable authentic articles to be studied in class. The first choice comprised two articles from a local newspaper published in English and were analyzed in terms of a) the title and where it could be found in the

introduction, b) the development and organization of the introduction, c) the repetition of certain lexis (terminology), if any, d) length, e) tense, and f) layout. Then students were asked to compare and contrast the introduction of the two articles with that of another article published in a later edition of the same newspaper. The results were more than satisfactory as the process was repeated overtime by using introduction sections to various authentic articles. So, a noticeable improvement in students’ writings was significant and the researchers decided to move to the following step: writing the introduction section to their writing assignments.

Either pairs or individuals, students chose their topics, wrote their titles and submitted a work plan of the mini research they had to carry out to finish their writing assignments. Then, classroom-writing sheets were disseminated to write the introduction; all writings were done in class. Writing of draft 1 lasted for about 20 minutes and peer-editing followed, which took about 30 to 40 minutes, during which writer and editor students moved freely in class to meet and discuss their writings. The session finished and papers were collected. The following encounter, students were given their introduction sections for further editing. It is worth mentioning that in the second draft students could not do writing and editing in one session, so peer editing was delayed for the next meeting. However, students found difficulty justifying their intentions as writer and editor students met to discuss their ideas while editing. To avoid such confusion in forthcoming sessions, so suggestions and recommendations would not be subject to what students remember, the researcher and teachers decided to do one-time writing and one-time peer-editing each class. This ensured that students would have enough time to meet and discuss their comments and suggestions in every writing session. This process of rewriting and re-editing was repeated 3 times. Then Questionnaire Sheet 2 (see Appendix 5) was distributed, which was based on Mangelsdorf’s study (1992), to know students’ opinions of peer-editing after encountering it. This process was carried on and extended to the rest of their writing assignments sections.

Having looked at the methodology used, we will now look at the results obtained.

STUDENTS’ RESPONSES

Peer editing, as a drafting process, focuses on what is to write, and how to write in a way to render the output comprehensible. It also draws attention to content, layout and surface errors, which are deemed impediments to the student’s progress in this area. In Mangelsdorf’s (1992), peer reviewing was researched in class and students were asked about their opinions of it. Elicited data revealed:

“that for most of the students and teachers in this study, peer reviews were perceived as a beneficial technique that helped the students revise their papers. The students pinpointed content and organization as the main areas that peer reviews improved. In particular, they emphasized that peer reviews led them to consider different ideas about their topics and helped them to develop and clarify these ideas. These comments suggest that peer reviews can make students more aware of the needs and expectations of their audience, helping them to meet the demands of the writing classroom which their peers are reflecting to them” (Mangelsdorf, 1990:278).

However, if peer editing did motivate many students to be fully engaged in writing, it also might have made some others unenthusiastic about writing and peer-editing. In the current study, when students were asked about their opinions of peer-editing before encountering it, 79% of them pointed out it might be useful to have their classmates read their papers and give suggestions for revision, 11% said it might not be useful and the rest did not respond.

Most of the areas pinpointed by students in which peer editing could be useful covered grammar, spelling, punctuation, structure, organization and content (See Fig. 2). A student wrote: ‘every one who is trying to correct other’s paper will deep his knowledge in structure, grammar.... and so he’ll try not to make the same errors he had found’ *. Other students were more interested in writing strategies as one wrote ‘we can learn new words and new styles of writing from each other’. Peer editing could be also one way out for students not to feel ashamed of asking either their classmates or their teachers. One student wrote: ‘you will not feel shamed of asking.’ However, justifications for editing being useless touched issues related to student’s levels and involvement in the process of peer editing. ‘May be my friend not good enough for editing,’ said a student and another wrote, ‘maybe he is careless of editing to me.’ Student’s answers were printed without corrections.

Students were also asked to give their expectations of what to receive from their classmates prior to peer-editing and to state the areas they really received comments. They were also requested to categorize them as helpful or unnecessary. Their responses showed that grammar, spelling, punctuation, vocabulary, organization, layout and writing strategies were all that they really needed. Therefore, peer editing was mainly directed towards organization, surface errors (grammar + mechanics) and word choice though they were asked to read their

classmates’ papers three times; once for content, once for paragraph development and once for grammar. In ESP writing classes, one of the teachers’ main concerns is guiding students to learn how to develop an appropriate receptacle for content.

Peer editing is not an end in itself, but rather a means to discuss their own writings. The process is not the core focus here, but rather the product, unless the former is viewed as a given aspect of the re-writing strategies.

“Writing is emphasized as an act of communication when a clear audience is provided for help with revision. Students should be given many opportunities to share and discuss their writing with other students and to hear and react to what peers have written. These sessions help students identify aspects of their writing which are particularly effective as well as those which need further work” (Dixon and Nessel, 1983: 86).

The opportunities to share, discuss, and react were not only oral, but also written notes eliciting areas of the writing skills. The majority of students were helpful, once asked about peer editing after encountering it. The three different areas are **a)** exchanging opinions, **b)** pointing at grammatical errors, vocabulary and mechanics, and **c)** learning writing strategies.

When students were asked in what way peer editing affected their writing, they wrote:

‘Peer-editing affected my writing by exchanging opinions on concentrated lights on hidden points that were not sensed by me.’*

‘...by pointing to vocabulary mistakes and spelling errors.’

‘...by improving my grammar, spelling, ..’

‘The peer-editing learn me where I had a mistake and why.’

‘It made me review my writing and try to understand it much better.’

Concerning students’ opinions of peer editing being useful or useless, 68% of students said it was useful, 14% said it was not, and 18% did not respond. Students’ responses, however, showed that peer-editing helped them discuss their topics and exchange opinions, they have become critics of their classmates’ papers. The majority of students confirmed peer editing could be helpful because their

* Student’s answers were printed without correction.

classmates drew their attention to errors, which they were unaware of. One student wrote, [Peer-editing is useful] 'because it will make me awakened to how I will write without faults.' And another one stated, 'It is helpful because my writing will be seen by the others from a different window and they will discover wrongs which I do not see them.'

Although several students preferred to have their teachers correct their papers, some others felt it was better to receive comments from their classmates, as stated below by one: [Peer-editing is useful] 'because it is better to have notices from my friend than my teacher.' Further progress in the product was exhibited if the material is first edited by a classmate, then by a teacher: 'Peer editing is very valuable because it has double benefits; first: you practice in editing, second: you are edited again for your editing.'

However, for some students, peer editing was useless because their classmates were unqualified to critique their writings, basing their opinion on their unnoticeable progress. They claimed this process was useful only if they have different credentials. Some others reported their colleagues were not capable of peer-editing simply because they were not up to the required level. A student wrote, 'The levels of students are not equal, and so the peer-editing may be useful and valuable in case that the levels of students are equal.' In contradiction to the above-mentioned quotation, a student wrote down that peer editing was useless 'because the student who corrects the sheet is at the same level of the one who wrote it.'

Surprisingly, both teachers and students said peer editing was time-consuming. One student wrote, [Peer-editing is useless] 'because it takes a lot of time and sometimes we aren't ready to write because that needs time to write an important thing.'

Teachers' Evaluation

Teachers' evaluation, based on samples taken from the students' edited drafts and in-class observation, aims at investigating the effect of peer editing on students from the teachers' point of view. Comments helped assess the students' progress, underlining their weaknesses and ways to address them. Their feedback was made after class, and difficulties were highlighted when using English as a medium to discuss their views. Some Arabic words were occasionally heard. In Mangelsdorf's (1992: 279), 'one teacher wrote that peer reviews help "reinforce the idea that the purpose of writing is communication... real audience, real purpose.'" It was also noticed peer editing motivated students to communicate orally, which enhanced in-class interaction. In peer observation, a teacher noted down:

"The activity reached its peak of involvement when the writers and editors moved to sit beside one another and started the discussion. I have never witnessed a medical class at the ESPC so actively involved. Students were talking to one another mostly in English, but some Arabic words could be heard. They seemed relaxed; they were smiling and in some cases laughing. The written text was the shared ground of discussion".

Peer-editing was finished using written and oral notes; the latter, however, were not the major concern. Verbal interaction was actually its by-product since students moved freely and exchanged related views. The former were indeed the focus of teachers and students to trace its effect on writing. This process shifted interaction from teacher-student interaction to student-student one. The students' interaction varied as they exchanged roles; from the editor to the writer status and vice versa.

"Factors of the speech event define the context for verbal communication, but verbal interaction is a continuous, shifting process in which the context and its constituent factors change from second to second. In normal everyday verbal interaction, addresser and addressee are constantly changing roles. The addresser of one minute is the addressee of the next, and vice versa. Purpose and content change as the interaction progresses. Even setting may change, as time moves on and the participants perhaps move from one place to another" (Malamah, Ann Thomas, 1987: 37).

Appreciably, students asked for permission to discuss issues related to their classmates' intentions in an effort to offer better alternatives and ideas, which fostered the level of interaction. This process motivated them to be more involved in the activity as individual opinions were the core basis of discussion. In peer observation, an observer wrote:

"The class was buzzing with activity. Students freely moved in the room to sit beside their peer-editors/writers. Some were smiling. A student called for another, apparently the writer, to come and sit beside him. My feeling was that they have forgotten all about the presence of an observer in the class".

The more active students are, the more interactive they are in class and the more fruitful peer editing is

as far as oral interaction is concerned, which positively influenced the written comments. The following sections are devoted to students' edited drafts and teachers' evaluations as three samples are chosen for analysis.

Sample Analysis

In analyzing students' edited drafts, close analysis was used to trace out the development of students' writings. However, it tackled surface errors, number of paragraphs and length, organization, content and improvement. Students' comments on their classmates' papers were also mentioned, and drafts 1, 2 and 3 were compared in the teachers' evaluation.

Sample 1

Title of Article: Dealing With Problems: Strategies for Handling Problems.

Section: Introduction.

Writing: Individual & Collaborative.

Level: Both writer and editor students were considered as pre-intermediate to upper-intermediate (Nelson Quick Check Test).

Specialization: Bachelor of English. Writer students were third and fourth-level bachelor students at the English department.

Since students were told to read the introduction section of their classmates for three times while editing, their comments were made following the specified stages: the first for content, the second for organization and layout, and the third for grammar and mechanics. Comments and suggestions for the first introduction were short and few. This was noted in all students' papers. As it is shown below, students' only suggestion was for content taking the rest as all right. However, a close analysis showed that introduction 1 was 13 lines, 3 paragraphs with 12 mistakes only. The content was complete except that it lacked any references. Generally speaking, it was well organized. Introduction 2 was 15 lines, 4 paragraphs and previous mistakes were avoided. However, new ones were made and underlined by peer-editors.

On the whole, it was still well organized. Introduction 3 was 17 lines, 4 paragraphs and well organized, yet no references were mentioned. Minor mistakes were found, and one missing word, and the thesis statement was clear and well stated. The progress that both editors and writers of the paper showed was mostly apparent in their suggestions for and comments on the second and third introductions (see Appendix 5). Below are the suggestions and comments and teachers' evaluation.

Students' Comments on Drafts 1&2 and the Teacher's Evaluation of Students' Writings

DRAFT 1 STUDENTS' COMMENTS	DRAFT 2 STUDENTS' COMMENTS	DRAFT 3 STUDENTS' COMMENTS	TEACHER'S EVALUATION
<p><u>Contents:</u> ✓ but we have to deal with the student who is reluctant to write, to understanding and responding to the student whose entries are indecipherable.</p> <p><u>Thesis statement:</u> ✓ the second paragraph.</p> <p><u>Organization:</u> ✓</p> <p><u>Grammar:</u> ✓</p> <p><u>Spelling:</u> ✓</p>	<p><u>Content:</u> you didn't mention any previous problems, and how you dealt with them. There are repeated sentences especially at the last of the third paragraph and the beginning of the fourth paragraph.</p> <p><u>The thesis statement</u> is good, keep it as you have written.</p> <p><u>Organization:</u> I think it is better to follow this way in the introduction.</p> <p>a. What is a reluctant writer?.</p> <p>b. Writing with a repetitive writer.</p> <p>c. Then responding to entries that are difficult to decipher.</p> <p><u>New thesis statement:</u> this article deals with</p>	<p>You haven't mentioned the previous problems in the introduction for the next time.</p> <p><u>The organization</u> is good.</p> <p><u>Thesis statement</u> is clear and good, but I think it will be better if you write like this: This article suggested some strategies for handling commonly occurring problems, from working with the student who is reluctant to write, or a student who has nothing to write about. These suggestions of strategies are general and can be adapted as appropriate.</p>	<p>-Draft 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 13 lines. - 3 paragraphs. - 12 mistakes. - content is complete except for previous studies. - well-organized <p>Introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teacher's correction done. <p>-Draft 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 15 lines. -4 paragraphs. - previous mistakes avoided but new ones were made and underlined by student editors only. - well-organized - no teacher's correction. <p>-Draft 3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 17 lines - 4 paragraphs - well organized - no previous studies - one missing word in the thesis statement, but it is still clear. - no teacher's correction.

Sample 2

Title of Article: The Road to Success: Achieving Success Has a lot to Do with How You Look at Yourself.

Section: Introduction.

Writing: Collaborative writing except the first draft which was written and edited individually.

Level: Writer and editor students were pre- and upper-intermediate. (Nelson Quick-check test).

Specialization: Bachelor of English. Writer and editor students were third and fourth-level bachelor students at the English department.

Put aside students' comments, a close look at peer editing showed the first draft had several mistakes. Paragraphing lacked clarity and the thesis statement needed rewriting. Introduction 1 was 17 lines and 3 paragraphs. Many mechanical and lexical as well as 2 grammatical errors were underlined. The teacher ticked (✓) all the correct peer editing. Introduction 2 was rather short with fewer mistakes and errors.

Introduction 3, however, was of an appropriate length, better paragraphed and clearly indented. Spelling mistakes were almost the only ones to be seen, and the thesis statement was modified depending on their classmates' suggestions. In point of fact, their third draft of the Introduction exhibited improvement, and peer editing was markedly noticed. Student's comments are shown below (see Appendix 6).

Students' Comments on Drafts 1&2 and the Teacher's Evaluation of Students' Writings

DRAFT 1 STUDENTS' COMMENTS	DRAFT 2 STUDENTS' COMMENTS	TEACHER'S EVALUATION
<p><u>Content</u>: not complete. -<u>Thesis statement</u>: good -<u>Organization</u>: good, two paragraphs only. -<u>Grammar</u>: good -<u>Spelling</u>: bad. -<u>punctuation</u>: not too bad.</p>	<p>-<u>Content</u>: not complete. -<u>Organization</u>: well -<u>Grammar</u>: well -<u>Spelling</u>: some mistakes -<u>Punctuation</u> is good. -We recommend that each student should have some steps toward his goal. -Improving the spelling is very important (When you don't know it, look it up in the dictionary!). -We agree with your organization and admire your grammar highly. -Your <u>thesis statement</u> is well, but it could be written as: " To Achieve Your Goals, You Should Keep Your Confidence Up."</p>	<p>-<u>Draft 1</u>: -17 lines. -2 paragraphs. -48 mistakes. -Content was not completely clear. -Paragraphing was not clear. -The thesis statement was stated but needed rewriting. -Teacher's correction done. -<u>Draft 2</u>: -16 lines. -3 paragraphs. -10 mistakes (mainly spelling). -rather short Introduction. -Title was changed as recommended. -Thesis Statement was not well-stated. -No teacher's correction. -<u>Draft 3</u>: -17 lines. -5 paragraphs. -5 mistakes. -Good paragraphing. -Clear indentation. -Thesis statement:</p>

Sample 3:

Title of Article: Islam and Peace.

Section: Introduction.

Writing: Collaborative.

Level: Writer and editor students were pre- and upper-intermediate. (Nelson Quick- check test).

Specialization: Bachelor of English. Writer and editor students were third and fourth-level bachelor students at the English department.

Peer-editing was efficient in this sample, perhaps because the students worked hard on this task and voiced keenness to tackle such an activity. The teacher edited students' reviewed materials only in draft 1 and ticked all the correct suggestions and

comments made by editor students. Draft 1 needed further organization and clarity. Mistakes were observed in this draft. Draft 2 was more cohesive and had fewer mistakes. Content still needed attention and teachers' correction was done. Draft 3 was much better than the other ones, but shorter, clearer and more cohesive. (see Appendix 7).

Students' Comment on Drafts 1, 2 and 3 and the Teacher's Evaluation of Students' Writings

DRAFT 1 STUDENTS' COMMENTS	DRAFT 2 STUDENTS' COMMENTS	DRAFT 3 STUDENTS' COMMENTS	TEACHER'S EVALUATION
<p>-<u>Content</u> is good. -you must be more specific (<u>organization</u>). - Some spelling mistakes. -<u>Grammar and spelling</u> are good. - No <u>thesis statement</u>? √</p>	<p>-They talk about belief in Allah in the first paragraph, and belief in the Holy Qur'an in the second paragraph. -<u>Organization</u> is better. -<u>Thesis</u>: "Belief in Islam as Means of Peace".</p>	<p>Paragraphs are short but clear and cohesive. <u>Thesis statement</u> : Islam is the Religion of Peace". -<u>The contents</u> are good. -<u>The organization</u> is good. -<u>The grammar</u> is good. -<u>The punctuation</u> is good.</p>	<p>Draft 1: -23 lines. -5 paragraphs. - Some mistakes. -No <u>thesis</u>. -Content: incomplete. Draft 2: -21 lines. -4 paragraphs. -<u>Layout</u>: good. -<u>Organization</u>: well. -Less number of mistakes. -<u>Content</u>: good but needed attention. Draft 3: -14 lines. -5 paragraphs. -<u>Layout</u>: done. -<u>Organization</u>: well. - <u>Thesis Statement</u>: agreed</p>

Peer editing enhanced in-class interaction and improved students' writings by making them aware of the procedures to follow during this process through their classmates' comments, not the teachers'. A peer observer noted the teacher's role was limited to giving some instructions and answering students' questions". Although a few students found peer-editing useless, the majority viewed it a beneficial activity due to the following factors, which were reached out depending on students' response and teachers' observation:

- Students were more motivated to communicate orally and in writing in a way which proved effective for classroom interaction (Dixon and Nessel, 1983: 86).
- Students could use editing symbols skillfully to refer to their peers' mistakes.
- Peer editing helped students to know their mistakes in terms of grammar, spelling and punctuation, organization and development of ideas, and the writing process as well.

- Peer editing made students become real audience for their peers, which affected both writing and editing (Mangelsdorf, 1992).

On the part of the teacher, however, his role was restricted to answering questions during the writing and editing stages. Instead of conferencing students in the early stages, teachers devoted their time to observing students as they were writing their introduction session and editing for their classmates, and to improving the implementation of classroom material and teaching/ learning methodology.

Peer editing spared the teacher's time in the correcting stage. The teacher, otherwise, would have exerted unneeded effort in correcting students' papers thoroughly. However, the following issues should be taken into consideration when applying peer editing in class:

- Students ought to know the purpose(s) of peer-editing (Mangelsdorf,1992) and seek to be co-operative, rather than competitive (Whitman, 1988).
- Students ought to master editing symbols prior to this process.
- Peer editing is time-consuming. Therefore, it needs lengthy sessions to finish.
- It is unadvised to separate peer editing and writing since students may forget what their intentions were at the time of writing.
- After students choose their partners, teachers are advised to regroup them according to their levels (each pair is preferable to be nearly at the same level), unless students want otherwise.
- It is unadvised to put students in groups they are uncomfortable with, which might impact their in-class work negatively.

It is recommended to assume peer-editing may not be as fruitful as expected due to:

- a) having mixed-ability classes.
- b) Lack of students' motivation.
- c) Lack of teachers' motivation.
- d) Deficiency of the teaching system.
- e) The inappropriate length of the course.

Emanating from the findings of this study, the researcher can say the use of in-class collaborative writing and peer-editing tends to make learning more interesting and can promote learners' motivation.

This study represents a preliminary effort to empirically examine their effect university students' writing skill in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.. Further research is needed to understand this issue thoroughly and highlight its findings, especially when conducting an investigation with more variables. It is also recommended to re-conduct this study with a larger number of respondents throughout a whole

semester or a year. Besides, it would be worthwhile to compare results across levels of proficiency and gender. Moreover, there is a need to investigate whether and what theories could be relevant for teachers in this area. Related research ought to identify needs of both language learners and instructors in an effort to foster learners' progress. Finally, universities, ministry of higher education and other educational institutions are recommended to make use of the study findings and similar future projects as well when designing their curricula.

The potentials for continued research in this area seem diverse. Each avenue explored, each genre tackled leads the concerned researcher to question, who will benefit from this technique?

The researcher hopes this study will contribute to the development of teaching English in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and provide EFL university instructors and Saudi universities.

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APPENDIXES

Appendix 1:

Stage 1	Stage 2																																																																
Questionnaire Sheet 1	Questionnaire Sheet 2																																																																
<p>What kind of suggestions would you like to receive from your classmate?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Grammar * Punctuation * Suggestions for re-writing * Title * Point of view about writing * Spelling * Vocabulary * Layout * Ideas * Organization * Medical information <p>*Anything I'll hear from my classmate will encourage me? * details and explanation of my mistakes? * I'll accept any creative suggestion that improves my writing, layout and organization.</p> <p>*What suggestions do you think will be most helpful to you?</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">content</td> <td style="text-align: center;">punctuation</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Grammar/structure</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: right;">1st</td> <td style="text-align: center;">6</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1</td> <td style="text-align: center;">10</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: right;">2nd</td> <td style="text-align: center;">0</td> <td style="text-align: center;">0</td> <td style="text-align: center;">7</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: right;">3rd</td> <td style="text-align: center;">0</td> <td style="text-align: center;">0</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1</td> </tr> </table> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">spelling</td> <td style="text-align: center;">vocabulary</td> <td style="text-align: center;">organization/writing process</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: right;">3</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2</td> <td style="text-align: center;">3</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: right;">2</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2</td> <td style="text-align: center;">9</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: right;">5</td> <td style="text-align: center;">4</td> <td style="text-align: center;">4</td> <td style="text-align: center;">6</td> </tr> </table> <p>Number of students who didn't answer: 1st question 2nd 3rd 9/14/1 /out of 38</p>		content	punctuation	Grammar/structure	1 st	6	1	10	2 nd	0	0	7	3 rd	0	0	1		spelling	vocabulary	organization/writing process	3	2	2	3	2	2	2	9	5	4	4	6	<p>What kind of suggestions did you receive from your classmate? (suggestions were written down according to the priority students expressed)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Grammar * Spelling * Punctuation * Organization/layout/rewriting * Content * Thesis statement * Structure * Title <p>Teachers' observations based on students' edited drafts negate the sequence above because papers were read 3 times during editing: the first for content, the second for organization and layout, and the third for surface errors (grammar, spelling, punctuation and the like).</p> <p>*What suggestions were most helpful to you?</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">content</td> <td style="text-align: center;">punctuation</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Grammar/structure</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: right;">1st</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2</td> <td style="text-align: center;">0</td> <td style="text-align: center;">9</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: right;">2nd</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1</td> <td style="text-align: center;">0</td> <td style="text-align: center;">4</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: right;">3rd</td> <td style="text-align: center;">0</td> <td style="text-align: center;">0</td> <td style="text-align: center;">0</td> </tr> </table> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">spelling</td> <td style="text-align: center;">vocabulary</td> <td style="text-align: center;">organization/writing process</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: right;">5</td> <td style="text-align: center;">0</td> <td style="text-align: center;">0</td> <td style="text-align: center;">4</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: right;">4</td> <td style="text-align: center;">0</td> <td style="text-align: center;">0</td> <td style="text-align: center;">5</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: right;">1</td> <td style="text-align: center;">0</td> <td style="text-align: center;">0</td> <td style="text-align: center;">4</td> </tr> </table> <p>Number of students who did not answer: 1st question 2nd 3rd 13/19/28/ out of 38</p>		content	punctuation	Grammar/structure	1 st	2	0	9	2 nd	1	0	4	3 rd	0	0	0		spelling	vocabulary	organization/writing process	5	0	0	4	4	0	0	5	1	0	0	4
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Appendix 2:

Read the following passage and then answer the questions:

Questionnaire Sheet 1

Dialogue Journal Writing with Nonnative English Speakers.

Office of English Language Programs, U.S. Department of State with TESOL. 2nd Ed, 2003.

Sample 1: Dealing With Problems: Strategies for Handling Problems.

North Star, Reading & Writing, Advanced.

Longman, 2nd Ed., 2004.

Sample 2: The Road to Success: Achieving Success Has a lot to Do with How You Look at Yourself.

Islam & Peace, Mohamed Atif Mohamed, KSU, 2003.

Sample 3: Islam and Peace