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TEACHING ACADEMIC ESSAY WRITING TO FIRST-YEAR UNDERGRADUATE EFL STUDENTS THROUGH PEER REVIEW AND PROCESS-BASED DRAFTING

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Abstract: Academic writing is paramount in university education. At university level, students' knowledge and understanding are largely exhibited and valued through the medium of essay writing (Coffin et al., 2003). This study explores the implementation and efficiency of integrating process-based drafting with peer review to evaluate academic writing skills of freshman students who are studying English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Transitioning from high school writing to university level academic discourse may create cognitive and linguistic challenges which may lead to stress and academic pressure while they are studying. As a result, many students find academic writing difficult for adjusting with its criteria, structure and vocabulary. Surrounded by socio-cultural theory and process-writing approaches, this article investigates how analytical writing and scaffolded peer review can help students to enhance strategic writing skills and comprehensive criteria. Structured peer review plays a critical role by encouraging students to evaluate peer drafts using clear, criteria-based rubrics. This peer interaction gives opportunity to develop collaborative learning, metacognitive evaluation skills and critical audience awareness. Additionally, effective peer review can create a classroom atmosphere to be more personalized and learner centered by depending on reflective writing and working on feedbacks accurately instead of simply relying on teacher correction. There are 16 distinct benefits of peer feedback in the academic writing context were delineated and subsequently categorized into five categories: affective benefits, cognitive benefits, behavioral benefits, social benefits, and meta-cognitive benefits. Additionally, the process writing makes the class engaged in academic writing progressing through prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing stages to enhance self-expression and creativity. Based on these findings, this study offers valuable insights for educators, curriculum designers, and researchers in the field of English as a Foreign Language writing instruction.

Key words: Process writing, peer review, challenges, benefits, EFL students, autonomy, self-reflection, analyzing.

Introduction

Academic writing is one of the crucial competences which should be addressed in today's university systems. Written works are considered helpful and important for students' academic life, especially, first-year students of EFL. In order to succeed from that skill, they need to be good at strategic rules and academic culture of writing. However, why this skill seems to be foremost factors to contribute to the students' cognitive ability and mental capacity. Many neuroscientists and psychologists make it relevant to the overall performance of students which may be

corresponding with reading, speaking and listening because in the initial stage of learning English as a foreign language, they need to understand ordinary texts for the purpose of applying language and improving communicative competences. Regarding psychological perspective, writing facilitates the assimilation and transformation of knowledge as well as improving metacognitive awareness. However, many universities misinterpret the students' needs and lacks that they should have gained enough proficiency to write before entering the university. Educators often fail to explain academic writing in an effective way which can encourage students to concentrate on critical writing rather than allocating their time for writing long, meaningless reports or essays. They should know what they are writing and how they can analyze it properly. UZSWLU freshmen sets a great example of this where students usually begin writing as a professional task despite of realizing structure and deep meanings. An interview conducted with students at STBA Prayoga identified four major difficulties they encountered when writing essays. The first difficulty was the inability to generate ideas, which was partly caused by concerns about spelling, sentence construction, and paragraph organization. The second problem was that some students were unfamiliar with the criteria for producing a well-written essay. Third, students lacked experience in evaluating and revising their own writing. Developing this ability could be facilitated by providing them with opportunities to assess and give feedback on their peers' essays. The fourth difficulty concerned students' inability to understand and effectively use teachers' feedback. This problem arose for several reasons. First, teachers provided comments only on students' final drafts, leaving them with no opportunity to revise their work based on the feedback received. Consequently, these comments were often disregarded. Second, vague evaluative expressions, such as "well-made," "good," or "poor," were sometimes confusing for students. Finally, teachers' feedback primarily focused on language mechanics rather than other important aspects of essay writing. In conclusion, the main challenges students faced included difficulties generating ideas, a lack of understanding of essay assessment criteria, limited experience in self-evaluation, and problems interpreting and applying teachers' feedback.Therefore, they need methodological ways of improving their understanding, main features of academic writing. In this study, we will explore how they can evaluate coherence and comprehension, personlized learning and effectiveness of collaborative working. Peer review and process writing are one of the possible solutions for these issues which are observed in their academic behaviour.

What to teach:

Writing academic essays effectively

Who to teach:

B1-B2 level first-year year EFL students

How to teach:

Peer review and process-based writing

Peer review

Writing an effective academic essay requires to be able to read and analyze one's own writing. This kind of process is engaged in "peer review" which provides university students with an appropriate exchanging information, evaluating and comparing their own essay with their friends and taking useful techniques to improve writing skills. Specifically, peer review can help students with several benefits:

7. **Analytical reading**. They start to read their writings carefully with considering even small details whether it is their own essay or others. It boosts their knowledge to understand what they write and how they can reform it.
8. **Reader-informed revision**. Students can know about how others react their writing and become ready for forthcoming feedbacks about their academic writing.
9. **Writing for a wider audience**. As first year students should write also other means of academic writings like reports, dissertations and articles, they should be prepared for a broader audience. Peer review encourage them for writing to others not only for themselves and getting grade.
10. **Feedback**. In this session of peer review, they learn how to command on their classmates' writings and conclude from feedbacks for their own writing.

Peer review also facilitates teaching academic writing to freshmen by reducing their initial academic burnout and persuading them to revise and review their own essay for improving their ability to write high-quality writings.

Process writing

Process writing approach is also beneficial for shaping students' knowledge towards academic writing. This approach mitigates the problems stem from lack of ability of organizing ideas, grammar, vocabulary and structure. This approach follows five phases including prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing or sharing (Johnson, 2008; McIntyre et al., 2011; Sheir et al., 2015; Vanderpyl, 2012). In each phase, students learn new techniques of academic writing and it will be easy for them to plan essays and write without academic stress. Here is the information about what students do in each phase of process writing:

Prewriting	Students need to choose one topic and find answers for these questions: why they write, who are their possible audience and how they write. They need to find materials whether online resources or printed books in order to get idea.
Drafting	Make an outline and brainstorm the ideas, remove or add information, write a short draft, focusing on details that can attract readers, getting or giving feedback.
Revising	Students need to read text aloud, identifying relevant or irrelevant details, self-revising and peer revising.
Editing	Consider the mistakes such as grammar mistakes, unsuitable vocabulary, conduct group editing, use computer for editing, track their final input and rewrite their final writing.
Publishing or sharing	They need to do quick check, sharing it with their teacher.

Integrating these step-by-step techniques, students, especially, first year students can adjust their previous knowledge to university level essays and eventually, they become good at it.

Research questions

1. How does the integration of peer review and process-based drafting influence the academic essay-writing performance of first-year undergraduate EFL students?
2. To what extent does peer review help first-year undergraduate EFL students identify and revise problems related to essay organization, thesis statements, paragraph development, and language accuracy?

3. How does process-based drafting influence students' ability to plan, develop, revise, and edit academic essays?
4. What challenges do first-year undergraduate EFL students encounter when participating in peer review and process-based drafting activities?

Discussion

Today, integrated teaching of these two approaches plays an important role in terms of progressing one's writing skills. Freshmen students can be encouraged to learn intensively and consciously while writing process. Many researchers approved the benefits of peer review and process writing in writing lesson in higher education (I K. Yogi Setyawan, October 2020, Vol. 5 No. 2). Process writing can help students to organize ideas, revise their writing and learning editing their drafts while peer review shares similar benefits as it enhances their capability to learn from feedbacks and become prepared for peer discussions. The main advantage is improvement on essay organization. First-year students struggle with developing clear thesis statements, making supporting arguments and connecting paragraphs logically. In this case, combination of these two approaches opens a door for them by structured drafting and peer feedback, they can identify their lacks and learn how to revise their final writings. For example, teacher tells students to choose one topic and decide which audience is suitable and start to search sources. After that, they should plan their whole essay by identifying what they write and create an outline, draft. Followed by this, teacher tells them to exchange their drafted sheets and share ideas about each other's outlines. They consider their friends' drafts, discuss what is true or wrong and do final edits. As a result, each student, even the weaker one, can know how to organize essay plan and they can learn how to make a strategic academic essay. After writing the whole essay, they should be told about exchanging the sheet again. Each student should read their friends' essays carefully finding its weak and strong points and telling each other feedbacks like that: "this is your weakness, you should make your thesis to be stronger, add counter argument, give examples or supporting sentences" or "these are your strong points, I like your supporting argument, your essay structure is clearer than mine, I learn how to begin the introduction". Students can benefit this conversation which exemplifies the most persuasive academic essay among them so that others try to apply same techniques used in this essay. This is useful because unlike other students who submit their essays only for their teacher and write the whole essay within a one attempt, the students who involved the classroom engaged with process writing and peer review, have opportunity to know their limits easily and reform their essay. Due to the fact that they do not simply share their essays with teacher for the purpose of getting grade and forgetting working on their mistakes, they actually hear feedbacks, understand the stages of writing while processing and become self-reflective in long run.

Limitations

Although these methods can improve overall skills of the students it can be quite difficult to make it effective. Some students may struggle with lack of academic vocabulary or appropriate grammar structure in order to open their arguments or ideas. This is because most first-year students have not enough linguistic skills as they will enhance it in the next years like second or third year of university. Therefore, process writing may be complex approach to adjust it with their current knowledge. Furthermore, these students tend to be heavily reliant on teacher's feedback and it is difficult to evaluate their essays on their own.

When it comes to peer review, it has mental and emotional limitations since students may feel embarrassed to give feedback each other and criticizing their friend's work. It may create unfair judgements among them because some essays may be overrated while some of them may be

underestimated. This can lead to misunderstanding of their own essay assessment. Moreover, due to the fact that they do not know how to evaluate one's essay, for instance, they are not familiar with assessment criteria what details should be considered or what categories can grade one's academic essay, it is really hard to give feedback.

So, what can be done to make successful the integration of these two methods? Initially, teacher should introduce the model essay structure to identify thesis statement and paragraph structure and explain how it can be done. Additionally, if teacher provide checklists that include assessment criteria, students can write effective feedback by answering questions such as "your essay is good but …should be added, your strong point is". It can be template for students.

Conclusion

In conclusion, peer review and process writing can enhance student's critical thinking, metacognitive abilities and confidence during the writing process and evaluating their progress. Peer review makes them to be confident and careful about their learning outcomes while process writing helps to develop their essay through prewriting, drafting, revising and editing. Combination of these methods also promote learner autonomy, self-reflection and collaborative learning rather than focusing on only teacher's guide. In short, peer review and process-based drafting can creative more interactive, supportive and learner-centered environment for first-year EFL students which can be useful to adapt university-level writing expectations and become more confident, independent writer.

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