



# REVISTA KRONOS

## Use of padlet for the implementation of the writing process

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**ABSTRACT** This research project intended to enhance the writing abilities of English language learners by the implementation of the writing process through the collaborative use of the technological tool Padlet. The intervention included five weeks of instruction on the various writing phases. The study's participants included forty high school students. They struggled to write coherent, comprehensive paragraphs and had a competency level between A1 and A2. The researcher used a pretest-posttest design to evaluate the progress in the students' writing. The viewpoints of learners toward the innovation were gathered by pre- and post-survey applications. In order to determine how the students interacted and participated in the group projects' writing assignments, observation checklists were completed. The post-test scores were higher than the pre-test scores, revealing a Cohen's  $d = 0.33$ . The findings revealed that implementing the writing process helped learners improve the quality of their writing pieces whereas the collaborative use of Padlet contributed to increase their levels of confidence and motivation in writing activities. The study has significance for language teachers and learners because it might raise helpful insights concerning the importance of collaborating with students to follow a writing process and enhance the quality of their writing.

**KEY WORDS** Collaborative writing, writing skills, writing process, Padlet.

FECHA DE RECEPCIÓN 20/11/2022

FECHA DE APROBACIÓN 23/01/2023

## Uso de padlet para la implementación del proceso de escritura

**RESUMEN** Este proyecto de investigación pretendió potenciar las habilidades de escritura de los aprendices del idioma inglés mediante la implementación del proceso de escritura a través del uso colaborativo de la herramienta tecnológica Padlet. La intervención incluyó cinco semanas de instrucción en las diversas fases de la escritura. Los participantes del estudio incluyeron cuarenta estudiantes de secundaria a quienes les resultaba difícil escribir párrafos completos y coherentes y tenían un nivel de competencia entre A1 y A2. El investigador utilizó un diseño de prueba previa y posterior para evaluar el progreso en la escritura de los estudiantes. Las puntuaciones del post-test fueron más altas que las del pre-test, revelando la  $d$  de Cohen = 0.33. 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 aumentar sus niveles de confianza y motivación en las actividades de escritura. El estudio tiene relevancia para los profesores y estudiantes de idiomas porque podría generar ideas útiles sobre la importancia de colaborar con los estudiantes para seguir un proceso de escritura y mejorar la calidad de su producción escrita.

**PALABRAS CLAVE** Escritura colaborativa, habilidades de escritura, proceso de escritura, Padlet.

## INTRODUCTION

The value of learning English, which has spread to become a common international language, has been acknowledged by educators all over the world. The four fundamental abilities must be managed by students in order for them to be proficient while using it. The Ministry of Education in Ecuador is also aware of its significance and has taken certain steps to promote this field in the nation. Some of those actions include making English a mandatory subject for every student from second grade 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 focuses on a real-world context and the relationship of language forms. It is remarkably important the use of the language productively 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 as apprehension, fear or resistance, factors that can account for a student's unsatisfactory writing skills (Javadi-Safa, 2018). Their motivation and performance are impacted by these failure beliefs (Belhabib, 2014; Dooley, 2006; Matsuya, 2003). According to Yau (2007), producing engaging and effective writing for English language learners is a challenging undertaking that exposes a lack of understanding, planning, and enthusiasm in their homework.

A similar reality has been demonstrated in the situation of Ecuador. Specifically, in Manabi's rural area, where 11<sup>th</sup> grade students from a public school are required to have a B1.1 level of English and progress to a B1.2 level by the time they graduate from high school. They are between 16 to 18 years old and their current proficiency ranges are between A1 and A2 levels of English language proficiency. The students have shown a 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. Besides, they are unaware of how a writing process develops in their written assignments. In addition, students appear reluctant and unmotivated to take part in writing exercises.

Faraj (2016) remarked the use of the writing process with a teacher's scaffold as a basis for enhancing students to write good pieces of writing meaningfully and accurately. Researchers have also looked into how technology may be used as a strong tool to encourage students to improve their writing abilities. Godwin-Jones (2018) emphasized the importance of technology and collaborative learning activities as contributors to motivating students to write more and better. A technological tool called *Padlet*, according to research by Fuchs (2014), has real-time benefits for participation and offers a place for the collection and revision 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.

## METHODOLOGY

This study used both qualitative and quantitative methodologies to achieve its goal of improving students' writing abilities by applying the writing process through Padlet. It is quantitative since the data collection would measure possible improvement in students' writings and collaboration through the use of Padlet. Additionally, it is qualitative due to the interpretation of data based on observations about how students collaborate using the tool.

### PARTICIPANTS

A convenient sample of 40 students, 16 females and 24 males, from a public high school in a rural area of Manabí participated in the study. The participants were the students assigned to the researcher and had been chosen from two other classes considering the number and the availability of students. They are in 11<sup>th</sup> grade in a range of 16-18 years of age in an A1 - A2 level of English proficiency. The participants had been studying English as a foreign language for several years, but when asked to speak or write in the target language, they exhibit a lack of confidence and motivation.

### VARIABLES OF THE STUDY

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

- Implementing the writing process: A recursive process that involves five stages: prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, publishing.
- Writing skills: Abilities to communicate with proper standards, grammar, punctuation, among others.
- Collaboration: Working together to create or produce something.
- Engagement in writing: Students' level of focus, drive, and enthusiasm when completing written assignments.

Four different types of data gathering procedures were used in this study to help answer the research questions. A pre and post-test were applied to assess learners' writing skills at the beginning and at the end of the intervention period to measure improvement. These examinations evaluated four performance levels, from beginner to exemplary, according to the following factors:

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: Focus and logical flow
5. Mechanics: Grammar, spelling, and punctuation

The researcher-filled observation checklists 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) exhibiting positive attitudes while collaborating in Padlet. With a rating scale, the checklist quantified the levels of frequency (4 = Always; 3 = Usually; 2 = Sometimes, and 1 = Rarely)

Finally, pre-post surveys (Appendix D) were applied before and after the implementation to collect and analyze the students' thoughts, feelings, and perspectives about:

- 1) Attitudes towards writing
- 2) Generating, revising, feedback
- 3) Collaboration

The pre-post surveys used a qualitative scale: Always, Sometimes, Rarely, and Never. Additionally, a Post survey about Padlet was applied at the end of the implementation. This survey presented 7 different statements about Padlet and its implications in English language learning on a qualitative scale with the following descriptors: Strongly agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly disagree.

## RESULTS

Regarding the initial 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 findings, students shown evidence of difficulty organizing and articulating their ideas in a paragraph during the pre-test. The establishment of a topic phrase and a concluding thought in the first paragraphs presented difficulties for the students. In addition, there were a lot of grammatical and spelling mistakes, as well as very little vocabulary use, in the evaluation of the pre-test. The post-test results, however, confirmed that the intervention aided students in producing more consistent, detailed, and understandable paragraphs (see Table 1).

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 of the pretest was 9.10 (SD 2,437) and the mean of the post-test was 15.73 (SD 1,358). Moreover, the minimum grade in the pretest (5) improved in the post test (14).

The effect size was calculated on the Social Science Statistics web site and the result indicated a Cohen's *d* (Mean of pretest - Mean of posttest / pooled SD) = 0.33 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 (see Table 2).

Table 2 shows the values of the individual categories of performance collected from the pre and post-tests. The outcomes demonstrate that after the implementation was accomplished, the groups improved in every category. 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 more clearly stated topic sentences.

The "concluding sentence" category had the largest improvement of all the performance categories, increasing by 1.47 points from the pre-test (M = 1.58) to the post-test (M = 3.23). According to the results, students were able to compose closing sentences that were more comprehensive than those they were able to in the Pre-test.

The Post-test findings showed that the "body/supporting details" category (M = 2.93) and the "mechanics" component (M = 3.10) had the lowest values. The findings showed that some students used fewer information to increase readers' interest in the issue in the body of their essays. Nevertheless, students did not always use the appropriate vocabulary. Furthermore, some students' sentences lacked flow and there were, in some cases, more than 5 errors in spelling and grammar.

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 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

In order to answer the second research question: To what extent will collaboration using Padlet impact students' engagement in writing? Observation checklists were filled by the teacher once a week during the implementation. These observations were made on 10 groups of 4 students and considered the frequencies of students staying on task, participating in group discussions, commenting, and providing feedback, as well as exhibiting positive attitudes during the prewriting activities. The data collected were entered into SPSS software to obtain an average of the frequencies from the observations of three sessions of study (see Figure 1).

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 participation of students in group discussions, students (43.5% usually and 38.5% sometimes) participated in group discussions. Additionally, students offered comments and feedback (47.5% usually and 36% sometimes). Finally, throughout group projects, students showed a positive attitude (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 showed excellent leadership, research, and technological skills. On the other hand, those who needed the most help with technology management and research abilities were the ones who showed the lowest levels of engagement. However, as the sessions progressed, students were able to face technology issues and manage the tool more easily, increasing their engagement levels.

In order to answer the third research question: 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 intervention. The survey results revealed that students' perceptions had improved (see Figure 2).

The post-survey results showed that students attitude towards writing was more positive than before the implementation (Post-survey = 48% always and 41.5% sometimes), compared to (Pre-survey = 25% always and 62.5% sometimes). They have higher confidence in their ability to communicate themselves (post-survey = 36.6% constantly and 48.8% occasionally). Students also perceive themselves as writers (post-survey = 39.5% constantly and 34.5% occasionally) (see Figure 3).

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.

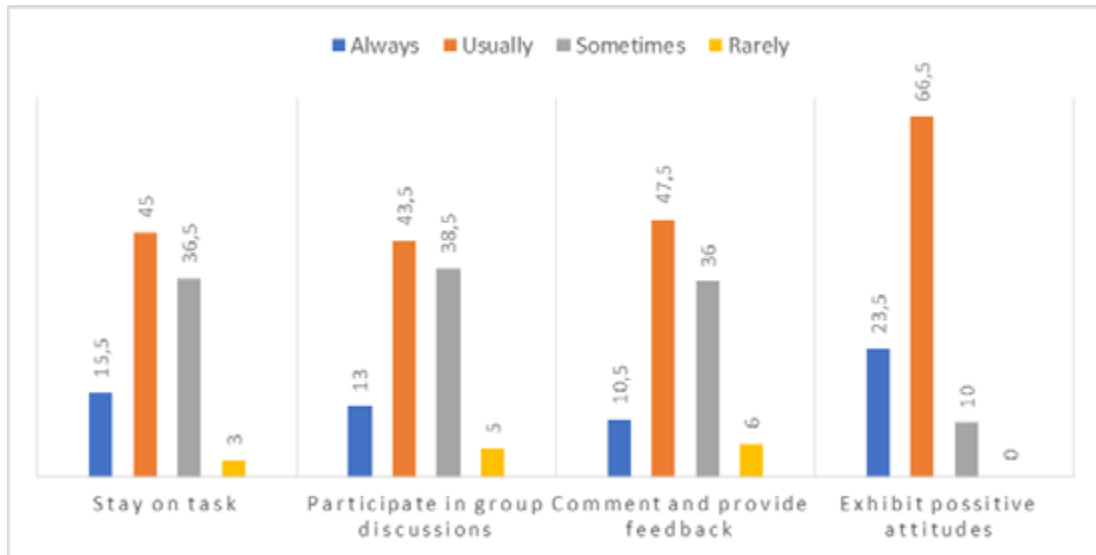
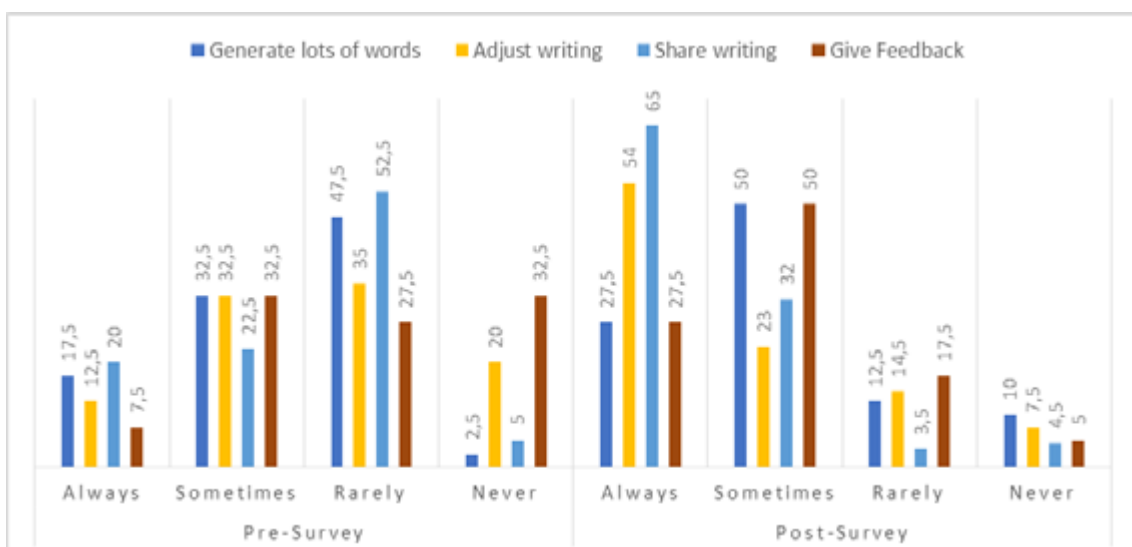


Figure 2. Pre-post Survey attitudes towards writing. This figure illustrates the frequencies of the Pre and Post surveys related to the students' attitude towards writing.



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 of the pre-survey revealed that students rarely generated lots of words (47.5%), rarely were able to adjust their writing pieces (35%), rarely used to share their writings and drafts (52.5%), and sometimes gave feedback (32.5%) before the implementation. On the other hand, according to the Post-survey, students agreed that after the implementation they could 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) (see Figure 4).

In terms of collaboration, students manifested positive attitudes since the beginning of the study. According to the result of the post-survey students agreed that they could 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) (see Figure 5).

In relation to the use of the technological tool Padlet, 57.5 % of students agreed and 30% strongly agreed that language learning through Padlet is a good idea. Also, 45% of students agreed and 40% strongly agreed that the work on Padlet kept them engaged during the tasks. In addition, 55% of students agreed and 30% strongly agreed that their performance in English writing has improved through the collaborative use of Padlet. Similarly, 55% of students agreed and 35% strongly agreed that the interactions through Padlet helped them to become active in writing activities. Finally, 62.5% of students agreed and 27.5% strongly agreed that they will use Padlet in English language learning in the future.

## DISCUSSION

The results showed that as in the studies conducted by Godwin-Jones (2018); Mallon & Bersten (2015); Fuchs (2014) students' participation, motivation, and engagement increased through the implementation of technology as well as collaboration during the lessons.

Additionally, because the writing process was included into a range of activities with various topics, learners' writing abilities significantly improved. Implementing the writing process approach satisfied the students' needs in EFL writing while also enhancing their writing abilities, as indicated in Faraj (2015) and Laksmi (2006). Students were able to articulate their thoughts in a more structured manner. Their works used more descriptive terminology and included complete topic sentences and conclusions.

For the study to be successful, student collaboration was essential. As it is presented by the findings of Chen (2018) collaborative learning helps both teachers and learners to develop a supportive learning environment, motivating students to produce, participate, and interact within the groups. Students had the chance to share their ideas, give feedback, and develop by working as a team and accepting responsibility for the task at hand through collaborative writing.

Lastly, as per Fuchs (2014) and De Berg (2014), Padlet offered students a platform to actively engage 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 to a larger audience. Padlet is a stage for collaboration, interaction, and creativity for language learners.

Figure 4. Pre-post survey Collaboration. This figure illustrates the frequencies of the Pre and Post surveys related to the students' collaboration.

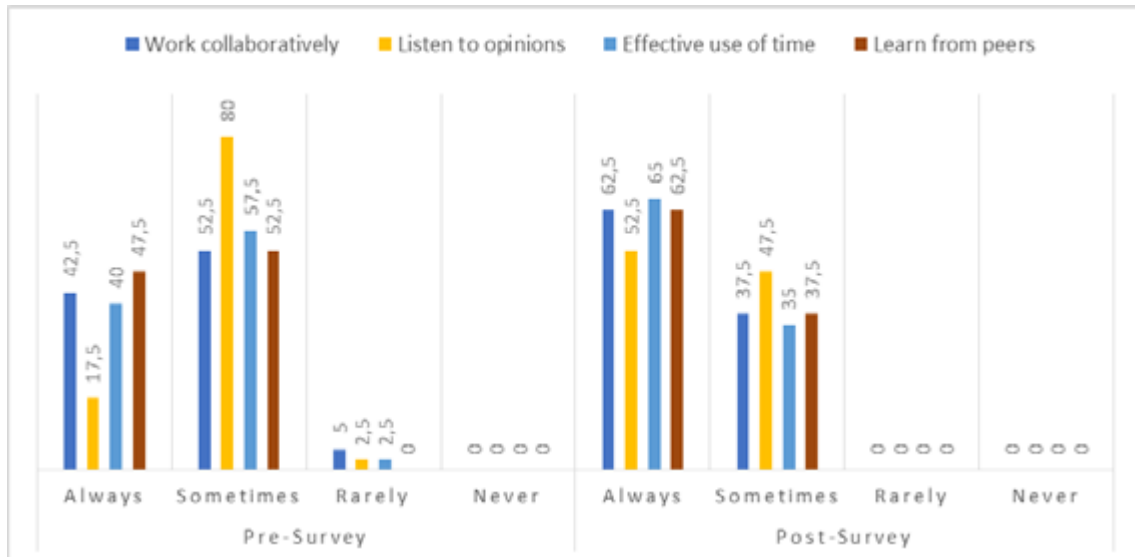
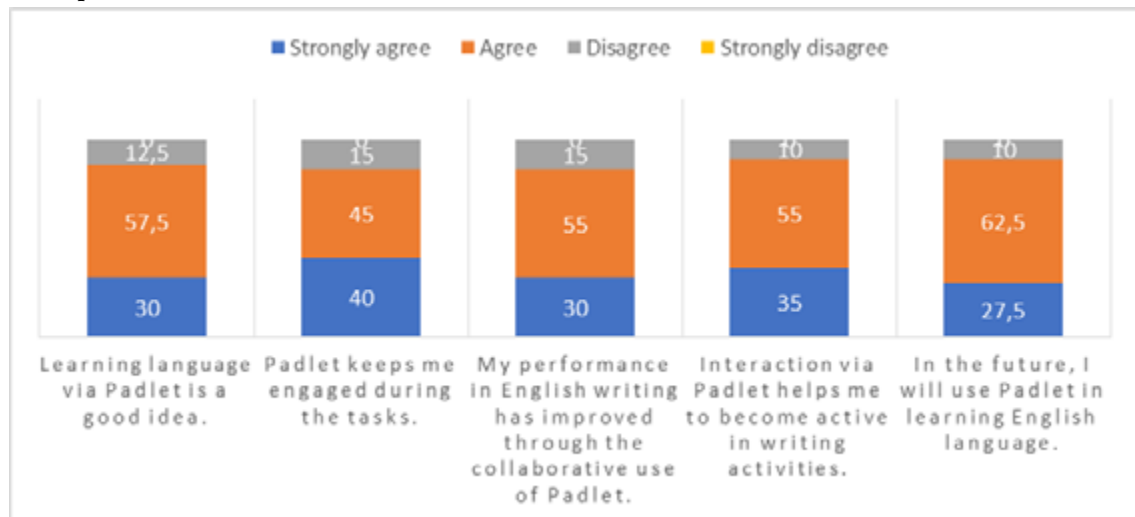


Figure 5. Post-survey Padlet. This figure illustrates the results of the surveys related to the use of Padlet after the implementation.



## CONCLUSIONS

The present action-research project explored a way of helping students meet the standards and the goals of EFL learning in the Ecuadorian context, as well as, increasing their engagement and willingness towards language learning. This study additionally sought to understand how incorporating the writing process through group collaboration on Padlet could impact students' perceptions of writing, group projects, and the use of technology to improve their work.

According to the findings of descriptive statistics, learners' writing abilities significantly improved between the pre- and post-test. The pre-test and pre-survey results showed that students were not familiar with the writing process or its stages prior to implementation. They were not used to writing drafts of their written tasks, and rarely did they show their work to someone before they submitted it. The post-survey results showed that these conditions changed positively. Students learned the value of writing through a multi-stage, non-linear approach that allowed them to go back and examine and revise their work as many times as necessary, just like professional writers do.



Similarly, the outcomes of post-tests showed a notable improvement in several areas of students' writing. By examining an example of a well-written paragraph and receiving frequent, useful comments students learned the importance of 1) to convey powerful, compelling topic sentences. 2) To build coherence in the body with the use of supporting ideas, and 3) To effectively restate the main point at the conclusion of their writing.

Padlet is a very useful tool for pre-writing activities, especially. Making lists, uploading pictures, commenting, and even giving likes to the posts, provided students with the opportunity to express themselves without fear or apprehension. Additionally, Padlet's collaborative writing feature encouraged and motivated students to participate. Even the more reserved students showed eagerness to join in group conversations and provide their thoughts because of the low-risk aspect of the Padlet platform.

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.

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