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Iranian Journal of Language Teaching Research

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Urmia University

Telecollaborative E-Feedback in EAP Writing: A Qualitative Study of Peer and Instructor Interactions

Imelda V. Bangun [a,*], Patrick Mannion [b], Zhengjie Li [c], John I. Liontas [d]

[a] *Keiser University, US*

[b] *Kansai Daigai University, Japan*

[c] *South China Normal University, China*

[d] *University of South Florida, US*

ABSTRACT

Integrating telecollaborative academic writing and e-feedback from peers and instructors supports English learners in constructing academic knowledge. However, such opportunities remain limited in English for Academic Purposes (EAP) contexts, constraining the development of critical thinking and academic writing skills. Guided by Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, this study examines six EAP students' perceptions and interactions through peer and instructor feedback via Google Docs. Data from document exchanges and semi-structured interviews were thematically analyzed. Findings indicate that students engaged in both social-function exchanges and revision-oriented feedback, addressing global and local writing concerns. While learners valued peer feedback, they sought instructor validation to confirm its accuracy. Notable gains included improved comprehension, grammar, text organization, and stylistic control. Most importantly, participants reported enhanced knowledge construction and transformation through sustained social interaction within the course. These findings underscore the pedagogical value of integrating telecollaborative e-feedback platforms in EAP instruction to foster academic literacy and critical thinking.

Keywords: telecollaboration; online peer and instructor feedback; academic writing; EAP; Sociocultural Theory

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received: 1 Apr. 2023 **Revised version received:** 29 Dec. 2025

Accepted: 11 Feb. 2026 **Available online:** 1 Mar. 2026

* Corresponding author: Keiser University, US
Email address: ibangun@keiseruniversity.edu

doi 10.30466/ijltr.2026.121921

Introduction

Due to its ubiquity and motivational effects, computer-mediated communication (CMC) has become an integral feature of academic writing instruction. CMC has been utilized not only to teach critical thinking and writing skills (Sullivan, 1993) but also to facilitate collaborative writing and online peer and instructor feedback (Lin, 2014; Nguyen, 2018; Yang, 2016). In English for Academic Purposes (EAP) contexts, students are routinely tasked with reading research articles and transforming that knowledge into academic texts such as rhetorical analyses, syntheses, and annotated bibliographies (Chen, 2016; Hirvela & Du, 2013). Through these processes, learners can develop higher-order thinking skills, improve the organization of academic texts, and effectively integrate, paraphrase, cite, and quote sources (Leopold et al., 2013; Mehrpour et al., 2023; Pham et al., 2020; Rouhi et al., 2020). Hiverla and Du (2013) further argue that academic writing requires students to actively construct knowledge by incorporating the essential components of argumentative essays.

Alongside the process of transforming reading into academic writing, opportunities to revise written work are essential for developing writing proficiency (Beach & Friedrich, 2006). Numerous studies have demonstrated that peer feedback enhances learning by actively engaging students in collaborative knowledge construction (Li et al., 2010; Li et al., 2012). Cheng and Ku (2009) emphasized that peer feedback benefits both the receiver and the provider, fostering critical thinking and evaluative skills. Increasingly, language educators integrate computer-assisted language learning (CALL) and CMC to create authentic, motivating learning environments (Wu et al., 2011). Zeng and Takatsu (2009) observed that online peer feedback encourages collaborative dialogue and improves students' proofreading and editing skills. Consequently, digital feedback interactions with peers and instructors enhance student engagement and collaborative learning.

Despite these promising findings, challenges persist. While research highlights the positive effects of peer and instructor feedback (Hyland & Hyland, 2006; Yang, 2011), concerns remain regarding disparities in linguistic ability and mutual understanding within peer review processes (Hanrahan & Isaacs, 2001). Less proficient learners may struggle to offer constructive feedback to more advanced peers, potentially limiting the effectiveness of collaborative revision. In response, scholars have called for feedback practices to be guided by learners' Zones of Proximal Development (ZPD) (Vygotsky, 1978), ensuring that instructional interventions align with learners' developmental readiness.

Given these challenges, this study investigates peer and instructor feedback in telecollaborative writing assignments within EAP courses at a research university in the southeastern United States. Specifically, it explores learners' perceptions of online feedback via Google Docs and examines how peer and instructor feedback interactions support knowledge construction within learners' ZPDs. To the authors' knowledge, limited research has simultaneously examined peer and instructor feedback in telecollaborative EAP writing environments, particularly with a focus on learners' ZPDs. This study seeks to address that gap, while also gauging learners' preferences and attitudes toward this instructional approach.

Review of Literature

Theoretical Considerations

The implementation of pair and group work in language education is grounded in a range of theoretical frameworks. From the perspective of Sociocultural Theory (SCT), learning is inherently socially situated, and language use in social interactions mediates language acquisition (Vygotsky,

1978). Vygotsky posited that learners should engage in interaction-oriented activities, as social interactions promote learning within the ZPD, defined as "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem-solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (p. 86). Vygotsky (1978) further explains that "Human consciousness arises through the dialectical unity of our biologically endowed brain and 'auxiliary stimuli' appropriated during participation in social practices" (p. 8). Since *mediation* is an essential mechanism in language development through social interaction (Lantolf, 2003; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006; Lantolf et al., 2018; Poehner & Lantolf, 2014; Vygotsky, 1978), it is worthwhile to explore the role of telecollaborative tools, peers, and instructors in the feedback process and how they influence peer feedback practices and writing proficiency.

From a social cognitive perspective, collaborative writing allows L2 learners to engage in observational learning, enhance self-efficacy, and foster a supportive environment in which they can model and strengthen writing skills through collective effort. This aligns with Bandura's (2009) assertion that "[t]he more efficacious groups judge themselves to be, the higher their collective aspirations, the greater their motivational investment in their undertakings, the stronger their staying power in the face of impediments, the more robust their resilience to adversity, and the higher their performance accomplishments" (p. 270). Collaborative writing thus creates opportunities for learners to observe their peers' (meta)writing processes, exchange ideas with increased self-efficacy, and engage in negotiation of meaning—interactions that provide essential input to advance L2 development (Long, 1996). In sum, this *collective efficacy* (Bandura, 2009) is achieved by pooling L2 learners' linguistic resources and co-constructing writing activities through scaffolded interaction.

While research on mediation (e.g., written/oral feedback, online/pen-and-paper feedback, face-to-face/anonymous feedback) has enhanced understanding of the peer feedback process and revisions (Lin 2014; Liu & Sadler, 2003), the mediating effects of telecollaborative tools (i.e., Google Docs) in online peer and instructor feedback, particularly among EAP students, remain underexplored. Critically, the systematic ways in which L2 learners perceive and internalize feedback from both peers and instructors remain insufficiently understood. Given mediation's central role in language development via social interaction (Lantolf, 2003; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006; Vygotsky, 1978), investigating the roles of telecollaborative tools, peers, and instructors in the feedback process—and their influence on peer feedback practices and writing proficiency—is essential.

L2 Feedback in Collaborative Writing

L2 feedback is situated within the concept of the ZPD, requiring learners to engage in L2 knowledge co-construction by identifying flaws or errors and presenting corrections (Storch, 2018). Feedback from peers and instructors in digital learning environments has been shown to help L2 learners improve not only their writing skills but also their critical thinking (Pham et al., 2020). Through collaboration, L2 learners may engage in critical thinking discussions and achieve a deeper understanding and enhanced retention of learned material (Alvarado Gutiérrez et al., 2019). Roschelle and Teasley (1995) defined collaborative learning as "the mutual engagement of participants in a coordinated effort to solve the problem together" (p. 70). Collaborative learning is fundamental to knowledge transformation and construction (Tannenbaum & Tahar, 2008; Vygotsky, 1978). Through collaborative learning and feedback, students become aware of higher levels of learning as they participate in online small-group discussions (AbuSeileek & Abualsha'r, 2014).

Peer modeling and feedback are crucial elements in collaborative learning and are particularly valuable for summary writing (Min, 2006; Lin, 2014). Peer feedback is a process through which learners observe their peers' thoughts, strategies, and actions, facilitating the transformation of their

academic knowledge and language awareness into enhanced skills and understanding (Topping & Ehly, 1998). Peer feedback encourages collaborative learning, as students learn to negotiate meaning through dialogue and interaction with peers (Hu & Lam, 2010).

Using an action research methodology, Chen (2019) found that collaborative video-making projects integrated with Facebook posts provided opportunities for EFL students at a university in Taiwan to enhance their speaking skills. While crafting a series of five-minute videos, students in each collaborative learning group were afforded opportunities to think critically, articulate their ideas in discussions, and achieve high levels of learning autonomy and efficacy.

Scholars in SLA broadly concur that both peer and instructor feedback are pivotal to L2 learners' writing development (see Brooks & Swain, 2009; Diab, 2009; Hyland & Hyland, 2006; Watanabe & Swain, 2007), and this consensus is evident in digital contexts as well (Ho, 2015; Liu & Sadler, 2003; Lyu & Lai, 2022; Ma, 2020; Tian & Zhou, 2020; Tseng & Yeh, 2019). Underscoring the synergy generated by L2 learners' collaborative writing, Watanabe and Swain (2007) suggested that through active feedback exchange, learners can more effectively internalize shared knowledge and retain vocabulary. Notably, Hyland and Hyland (2006) stressed that less proficient learners may not be able to provide useful and relevant feedback to their more competent peers. Tian and Zhou (2020) offered more nuanced insights into the feedback peers and instructors provide in L2 writing. They maintained that L2 learners in online writing contexts showed varied engagement with automated, peer, and teacher feedback, with most feedback originating from automated sources but being the least incorporated, while teacher feedback was more frequently applied. Differences in uptake were also observed based on learners' proficiency levels and essay tasks.

Mixed Perceptions of L2 Feedback in Collaborative Writing

Although there has been growing interest in peer feedback over the past two decades, this study is grounded in three key trends, highlighting that L2 learners tend to hold divergent perceptions toward feedback from their peers and instructors.

The first trend focuses on *revision-oriented discourse*, where students identify problems and exchange solutions through revisions (Ho, 2015). Ho's study showed that learners addressed both global revision-oriented feedback (e.g., content/idea development, organization, and purpose) and local revision-oriented feedback (e.g., wording, grammar, and punctuation) when providing peer comments.

The second trend centers on *inter-group peer feedback*, where Ma (2020) found that such feedback tended to emphasize content, organization, and layout more than mechanical issues. In contrast, instructors tended to provide more language-focused feedback, which the author attributed to students' face-saving concerns.

The third trend involves using technology to extend peer feedback and peer learning beyond the classroom into a more interactive learning environment (Lyu & Lai, 2022; Tseng & Yeh, 2019). The primary platform used in this context was Google Docs. A recent example is Tian and Zhou (2020), who explored the feedback uptake of EFL students receiving instructor, peer, and automated feedback in an online introductory EFL writing course. Their findings indicated that while instructors provided less feedback overall, the uptake rate for instructor feedback was the highest. Moreover, uptake was greater for meaning-focused feedback than for surface-level feedback across all sources.

Despite the clear recognition of teacher feedback in collaborative writing processes, some studies (e.g., Brooks & Swain, 2009; Rouhi et al., 2020; Yeganehpour & Zarfsaz, 2021) have demonstrated

that peer feedback may contribute more significantly to learners' writing competence. According to Byrd (2003), peer feedback can boost learners' confidence and improve both content and conventions. Drawing on a sociocultural perspective, Hu (2005) attributed the success of his English writing program for Chinese EFL learners at a Singaporean university to a highly structured and well-trained peer-review process, arguing that peer suggestions were effectively internalized during revisions. Brooks and Swain (2009) concluded that feedback from L2 learners was often more developmentally appropriate and effective than feedback from teachers.

In a quasi-experimental study, Rouhi et al. (2020) compared the writing accuracy of three groups—feedback-giving, feedback-receiving, and a control group—following a series of translation tasks. The feedback-giving group outperformed the others (i.e., produced fewer clauses with errors) in both translation and picture description tasks. This suggests that giving peer feedback may provide more cognitive benefits than receiving it. Similarly, Yeganehpour and Zarfsaz (2021) investigated the effects of both peer and instructor feedback on verb-tense accuracy in EFL student writing. Their findings indicated that while both feedback types improved tense accuracy, peer feedback was slightly more effective.

While these studies highlight the benefits of peer and instructor feedback, other research has noted several challenges (Do, 2023; Hanrahan & Isaacs, 2001; Such, 2019). Hanrahan and Isaacs (2001) underscored the impact of L2 learners' varied linguistic competence, which may hinder mutual understanding and the effectiveness of peer review—especially when less proficient learners lack the metacognitive skills needed to provide meaningful feedback. Such (2019) observed that English learners at a U.S. college often focused more on meaning-making than on mechanics such as spelling and grammar during telecollaborative writing. Beginning-level students struggled to understand the collaborative process and were generally unable to provide effective feedback. While intermediate learners engaged more consistently, they expressed mixed perceptions of the value of peer interaction. Advanced-level students, due to their greater proficiency, participated less in peer feedback and did not value group discussions focused on the writing process, suggesting they viewed collaborative writing as an individual task rather than a collective one.

Telecollaboration in L2 Writing

Since the rise and recognition of telecollaborative tools, a plethora of research has investigated their potential to advance L2 learners' writing competence (Alwahoub et al., 2022; Alwaleedi, 2022; Dooly, 2017; Sippel & Martin, 2024) as well as explored how feedback generated within telecollaborative platforms may mediate their thinking, thereby enhancing their metacognitive awareness of writing. For example, Suwantarathip and Saovapa (2014) reported that telecollaborative tools such as Google Docs not only encouraged L2 learners to compose essays but also enabled them to achieve higher mean scores compared to peers who completed the same tasks in face-to-face settings. Similarly, Bikowski and Vithanage (2016) found that L2 learners engaged in collaborative web-based writing groups using Google Docs demonstrated statistically significant writing gains and positive perceptions of the experience. In the domain of L2 feedback, Hsu (2019) concluded that wiki-mediated collaborative writing empowered EFL learners to contemplate language choices, co-construct ambiguous text segments, and exchange constructive feedback within a social-constructivist paradigm.

With advances in computer and information technology, online peer feedback is increasingly valued over traditional written feedback, as students are better positioned to participate actively and assume responsibility for their writing tasks (Guardado & Shi, 2007). Dooly (2017) defined telecollaboration in education as the use of digital communication tools to promote learning through social interaction and collaboration, fostering independent learning. Through online peer and instructor feedback, students can anonymously offer comments while reviewing their more proficient peers'

summary revision processes by reviewing log files (Yang, 2011). These log files function as valuable resources for students to compare and reflect on their revisions relative to those of advanced peers (Yang, 2016). After receiving online peer feedback, graduate students can clarify illogical sentences and textual ambiguities, thereby facilitating the construction of new academic knowledge through the reorganization of ideas in reading and writing tasks (Hovardas et al., 2014; Yang, 2016). Notably, a recent study by Sippel and Martin (2024) found that feedback from both partners and instructors helped German learners at a U.S. college compose better emails. However, partner feedback did not yield more effective writing outcomes than instructor feedback.

Numerous studies have compared the benefits and drawbacks of CMC/CALL peer review with those of traditional face-to-face peer review. For instance, Liu and Sadler (2003) investigated peer review via CMC and traditional face-to-face modes in first-year composition courses with native and non-native English speakers in the United States. They found that the CMC group produced more global evaluative comments—those strongly linked to improved overall writing quality—than the traditional group. Mwalonga (2012) found that asynchronous online discussion forums were effective tools for both formative (i.e., non-graded) and summative assessment. Chang et al. (2011) similarly advocated the use of CMC, stating that online discussion forums fostered satisfactory peer interaction. They further examined peer review among 24 Taiwanese non-English-major undergraduates in an elective writing course, comparing face-to-face peer review (pen and paper), asynchronous CMC (formal LMS), and synchronous CMC (MSN chat). Students generated the most global revision comments in the face-to-face mode, partly because the structured in-class setting encouraged task focus. Chang et al. (2011) concluded that despite CMC's benefits, challenges remain in accurately negotiating meaning. Additionally, Xu and Zeng (2019) reported that 48 college-level EFL students in China viewed synchronous CMC tools (e.g., Moodle) positively for enhancing conversational and expressive skills and articulating constructive thoughts during challenging tasks. However, these students also noted limitations in Moodle's constrained learning environment, particularly its lack of real-time oral communication.

Current Conundrums

Research on the interplay of peer feedback, instructor feedback, and telecollaborative tools remains limited and inconclusive. The challenges intensify when examining the quality of peer feedback, the effectiveness of L2 learners' revisions (Li et al., 2010), and their perceptions of giving and receiving reviews (Trautmann, 2009). Consequently, it is essential to clarify the systematic steps involved in providing both peer and instructor feedback, explore how digital platforms such as Google Docs shape L2 learners' peer-review processes, and identify which features within these platforms encourage more active participation. Based on the literature, the authors conclude that further investigation into the use of CMC for peer review is warranted—especially regarding the dynamics between peer and expert feedback.

Method

Research Questions

This study aims to address the following research questions:

1. What types of online peer and instructor feedback do EAP students typically receive?

2. How do EAP students perceive Google Docs as a telecollaborative tool and as a facilitator of online peer and instructor feedback to support their learning?

Choice of Inquiry Type

Building on previous studies (de Guerrero & Villamil, 2000; Yu & Lee, 2015) investigating group learning dynamics and, specifically, learners' peer feedback (Liu & Brown, 2015), this study adopts a qualitative research approach (Bochner, 2000) for data collection and analysis. Specifically, it employs a case study approach, which focuses on describing and understanding a phenomenon (Creswell, 2007): the reciprocal process of asynchronous peer and instructor feedback and how participants construct their knowledge (Yang, 2016). Twenty-five EAP students enrolled in *Writing and Editing 5* and *Advanced Business Topics* participated in this study. Of these, six were randomly selected for semi-structured interviews (see Table 1).

Context and Participants

Participants in this study were placed at an advanced EAP level based on their IELTS/TOEFL scores and on speaking and writing entrance examinations required by the program. They were enrolled in the Intensive English Program before pursuing majors in engineering, education, accounting, health, or business administration. Of the 25 EAP students who attended the *Writing and Editing 5* and *Advanced Business Topics* courses, six students (see Table 1) were randomly selected to participate in semi-structured interviews for this study. These courses were embedded in the curricular structure of an English Language Program at a large, public research university in the Southeastern United States. A major component of the courses was the integration of Google Docs as a telecollaborative tool to increase EAP students' academic writing proficiency through online peer and instructor feedback. The study was conducted over eight weeks during one semester, with each week offering three hours and forty-five minutes of instruction. Participants were informed that their participation would be voluntary and would not affect their assessed performance or course grades. Both the English Language Program and the Institutional Review Board of the host university granted permission to conduct this research.

Table 1
Profile of Participants

Pseudonyms	Country	Major	Gender
S1	Saudi Arabia	Industrial Engineering	M
S2	Saudi Arabia	Mechanical Engineering	M
S3	Saudi Arabia	Occupational Health and Safety	F
S4	Saudi Arabia	Business and Management	M
S5	China	Accounting	F
S6	China	Business and Management	F

Procedures

One of the researchers, who was also the instructor for both the Writing *and Editing 5* and *Advanced Business Topics* courses, used *Canvas* as the Learning Management System (LMS) to share a course guide and course summary. She also created Google Docs in Google Drive for writing telecollaboration and provided participants with access throughout the study. The instructional

presentation followed a timetable adapted from the research conducted by Wu et al. (2015), although the content and schedule were based on actual classroom activities (see Table 2).

In Stage One, participants received an introduction to peer and instructor feedback, as well as intensive upfront training on using Google Docs. In Stage Two, they were trained on providing feedback using a rubric. In Stage Three, the learning process focused on the following curricular elements: (a) content knowledge and vocabulary; (b) writing strategies such as composing a hook, thesis statement, and conclusion; (c) writing strategies including paraphrasing, summarizing, synthesizing, and citing sources; and (d) the organization of an argumentative essay: introduction, body, counterargument, refutation, and conclusion. During this stage, participants provided peer feedback, received confirmation of their input from the instructor, and subsequently received additional information from the instructor. Finally, in Stage Four, participants made revisions based on feedback from both peers and the instructor.

Table 2
Student Revision Process: 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Cycle

Stage One (One week)	Providing an introduction to peer and instructor feedback, along with training on Google Docs.	
Stage Two (Two weeks)	Providing training on how to write constructive feedback based on a rubric (see Appendix A) and teaching content knowledge and vocabulary related to the subject matter.	
Stage Three (Four weeks)	The 1st cycle of writing with revision	
	Step 1	Explaining different writing strategies and assigning students to write a hook, thesis statement, and conclusion for an argumentative essay using Google Docs. Students were also assigned to write collaboratively and provide feedback within groups (see Appendix B)
	Step 2	Assigning students to provide feedback to their peers based on the instructor's prompt.
	Step 3	Confirming and giving feedback on reviews provided by the students to each other (see Appendix C).
	Step 4	Providing further feedback (see Appendix D) on students' writing performance that their peers might have missed.
Stage Four (Two weeks)	The 2nd cycle of writing and revision	
	Assigning students to review feedback from peers and instructors and make revisions.	

After the students completed Stage Four, the researchers analyzed and coded the interactions between the instructor and students. We employed some of Gibbs' (2002) data analysis procedures. First, we organized the data from the transcribed interviews by assigning numbers to each student. The transcriptions were saved in Google Docs files for review. Second, we coded the comments using (1) a coding scheme from a study on virtual peer feedback by Liu and Sadler (2003) and (2) definitions of online peer and instructor feedback developed by Saeed et al. (2018). Liu and Sadler's (2003) coding scheme consists of the following nine codes: content; unity and organization; argumentative genre/purpose; language; mechanics; social support and care; maintaining good relations; shared understanding; and social ties (see Table 3 below for definitions and examples of each code). Third, we clustered students' comments in Google Docs into nine codes by identifying patterns and associations among them. Finally, we interpreted the data and reported it in the Results and Discussion section below. The final procedure involved conducting semi-structured interviews, which were arranged outside the classroom setting. The interviews, which lasted about 30 minutes on average and totaled approximately 3.5 hours, were all recorded. The authors transcribed the

interviews verbatim, producing about 90 pages. Each participant responded to fourteen questions regarding their experiences and attitudes toward online peer review. During the interviews, the researchers noted the participants' responses.

Results and Discussion

Q1: What types of online peer and instructor feedback do EAP students typically receive?

We analyzed online peer and instructor feedback by coding all comments using a coding scheme from Liu and Sadler's (2003) study on virtual peer feedback and definitions of online peer and instructor feedback developed by Saeed et al. (2018). The findings (see Table 3) showed that the EAP students and the instructor engaged in both revision-oriented and socially supportive discourse. These feedback exchanges targeted various aspects of the students' writing. They supported revisions at both the global and local levels, addressing content clarity, unity, organization, argumentative purpose, language use, and mechanics. At the same time, the interactions included elements of social support, maintaining good relations, shared understanding, and expressions of social ties, fostering a positive collaborative environment.

Table 3
Findings and Coding of Students' and Instructor's Interaction

Codes and Definitions	Sample Comments
1. Content = Any comment focusing on the clarity, sufficiency, or relevance of ideas and supporting details in relation to the essay's theme.	S1: I think you are missing a hook. Instructor: You should add a hook in your introduction to engage the reader's attention.
2. Unity and Organization = Any comment focusing on thematic consistency, the logical flow or order of ideas, or coherence among sentences.	S2: In my opinion, you should focus only on one topic in this body paragraph. Instructor: Good feedback. Please focus on discussing only one advantage of online learning and follow your outline.
3. Argumentative-Genre/Purpose = Any comment focusing on clear thesis statements, the definition of authors' positions, the articulation of claims, counterclaims, and/or rebuttals within the bodies of essays or their signposts.	S3**:** I think the argument *needs more supporting details.* Instructor: Great feedback. You should add two more supporting details explaining why the "fat tax" should be enacted into law.
4. Language = Any comment focusing on the grammar (e.g., forms, tenses) or meaning of linguistic items in the essays.	S2: Your verb should agree with your subject. Instructor: Yes. Is your subject singular or plural? Should you add "-s" to your verb?
5. Mechanics = Any comment focusing on the use of punctuation, spelling, or capitalization in the essays.	S2: field (suggesting peer to use lowercase "f" instead of capital "F" in the middle of a sentence). Instructor: Great feedback!
6. Social support and care = Any comment focusing on motivating or encouraging a learner, or showing care for peers, especially when a peer expresses negative feelings.	S4: Your paper is written well. Instructor: Yes!
7. Maintaining good relations = Any comment in which a learner introduces revision-oriented feedback in a polite and friendly manner, such as by offering positive or praising remarks.	S5: I'm sorry, but I think you need to expand this paragraph. Instructor: I agree.
8. Shared understanding = Any comment or series of comments exchanged by learners that address misunderstandings or acknowledge and confirm comprehension of their peers' feedback.	S1: I think this should not be in the past tense. S2: That's right. Thanks! Instructor: Yes, please correct the verb tense.
9. Social ties = Any comment expressing social connections or friendships, such as showing camaraderie or friendliness.	S6: Thank you so much for proofreading my paper. Instructor: I hope you learn a lot through providing peer feedback.

In one example from the dataset, S1 noted—and the instructor confirmed—that a hook is necessary to catch the reader's attention. Learners also posted comments about global issues related to organization and the flow of ideas. For instance, S2 observed a lack of focus and suggested limiting each paragraph to a single idea. The instructor agreed with S2's advice and noted that the student referred to the outline. As learners exchanged this type of global revision feedback, they also commented on matters of purpose and genre, as reflected in S3's remarks. At the local level, learners and the instructor addressed language accuracy and mechanics by offering suggestions to improve grammar, verb agreement, punctuation, and spelling, supporting detailed text refinement.

This range of feedback effectively covered key aspects of writing, including content clarity, unity, argumentative purpose, language use, and mechanics.

Beyond revision-focused comments, learners exchanged feedback that provided social support to maintain group well-being. This support took the form of compliments, positive reinforcement, and encouragement (S1, S2, S5, S4, and S6). The instructor also played a role in affirming these supportive exchanges, fostering a positive and trusting environment. Additionally, learners used polite, friendly language when offering revision suggestions, helping maintain good relations within the group. They actively worked to establish a shared understanding by acknowledging and clarifying peers' feedback, thereby minimizing misunderstandings and fostering more effective communication. Finally, the interactions reflected social ties that reinforced camaraderie and a sense of community among participants, further enhancing collaboration and engagement throughout the peer review process. Such socially supportive feedback is critical in telecollaborative contexts, as it promotes motivation, trust, and a willingness to engage constructively with peers, ultimately leading to richer and more effective revision practices.

These findings align with the coding categories established by Liu and Sadler (2003) and underscore the importance of both cognitive and social dimensions in online peer feedback. Thus, EAP students typically receive a comprehensive range of online peer and instructor feedback, encompassing both revision-oriented comments and social support, which together facilitate effective writing development.

Q2: How do EAP students perceive Google Docs as a telecollaborative tool and as a facilitator of online peer and instructor feedback to support their learning?

The participants were interviewed individually at the end of the semester to gain insight into their perceptions of peer and instructor feedback and their use of Google Docs as a telecollaboration platform. The interview data were transcribed and analyzed based on two thematic categories derived from the semi-structured interview questions, each focusing on participants' perceptions and experiences.

Peer and instructor Feedback—The most frequently used words by students to describe their perceptions of peer and instructor feedback were "good," "easy to understand," "helpful," and "trust." They expressed that it was valuable to have the opportunity to learn from others. Students also found peer feedback particularly accessible and beneficial, especially after completing their drafts and needing another perspective for proofreading. They emphasized the importance of trusting their classmates in the peer review process. S2 described her perceptions and experiences as follows:

> *Sometimes, my classmates' feedback is good. It is easier to understand because they explain simply. I can understand grammar better. To proofread others, you know other people's names so that you also can learn, and you trust them because, being able to proofread and see those mistakes, it's important. And again, sometimes when you write your paper you should just be done with it and then maybe come back*

> *the next day and then look at it again, and then you will find some of your mistakes. You know because if you just did it and then you keep on reading, you will not find the errors. It is good to have other people read your work.*

S6 shared his reflections on peer and instructor feedback:

> *I'm very happy; I will be very happy to get help from another student. Many times, my friends and I help each other because we use a simple way to explain what the professor has explained in class. I understand it, that's good, so it's also a good way to help you understand things better.*

However, S4 explained that although he trusted peer feedback, he occasionally questioned its accuracy. As a result, confirmation from the instructor was essential. He stated:

> *I like both instructor and classmates can put the idea and feedback, but I don't want certain people to give me feedback. So, I like the instructor to say whether the feedback is great or not. I like it this way. I still prefer to learn new things from all directions. I love to learn by myself, and from my friends, and I love the help from my instructor. I learn to write better.*

Google Apps and Google Docs as a Platform—While most students were initially unfamiliar with Google Apps, they expressed enjoyment using Google Docs. The most common words students used to describe their perceptions of Google Apps, particularly Google Docs, were "collaboration," "efficient," and "easy." They explained that Google Docs is similar to Microsoft Word but more efficient for collaboration because it automatically saves their work and includes commenting features that allow them to provide peer feedback. They also noted that, with intensive upfront training from the instructor, they encountered no difficulties navigating Google Docs. S1 and S5, respectively, explained that:

> *I like using Google Apps to communicate with my instructor and my classmates. The technology helped me communicate with my team of friends rather than give them my number. I also save time and paper. (S1)*

> *If somebody, if someone teaches you how to use it, I think there is nothing difficult until you try it, so I think it's easy, but I need to practice more for how to use more techniques or tips. (S5)*

S1 and S3 agreed that Google Docs, as a telecollaboration tool, is efficient:

> *The main purpose of Google Docs is collaboration. Yeah, we didn't have to save our work and email it to each other. We can't also work at the same time unless we are together. I was like collaborating with three people; without Google Docs or without Google Apps, we had to type, save, attach email, and send it to other people. With Google Docs, we are just doing everything there. We don't need to like it. We just say, hey, I updated the file. (S1)*

> *I think Google is really good for learning. Before this class, I don't know if we can share the article with a classmate. I don't know the Google Docs introduced this. I feel more motivated, more inspired to learn in the class. If you submit to your assignment on the Canvas, you can't write it. Everything is stored on the cloud. With Google Docs, you can retrieve the information to get access to them anytime, anywhere, and gain more technical knowledge using them right (familiarity). (S3)*

Overall, the participants perceived Google Docs as an effective and user-friendly telecollaborative tool that not only facilitated collaborative learning but also significantly enhanced their writing

experience and engagement with peer and instructor feedback, thus supporting their learning as intended.

Discussion

While prior studies have demonstrated that peer and instructor feedback can positively impact writing development (Hanrahan & Isaacs, 2001; Hyland & Hyland, 2006), other research has identified challenges associated with these forms of feedback. These challenges often stem from differences in linguistic proficiency, which affect learners' ability to provide continuous and effective feedback (Yang, 2011). Less proficient learners, in particular, may struggle to offer useful and relevant feedback to their more competent peers (Hyland & Hyland, 2006). Therefore, when implementing online peer feedback within telecollaborative writing contexts, it is important to include instructor feedback to validate and confirm peer comments. The ZPD framework (Vygotsky, 1978) offers a valuable lens for understanding and structuring language-teaching interactions.

Regarding peer and instructor feedback interactions, our study found that EAP students engaged in revision-oriented discourse consistent with previous research (Chang et al., 2011; Ho, 2015; Yu & Hu, 2017). Students focused on both global aspects—such as content development, organization, and purpose—and local issues like wording, grammar, and punctuation. Importantly, they also attended to the social dimensions of feedback, emphasizing group well-being during online peer and instructor exchanges. Semi-structured interviews revealed that most students appreciated learning from peers, who often explained concepts in more straightforward terms. However, students still valued the instructor's role in confirming the accuracy of peer feedback. These results align with Tian and Zhou's (2022) findings, which highlight EFL learners' higher regard for teacher feedback during revision, alongside the incorporation of feedback from digital tools, peers, and instructors.

Contrary to the findings of Brooks and Swain (2009) and Yeganehpour and Zarfsaz (2021), our study found that ESL learners showed a stronger preference for instructor validation of peer feedback before revising their work. This preference may be attributed to participants being international students enrolled in an EAP program seeking academic English improvement, who therefore lacked full confidence in both their own and their peers' language proficiency.

Regarding Google Docs as a telecollaboration tool, students reported positive perceptions of its efficiency for collaboration and appreciated features such as automatic saving and commenting. They noted that the platform was user-friendly, especially with initial instructor training. These findings support prior research (Bikowski & Vithanage, 2016; Suwantarathip & Saovapa, 2014) suggesting that Google Docs fosters ESL learners' interest in digital essay composition through its collaborative features and systematic feedback integration. Nonetheless, students emphasized the need for instructor guidance and presence to refine their writing and clarify linguistic aspects of grammar, text development, organization, and style, rather than relying solely on peer feedback.

Finally, peer and instructor feedback collectively facilitated significant improvements in academic writing and editing skills. Key gains included learners' enhanced understanding of grammar, text development, organization, and stylistic elements; opportunities to observe and learn from more proficient peers' writing processes (knowledge transformation); and the ability to independently resolve writing challenges through revision informed by feedback (knowledge construction). These findings confirm earlier research on the positive effects of online peer and instructor feedback (Hyland & Hyland, 2006; Yang, 2011) on students' writing and editing capabilities.

Conclusion

Without a doubt, English academic writing can seem extremely daunting and challenging for EAP students, especially those new to Western-style teaching and learning processes delivered in English. However, for EAP students, most of whom are digital natives predisposed to engage responsively in a digital environment, telecollaborative tools like Google Docs may accommodate their learning styles and empower them to become active participants in exchanging peer feedback. More importantly, this study underscores Vygotsky's (1978) ZPD construct and extends it to a more meaningful concept, the multi-directional ZPD, which refers to the constant alternation of the more knowledgeable others among learners and the regulation and mediation afforded by the physical properties of a tool (Abtahi et al., 2017). The EAP students felt engaged in the revision process on Google Docs because they were led to provide constructive feedback to their peers in a multi-directional way, along with macro-level scaffolding from the instructor. To this end, as instructional technologies rapidly develop, EAP practitioners should judiciously infuse English academic writing classes with innovative and effective apps and online tools that continually challenge the roles of EAP students as they engage in collaborative tasks and activities. Instructors, as the more knowledgeable others, can avail themselves of opportunities to monitor learners' meaningful interactions and help learners construct their content knowledge, leveraging their EAP prowess.

This study has several limitations. First, the EAP instructor was also a researcher, which may introduce some degree of bias; readers should consider how this might influence the study's conclusions. Second, future studies would benefit from randomly selecting a larger and more diverse sample of participants from other *Writing and Editing 5* and *Advanced Business Topics* courses taught by different instructors. Third, increasing the number of participants and extending data collection over a longer period could provide deeper insights into the types of online peer and instructor feedback EAP students receive during their online learning.

In light of these limitations, we suggest that researchers in the TESOL or ESL fields continue to explore the affordances of telecollaborative tools like Google Docs for developing EAP students' academic writing skills. First, researchers are encouraged to investigate the impact of instructor versus peer feedback using quantitative methods, such as surveys, to measure subtle differences between these feedback types and to confirm or challenge this study's finding that EAP students employing Google Docs tend to favor peer feedback that has been validated by an instructor.

Second, it is worthwhile to examine the effects of telecollaborative tools like Google Docs on EAP students' preferred modes of English academic writing. A quasi-experimental study comparing telecollaborative writing environments with traditional paper-based writing environments could elucidate the affordances of Google Docs. This approach would also allow researchers to explore individual differences among EAP students, including preferred interaction modes, learning styles (see Ho, 2015), and cultural backgrounds. In other words, it is essential to obtain more granular insights into how telecollaborative tools can be better integrated to facilitate EAP students' English academic writing development.

Finally, exploring the external L2 motivation spectrum may yield valuable findings on how a structured and gamified online learning environment can galvanize EAP students' development of English academic writing skills. Huang et al.'s (2019) study demonstrated that gamification elements such as points, badges, and leaderboards encourage students to produce higher-quality peer feedback and achieve better learning outcomes. Accordingly, researchers are encouraged to incorporate gamified approaches to further empower students to interact with peers and instructors on Google Docs, generating richer data on EAP students' learning experiences and outcomes.

In sum, while this study acknowledges certain limitations, it opens promising avenues for future research into the pedagogical potential of telecollaborative tools in EAP contexts. The findings underscore the importance of designing feedback-rich, technology-enhanced learning environments that align with students' linguistic needs and digital proficiencies. As digital platforms—and increasingly, AI-powered writing tools—continue to shape the landscape of academic writing instruction, a deeper understanding of how students engage with feedback—and how instructors can effectively mediate that engagement—remains crucial and integral to evolving pedagogical practices. Continued research in this area will not only refine our understanding of effective teaching strategies but also inform future innovations in EAP instruction, ensuring that both peer and instructor feedback are meaningfully integrated to support learners' academic writing development.

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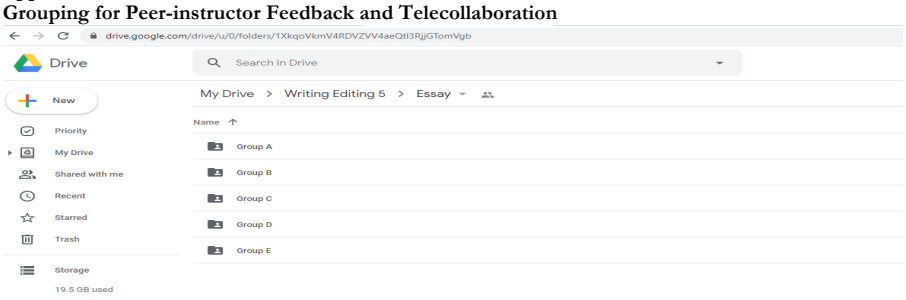
Appendix A

Writing Rubric

Criteria	Ratings						Pts
CONTENT: • Has appropriate thesis; • Ideas are organized and clear; • Transitions smoothly connect ideas; • Provides substantial and effective support; • Demonstrates accurate knowledge of content and/or research; • Shows critical thinking and insight in analysis.	5.0 pts Excellent	4.0 pts Good	3.0 pts Adequate	2.0 pts Minimal	1.0 pts Unsatisfactory	0.0 pts No Points Earned	5.0 pts
ERROR CORRECTION: Significant grammatical, organizational, content, and/or vocabulary error corrections/improvements are indicated and made.	5.0 pts Excellent	4.0 pts Good	3.0 pts Adequate	2.0 pts Minimal	1.0 pts Unsatisfactory	0.0 pts No Points Earned	5.0 pts
LANGUAGE: • Shows consistent control over basic grammar; • Vocabulary is level appropriate; • Grammatical and vocabulary errors do not cause confusion in meaning	5.0 pts Excellent	4.0 pts Good	3.0 pts Adequate	2.0 pts Minimal	1.0 pts Unsatisfactory	0.0 pts No Points Earned	5.0 pts
ACADEMICS: • Meets assignment requirements (page length, required content, minimum of 5 sources, etc.); • Correct formatting used throughout; • Sources incorporated correctly through summary, paraphrase, and quotation; • In-text citations are present and of correct format; • Reference or Works Cited page present and of correct format.	5.0 pts Excellent	4.0 pts Good	3.0 pts Adequate	2.0 pts Minimal	1.0 pts Unsatisfactory	0.0 pts No Points Earned	5.0 pts
							Total Points: 20.0

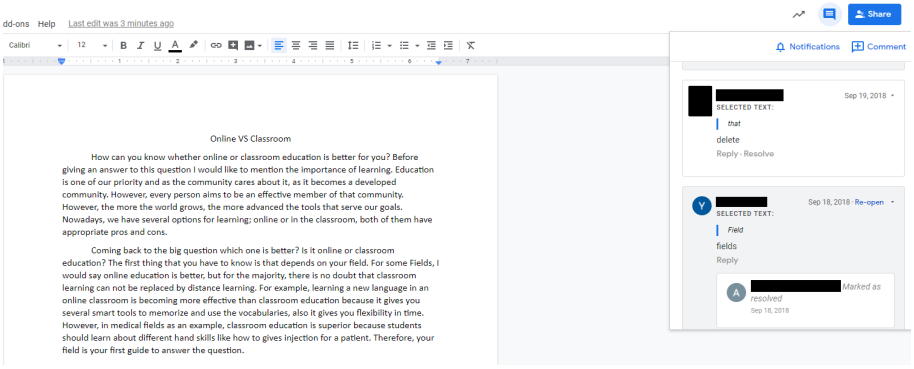
Appendix B

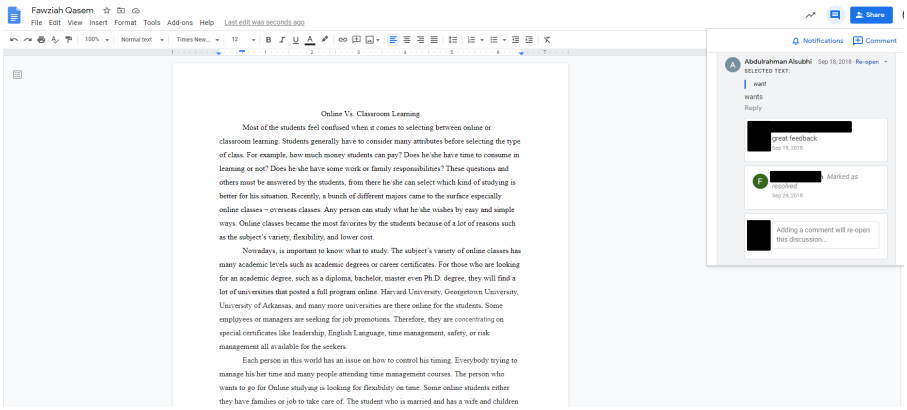
Grouping for Peer-instructor Feedback and Telecollaboration



Appendix C

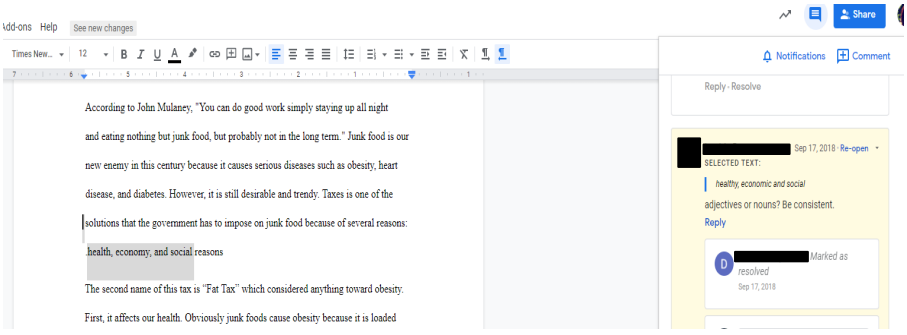
Peer and Instructor Feedback Samples on Google Docs





Appendix D

Instructor Feedback



Imelda Bangun, Ph.D., has worked with immigrants, refugees, and international students for over thirteen years as an educator and administrator. She has a Ph.D. in Technology in Education and Second Language Acquisition from the University of South Florida. Her research interests include e-learning, metacognition, motivation, English for Academic Purposes, and multiliteracy.

Patrick Mannion, Ph.D., is an instructor at Kansai Gaidai University. He has a doctoral degree in Second Language Acquisition / Instructional Technology (University of South Florida) and over 20 years of teaching experience. His research interests and experiences include L2 education, multimodal communication, and language teacher education.

Zhengjie Li, Ph.D., is an English instructor at the International Department of the High School Affiliated to South China Normal University (HFI). He obtained his doctoral degree at the University of South Florida. His research interests include cross-cultural translation, instructional technologies in foreign language education, and GEN AI in TESOL/TEFL.

John I. Liontas, Ph.D., Associate Professor of ESOL and Foreign Languages at the University of South Florida, is a multiple award-winning editor, author, and educator. He is widely recognized as a thought leader in the fields of idiomatics, digital technologies, applied linguistics, and second language acquisition and has received over fifty (inter)national teaching and research awards.