

THE ROLE OF PEER EDITING IN ENGLISH CLASSES

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ABSTRACT

Peer reviewing is a method used by English language teachers to actively involve students in the writing process and facilitate the development of the final version of the essay. Disputes about the effectiveness of collegiate editing are common among both teachers and students. The purpose of this article is to share the results of a classroom study that focuses on the effectiveness of the practice of collegiate editing in 2-year composition classes in college. This review presents the results of several methods of collegiate editing, examines both the difficulties and advantages of this process, and examines how to adapt the experience to meet the individual needs of each classroom.

In second language acquisition, various authors provide theories that lead to effective understanding and methodology for the instruction of foreign language learners. Specifically, Krashen provides his theory on this topic. He states, "What current theory implies, quite simply, is that language acquisition, first, or second, occurs only when comprehension of real messages occurs, and when the acquirer is not "on the defensive," to use Stevick's apt phrase. Language acquisition does not require extensive use of conscious grammatical rules, and does not require tedious drill. It does not occur overnight, however. Real language acquisition develops slowly, and speaking skills emerge significantly later than listening skills, even when conditions are perfect." [2, p. 18] Teachers and students should be aware of the process of learning a language and have realistic expectations of how the inter-language of the learner progresses. Krashen went on further to explain, "The best methods are therefore those that supply 'comprehensible input' in low anxiety situations, containing messages that students really want to hear. These methods do not force early production in the second language, but allow students to produce when they are "ready", recognizing that improvement comes from supplying communicative and comprehensible input, and not from forcing and correcting production."(p. 7). With this explanation, ESL teachers can modify their instructional methods and lessons to allow multilingual students time to produce language with a comfortable ambiance rather than forceful drill and immediate results of spoken and written communication.

Input should be provided that addresses the subconscious as well as the conscious aspect of learning; comprehensible input is mostly concerned with subconscious learning of grammatical rules of the language. In grammar, the monitor model is concerned with what students consciously perceive to be errors in output. It

is important to note that the conscious rules of grammar should be learned, but only a small set rather than a large difficult set for use in the monitor. [6, p. 21] Krashen explains that acquisition can occur without conscious learning of rules quite often. The students have acquisition best with their comprehensible input at plus one or “i+1”. This is comprehensible input at one level beyond their ability.

When teaching grammar, the teacher should understand that the class should be

taught in the language of the grammar and the students should be interested in the

material only at the comprehensible input. This is more necessary for acquisition rather than merely the content of the lesson. Extensive use of the target language should also be used. For example, ESL classes in Japan and a lot of other countries may use the grammar-translation methodology to teach language in the students’ first language, so they have very limited exposure to authentic spoken language in a communicative context. With this method, classrooms may use isolated drills that do not provide enough comprehensible input. Moreover, this strongly hinders students’ language acquisition and performance.

Another theory that coincides with Krashen is Piaget. Several authors stress the importance of Jean Piaget’s constructivist theory in teaching. This fits in with effective lessons taught in the ESL classroom with technology.

There are a variety of approaches, methods, and techniques that may be associated with constructivism such as: whole language instruction, participatory, LLC, and project-based learning. Particularly in whole language classrooms, learners work together to read and write for and with each other and evaluate products together. This approach can be used with online lessons when teaching ESL. Teachers need to have responsive teaching to meet students’ needs and interests. Students can actively pursue learning and construct knowledge through interaction. As teachers are facilitators in a constructivist learning environment, the pedagogical design must enable teachers to scaffold students during a learning process. Guided peer editing fits this type of environment because the instructor has a strong role in scaffolding with the activity. Students are given an opportunity to construct their own opinions of corrections needed through pair interaction as responders of writing. In addition, they are given suggestions for improving their own writing through editing.

Peer editing with online programs Online programs for teaching English composition and ESL instruction have been used for peer editing. There have been positive as well as negative results for the use of these programs. All over the world online learning in education is growing fast. [7, p.1] Computer- mediated communication tools such as: chat, messaging, email, groups, social networking sites, etc, can be effective to improve writing among ESL students. Wang explains his position about ICT, which is another name for CMC. [5, p. 27]

He explains how effective integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) into teaching and learning is becoming an essential competency for teachers. He has a generic model which has three important elements: pedagogy, social interaction and technology. Teachers should integrate ICT into their curriculum with this model. Constructivist theory provides the foundations for this model. This use of ICT was concluded to be positive.

Chat is the most widely used tool in education so far. Almeida presents her case in an article about chat. She explains it in the following way, “Using chat means that the target language is learned by interacting with people from the real world, in real time (often across several time zones) and using language of the real world, whether they are native or non-native speakers.” [1, p.32]

Chat will continue to be utilized and developed in the future as an authentic and communicative tool for language learning. ESL writing courses will continue to have forms of CMC within their curriculum. Social networking sites have chat, group pages, and other web programs that can be used inside and outside ESL and EFL classrooms. Outside the classroom found that CMC has considerable benefits as an educational tool. [4, p. 15] Inside the classroom in an academic setting some forms of CMC should be controlled carefully to meet the needs of students in a safe, secure, and non-threatening atmosphere. One type of CMC that could be useful for peer error correction in writing under certain circumstances is Facebook. Even though this will not be the focus of the present study, it should be considered for future research to use for peer error correction in English as a second language writing classes.

Naumoska explains the advantages of peer feedback which include: critical thinking, encouraging students to voice opinions, and the importance of constructive feedback. When students do any kind of writing, they always need a follow up of feedback and peer feedback to meet those requirements. Naumoska explained, “By introducing peer review in the feedback stage, several birds are killed with one stone, because receiving feedback from one’s peers does not carry with it the same pressure and stress that receiving feedback from one’s teachers might, furthermore, this type of feedback gives students the opportunity to read each other’s work and in that way to compare themselves with their fellow students, to critically examine each other’s writing, and at the same time to escape from the constant scrutiny of the teacher”. [3, p.14] Some disadvantages were also explained to help teachers with preparation. First, students may not take the activity seriously. Secondly, they may not want to hurt students’ feelings so only provide positive feedback without critical thinking skills being used. However, one

should realize that the success of the activity may have factors such as: size, level of English, age, and others. When organizing peer response activities, the above mentioned points should be kept in mind, and it is important for instructors to pay close attention to the needs of multilingual writers. Overwhelmingly, peer editing contributes

to greatly reducing the amount of errors in the writing of these students. Peer editing can be considered as one part among many parts of the writing process in classes, and it contributes to building a community of writers.

The list of used literature:

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