

Research Article

Students' Attitudes toward the Use of Peer Assessment in Developing Writing Skills

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Abstract: Developing writing proficiency in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes is both important and challenging. Peer assessment has been widely recognized as an effective approach to promote learner autonomy, reflection, and engagement in writing. This study investigates students' attitudes toward peer assessment in writing and compares two modes of implementation: traditional paper-based review and an online platform (Padlet). The research was conducted over a two-month period with 155 intermediate-level third-year students, who participated in peer review activities and completed an 18-item questionnaire, including 3 items for demographics and 15 items on a five-point Likert scale to measure cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions of students' attitudes based on ABC model. Findings indicate that students generally responded positively to peer assessment, valuing its role in improving accountability, evaluative judgment, and writing development. Nevertheless, some students expressed hesitation and uncertainty when applying grading criteria, suggesting a need for clearer guidance and training. The comparison between models revealed that the Padlet approach was more effective in enhancing emotional engagement, fairness, enjoyment, and independent decision-making than the traditional method. These results highlight the potential of digital tools to create a more engaging and equitable peer assessment environment. With adequate support, peer assessment can serve as a powerful strategy for developing writing skills in EFL contexts.

Keywords: peer assessment; writing skills; student attitudes; Padlet/online platform

1. Introduction

Peer assessment has emerged as a significant pedagogical strategy in language education, especially in developing writing skills among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. As learners engage in evaluating and providing feedback on one another's work, they not only enhance their understanding of the writing process but also develop critical thinking, self-reflection, and collaborative learning skills (Chen et al., 2023; Sousa et al., 2024). Numerous studies have highlighted the pedagogical benefits of peer assessment, demonstrating its potential to improve writing performance, foster learner autonomy, and promote active engagement in the learning process (Chen et al., 2023; Ma & Luo, 2022).

Peer assessment can be understood as a collaborative process in which students of similar status evaluate the quality or standard of each other's work. More than just assigning a grade, this process involves providing detailed feedback, engaging in dialogue, and reaching a shared understanding through discussion. The emphasis here is on its formative purpose – helping students support one another in planning their learning, recognizing strengths and weaknesses, identifying areas for improvement, and cultivating important skills such as metacognition, self-regulation, and professional communication (Topping, 2017).

Peer assessment in language learning – particularly in writing – has received growing attention in recent years. Chen, Liu, and Lin (2023) found that collaborative peer feedback in second language writing tasks fosters cognitive and social engagement, helping students deepen their understanding of writing strategies and learn from one another. According to Biju and Selvaraj (2023), students who received feedback from their peers on writing reported greater enthusiasm and engagement in the learning process. Similarly, Meletiadou (2021a) found that implementing peer assessment improved students' writing performance across five key areas including mechanics, organization, content, focus, vocabulary and language use.

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These studies demonstrate the positive effects of peer assessment on various aspects of writing, including enhanced performance, motivation, and learner engagement.

Moreover, the role of online platforms in delivering peer assessment on writing has attracted significant interest. Tran and Pham (2023) conducted a comparative study examining peer feedback delivered through two online platforms – Moodle and Facebook. Their findings revealed that both types of peer feedback positively influenced students' writing skills, particularly in terms of writing accuracy. Regarding writing fluency, while peer feedback via Moodle showed little effect, feedback delivered through Facebook significantly improved the fluency of students' writing.

Despite the wealth of research supporting the effectiveness of peer assessment, much of the existing literature tends to assume its benefits without thoroughly exploring students' own attitudes toward the practice. In reality, the success of peer assessment depends not only on its design and implementation but also on how it is perceived and experienced by learners. Understanding students' attitudes – how they feel about peer assessment, how they behave during the process, and what they believe about its usefulness – is essential for ensuring its meaningful integration into the language classroom.

Adopting the ABC model of attitude, this study views attitudes as comprising three interrelated components – cognitive (beliefs and evaluations), affective (emotions and feelings), and behavioral (actions and intentions) – that together form a coherent evaluative response toward a given object or situation (Ajzen, 1991; Bohner & Dickel, 2011; Haddock & Maio, 2019). The primary aim is to investigate students' attitudes toward peer assessment in writing and to compare their responses across two modes of implementation: traditional paper-based methods and the online platform Padlet. Specifically, the study addresses the following objectives: (1) to explore students' cognitive, affective, and behavioral attitudes toward peer assessment; and (2) to examine whether attitudes differ significantly between paper-based and online peer assessment. For these two aims, there were two research questions as below:

1. What are students' attitudes toward the use of peer assessment in developing writing skills, as examined through the ABC model?
2. How do students' attitudes toward peer assessment in developing writing skills differ between paper-based and online (Padlet) platforms?

Exploring these dimensions, the study hopes to offer deeper insights into the effectiveness and reception of peer assessment practices from the learners' point of view.

2. Materials and Methods

This study involved 155 intermediate-level students enrolled in six English 6 classes at the same academic level. All students were participating in a two-month English course, which included four writing lessons designed to improve academic writing proficiency. The participants were required to use English as the medium of instruction and communication throughout the course. The students were assigned writing tasks and engaged in peer assessment activities during each writing session. They were randomly paired to evaluate one another's writing using a set of pre-designed scoring criteria provided by their lecturers. However, it is important to note that the students had limited prior experience with peer assessment and just received a quick training session on how to apply the criteria before the intervention. To compare modes of peer assessment, two implementation models were used: one group used traditional paper-based peer assessment, while the other used a digital platform (Padlet) to complete the same tasks.

At the end of the course, students were invited to complete a structured survey aimed at evaluating their perspectives on the peer assessment process. The survey consisted of 18 items including 3 items for demographics and 15 items which are divided into three thematic sections: cognition (5 items), affection (5 items) and behavior (5 items) to investigate students' attitude (see Appendix A). These items are organized by the ABC model (cognition, affection, behavior) and were rated on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (Totally Disagree) to 5 (Totally Agree).

Table 1 shows 15 survey items on students' attitudes were grouped into three categories: cognition, affection, and behavior, with five items in each group. The table gives an overview of which questions belong to each category of the survey. The survey data was collected anonymously and served as the basis for analyzing how students perceived the effectiveness, fairness, and educational value of peer assessment in their writing development.

Table 1. Item classification.

Section	Item Numbers	Focus
Cognition	2, 4, 9, 11, 15	Judgment, learning, understanding scoring
Affection	1, 5, 6, 7, 10	Motivation, enjoyment, responsibility, reluctance
Behavior	3, 8, 12, 13, 14	Scoring, feedback, peer influence, consistency

These methodological details provide a clear framework for analyzing the collected data. The next section will present the results of this analysis, highlighting key patterns in students' attitudes toward peer assessment.

3. Results

The reliability of the instrument used in this study was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, a standard measure of internal consistency. The results indicated a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.762 and a standardized item value of 0.770 across 18 items. These values demonstrate an acceptable level of reliability, suggesting that the questionnaire items consistently measured the same underlying construct related to students' attitudes toward peer assessment.

Descriptive analysis revealed several key findings. The highest frequency recorded was 76 students (49%) who agreed that peer review makes them more accountable and in control of their writing. In contrast, the lowest frequency was 1 student (0.6%) who totally disagreed with the same statement. Similarly, the highest percentage of students who totally agreed (46.5%) was seen in the statement that peer assessment helps them develop their writing skills by learning about others' ideas, whereas the lowest percentage (0.6%) occurred in multiple items such as disagreeing with the benefit of peer review or not paying attention to writing structure. Most attitude items received high average scores, indicating a generally positive perception of peer assessment. For instance, the mean scores were 4.26 for the benefit of developing writing skills, 4.18 for reading assessment criteria and grading accordingly, and 4.17 for paying attention to writing structure. Lower average scores appeared on items indicating hesitation, such as 3.36 for feeling unsure about grading due to unclear criteria and 3.14 for reluctance to give grades.

Regarding the cognition section (Items 2, 4, 9, 11, and 15), the survey results highlight the significant cognitive benefits of peer assessment in writing activities. A strong majority of respondents (80.6%) agreed or strongly agreed that peer assessment enhances their judgment skills, enabling them to assign appropriate scores - an indication of developing evaluative thinking through practice. Additionally, 83.3% acknowledged that learning from others' ideas helps improve their own writing, reflecting openness to knowledge exchange. Despite these benefits, 51% of participants expressed hesitation in grading due to uncertainty about the assessment criteria, revealing a lack of confidence in applying evaluation standards. Encouragingly, 82.6% stated that they carefully read and apply the criteria when grading, suggesting a generally responsible and informed approach. Furthermore, 78.7% reported that they pay attention to their peers' structure and language use to enhance their own writing, demonstrating how peer assessment also promotes learning through observation and reflection.

Concerning the affection section (Items 1, 5, 6, 7, and 10), the findings underline the emotional engagement and motivational value of peer assessment in writing tasks. A significant portion of participants (80%) agreed or strongly agreed that peer review increases their sense of accountability and control over their writing, reflecting enhanced ownership and self-regulation. Moreover, 66.5% indicated that peer assessment boosts their involvement in the course, while 60.6% stated they enjoy the process of evaluating their peers' work - suggesting that it fosters active participation and positive learning experiences. Similarly, 69% recognized that peer assessment brings multiple advantages for students, including the development of writing abilities and critical thinking. Nonetheless, 40% of respondents reported feeling hesitant when assigning grades to classmates, pointing to lingering discomfort or a lack of confidence in acting as assessors. These results suggest that while peer assessment supports emotional and motivational growth, additional support may be necessary to help some learners feel more secure and competent in the grading role.

In relation to the behavior section (Items 3, 8, 12, 13, and 14), the data reflects generally active and thoughtful student participation in peer assessment. Most respondents (80.7%) indicated that peer assessment enables them to give helpful and constructive feedback,

emphasizing their engagement in supporting peers' writing improvement. Furthermore, 69% viewed the process as fair, appreciating the opportunity to make independent judgments. When it comes to grading practices, only 43.2% reported assigning the same score to every piece of writing, while a considerable number (38.1%) disagreed, suggesting that many students strive to assess based on individual work quality. Social factors also emerged, as nearly half (48.4%) of the participants admitted to being influenced by friends' opinions when grading. Despite this, 61.9% claimed to rely on their own understanding and perspective when evaluating, pointing to an effort to remain impartial and self-reliant. Overall, the results suggest that while students generally demonstrate constructive behavior in peer assessment, there remains a need to strengthen consistency and minimize external influence in the grading process.

To explore gender-based differences, ANOVA tests were conducted. The results indicated no statistically significant differences between male and female students across all 15 attitude items, with p -values exceeding 0.05. These results suggest that gender did not significantly affect students' perceptions. However, when analyzing differences based on the method of assessment (Padlet vs. Paper), several statistically significant differences emerged. Table 2 summarizes the ANOVA results comparing students' attitudes between the paper-based and Padlet models. It highlights the items where significant differences emerged. The ANOVA results reveal several statistically significant differences between the Padlet and paper-based peer assessment models, indicating that the Padlet model yielded more positive outcomes in specific aspects of students' learning experiences. Notably, students in the Padlet group reported significantly higher levels of responsibility and control over their own writing (Item 1, $p = 0.009$), greater involvement in the course (Item 5, $p = 0.009$), and more enjoyment when participating in peer assessment (Item 6, $p = 0.023$). They also perceived more benefits from the activity (Item 7, $p = 0.040$), felt the process was fairer (Item 8, $p = 0.007$), and demonstrated stronger independence in assigning grades based on their own knowledge (Item 14, $p = 0.009$). These results indicate that the Padlet model enhanced affective and behavioral engagement more effectively than the traditional paper-based method. In contrast, the remaining items – including judgment skill development (Item 2), giving constructive feedback (Item 3), learning from others (Item 4), hesitation or reluctance in grading (Items 9 & 10), adherence to grading criteria (Item 11), score consistency (Item 12), peer influence (Item 13), and learning through peer text analysis (Item 15) - did not show statistically significant differences ($p > 0.05$). This suggests that both models were equally effective in these cognitive and procedural domains.

Table 2. Differences based on the method of assessment.

Statement		Mean Square	Sig.
1. Peer review makes me more accountable and in control of my own writing	Between Groups	4.607	.009
	Within Groups	.653	
5. Peer assessment encourages me to become more involved in the course.	Between Groups	4.810	.009
	Within Groups	.678	
6. I enjoy participating in the assessment of other students' writing.	Between Groups	4.765	.023
	Within Groups	.908	
7. I feel that peer assessment has many benefits for students.	Between Groups	3.800	.040
	Within Groups	.887	
8. I feel that peer assessment is fair to students because they can make their own judgments.	Between Groups	6.454	.007
	Within Groups	.864	
14. I give my own grades based on my own knowledge and opinions.	Between Groups	7.897	.009
	Within Groups	1.144	

These findings indicate that the online or Padlet model offered clear advantages over the paper-based approach in fostering responsibility, fairness, and enjoyment in peer assessment. The significant differences highlight the role of digital platforms in strengthening students' affective and behavioral engagement, providing a basis for deeper discussion in the following section.

4. Discussion and Conclusions

The findings of this study demonstrate that intermediate EFL students generally responded positively to peer assessment in writing, supporting its cognitive, affective, and

behavioral benefits. Students reported that reviewing peers' work strengthened their accountability, improved evaluative judgment, and enhanced writing skills. These results are consistent with earlier studies. Firstly, Chen et al. (2023) emphasized its role in promoting cognitive and social engagement. Additionally, Meletiadiou's (2021a) quasi-experimental study of EFL learners found that peer assessment significantly improved writing performance, particularly when students were trained in rubric use. The reliability of the survey instrument and descriptive statistics further reinforced that students showed strong agreement on the benefits of peer review. Similarly, recent work on EFL student engagement in peer feedback tasks documents gains in engagement across cognitive, affective, and behavioral domains, especially when scaffolding is provided (Zhang et al., 2023). These studies demonstrate the positive effects of peer assessment on various aspects of writing, including enhanced performance, motivation, and learner engagement. Nevertheless, some students in our study expressed hesitation or uncertainty about grading peers' work, particularly when rubrics or criteria were not sufficiently explicit. This resonates with Vo and Nguyen's (2023) recommendation for explicit rubric training and exemplar models to reduce rater anxiety and increase consistency. In support, a recent Vietnamese study of Phuong et al. (2023) on analytical rubrics in peer and self-assessment found that providing clear analytic rubrics improved writing outcomes and rater confidence relative to unguided approaches.

When examined through the ABC model, the results highlight multidimensional benefits. Cognitively, students developed stronger judgment and learned from peers' ideas, reflecting findings by Wei and Liu (2024) and Ma and Luo (2022), who stressed the role of peer engagement in enhancing critical thinking and learning outcomes. More concretely, in a study of peer feedback quality and implementation, He & Gao (2023) distinguish feedback "accuracy" and "revision potential" and show that learners often benefit most when peers supply feedback that is both correct and actionable. Affectively, many students reported increased motivation, investment in their writing, and a stronger sense of ownership – findings consistent with Biju & Selvaraj (2023) and accessible in recent broader studies of peer feedback in writing contexts (Meletiadiou, 2021a). Yet, the reluctance to assign grades signals that emotional barriers – such as fear of offending peers or anxiety about judgment – persist, reinforcing the need for scaffolding, norming sessions, and low-stakes practice. In line with this, recent work on peer feedback provision and reception among lower-proficiency EFL learners warns that cumulative rounds of peer feedback, especially when poorly scaffolded, may overwhelm students emotionally (Xiaomeng & Ravindran, 2024). Behaviorally, students in this study actively engaged in peer review, wrote constructive comments, and resisted superficial scoring. However, social influence (e.g. reluctance to downgrade a friend) did affect some judgments, suggesting that anonymity, random pairing, or rotation might help attenuate bias. This nuance is supported by research on learner engagement with peer feedback: investigations into changes in engagement over multiple rounds show that social dynamics, proficiency differences, and peer familiarity can all modulate behavior (Li & Jiang, 2024).

A distinctive contribution of this study is its direct comparison of paper-based and Padlet-based peer assessment modes. Learners using Padlet reported higher levels of enjoyment, perceived fairness, emotional engagement, and autonomy compared to their paper-based peers. This aligns with Nguyen & Trang's (2023) study in Vietnam, which demonstrated that using peer feedback on Padlet improved learners' motivation and writing in email tasks. While both models, paper and online based writing forms, yielded cognitive benefits, Padlet's affordances – such as comment visibility, revision traceability, and ease of interaction – seem to amplify affective and behavioral engagement. Notably, the absence of significant gender differences in attitudes in our data suggests that the benefits of peer assessment – and digital peer assessment especially – are broadly applicable across student groups.

Based on these findings, this study affirms that peer assessment is an effective approach for developing writing skills in EFL contexts (Chen et al., 2023; Meletiadiou, 2021a; Meletiadiou, 2021b). To maximize its impact, educators should provide rubric training (Vo & Nguyen, 2023), adopt measures to reduce bias such as anonymity or peer rotation. Besides, the integration of digital platforms like Padlet can deepen emotional engagement and autonomy, but only when accompanied by scaffolding and ongoing guidance. Embedding tasks that promote independent critical thinking, providing calibration opportunities, and minimizing social influence will help strengthen the objectivity and depth of peer feedback. With thoughtful design and support, peer assessment can foster sustained reflection, motivation, and active engagement, thereby contributing to meaningful improvements in

student writing in EFL classrooms.

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Appendix A

Questionnaire

Item	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1. Peer review makes me more accountable and in control of my own writing					
2. Peer assessment helps me develop my judgment skills to give appropriate marks to my writing.					
4. Peer assessment helps me develop my writing skills by learning about other people's ideas.					
5. Peer assessment encourages me to become more involved in the course.					
6. I enjoy participating in the assessment of other students' writing.					
7. I feel that peer assessment has many benefits for students					
8. I feel that peer assessment is fair to students because they can make their own judgments.					
9. I feel hesitant about giving marks to others because I do not understand the criteria for marking their writing.					
10. I feel reluctant to give grades to other students.					
11. I read the writing assessment criteria carefully and give grades based on the criteria given.					
12. I give everyone the same grade for their writing.					

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