## Using an Online Teaching Platform to Improve Corrective Feedback Practices in EFL Writing Lessons

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**Abstract**

Distance education has become a prominent part of the education system around the globe in recent years. The limitations and problems encountered during online lessons have made teachers and administrators overlook the many benefits that distance education can offer. Research in applied linguistics has suggested that reduced feedback opportunities and less interaction are essential problems in EFL writing lessons due to the essential role of corrective feedback in second language acquisition. Since distance education is usually associated with such limitations, online EFL writing lessons are believed to be less effective. In an attempt to dispel this misconception, this study shows that not only can online lessons match the efficiency of traditional face-to-face lessons, but they can actually become more efficient in teaching writing to EFL students through the utilisation of online teaching platforms. Sixteen undergraduate students from a state university received online EFL writing lessons for two months using one of these platforms, Google Classroom. A questionnaire was created to investigate the benefits of using this online platform for online EFL writing lessons. The results were interpreted by calculating the average means for each questionnaire section and examining participant answers to open-ended questions. Overall, the participants declared that the use of Google Classroom improved both the quality and quantity of feedback, resulting in better learning outcomes.

**Keywords**: EFL writing lessons, second language acquisition, online teaching platforms.

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## Introduction

The devastating earthquakes that impacted millions of people in Turkey led universities to switch to distance education in the 2022–2023 academic year. Such abrupt transition posed great challenges for both instructors and students alike; during the distance education period in the pandemic, students were less motivated to participate or even to turn on their cameras (Güven, 2023), the interaction between the teacher and students decreased, and monitoring student work became much more difficult (Tas et al., 2021). These problems have become more prominent in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) writing classes, which already require significant individual effort and self-management in face-to-face lessons. While keeping track of student writing is already difficult in traditional writing lessons, the challenge has the potential to become even bigger due to the aforementioned limitations of online lessons if instructors are to carry traditional methods of teaching into online classrooms.

The lack of interaction is an essential threat to the quality and quantity of corrective feedback, which is regarded as an important tool in EFL writing classes (Ferris, 2004). Without the utilisation of corrective feedback, implicit corrective feedback in particular, students would not benefit from the problem-solving-like processes involved in self-correction (Bitchener & Knoch, 2008) that result in more cognitive effort (Khadawardi 2020) and better learning (Baleghizadeh & Dadashi, 2011; Ferris, 2004). Combined with the lower student motivation and participation attributed to distance education, inefficient feedback practices are likely to decrease the efficiency of learning.

Although decreased interaction and feedback are essential obstacles in teaching EFL writing, the literature suggests that using online teaching platforms can overcome the shortcomings of online writing lessons and improve writing skills (e.g., Yim et al., 2017). Despite the great potential of such platforms, however, the number of studies investigating this phenomenon is limited. To help overcome this limitation, this study investigated the efficiency of using an online teaching platform, Google Classroom, in online EFL writing lessons. By exploring student perceptions regarding the use of online teaching platforms, I focused on the potential benefits of using these tools in terms of feedback efficiency, which could improve learning in turn. The secondary objectives of the study were to investigate potential improvements in student motivation and to examine student attitudes towards the efficiency of Google Classroom and its applicability to face-to-face lessons. The following research questions were asked in the study:

1) How do EFL students perceive using online teaching platforms during writing lessons in terms of feedback, interaction, and group work?
2) To what extent do EFL students believe that the use of online teaching platforms is effective in improving L2 writing?
3) How motivated do EFL students feel when using online teaching platforms in EFL writing lessons?
4) Do EFL students believe that online teaching platforms can also be used in face-to-face writing lessons?

The findings are significant in showing that students find EFL writing lessons conducted on online teaching platforms to be more effective in terms of feedback practices, interaction, learning process and outcomes, and student motivation.

## Literature Review

The pandemic introduced most people to distance education as universities and schools switched to online classes all over the globe. This sudden change to distance education was challenging for a myriad of reasons, including but not limited to students with their cameras off (Castelli & Sarvary, 2021), limited contact with students resulting in decreased chances for providing motivation and support (Mikušková & Verešová, 2020), and unreliable and unreliable internet connections (Wallace et al., 2021). The Turkish context was no exception when it came to the limitations of distance education. Teachers faced difficulties with learning online tools and using the provided materials, which they referred to as inadequate, to carry out their teaching (Tas et al., 2021). They also experienced problems

during online lessons due to technical problems, low attendance, and low motivation (Güven, 2023). Furthermore, the absence of face-to-face interaction and real-time monitoring of student activities made it hard for teachers to assess learning and provide feedback, most of whom found their assessment and evaluation during online lessons inadequate (Tas et al., 2021). Similar to teachers, students in Türkiye also faced difficulties during distance education. In addition to feeling isolated due to being deprived of their social school environment (Temiz, 2020), students found it difficult to feel motivated and continue their studies without directly interacting with their teachers (Durak & Çankaya, 2020).

Despite its challenges, distance education has also brought certain benefits, such as improved teamwork and collaboration (Ece & Bastas, 2022) and a positive attitude towards online teaching tools (Krstić & Radulović, 2021). Online teaching platforms, such as Google Classroom, became helpful during the pandemic by facilitating the adoption of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) learning (Ali & Maksum, 2020), and students welcomed the use of such platforms due to their ease and utility (Fauzi et al., 2021). Teachers might assign certain learning tasks using such platforms since they are especially useful for "flipping the classroom" (Cummings, 2016), giving the teacher more opportunities to focus on interactive tasks during the lessons. In addition, the use of online teaching platforms encourages students to participate more and boosts learning (Heggart & Yoo, 2018).

In online EFL writing lessons, the advantages or disadvantages of distance education can be amplified depending on how lessons are conducted. If teachers carry out online writing lessons in a similar way to traditional writing lessons, which rely mostly on individual effort and engagement, interaction might become extremely minimal or even absent. Teachers usually provide written feedback for writing tasks after collecting student papers and allow students to revise their texts later on. This lack of interaction is especially concerning since teacher or peer-support might be essential in self-correction; students should attempt to revise their mistakes in class as they might need such assistance (Ferris 2004). Combined with the previously mentioned problems of low motivation and attendance (Güven, 2023; Mikušková & Verešová, 2020), the reduced interaction problem in writing classes might be further enhanced in online lessons.

The benefits of distance education can also become most prominent in writing lessons when online tools are used correctly. One way to promote the advantages is to use online teaching platforms such as Google Classroom, Edmodo, and Moodle. Students find platforms like Google Classroom easy to use in writing classes (Syarifah, 2021), and the tasks are easier to submit without the physical need for paper (Ali & Maksum, 2020). Adopting a blended learning environment through online teaching platforms improves the English ability of EFL learners, especially their writing and reading skills (Warman, 2021). Teachers can create a rubric for each task on an online teaching platform (Sharda & Bajpai, 2021), making it easier for students to understand the required objectives for writing tasks. EFL students learning academic writing in English find the features of Google Classroom practical, and their writing performance shows a positive correlation with their usage of the online platform (Rosyada & Sundari, 2021). Self-efficacy, which can be defined as a person's self-belief in their competency for accomplishing a task, is also improved in EFL academic writing classrooms carried out with online teaching platforms (Zhang, 2018). Even secondary school students report that using these platforms boosts their self-confidence and motivation to write more qualified essays (Shelvam, 2022). By using third-party addons, the already high functionality of online teaching platforms like Google Classroom can be further enhanced (Crane, 2016).

Among the many advantages of using online teaching platforms, increasing the quality and quantity of feedback is perhaps the most crucial one. Corrective feedback has been regarded as an inseparable part of L2 writing education (Ferris, 2004), since it can improve student writing and decrease errors over time (Khadawardi 2020), including grammatical and lexical errors (Chandler, 2003). Direct and indirect feedback can both improve writing performances (Van Beuningen et al., 2008), and this boost is shown to have the same effect two months later in a delayed post-test (Bitchener, 2008). Even a single corrective feedback session sustains its positive effects a month later, which suggests that regular feedback sessions might result in even greater improvement (van Beuningen et al. 2012). Although Truscott (2004) argues that corrective feedback can be detrimental as students might avoid complex

structures and suggests additional writing practice instead of providing feedback, Van Beuningen et al. (2012) showed that their sample of students did not simplify their writings after corrective feedback, and extra writing practice was not more effective than feedback practices. Therefore, enhanced feedback practices through online teaching platforms can improve the writing skills of EFL students, as corrective feedback is shown to be a useful practice.

The ways online teaching platforms can enrich feedback practices are varied and ample. Teachers can use videos and audio recordings to provide feedback along with written feedback on online teaching platforms, such as Google Classroom (Johnson & Cooke, 2016). Similarly, these tools can be used for tracking student progress and increasing interaction between teachers and students (Sharda & Bajpai, 2021); the interactive features of such platforms allow teachers to give instant feedback as students continue writing, allowing students to attempt self-correction while the error-making process is still fresh in their memory. This is especially useful in providing implicit feedback (Ebadi & Rahimi, 2019), which allows students to realise the type of mistake they made and become collaborators in their learning process (Bitchener, 2012; Mahmoud & Oraby, 2015). The benefits of using implicit feedback in writing lessons are apparent both in short term (Khadawardi 2020) and in long term (Ferris, 2006), and such indirect feedback can even result in better learning outcomes than explicit (or direct) feedback (Baleghizadeh & Dadashi, 2011; Ferris, 2004). The better learning outcomes are often attributed to the higher cognitive effort stemming from the attempt at self-correction (Khadawardi 2020), which involves problem solving (Bitchener & Knoch, 2008). The advantage of online teaching platforms over traditional ones is the increased amount of interaction in providing implicit feedback; students and teachers interact more efficiently on online platforms, allowing better scaffolding by creating a "zone of proximal development" (Vygotsky 1978). Although dialogues in the form of scaffolding between teachers and students have the potential to improve writing skills (Williams, 2002), such back and forth interaction for each student might be challenging or even impossible in traditional writing classrooms, especially in crowded ones. By using an online teaching platform, teachers can quickly examine student work as they continue to write and provide feedback through codes, markings, and comments.

Online teaching platforms also ease the detection of the need for feedback and correction. Students who find it difficult to ask questions to their teachers in face-to-face classrooms can do this using online teaching platforms without feeling stressed (Suryani et al., 2021). Even if such students are still reluctant to ask their questions, these platforms make it easier to identify the students who are experiencing difficulties with certain tasks (Ali & Maksum, 2020). While students can benefit from the comfort of staying anonymous, teachers can see the contributions made by each student by using revision history (Woodrich & Fan, 2017), allowing for keeping track of student error-correction patterns and development.

Improving peer feedback and collaboration is another way of increasing both the quality and quantity of feedback in online writing lessons. Using online office tools in synchronous collaborative writing, students show more balanced participation and group work, thus increasing their quality of writing (Yim et al., 2017). In addition to increased student participation and engagement, online teaching platforms like Google Classroom allow students to improve flexible strategies in writing with their peers (Cummings, 2016), and such flexibility is likely to increase the efficiency of peer feedback and make students more positive about using this type of correction.

Based on this literature review, the potential benefits of using online teaching platforms for online writing lessons can be summarised as follows:

- Online teaching platforms allow easy assignment submission without the need for paper (Ali & Maksum, 2020; Syarifah, 2021).

- Such platforms have the potential to increase student participation, engagement, motivation, and self-efficacy (Cummings, 2016; Heggart & Yoo, 2018; Rosyada & Sundari, 2021; Shelvam, 2022; Zhang, 2018).

- These platforms keep track of the changes made to a document and store multiple versions of the same assignment (Woodrich & Fan, 2017). This way, teachers and students can see the development of a task through subsequent versions.

- It is easy to integrate online teaching platforms such as Google Classroom with other writing tools and built-in addons (Crane, 2016), which allows flexibility and creativity in planning writing lessons along with more efficiency.

- Grading and creating rubrics are practical on online teaching platforms (Sharda & Bajpai, 2021). Students can see the rubric for a certain assignment and complete the task according to the given criteria.

- The implementation of online teaching platforms into online writing lessons allows for giving comments and feedback in multiple ways, including but not limited to comments, colour codes, and videos (Ebadi & Rahimi, 2019; Johnson & Cooke, 2016). Videos and other multimedia materials can also be used for the presentation of the lesson (Saini & Goel, 2020).

- Teachers and students can collaborate in real-time, which leads to a more efficient and interactive feedback process during writing lessons (Cummings, 2016; Suryani et al., 2021; Yim et al., 2017). In particular, more implicit feedback can be provided for each student, resulting in better error correction and learning (Baleghizadeh & Dadashi, 2011; Bitchener & Knoch, 2008; Ferris, 2006; Khadawardi, 2020).

- Using online teaching platforms in online writing classes can improve learning outcomes, including the quality of writing (Rosyada & Sundari, 2021; Warman, 2021; Yim et al., 2017).

Despite the abundance of findings in favor of using corrective feedback and online teaching platforms, the delivery of this feedback through such platforms has been mostly asynchronous in the few available studies (e.g., Rosyada & Sundari, 2021). As shown above, this is unfortunate since implementing the practice of scyhronous feedback during online EFL lessons could overcome the limitations associated with distance education and bring additional advantages over traditional classrooms. First, providing implicit feedback interactively during writing lessons can allow students to realize their mistakes immediately and adjust their decision making processes when using similar structures, as they would still remember how they committed the error and become an active collaborator in their own learning (Bitchener, 2012; Mahmoud & Oraby, 2015). This would also help them to engage in a problem-solving process, which is associated with better learning outcomes (Bitchener & Knoch, 2008). Additionally, teachers can provide further scaffolding for students as they attempt to correct their own mistakes, providing immediate and interactive guidance (Ferris 2004). Acknowledging the importance of such advantages, this study focuses on student perceptions about using an online teaching platform to improve the quality and quantity of feedback during online EFL writing lessons and whether such improvement would enhance writing processes and learning outcomes. Additionally, I investigated student motivation and attitudes towards using online teaching platforms and implementing them into traditional lessons.

## Method

The current descriptive study aimed to obtain preliminary results from a single EFL class and pave the way for larger-scale studies using the same questionnaire by using descriptive statistics and quotations from student answers rather than more complicated statistical and qualitative analyses. The study is quantitative in nature, as it mostly relied on quantitative data (descriptive statistics) to reveal a general pattern rather than investigating personal perspectives regarding a phenomenon using detailed quantitative analysis (Loeb et al., 2017). The ethical approval for the study was granted by the METU Human Research Ethics Committee.

## Participants

Sixteen students (9 females) from Middle East Technical University participated in the study. The average age was 18.82 (SD: 1.13). The participants were from the same upper-intermediate level class in the School of Foreign Language Teaching; therefore, their L2 English proficiency was rated as upper-intermediate based on multiple English language tests applied by the university. They had all started learning English after the age of 7 through formal education, starting in the second grade of their primary schools. No problems were reported during the experiment with online teaching platforms and tools, as the participants were skilled in using technological tools. Participation was voluntary.

**Materials**

**Google Classroom**

Teachers using less-interactive tools might face the limitations experienced in online learning even more severely as a result of this shortcoming. Therefore, using effective tools and software in online lessons is of uttermost importance in online teaching. Google Classroom stood out as one of the most common solutions to overcome the limitations of online lessons, as the benefits of using online teaching platforms are abundant in the literature, specifically in teaching L2 writing (see the Literature Review above). The participants in the current study registered on this website using their email addresses and joined the online classroom using the class code.

**Highlight addon tool**

Besides increasing the amount and effectiveness of feedback, adopting an appropriate feedback strategy is also crucial in EFL writing lessons. As mentioned above, using implicit feedback strategies and making students realise their own mistakes has been proven to be beneficial for the learning process (Bitchener, 2012; Mahmoud & Oraby, 2015). I decided to adopt implicit corrective feedback by using colour codes, as students show positive attitudes toward implicit feedback provided in codes (Khadawardi, 2020). Google Classroom offers innumerable add-ons to improve the overall experience of the activities. In the current study, I found the "Highlight Tool" to be a perfect match for my goals, as this tool automatically gives the labelling key and lists the errors they have made (Appendix 2).

**Questionnaire**

Creating a questionnaire based on Likert-Scale items can be tricky due to the acquiescence effect, which can be described as the tendency to give positive answers for all items (Hinz, 2007). It is essential to reverse some items in the Likert scales to prevent participants from giving high scores to all items (Colet, 2020), instead of creating all items in a way to declare positive attitudes (e.g., Google Classroom was useful in receiving peer feedback). Furthermore, items in such questionnaires should use positive language (e.g., avoiding the use of "not"), and the meanings of key vocabulary items should be revised in order to avoid a lack of comprehension in reading questions (Colet, 2020). Examining the literature regarding online teaching platforms, I created 11 different sections and 63 questions using Likert-Scale items. In the brainstorming phase, ChatGPT was used to generate ideas for questionnaire sections (OpenAI, 2023). In addition to Likert-scale items, I added two open-ended questions, asking the participants if they wanted to add any more advantages or disadvantages regarding using an online teaching platform, Google Classroom, in online EFL writing lessons. Four experts rated the relevance of questionnaire items for each section using a Content Validity Index (CVI). The indices of S-CVI/UA and S-CVI/Av were calculated as 0.94 and 0.98, respectively, signifying excellent content validity as the value of 0.78 or higher is considered as an indicator of good content validity with three experts or more (Polit et al. 2007). The Cronbach's alpha for the questionnaire was calculated as 0.95 after data collection (The reliability of this questionnaire should be investigated further in future studies with more participants.)

**Data Collection and Analysis**

I used Google Classroom in my online writing lessons in the second term for 2 months. I started the lessons with a presentation about the topic of that particular day, such as essay types, writing topic sentences, or creating a logical flow in essays. Following this presentation, students engaged in collaborative tasks (e.g., brainstorming and writing thesis statements). Since Google Classroom allowed both peer and teacher interaction at the same time, the quality and quantity of feedback increased during these writing activities. Group activities were followed by individual writing sessions, in which students wrote their essays on an individualised page, and I followed their whole writing process. This allowed me to give instant feedback using colour codes and comments. Although implicit feedback was the common form of feedback during the online sessions, such feedback was focused on particular errors so that the participants could attempt self-correction and ask further questions without feeling overwhelmed. Additionally, explicit feedback was provided for the errors that were too challenging for the students to correct immediately, in line with the suggestions of Ferris (2004). After the online

lessons, I provided feedback for all the errors in the essays, which allowed students to correct their own mistakes in their available time (Appendix 3).

In addition to grammar, paraphrasing, and vocabulary activities completed in the online sessions, students wrote three essays during the 2-month period. Each essay task required writing a different type of essay: The first task was an opinion essay, the second a problem-solution essay, and the third a cause-and-effect essay. This way, the students had the chance to improve their skills in writing different types of essays. Towards the end of the term, I asked the students to complete the questionnaire I created in Google Classroom. The participation was voluntary, and 16 students completed it. Before starting the questionnaire, the participants saw the meanings and uses of some key vocabulary items from the questionnaire since their comprehension was crucial to giving accurate answers.

All data observations, analyses, and figure generation were done using R (Version: 4.2.3; R Core Team, 2022) and the ggplot2 package (Version:3.4.2; Wickham, 2016). Since the design of the current study included only one group of participants without any pre-tests, statistical tests were not suitable for the collected data. Instead, I discussed the benefits of using Google Classroom by referring to descriptive statistics in the following subsections. The frequency table for the questionnaire answers is given in Appendix 1.

## Findings

The average score for each section is calculated and examined. Figure 3 shows the average scores (out of 5) per section in the questionnaire, and the frequency table of the given is given in the Appendix.
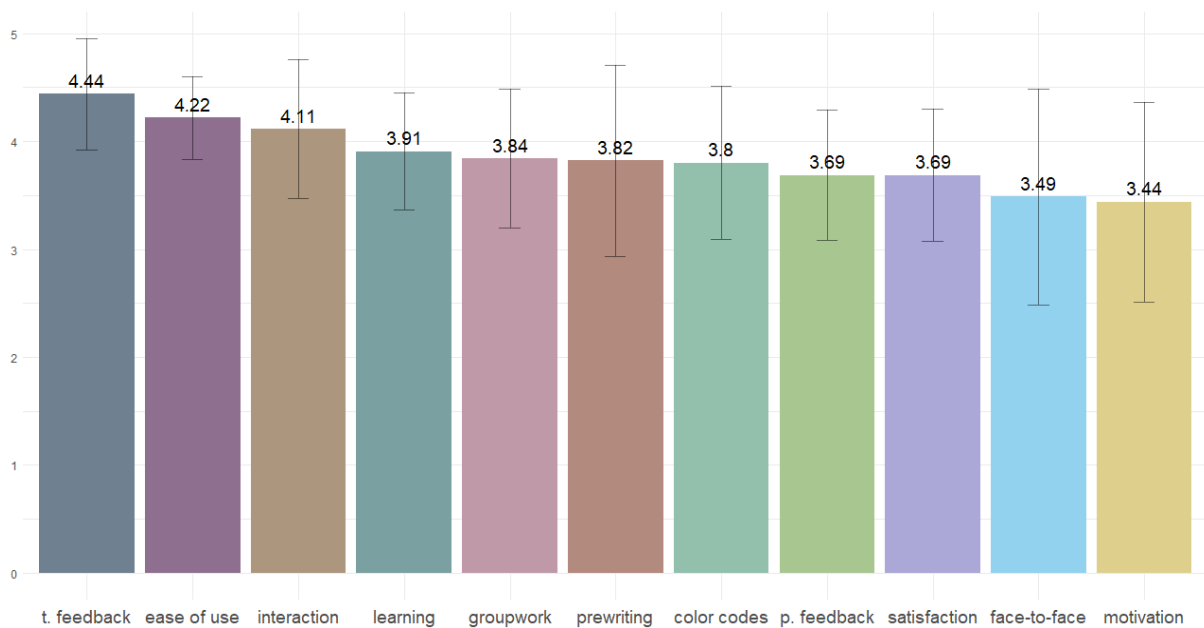


Figure 1. Average scores for each section of the questionnaire. Error bars show the standard deviations of the average scores.

Higher scores show more agreement with the benefits. Likert-scale items were rated as the following: 5:Strongly Agree, 4:Agree, 3:Neutral, 2:Disagree, 1: Strongly Disagree; reverse item ratings were normalised before including them in section averages. From left to right, bars refer to 1) teacher feedback, 2) ease of use, 3) interaction, 4) learning outcomes, 5) efficiency of group work, 6) pre-writing stage, 7) using colour codes, 8) peer feedback, 9) overall satisfaction, 10) potential integration into the face-to-face classroom, and 11) student motivation. The sections in the figure are strategically arranged to prioritise those with higher positive ratings, showcasing a noticeable leftward trend indicative of increasing values.

The students declared the highest positive ratings for teacher feedback in Google Classroom (4.44 out of 5), followed by ease of use (4.22 out of 5), increased interaction (4.11 out of 5), and improved learning (3.91 out of 5). The students also believed that the use of Google Classroom in online writing classes improved group work (3.84 out of 5), pre-writing stage (3.82 out of 5), and peer feedback (3.69 out of 5). In addition, colour codes were rated as useful (3.80 out of 5), and students declared overall positive attitudes toward the use of an online teaching platform (3.69). The two lowest-rated sections were increased motivation (3.44) and the application of such practice in face-to-face lessons (3.49), but the average ratings were still above the mid-value of the 5-point Likert-Scale.

## Discussion

In an attempt to reveal how students perceive using an online teaching platform in online EFL writing lessons, the current study examined a group of upper-intermediate students over a period of 2 months. In addition to teacher presentations, the students carried out various pre-writing activities in each writing lesson. The immediate feedback provided during the lessons was further supported by the delayed feedback given for the final versions of the essays. A questionnaire, with a focus on how students perceive the integration of an online teaching platform into EFL writing lessons, was created and given to the students. The results of the questionnaire showed positive attitudes towards the use of online platforms in many aspects. The findings are discussed in the same order as the research questions given in the literature review part.

First and foremost, students believed that using an online teaching platform (Google Classroom) increased the effectiveness of feedback and interaction. Especially teacher feedback, which received the highest rating average (4.44 out of 5), seemed to be improved by using an online teaching platform. Corrective feedback is regarded as highly important in EFL writing (Ferris, 2004), and its positive effects are both apparent in different aspects of writing (Chandler, 2003; Khadawardi, 2020) and long-lasting (Bitchener, 2008). As revealed by the student answers, using an online teaching platform increased the quality and quantity of corrective feedback and helped overcome the limitations of inadequately tracking and assessing student work in online lessons (Tas et al., 2021). Immediate feedback is crucial in writing lessons, as students might need further help in their attempts to fix their mistakes (Ferris, 2004). While fixing their own mistakes in accordance with the given corrective feedback, the students in the current study could maximise the benefits of teacher assistance due to the increased opportunities for guidance during the lessons in a zone of proximal development (Vygotsky 1978). The answers to the open-ended questions also show that the most prominent advantage of using Google Classroom was feedback efficiency.

"Google Classroom allows a teacher to see everything that their students do in the lesson and give immediate feedback." (Participant 2)

"Enable students to get feedback faster." (Participant 7)

"Instant feedback." (Participant 5)

Increased interaction was another essential finding given that the lack of direct interaction makes students feel demotivated and unwilling to carry out their educational tasks (Durak & Çankaya, 2020). In line with previous work suggesting that online teaching platforms like Google Classroom have the potential to increase the interaction between teachers and students (Sharda & Bajpai, 2021), the students in the current study declared that the interaction was greatly improved by using Google Classroom in their online writing lessons. In fact, this section received the third highest rating average, indicating that interactivity was one of the best aspects of implementing an online teaching platform (4.11 out of 5).

The scope of interactivity goes beyond teacher feedback, as students could also compare their ideas, work with each other, and engage in meaningful conversations. By using additional tools offered by Google Classroom (e.g., Google Slides), the students completed tasks successfully with their groups, confirming the finding of more effective group work created by online teaching platforms (Yim et al., 2017). This is expected since group work mostly relies on interaction and collaboration with peers, and the use of online teaching platforms can increase the amount and efficiency of such aspects (Cummings, 2016). While small group discussions might also be used in face-to-face writing classrooms, students using online teaching platforms can refer to certain limitations or ideas by using a multitude of online tools, such as graphs, highlighting, and comments. This feature of such platforms also allows students

to benefit from the countless sources and materials available on the internet. In order to show how a topic sentence needs improvement, for example, a student might add good examples of topic sentences written for a similar topic or provide a source explaining the qualities of good topic sentences.

The students in the current study used such strategies to give each other feedback and improve the quality of their group work. Although the rating average was less than the average for teacher feedback (3.69 vs. 4.44), peer-feedback was rated as effective in the lessons carried out on online teaching platforms. The students mostly gave each other feedback during the pre-writing stage in small groups, while the feedback for the final work was provided by the teacher. As discussed above, this allowed students to engage in group work more effectively. One way to increase peer feedback and extend its scope beyond the pre-writing stage might be to use additional tools, such as the Eduflow website. The anonymous feedback system offered by Eduflow can help students evaluate each other's work without knowing the author of the essay. Such a tool might be especially helpful, as some students felt uncomfortable with their real names on the screen during online lessons, especially when their contribution was being evaluated by others in the pre-writing stage.

"When my name appears on the screen, it makes me slightly uncomfortable." (Participant 4).

Another domain where the use of an online teaching platform excelled was the overall writing process. The students found using Google Classroom easy in online writing classes (4.22 out of 5), in line with Fauzi et al. (2021) and Syarifah (2021). This is especially important since such a radical change in the way a lesson is carried out usually presents a challenge to both students and teachers, similar to the case in Türkiye during the pandemic (Tas et al., 2021). The students mentioned how easy it was to prepare and submit assignments in Google Classroom in their answers to the open-ended questions.

"It helps me to get better feedback. it is easy to submit assignments." (Participant 13)

"It facilitates the writing process." (Participant 12)

"It is easier to write through computer." (Participant 16)

"Easy to write and delete and see the mistakes." (Participant 4)

The students were able to use different pre-writing techniques (e.g., brainstorming) using Google Classroom tools. Their overall attitude towards the improvement of the pre-writing stage was positive (3.82 out of 5). The effectiveness of this stage can be further improved by using more multimedia to support pre-writing activities, which was not possible during this study due to insufficient time for preparing online materials.

One part that could be improved in the overall writing process was the guidance given for implicit error codes. Although most students found colour codes useful (3.80 out of 5), some thought they were difficult to understand and could be improved. Preparing guidelines on how to interpret and use colour codes to identify one's own mistakes can improve the usage of these codes and thus their efficiency in online writing classes.

"Color codes are useful for feedback." (Participant 11)

"The color codes can be improved." (Participant 15)

"I think color codes are hard to understand." (Participant 6)

Such criticism might also stem from the increased difficulty of revising errors through implicit feedback as opposed to explicit feedback. As mentioned above, while students might find it challenging to find and correct their own mistakes, it results in better learning, especially for upper-level L2 learners (Bitchener, 2012; Mahmoud & Oraby, 2015). Therefore, teachers should insist on providing implicit feedback and find ways to make self-correction the common way of fixing errors in EFL writing lessons instead of spoon-feeding students through explicit corrections.

Confirming the necessity of this suggestion, the students declared that using Google Classroom in online writing classes improved their overall learning process and resulted in more learning. The dominance of implicit feedback over explicit feedback was likely to be the main factor in this outcome, as the prior feedback type is argued to result in better learning outcomes (Baleghizadeh & Dadashi, 2011; Ferris,

2004). In accordance with the previous findings (e.g., Bitchener, 2008), the positive learning outcomes brought by implicit feedback are likely to be long-lasting or even permanent. The enhanced interactivity in the online lessons allowed students to ask for further confirmation after feedback, providing much-needed guidance during the lesson as they corrected their mistakes. The main goal of any teaching method or tool is usually to improve learning, and in line with the literature showing better learning as a result of using online teaching platforms (Rosyada & Sundari, 2021; Warman, 2021; Yim et al., 2017), the current study also suggests that such tools can improve learning outcomes. The results, in that regard, seem to contradict the heavy criticism of Truscott (2004) against the use of corrective feedback.

As for motivation, the students reported feeling more motivated to engage in writing tasks while using an online teaching platform (3.44 out of 5); however, this was the lowest-rated section in the questionnaire. They also declared an overall positive attitude toward using the platform, Google Classroom, in online writing lessons (3.69 out of 5), in line with Fauzi et al. (2021). Relatively lower rating averages for these sections were expected since students might need some time to get used to using online teaching platforms, which can in turn increase the observed benefits (Rosyada & Sundari, 2021). The initial challenge of using such platforms can be mitigated by overcoming the aforementioned limitations, namely, creating useful guidelines and combining other tools with online teaching platforms like Google Classroom. This could allow students to feel even more motivated and develop a more positive attitude toward online teaching platforms, even in the first weeks of using these platforms.

One final investigation of the study was the student perceptions about the applicability of an online teaching platform to face-to-face lessons. Although the students declared that using Google Classroom in face-to-face classrooms could be beneficial (3.49 out of 5), some were worried about carrying their laptops or failing to take full advantage of this tool with their mobile phones.

"Carrying a computer every day in face-to-face classes can be difficult for students." (Participant 1)

"Using google classrooms with phones is challenging. I cannot take my computer to school." (Participant 16)

Such concerns can be alleviated by making students familiar with mobile applications that are used to maximise the utility of online teaching platforms. These applications provide a better user experience compared to using online teaching tools with web browsers on mobile phones. For example, one student mentioned the inefficiency of notifications for tasks and assignments, which can be easily improved by using the mobile application of Google Classroom.

## Conclusion

This study shows that using an online teaching platform (e.g., Google Classroom) can improve important aspects of second language learning in online EFL writing lessons, especially the quality and quantity of feedback, interaction, and group work. As revealed by the questionnaire results, the students thought that such benefits resulted in better learning outcomes. Although one of the most prominent advantages of using online teaching platforms is the availability of instant and varied feedback, this issue has been understudied in second language acquisition research. Therefore, the current findings are important in showing that using online platforms can enhance feedback practices in online EFL lessons. In particular, teachers and instructors could give immediate and interactive implicit feedback during online writing lessons and thus provide the scaffolding their students need, allowing them to correct their mistakes through problem-solving processes. As a result, students are likely to improve their writing skills and feel more motivated and engaged in EFL writing lessons.

Creating detailed guidelines can help students overcome the initial challenges of using online teaching platforms. Although I guided my students on how to use Google Classroom, preparing detailed guidelines could have provided a better learning experience, especially regarding self-correction using colour codes and the use of the mobile application. Further improvements can include using aliases instead of real names to promote anonymity and preparing more multimedia-based materials for the activities in Google Classroom. By alleviating such limitations, which mainly resulted from the limited time to switch to distance education in the current study, online teaching platforms can offer more interactive and fun EFL writing lessons in both online and face-to-face lessons, resulting in better learning. By heeding these suggestions and using the questionnaire created for this study with larger

participant pools, further studies can use more advanced data analysis methods to reveal the full potential of using online teaching platforms in EFL writing lessons.

**Limitations**

Due to the abrupt change to distance education, I could not create an experimental design with a control group. The generalizability of the results requires further studies with larger and more varied sample groups, as the current study included a limited number of participants. Finally, experimental studies can compare the writing scores of experimental and control groups to investigate potential improvements in learning outcomes in a more objective way.

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**Appendices**

**Appendix 1.** Frequency Table for the Answers in the Questionnaire

| Likert-scale Item | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. The Google Classroom interface was easy to navigate. | 7 | 9 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 2. Technical difficulties were minimal when using Google Classroom | 4 | 11 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 3. Using Google Classroom was convenient for submitting assignments. | 9 | 6 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 4. I experienced difficulty in using Google Classroom. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 9 | 4 |
| 5. The instructions provided for using Google Classroom were clear. | 7 | 8 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 6. I felt comfortable using Google Classroom. | 6 | 5 | 3 | 1 | 1 |
| 7. Using Google Classroom increased my motivation to learn English. | 2 | 3 | 6 | 2 | 3 |
| 8. Using Google Classroom increased my motivation to write in English. | 3 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 2 |
| 9. I felt demotivated in participating activities in Google Classroom. | 0 | 0 | 6 | 6 | 4 |
| 10. Using Google Classroom helped me feel more engaged in the course. | 3 | 6 | 5 | 2 | 0 |
| 11. Using Google Classroom made me more interested in writing assignments. | 4 | 4 | 6 | 1 | 1 |
| 12. I found peer feedback on my writing to be helpful. | 1 | 8 | 5 | 2 | 0 |
| 13. The feedback I received from peers in Google Classroom helped me improve my writing. | 1 | 8 | 6 | 1 | 0 |
| 14. I found peer feedback in Google Classroom to be fair and unbiased. | 2 | 6 | 7 | 1 | 0 |
| 15. The feedback I received in Google Classroom was useless. | 0 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 11 |
| 16. I felt comfortable giving feedback to my peers in Google Classroom. | 1 | 4 | 6 | 5 | 0 |
| 17. I struggled with giving and receiving feedback in Google Classroom. | 1 | 1 | 2 | 7 | 5 |
| 18. I found the teacher feedback on my writing to be helpful. | 12 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 19. The feedback I received from the teacher in Google Classroom helped me improve my writing. | 11 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| 20. The teacher feedback in Google classroom was useless. | 1 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 11 |
| 21. I found the teacher feedback in Google Classroom to be clear and understandable. | 9 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| 22. I felt comfortable asking the teacher for help in Google Classroom. | 5 | 5 | 5 | 1 | 0 |
| 23. I am dissatisfied with the feedback I received in Google Classroom. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 11 |
| 24. My teacher's delayed feedback (the feedback provided later for the writing assignments) on my writing assignments helped me improve my writing skills. | 5 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| 25. My teacher's use of color codes helped me understand my mistakes and improved my self-correction skills. | 8 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 0 |
| 26. Using color codes instead of direct corrections (i.e., corrections made directly on the student's writing) are better for understanding my mistakes and avoiding making similar mistakes in future. | 6 | 6 | 3 | 0 | 1 |
| 27. Colors codes failed to improve my understanding of self-mistakes. | 0 | 1 | 1 | 6 | 8 |
| 28. Receiving feedback on my writing via color codes increased my motivation to write in English. | 1 | 5 | 7 | 2 | 1 |
| 29. Colors codes were difficult to understand. | 2 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 6 |
| 30. The interactive tools in Google Classroom (e.g., comments, instant feedback) were helpful in learning to write in English. | 8 | 6 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| 31. The interactive tools in Google Classroom (e.g., comments, instant feedback) were ineffective. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 10 |
| 32. The interactive tools in Google Classroom (e.g., comments, instant feedback) helped me feel more connected to my classmates and teacher. | 4 | 6 | 4 | 1 | 1 |
| 33. The interactive tools in Google Classroom (e.g., comments, instant feedback) were easy to use. | 6 | 8 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| 34. I found the use of multimedia (e.g., pictures, mind maps) helpful in learning to write in English in Google Classroom. | 3 | 5 | 7 | 0 | 1 |
| 35. I struggled with the interactive tools in Google Classroom. | 0 | 1 | 1 | 7 | 7 |
| 36. I participated in group work writing activities in Google Classroom in an efficient way. | 4 | 9 | 3 | 0 | 0 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 37. Participating in group activities in Google classroom increased my collaboration skills to work with others. | 4 | 4 | 6 | 2 | 0 |
| 38. Participating in group work activities in Google Classroom improved my ability to give and receive feedback in a group. | 2 | 7 | 4 | 2 | 1 |
| 39. Group works were terrible and useless in Google Classroom. | 1 | 0 | 2 | 5 | 8 |
| 40. Participating in group work activities in Google Classroom improved my ability to think critically and creatively. | 1 | 6 | 7 | 2 | 0 |
| 41. I had enough opportunity to participate and contribute during group work activities in Google Classroom. | 3 | 10 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| 42. Google classroom failed to give me enough chances to engage in group work. | 0 | 2 | 0 | 7 | 7 |
| 43. Using Google classroom makes brainstorming easier. | 3 | 9 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| 44. Using Google Classroom allowed me to engage in a more efficient brainstorming phase through the use of comments, lists, and visuals. | 3 | 9 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| 45. After completing prewriting activities in Google Classroom (e.g., brainstorming, writing the thesis statement), I felt more comfortable in writing an essay in English (compared to a face-to-face classroom). | 5 | 6 | 4 | 0 | 1 |
| 46. Using google classroom for brainstorming and other pre-writing activities was ineffective. | 2 | 1 | 0 | 7 | 6 |
| 47. After completing prewriting activities in Google Classroom (e.g., brainstorming, writing the thesis statement), I wrote better essays in English (compared to a face-to-face classroom). | 4 | 5 | 5 | 0 | 2 |
| 48. Google classroom activities before the actual writing (brainstorming) failed to improve my writing performance and skills. | 0 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 8 |
| 49. Using Google Classroom improved my English writing skills. | 4 | 8 | 3 | 1 | 0 |
| 50. Using Google Classroom made it easier for me to complete writing assignments. | 5 | 9 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| 51. I received enough practice on my writing assignments in Google Classroom. | 3 | 8 | 4 | 1 | 0 |
| 52. My English writing skills have stayed the same after using Google Classroom in online writing lessons. | 0 | 0 | 4 | 10 | 2 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 53. Using Google Classroom allowed me to use other online tools (e.g., Online dictionaries) effectively during writing English writing lessons. | 5 | 7 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| 54. I feel more confident in my writing ability in English after using Google classroom. | 1 | 8 | 6 | 1 | 0 |
| 55. I think the use of Google Classroom could be implemented in face-to-face EFL writing classes to increase learning. | 3 | 7 | 5 | 0 | 1 |
| 56. Google Classroom can be helpful in the English learning activities other than writing in face-to-face lessons. | 2 | 7 | 2 | 2 | 3 |
| 57. Google Classroom would be an inefficient tool in face-to-face lessons. | 2 | 2 | 2 | 8 | 2 |
| 58. I would feel comfortable with using Google Classroom in face-to-face lesson activities. | 2 | 6 | 5 | 2 | 1 |
| 59. I have the necessary equipment (e.g., smartphone, tablet) to participate Google Classroom activities in face-to-face lessons. | 5 | 7 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| 60. I would prefer using Google Classroom in an online writing lesson compared to a regular face-to-face writing lesson. | 2 | 6 | 6 | 1 | 1 |
| 61. I would recommend my peers using Google classroom for English writing lessons. | 1 | 12 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 62. I would avoid using Google Classroom altogether if I am given the chance. | 0 | 1 | 3 | 6 | 6 |
| 63. I want to continue using Google Classroom in future. | 1 | 9 | 5 | 0 | 1 |

Appendix 2. The labeling key and list of errors.

**Labeling Key**
Sentence Structure
Plural/Singular
Tense
Spelling
Punctuation
Word Form
Style
Wrong Word
Missing Word
Unclear
Cohesion
Coherence
Article Error

| Label Name | Extracted Text |
|---|---|
| Word Form | leaders |
| Spelling | Noone |
| Article Error | emotional |
| Missing Word | friends |
| Article Error | emotional conclusion |

Figure 2. An example of how errors were listed using color codes.

Appendix 3. Color codes used in the text.

The second essential competence is conscientious. The research show that people with high emotional intelligence can produce faster and quicker solutions about problems. For this reason, the worker, who have a higher emotional intelligence can be good leader. Morover, people with high emotional intelligence can create better quailty environment and thanks to this, worker can work more comfortable and happy.

Figure 3. An example of using color codes in Google Classroom.