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The Triple Flip: Using Technology for Peer and Self-Editing of Writing

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Abstract
Many teachers consider themselves digital immigrants who struggle to keep up with student digital natives. Whether or not this dichotomy still holds true, in a 21st Century context of teaching and learning, is debatable not least of all because of the exponential development of apps and mobile learning technology. Nevertheless, it is sometimes difficult for educators to know where to begin and for students to know how best to use it to advance their studies and improve their writing.

Focusing on university students at a pre-university English as Second Language (ESL) program in Dubai, this paper discusses how mobile learning and the use of a range of apps can foster peer and self-editing, aid noticing and enhance ownership of the writing process. It is argued that flipping corrective feedback helps students to notice their errors and spend more time developing their writing.

Keywords
Peer editing, Self-editing, Mobile technology, Flipped learning
Many teachers consider themselves digital immigrants who struggle to keep up with student digital natives. Whether or not this dichotomy still holds true, in a 21st Century context of teaching and learning, is debatable not least of all because of the exponential development of apps and mobile learning technology. Nevertheless, it is sometimes difficult for educators to know where to begin and for students to know how best to use it to advance their studies and improve their writing. Focusing on university students at a pre-university English as Second Language (ESL) program in Dubai, this paper discusses how mobile learning and the use of a range of apps can foster peer and self-editing, aid noticing and enhance ownership of the writing process. It is argued that flipping corrective feedback helps students to notice their errors and spend more time developing their writing.

INTRODUCTION
The research initially focused on the apps Explain Everything, Notability and Edmodo which were explored to facilitate peer and self-editing to enhance ownership of the writing process. Subsequently, following an initial pilot, and in view of the expanding market of apps, the paper incorporates apps that are categorized according to function. These include: Powtoon, Thinglink, Showbie, Schoology and others. The overall process is termed the ‘Triple Flip’ and seeks to integrate self and peer editing processes with authentic publishing opportunities.

The limitations of teacher driven corrective feedback on ESL student writing have been extensively studied as has research emphasizing the value of student self-editing based on the Noticing Hypothesis. When teachers provide corrective written feedback highlighting learners’ weaknesses, the process is passive. The Noticing Hypothesis states “SLA is largely driven by what learners pay attention to and notice in TL input and what they understand the significance of noticed input to be” (Iwanaka & Takatskuka, 2007, p. 57). Essentially, Schmidt came up with the Noticing Hypothesis based on his own personal experiences as an adult learner of Portuguese. As a result, he hypothesized that only when L2 learners become aware of the linguistic form in the input, do they begin to acquire it. His basic claim is that input can only be acquired once the learner notices it, which is when it is consciously registered. Schmidt & Frta (1986) indicate that being exposed to information in class is not enough for input to be retained and/or used. They argue that it is a must for the learner to consciously notice and become aware of the input structures in order to be able to use them. As such, their L2 premise is that there is no L2 learning without conscious noticing. Relating to the current research project, learners were given the opportunity to notice their errors in writing through the use of the mobile apps for their self and peer editing.

With the development of mobile learning there has been a huge interest in flipped learning. Teachers have been encouraged to make videos and presentations that learners can access outside the classroom. However, it is debatable to what extent this is student-centered, proactive or beneficial. Also it is incredibly time consuming on behalf of teachers. Conversely, the study arises out of concerns over the extent to which mobile technology really enhances learning and which theoretical basis it stems from. It could be argued that the emphasis still seems to be on the teacher rather than being student centered. Other concerns are that technology is diluting learning and that mobile learning practices are a kind of ‘tech fluff’ or ‘edutainment.’

The research therefore investigates how mobile learning and the use of a range of apps aid peer and self-editing, enhance noticing, improve writing and increase student ownership. It considered how the structuring of app architecture facilitated a cascade of peer and self-editing processes to develop writing as well as providing authentic publishing opportunities.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM
Although the limitations of teacher driven corrective feedback on student writing have been extensively studied, as has research emphasizing the value of student self-editing based on the Noticing Hypothesis, there is currently very little in-depth research relating to the use of apps to improve academic writing.

Whilst students may have a lack of knowledge about how to improve their writing in a second language, some teachers could be doubtful or lack the skills to use technology to help students peer and self-edit. Nevertheless, 21st Century teaching and learning are reframing traditional pedagogies, contexts for learning as well as the direction and reception of knowledge.

Therefore, it is within this spirit that a discussion of how a layering of apps, or a construction of app architecture, can create a dynamic learning environment for students to improve their own writing through increasing their autonomy and sense of control. The process, termed ‘The Triple Flip,’ was not seeking to replicate traditional pedagogies but aimed to harness technology to create new structures and training for peer and self-editing of writing. The learning process is not restricted to the classroom or bound within traditional hierarchies of teacher – student control and reception. Potentially, flipping corrective feedback therefore becomes a win-win situation for both teachers and learners by using technology to create new structures and processes for noticing, improving and sharing written work.

Innovation and Value of the Triple Flip
The Triple Flip has a number of key affordances that foster innovative digital collaboration between learners and teachers. It offers greater interactions between learners and teachers in a manner that overrides the (imagined) division between digital natives and immigrants.
and seeks to answer the following questions:
(MFNCA, 2009).

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Band 5 in IELTS. They are first language Arabic speakers and are of

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The participants are female students at Zayed University, Dubai

and autonomy.

In terms of SLA, learners must be exposed to appropriate input to

produce accurate output. Van Lier (1996), drawing on Vygotsky

promotion of notice, which includes awareness: autonomy and authenticity.

To achieve these variables Van Lier stresses peer interaction is essential to provide the necessary scaffolding and motivation.

In terms of writing pedagogy teacher driven corrective input is arguably one-way and whilst highlighting learners’ errors, the process is passive and leaves students and does not necessarily develop their autonomous output.

Researchers such as Schmidt (2010) claim the learning process is individualistic and that peer error correction would augment students’ awareness of their errors by providing an atmosphere for noticing and learn the difference between the produced interlanguage forms and the target language forms.

In order to further promote awareness of autonomy, authenticity and autonomy, learning outside the classroom is as important, if not more so, than within. Van Lier believes learners should be given more control of what, how and when they want to learn. At the same time, students need to be guided in learning to notice their errors. A possible solution therefore is to draw on developments in mobile learning.

The concept of the flipped classroom be integrated to facilitate students in learning to notice their errors, during peer or self-editing, so that they can work autonomously beyond the classroom.

flipped classes are a relatively new phenomenon in education. The first discussion began about 12 years ago with the integration of technology into the classroom methodology by a few technologically savvy educators. According to Thompson (2011), flipped classes became popular because of Samuel Khan who tried to teach mathematics online. In his own classroom, he developed instructional videos for them and uploaded them online for later viewing. As he developed more and more videos, he eventually left his day job to develop his own research conducted on peer editing shows that training enhances the experience and efficiency of peer evaluation.

learners who received training on how to edit and review had

more purposeful and process based approach to writing.

so popular because of the vast availability of resources online.

the symbol of this new teaching approach.

As with any other approach to teaching and learning, the flipped classroom model has its pros and cons. According to Fulton (2012), the benefits of the flipped classroom can be listed in a few points. In the flipped class the students learn at their own pace; the teachers get a deeper awareness of their students’ learning, which is a result of noticing their students’ errors and what students can do to improve, and that errors would decrease as a result of self and peer editing.

Support for the use of peer editing in process writing instruction can be found in Vygotsky’s theory on learning (1962, 1987). To Vygotsky, social interaction is an essential element of cognitive learning. Learning takes place in social settings and contributes to students’ autonomy. Writing performance can be improved, and that errors would decrease as a result of self and peer editing.

To sum up, flipping the writing process to include collaborative peer editing and feedback is an effective practice for teaching academic process writing. The literature indicates that training teachers in collaborative peer feedback is necessary in order for the learners to give useful feedback on content and language structure. Moreover, the interaction between the editor and the writer can lead to long-term improvements in the quality of writing. The marriage between the flipped method and peer feedback has advantages and results on the process of writing provided the learners are exposed to enough training.

**Methodology**
Qualitative research methods were triangulated to include data collected from a survey, unstructured interviews, narrative practices and observations of the students’ writing at each stage of the interaction co-construction. This process in the first stage is how students may take a more active role in the assessment of their writing and how the range of apps could function as a tool to facilitate this. Student experiences were at the center of the project to ensure that the initiative was dialogic and learners’

**Participants**
Two groups of students were involved in the study. All participants were females whose native language is Arabic. The learners were all enrolled in a founded Arabic language program at university. Their ages ranged between 18-21 years old. All the students in this study were of Arabic ethnicity with no differences in their nationalities. All participants had their own iPads with the necessary apps for this study. As part of the students’ class objectives, they were required to write a problem-solution essay referencing external sources of information in Arabic. These essays served as the content for the current research.

The first group consisted of pre-initial students of English with a current IELTS Band 3 – 5. Seventeen took part in the process and were interviewed in both Arabic and English. The second group involved 15 students who received 20 contact hours of core English per week. The students were all in the same class or the full semester term with one instructor. It is worth noting that levels of literacy in the United Arab Emirates have accelerated since independence in 1971 and a huge investment in education subsequent to this event is also a high priority of Emiratisation and there is a real sense that educating Emirati females will be a huge benefit to the nation. (MFNCA, 2009).

**Research Questions**
The study was conducted in stages reflecting the teaching and seeks to answer the following questions:

1. **RQ1** Are effective apps that allow teachers to flip the learning environment and provide materials and videos offering careful cues and models in guiding students’ peer and self-editing through structure, content and language? How has such an approach been successful in teaching, voice commentaries and stickies in engaging students in the peer and self-editing process?

2. **RQ2** Would apps and mobile learning platforms, such as Edmodo and Schoology, provide authentic publishing platforms, audience and peer discussion forums to motivate learners to improve their writing?

Whilst there was a use of a range of apps, the research was not app specific but rather concerned with the processes of how the apps could be used. What happens when apps are used in the process, incorporating both synchronous and asynchronous features, provide an articulation of structured digital collaborative activities for producing, processing and sharing writing that are not bounded temporally or spatially.

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Powtoon templates allowed for flexibility in design to fit the reading; no voice was used in the videos. A total of 10 videos were based on topics related to the curriculum of the course being and jingle at the end of each video, while the videos under the paid templates offered if they do not wish to pay for a subscription. The educational templates, which were used to create input for this Powtoon is a fun and user-friendly tool for making presentations video-making platform Powtoon, accessed at www.powtoon.com.

in the following steps:

1. Input with Powton

The first flip consisted of input writing videos using the video-making platform Powton, accessed at www.powton.com. Powton is a fun and user-friendly tool for making presentations that can be shared with others. The platform offers a range of educational templates, which were used to create input for this project. It is possible for users to create videos using the free templates offered if they do not wish to pay for a subscription. The videos created using Powtoon include the website’s logo and jingle at the end of each video, while the videos under the paid subscription do not.

The researchers designed and created a series of short videos based on topics related to the curriculum of the course being taught. The Powtoon videos ranged in length from 3-5 minutes and did not include any voice instructions. All instructions were based on the written content displayed on the screen. All videos were shared with the students by email as.m4v attachments. Powton templates allowed for flexibility in design to fit the various themes presented. After going through all the videos and brainstorming for their essays, the students were asked to write their first drafts using Microsoft Word.

2. The Notatolly Process

The second step of the process, or the second flip, involved using the app Notatolly to peer edit each other’s work. Notatolly is a paid app, which is required at our institution for all the students who engage. As such, no app was chosen for the editing process. Notatolly allows for the annotation of PDFs using highlighters, text notes, sticky notes and voice notes. Students were asked to upload and ask to email their drafts to each other. Notatolly allows the students to view their partners’ essays in PDF format as email attachments. They reviewed each other’s essays and gave recorded verbal feedback and written comments on the work. The teachers acted as the participants could review audio comments linked to their written feedback receive. After the feedback, the students met for peer editing sessions in class and the revisions were discussed in detail to clarify all points of feedback. The teachers at this point were monitoring the discussions and pair meetings to make sure everyone was adhering to the requirements of the assignment. At this stage, all work is student-centered with remote teacher supervision. Once this was concluded, the students were then asked to write their second drafts based on the peer feedback they had received. Their second drafts were published in Edmodo for class sharing as the Third Flip.

3. The Edmodo Process

The third flip involved publishing the edited essays in Edmodo. Educreations was the favorite of the three chosen apps with 40% of the students made them self-conscious. As regards peer editing, responses were far more positive for noticing certain errors, which they hadn’t been aware of earlier.

regarding the use of video for writing, 71% found the videos useful although only 14% said they watched them outside the classroom. In terms of the flipped classroom concept, this variable indicates that learning was occurring within the traditional classroom context rather than beyond a mobile device. What is not captured is whether they would have viewed the videos outside the classroom if they did not have the opportunity to watch them within. In terms of the editing apps, Notatolly and Educrations for peer editing were found to be useful by 69% and 43% of the students respectively. The students found them very useful and 35% found them a waste of time. In the unstructured interviews and discussions, students remarked that for peer editing was a passive activity on behalf of students. Corrective feedback was a passive activity on behalf of students. Alternatively, it could indicate that traditional teacher feedback is the most important factor for improving writing. Alternatively, it could indicate that the students held traditional perceptions of what factors influenced development. Conversely, a combination of traditional teacher driven feedback, peer review and technology are all significant variables that help students improve their written work.

Usage of the various apps provided evidence of improvements in students work. These improvements were particularly in terms of content and style although the same number and type of grammatical errors were still occurring. Their ability to discuss their writing with one another and with the teacher also developed as the students started to acquire a meta-language or critical criteria for assessing their writing.

4. Group 2: Results of Unstructured Interviews

The results demonstrate that the majority of the students enjoyed the overall experience of peer and self-editing as 53% indicated that it was an interesting and engaging way to approach the writing process. Interestingly, they stated that the process helped them to find their own mistakes. Looking at the results specifically, 56% found the peer editing useful explaining that they felt it improved their writing by increasing their ability to notice certain errors, which they hadn’t been aware of earlier. As for the apps themselves, only 46% found Notatolly helpful in the editing process. Many expressed their dislike of this app as opposed to their commitment with Powton and Educreations which was the favorite of the three chosen apps with 40% of the students indicating they enjoyed using it especially because it allowed them to read each other’s work and comment and give feedback. The feedback platform was a major motivator in their re-writing process. 67% said they benefited the most from allowing their classmates to read their work and comment on it in Edmodo. 33% found the Powton videos to be useful as a reference as well as quite attractive. Only 6% were in favor of using Notatolly for the recording and editing. Regarding their confidence at editing their own writing after going through the training for this project, 60% answered they felt quite confident about their ability to edit their writing as well as content. They explained that the training provided allowed for noticing certain errors, which they hadn’t been aware of earlier. When it comes to the differences during this process, 60% said correcting, 30% dislikedrewriting their essays, and 10% did not enjoy explaining and discussing the errors with their classmates. There was a general view that more preparation was necessary before actually editing the essays. 
Finally, according to our students’ answers, this experience of the writing process could be improved by offering more training and practice on how to edit, as they were not confident in their abilities as self and peer-editors. Also, they did not like having different partners in different stages of the re-drafting process. Instead, they preferred having the same editing partners throughout.

**LIMITATIONS OF STUDY AND FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS**

The limitations of the study are size of the sample and relatively short period of time over which the study was conducted. Recommendations for future research would include a longer research period and comparisons with other classes and across other academic disciplines.

The next cycle would be for students to create their own Powtoons and videos in order to create their own content for learning. Ideally, teaching should also be flipped, and not just learning in order to make the whole process more student-centered. Further avenues of research would also involve looking at teachers’ perceptions of the Triple Flip process and possible questions could be how they view their shifting role in the 21st Century ‘well-less’ classroom. How do they feel about the erosion of the traditional teacher – student hierarchy? Do they feel that students’ writing is improving through this process? Another issue would their perceptions of managing the peer and self-editing process. What are the practicalities of its facilitation; benefits and limitations of the process?

**DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

Overall, this study looks into using technology to aid peer and self-review of writing suggests that students require careful guidance in both the writing review process as well as the required technology. It also reveals that students do not necessarily find this learner-centered approach an intuitive process and were also not convinced that this is beneficial.

These findings remind us that technology in the classroom, for the purposes of writing instruction, does not supersede the role of the instructor. Students in this study felt that the teacher was a vitally important participant in the teaching and learning cycle. The students’ responses, to the apps also indicate that students’ preferences and opinions about the values and usability of technology are vitally important. Students need to be convinced that the application is purposeful and efficient.

The current study argues that apps can aid in the self and peer-editing process provided the students undergo well-planned step-by-step training. This would be helpful to the students as well as teachers who have major time constraints and are unable to give one-on-one effective feedback. Nevertheless, duplicating the process of this study must be done with a major limitation in mind: the students all wrote a problem-solution essay, which had been taught and discussed at length in class. Since all students were familiar with the requirements of this type of essay, the quality of their work was surely affected, which in turn influenced the self and peer-editing processes.

Finally, this research project has helped to highlight some of the possibilities of using technology to help students review their writing using collaborative and authentic methods. Conversely, it indicates that whilst students want functional, efficient applications they also require teacher input and support in using these. Nevertheless, there were definite improvements in terms of the quality of their writing.

The essays improved from draft to final version. The editing devices helped them to notice more of their errors and the prospect of having their writing published on Edmodo prompted them to carefully prepare and check their essays. It is recommended that more training sessions on feedback are needed in order to increase the expertise and confidence of the student reviewers. However, as this is very time consuming, the curriculum of the course must allow for the necessary time to be integrated into the syllabus of the course.

**REFERENCES**


