



**Peer Feedback of Digital Storytelling Facilitated by Steller to Improve Writing  
Skills**

Nathali Lizett Bonifaz Aquino

Guide: María Rossana Ramírez Avila

Presented as Partial Fulfillment for the Degree of Magister en Pedagogía de los  
Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros con Mención en la Enseñanza de Inglés. CES:  
RPC-SE-19-N°.140-2020. Cohort 2019 - 2021. Author's email:  
nathalizett.bonifaz@gmail.com Guayaquil, February 04th, 2021.

## **Peer Feedback of Digital Storytelling Facilitated by Steller to Improve Writing Skills**

Feedback plays an important role in instruction (Mory, 2004 as cited in Ertmer et al., 2007) with many learning theorists positing that it is essential to students' learning (Driscoll, 2000 as cited in Ertmer et al., 2007). Moreover, peer-feedback supports the learning process by providing an intermediate check of the performance against the criteria, accompanied by feedback on strengths, weaknesses and/or suggestions for improvement (Falchikov 2001, as cited in Ion, Barrera, & Folch, 2016).

Thus, by engaging students in the feedback process, meaningful interaction increases- interaction with peers and interaction with the content of the discussion postings- which subsequently promotes student satisfaction with the course (Richardson & Swam, 2003 as cited in Ertmer et al., 2007) and with the instruction (Fulford & Zhang, 1998 as cited in Ertmer et al., 2007).

Digital storytelling is a computer-based tool to tell stories and help students to improve their knowledge using technology. As a multimedia tool, digital storytelling is a means of educational technology (Dogan & Robin, 2009). Story telling is not a new method to improve writing. Mello (2001) stated that storytelling is one of the oldest methods used to narrate thoughts and images (as cited in Duman & Göcen, 2015). The participants in this research show a lower level of English and poor motivation as the main evidence of students' lack of English skills. Teachers use methodologies and strategies appropriate to students' needs and one of their needs is to properly express their ideas in a written way, which is one of the skills that

teachers and students struggle with (Arnaudet, 1990, as cited in León & Rosero, 2018, pp.40.)

The National Commission on Writing (NCW) of the American's Schools and Colleges declared writing as the most neglected domain among reading, writing and arithmetic research in its 2003 report. ("The Neglected", 2003 as cited in Yamaç & Ulusoy, 2017). According to the National Curriculum of Ecuador (Ministerio de Educación, 2016), writing is a complex process which must be developed gradually and progressively throughout an individual's school years and beyond.

In addition, technology is one of the most important tools nowadays in our classroom because it promotes students' autonomy. It helps students to keep engaging, and it increases the amount of social development even in a virtual learning environment.

Merzenich (2007) stated,

In a world run by computers, where almost every kid in that class will have some sort of a computer in their pocket and on their desk in their future life and job, wouldn't it make sense to measure the impacts of serious computer-based training on our schoolchildren's reactions to, and their facile uses of computers? (p. 1; as cited in Ferriter & Garry, 2010).

Writing has to be well developed during the first years of learning a new language because it is the second way to express feelings, ideas or thoughts. Students of seventh grade of a public school analyzed in this study have faced some difficulties while writing words, sentences, and even paragraphs. Seventh graders have A1 level of English because during the last years, they did not have an English teacher. They faced difficulties such as lack of vocabulary, grammar rules, spelling of some words, motivation, and understanding of its purpose.

There are similar studies regarding peer- feedback to improve writing skills conducted in Ecuador. Flores (2020) and Jeanneth (2020) reported positive results applying peer-feedback to improve oral skills a higher education institution. Furthermore, another similar study related to writing Vega (2019) reported great advances after the implementation of peer-feedback to improve students' writing skills. Another element of this research is storytelling. In the international context, this study addressed the impact of digital storytelling technique to improve writing skills. However, there is little information about the implementation of digital storytelling as a technological resource in Ecuador. Learning is a socially constructed activity that takes place through communication with peers (Bruffee, 1984). For this reason, the teacher should adopt technology and strategies to promote effective learning.

### **Literature Review**

Studies related to the use of peer feedback, storytelling, technology, and motivation in language learning have been made for many years. The following theoretical support is divided into five sections related to the variables of this innovation.

#### **Writing**

Writing is a form of human communication. It is the visual form of the language (Rahmawati, 2017 as cited in Azmi & Abdul, 2019). Kellogg (2008) emphasized that learning how to write a coherent, useful text is a protracted and challenging effort of mental ability development. Additionally, writer needs to develop and manage ideas before transforming them into readable text and at the same time making sure the spelling, punctuation, grammar and others are correct (Yee & Kee, 2017 as cited in Azmi & Abdul, 2019). Furthermore, digital stories

provide an alternative conduit of expression for those students who struggle with writing traditional text (Reid, Parker, & Burn, 2002).

### **Storytelling and Writing Instruction**

A variety of studies on the use of digital storytelling in writing instruction revealed that digital storytelling motivate students to write more explicitly and detailed stories by expanding the audience (Foley, 2013; Sylvester & Greenidge, 2009; Vasudevan et al., 2010 as cited in Duman & Göcen, 2015). Besides, with the help of digital stories, students both comprehend the organization of stories throughout the processes for reflection, editing, and feedback (Kulla-Abbott, 2006).

### **Students' Perspectives**

Can and Walker (2011) stated that convictions and perspectives are useful to develop skills. Students' perceptions of their learning community, their strength of connection with their fellow students and associated strength of identity with a programme can influence approaches to learning and learning outcomes (Bliuc, Ellis, Goodyear & Hendres, 2011). Moreover, the importance of trust in self and in others to be able to give good feedback and in being comfortable with the process was a key theme raised by the students in both interventions; a finding in common with many studies (Friedman, Cox, & Maher, 2008; Su & Beaumont, 2010 as cited in Evans, 2015).

### **Motivation**

Motivation is an essential element of successful language acquisition and is a dynamic process subject to continuous flux (Dornyei, 2001). In addition, creating digital stories acts as a motivator for students; thus they remain engaged throughout the project (Burn & Reed, 1999).

### **Peer Feedback**

Vygotsky's (1978) stated, "The socio-cognitive learning perspective, specifically Zone of Proximal Development, supports the use of discussions in online environments." Hounsell (2007) stated, "feedback is considered to be a key component of the learning and assessment activity for the reflective construction of knowledge and lies in a transformed role for students in feedback and in a variety of forms: in targeting, generating and interpreting feedback and in communicating and engaging with it" (as cited in Ion, Barrera, & Folch, 2016). Feedback may be even more important in online environments than in traditional classrooms (Lynch, 2002; Palloff & Pratt, 2001). It has garnered increasing attention in second-language (L2) writing classrooms, as the activity promises to encourage negotiation about and construction of meaning as well as to help students develop new perspectives on writing (Ferris, 2003; Liu & Hansen, 2002; Liou, 2009 as cited in Lin & Yang, 2011). Notar, Wilson, and Ross (2002) specifically call for feedback that is "diagnostic and prescriptive, formative and iterative, and involving both peers and group assessment" (p. 646).

### **Punctuation**

Allen (2002) assumed that punctuations have a useful purpose for having whatever kind of writing clear and easy to understand. Moreover, if a text is laid out correctly, it will be considered as a strong piece of writing (as cited in Sulliman et al., 2019). Crystal explains:

Punctuation marks are the main means of showing the grammatical organization of what you write. Hide the punctuation and you hide the grammatical structure. Furthermore, if you hide the grammatical structure, you hide the meaning of what you are trying to say (1996, as cited in Waugh, 1998).

### **Capitalization**

"It is impossible to give rules that will cover every conceivable problem in capitalization" (G.P.O, 1984 as cited in McCaskill, 1998). Capitalization problems are part of the punctuation problem, which may be the result of inadequate learning or inefficient teaching (Davidson, 2005 as cited in Farroq et al., 2012).

### **Grammar**

English Grammar rules originated in antiquity, but over centuries have evolved according to usage and are still changing today. Thus, grammar rules may change and may be inconsistent, but usually have a functional basis. A rule of grammar or punctuation with a functional basis will not prevent effective statement of ideas, nor will following all the rules ensure effective writing. (McCaskill, 1990)

Grammar skills include run-on sentences, fragments and verbiage, inclusion of necessary information, use of a different type of sentences, subject-verb agreement, and placement of modifiers, tense agreement and parallel construction (Leisak, 1989 as cited in Farroq et al., 2012)

### **Vocabulary**

Vocabulary is divided into two parts: active vocabulary and passive vocabulary. Active vocabulary is learned for production and passive vocabulary is used only for recognition. Students usually face difficulties in the production area, which is associated with meaning (specific/general), form (pronunciation/spelling), possible word combinations and structures (Miller, 1984 as cited in in Farroq et al., 2012).

### **Spelling**

One of the challenges is spelling the English words correctly; his view is that learners wrongly spell the words, which results in weird sentences. (Ibrahem, 1978 as cited in Hameed, 2016). Moreover, it is easy to judge if a good spelling program is

part of an elementary classroom, secondary classroom or a higher secondary classroom. Simply ask, "Are children in this classroom engaged in the spelling process: finding words, inspecting words, mastering words, and developing good spelling habits?" (Gentry, 1995 as cited in Hameed, 2016).

### **Organization**

With the help of digital stories, students both comprehend the organization of stories throughout the processes for reflection, editing, and feedback (Kulla-Abott, 2006 as cited in Yamaç & Ulusoy, 2017) and have a deeper understanding of the revision process (Stojke, 2009 as cited in Yamaç & Ulusoy, 2017). In Kulla-Abbott's (2006) study, digital storytelling helped students comprehend the organization of stories with the processes of reflection, drafting and feedback (as cited in Yamaç & Ulusoy, 2017).

The goal of this study is to explore the effects of peer feedback of digital storytelling facilitated by Steller to enhance writing skills. The first goal is to determine how peer feedback improves writing skills in seventh graders and the second is to analyze the effects of motivation using Steller and peer feedback in seven graders.

The specific research questions are:

1. To what extent does peer feedback through Steller improve students' writing skills?
2. What are students' perspectives towards Steller and peer feedback?

### **Innovation**

This innovation will consist of improving seventh graders writing skills by using peer feedback facilitated by Steller. It will take place as part of a regular unit of study with ten periods of classes in one week of implementation with ten participants of seventh grade students at a public school in Guayaquil. The goal of the innovation will be to get students to produce descriptive text consisting of a brief introduction using a sequence of simple sentences using simple present tense expressing their likes and dislikes.

To reach that goal, students will go through the acquisition of some phrases using simple sentences to introduce their personal information written through a digital storytelling called Steller. After the pretest to measure the students' abilities in writing sentences, students will be introduced some simple words and basic expressions to write about themselves and how to use Steller.

First, the teacher will introduce the use of Steller and show some examples of simple sentences and phrases to introduce themselves. Second, students will be able to recite the new vocabulary about personal information. Then, students will write about them using personal information and basic words in Steller. Meanwhile, the teacher will teach how to give quality peer feedback by modeling the task. Next, the teacher will ask students to take a tour around a virtual classroom eliciting new vocabulary about hobbies and food. After that, the teacher will encourage students to generate written ideas to express their likes and dislikes using common phrases in Steller. Additionally, the teacher will promote peer feedback using a rubric. Students will read their partners' work, choose their favorite, and write some comments about it. Finally, students will be able to give feedback and write a brief introduction about themselves using their personal information and expressing likes and dislikes. See a detailed plan in Appendix A

### **Methodology**

The current study will use a qualitative and quantitative approach to find out if the use of Steller as a digital storytelling tool is an effective way to improve writing skills in seven graders. The overall purpose and central premise of mixed methods studies is that the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches in combination provides a better understanding of research problems and complex phenomena than either approach alone (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007 as cited in Molina-Azorin, 2016).

### **Participants**

This study will use a sample of ten students between ages 9 to 10 years old from public school in the Coast Region of Ecuador. The participants are native speakers of Spanish and they are at a pre-A1 level of English in the CEFR and face challenges at writing. Parents will provide a consent letter if they would like to participate in this study.

### **.Instruments**

To answer the first research question, the pre – post test will be applied before and after the implementation of the innovation. The pre- test will help to identify the background on the present tense structure, common phrases to introduce themselves, and vocabulary about it. The post-test will provide evidence of how students will improve their performance. In the pre and post-test, students will write an introduction using Steller, a rubric will also be designed to assess students' writing performance (Appendix B). The rubric will consider the following categories: Punctuation, capitalization, grammar, vocabulary, spelling, and organization of the paragraph. Each descriptor is going to be evaluated on four points to measure students' outcomes. To answer the second research question; the data will be collected through semi-structured interviews that are going to be conducted in two

weeks. Interviews will last on average, 20 minutes, will be recorded, and transcribed. Students are going to be contacted via phone call or WhatsApp message to set up an appointment for their interview. The data analysis will be presented through diagrams. All activities and procedures are going to be approved by the public school.

### **Data Analysis**

The application of this action research will include the analysis of quantitative and qualitative instruments. To analyze the impact of the innovation of this research study, I will use descriptive statistical and inductive analysis, to have a brief overview of my data collection. The scores from the pre and post tests to assess students' writing performance will be entered into a spreadsheet. Later, they will be imported to the SPSS program to get descriptive statistics: minimum, maximum, mean, and standard deviation. Interviews will be transcribed and reviewed for general themes regarding enhancing writing skills and the effect of peer feedback facilitated by Steller(Appendix C).

Next, the axial coding step will be conducted. It will look at the relationships between themes and these relations will help me to understand and interpret them better. These themes will be organized into two broader categories (Strategy and Skills) during the selective coding step.

### **Ethical Considerations**

The researcher will ask for all permissions from the institution and the director. In addition, parents will be notified and they will sign a consent letter to approve the participation of their children in this innovation to improve their writing skills. However, all the data will be confidential and the names of the participants will not be revealed.



### References

- Azmi, Z., & Abdul, A. (2019). The impact of digital storytelling on ESL narrative writing skill. *Arab World English Journal*, 5, 319-332.  
<https://doi.org/10.24093/awej/call5.22>
- Burn, A., & Reed, K. (1999). Digi-teens: Media literacies and digital technologies in the secondary classroom. *English Education*, 33(3), 5-20. doi:10.1111/j.1754-8845.1999.tb00720.x
- Bliuc, A-M., Ellis, R.A., Goodyear, P., & Hendres, D. M. (2011). Understanding student learning in context: Relationships between university students' social identity, approaches to learning, and academic performance. *European Journal of Psychology Education*, 26, 417-433.
- Bruffee, K. A. (1984). Collaborative learning and the "Conversaton of mankind". *College English*, 46, 635-652. <https://doi.org/10.2307/376924>
- Can, G., & Walker, A. (2011). A model for doctoral students' perceptions and attitudes toward written feedback for academic writing. *Research in Higher Education*, 52(5), 508-536. doi:10.1007/s11162-010-9204-1
- Corgan, R., Hammer, V., Margolies, M., & Crossley, C. (2004). Making your online course successful. *Business Education Forum*, 58(3), 51-53.
- Dogan, B. & Robin, B. (2009). Educational uses of digital storytelling: creating digital storytelling contests for K-12 students and teachers. In C. Crawford et

al. (Eds.), *Proceedings of Society for Information Technology and Teacher Education International Conference 2009*. Chesapeake, VA: AACE. See discussions, stats, <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/233897532>

Dornyei, Z. (2001). *The psychology of the language learner*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Duman, B. & Göcen, G. (2015). The effect of the digital storytelling method on pre-service teachers' creative writing skills. *Anthropologist*, 20(1–2), 215–222.

Ertmer, P., Richardson, J., Belland, B., Camin, D., Connolly, P., Coulthard, G., ... Mong, C. (2007). Using peer feedback to enhance the quality of student online postings: An exploratory study, *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, volume 12(issue) 2, 412–433, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1083-6101.2007.00331.x>

Evans, C. (2015). Students' perspectives on the role of peer feedback in supporting learning. *Journal of Cognitive Education and Psychology*, 14(1), 110-125.  
doi:10.1891/1945-8959.14.1.110

Farooq, M. S., Uzair-Ul-Hassan, M., & Wahid, S. (2012). Opinion of second language learners about writing difficulties in English language. *South Asian Studies* (1026-678X), 27(1).

Ferriter, W. & Garry, A. (2010). *Teaching the I generation: 5 easy ways to*

*introduce essential skills with web 2.0 tools*. Solution Tree Press.

Flores, N. & Jeanneth, C. (2020). Peer-feedback of students' recorded videos to improve Oral skills: An action research study. (Master's degree theses, Universidad Casa Grande, Guayaquil, Ecuador).  
<http://dspace.casagrande.edu.ec:8080/handle/ucasagrande/1821>

Hameed, P. F. M. (2016). A study of the spelling errors committed by students of English in Saudi Arabia: Exploration and remedial measures. *Advances in Language and Literary Studies*, 7(1), 203-207.

Ion, G., Barrera, A., & Tomàs, M. (2016). Written peer-feedback to enhance students' current and future learning. *Int J Educ Technol High Educ* 13, 15.  
<https://doi.org/10.1186/s41239-016-0017-y>

Kellogg, R. T. (2008). Professional writing expertise. In K. A. Ericsson, N. Charness, P. J. Feltovich, & R. R. Hoffman (Eds.), *The Cambridge handbook of expertise and expert performance*, pp. 389-402. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Kulla-Abbott, M.T.(2006). Developing literacy practices through digital storytelling. *Dissertations*. 570. ProQuest LLC (3285640).  
<https://irl.umsl.edu/dissertation/570>

León , A. & Rosero, A. (2018). Collaborative work, through google drive tool, to develop the writing skill in A1 level. *Kronos – The Language Teaching Journal*, 1(01), 39-43.

<http://revistadigital.uce.edu.ec/index.php/KronosJournal/article/view/852>

[Lin, W., & Yang, S. \(2011\). Exploring students' perceptions of integrating Wiki technology and peer feedback into English writing courses. \*English Teaching: Practice and Critique\*, 10\(2\), 88-103. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ944900](#)

Lynch, M. (2002). *The online educator: A guide to creating the virtual classroom*. New York: Routledge Falmer.

Ministerio de Educación. (2016). *Estándares de Calidad Educativa* [Standards of Educational Quality].

[https://educacion.gob.ec/wpcontent/uploads/downloads/2012/09/estandares\\_2012\\_ingles\\_opt.pdf](https://educacion.gob.ec/wpcontent/uploads/downloads/2012/09/estandares_2012_ingles_opt.pdf)

[McCaskill, M. K. \(1990\). Grammar, punctuation, and capitalization: A handbook for technical writers and editors \(Vol. 7084\). National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Office of Management, Scientific and Technical Information Division.](#)

[Molina-Azorin, J. F. \(2016\). Mixed methods research: An opportunity to improve our studies and our research skills. \*European Journal of Management and Business Economics\*, 25\(2\), 37-38. doi:10.1016/j.redeen.2016.05.001](#)

Notar, C. E., Wilson, J. D., & Ross, K. G. (2002). Distant learning for the development of higher-level cognitive skills. *Education*, 122, 642–650.

Palloff R. M., & Pratt, K. (2001). Lessons from the cyberspace classroom: The realities of online teaching.

Reid, M., Parker, D., & Burn, A. (2002). *Digital video report*, BECTA.  
<http://digitalstorytellingclass.pbworks.com/f/digital+storytelling+struggling+readers.pdf>

Suliman, F., Ben-Ahmeida, M., & Mahalla, S. (2019). Importance of punctuation marks for Writing and Reading Comprehension Skills.

Vega, R. (2019). Improving writing with peer-feedback and blogger: An action research study. (Master`s degree theses, Universidad Casa Grande, Guayaquil, Ecuador). <http://dspace.casagrande.edu.ec:8080/handle/ucasagrande/1821>

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). Internalization of higher psychological functions. *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*, 37(2), 52-57.

Waugh, D. (1998). Practical approaches to teaching punctuation in the primary school. *Reading*, 32(2), 14-17.

Yamaç, A., & Ulusoy, M. (2017). The effect of digital storytelling in improving the third graders' writing skills. *International Electronic Journal Of Elementary Education*, 9(1), 59-86. <https://iejee.com/index.php/IEJEE/article/view/145>

**Appendix A**

**Lesson Plan**

Available upon request.

**Appendix B**

**Rubric**

Available upon request.

**Appendix C**

**Interview**

Available upon request.