

INTEGRATING FEEDBACK INTO PROSPECTIVE ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS' WRITING PROCESS VIA BLOGS AND PORTFOLIOS

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to investigate the effect of blogging and portfolio keeping on a group of pre-service teachers' writing skill in a compulsory writing course at a tertiary level English language teaching (ELT) programme in Turkey. The study specifically looked into to what extent receiving feedback from course instructor and peers created ownership in writing and also to what extent giving feedback to peers' writing through blogging and portfolios contributed to a group of prospective English language teachers' writing skill. The study lasted two academic terms (28 weeks) with two groups; namely, portfolio group (30 student teachers) and blog group (29 student teachers). The blog group posted all their written work on personal blogs while the portfolio group kept personal portfolios for their written work. As part of blogging and portfolio keeping both groups also received feedback from course instructor and peers as well as providing feedback to other peers' writing. Results of the study may suggest that blogs and portfolios emerge as effective tools to integrate feedback practice into writing process, offering course instructors and students ample time and practice outside ordinary English classes as a foreign language (EFL). The study also shows that the practice of blogging and portfolio keeping and specifically receiving and giving feedback both on paper and online contributes to student teachers' writing skills significantly on basic elements of writing skill such as process, organization, content, language use, vocabulary, mechanics, and accuracy. In addition, receiving teacher's feedback was reported as the most favourite type compared to receiving and giving peer feedback. Thus blogs and portfolios need to be integrated into writing classes in order to secure better benefits from writing practice in EFL contexts.

Keywords: blogging; portfolio-keeping; feedback; writing; pre-service teachers of English

INTRODUCTION

Writing practice when viewed as a process entails continual and constructive feedback to written work (Hyland, 1988; Bitchener, 2008). However, in writing classes such a practice might be arduous to realize, given the limited time students and teachers have to devote to feedback sessions in ordinary language classes. Thus it would be necessary to take writing instruction out of classrooms. Blogs and portfolios being two major sophisticated sources offer variety to such an end, enhancing students' writing outside ordinary class walls and thus integrating feedback into the whole writing practice.

With the widespread use of computer technology and various applications of the Internet such as blogs, podcasts, newsfeeds, and wikis, language instruction including writing has gone beyond ordinary language classrooms and by means of which the learners have had chances to continue their learning in and out of classrooms continually (Hendron, 2008; Richardson, 2009). One such tool, blogs are an interactive platform or "interactive homepages" can facilitate writing instruction as students through "online exchanges" exceed their learning "beyond the physical classroom" (Blackstone, Spiri, & Naganuma, 2007, p.1), breaking the classroom walls (Arslan & Kızıl, 2007). Through blogs students are engaged in more creative writing tasks along the process of their writing (Eastment, 2005), leading to language development on the part of students (Pinkman, 2005; Fellner & Apple, 2006). When compared with only in-class writing instruction in EFL settings, blog-based writing instruction may bring out an element of collaboration and interaction while learning to write in EFL contexts (Hyland & Hyland, 2006; Miceli, Murray & Kennedy, 2010). With the interactive nature of blogs, learners receive and give feedback to each other's writing without the pressure of the other revising one's work face to face since such an application offers students ample time to read peer's writing, give them feedback and also revise their work (Hansen, 2005) and also without time restrictions, through blogs, both teachers and students share ideas and opinions, having ample opportunities to offer ideas collaboratively at every stage of writing (Arslan & Şahin-Kızıl, 2010).

Furthermore, portfolio keeping can serve similar purposes. Song and August (2002, pp. 49-50) claim portfolio assessment "can accommodate and even support extensive revision, can be used to examine progress over time, and can encourage students to take responsibility for their own writing." Baturay and Daloğlu (2010, pp. 413-414) also support that portfolio entailing students' active participation in the writing process "creates an atmosphere for student centred learning, which requires active student involvement" and also "capitalize[s] on students' natural tendency to save work and to take a second look and think about how they could improve future work."

Portfolios and blogs can therefore offer such possible means to integrate feedback into the writing process. However, the role and place of feedback in a process approach to writing has been a matter of discussion (Goldstein, 2004). Some authors have cautioned its effect as corrective feedback is ineffective as a means of improving student writing (Truscott, 1996; Truscott, 2007; Truscott & Hsu, 2008), correction can be “ineffective or harmful” for the students as it might negatively affect “fluency ... and their overall writing quality” (Truscott, 2004, p.338), there may be no guarantee for the students to improve their future writing without teachers’ support (Truscott, 1996), and any possible benefits are really trivial (Truscott, 2007; Truscott & Hsu, 2008). On the other hand, the bulk of research studies have shown positive effects of corrective feedback on learners’ written work (Ashwell, 2000; Fatham & Whalley, 1990; Ferris & Roberts, 2001; Miaoa, Badger & Zhen, 2006). In process approaches to writing, feedback is also of high importance in order to empower learner autonomy and also to actively involve them in the feedback process (Mendoca & Johnson, 1994). Ferris (2004, pp.59-60) suggests that error treatment is necessary, teachers need to offer “indirect feedback”, and students have to revise their written work having been provided with feedback “ideally in class where they can consult with their peers and instructor.” While lack of feedback on written work leads to frustration (Lee, 2004), offering feedback leads to more fruitful results for second language learners (Leki, 1991). Studies as to students’ use of feedback have shown that feedback is useful to improve students’ second language writing as well as L2 grammar (Ferris, 1995; Hyland, 1998). Providing feedback on students’ writing may help students recognise and avoid local errors in further revisions (Chandler, 2003; Fatham & Whalley, 1990; Ashwell, 2000). Corrective feedback may, therefore, contribute to students’ learning of some local issues such as sentence structure, wording, and correctness (Bitchener, Young, & Cameron, 2005) as well as global ones such as content, purpose, and organization (Straub, 1997).

In addition whether teacher feedback or peer feedback brings out more fruitful results has also been a matter of discussion. In a number of research studies teacher-written feedback is considered an important part of the writing process by both teachers and students (Cohen & Cavalcanti, 1990; Fatham & Whalley, 1990; Connor & Asenavage, 1994; Ferris, 1995; Zhang, 1995; Paulus, 1999; Ferris, 2002). On the other hand, “peer feedback is still well-liked and teachers keep incorporating it in their courses and report students’ positive experiences” (Hyland & Hyland, 2006). Peer feedback has been found effective in improving students’ writing skill (Tsui & Ng, 2000; Hu, 2005; Matsuno, 2009) as it may help students to develop critical thinking skills to analyse and revise their own writing (Leki, 1990; Zhang, 1995), activate learner participation and also create an authentic communicative context (Hyland, 2003). Moreover, peer feedback is likely to lead to greater learner independence or autonomy (Berg, 1999; Miaoa, Badger & Zhen, 2006).

Prospective teachers of English attending an English Language Teaching (ELT) department need to acquire strong language skills in writing in English and also learn how to give and receive feedback prior to their professional careers. This study, therefore, aims to investigate how writing instruction and particularly feedback practice can last beyond the classrooms with a specific purpose to determine the extent to which blog and portfolio integrated writing instruction and whether blog and portfolio integrated teacher and peer feedback would contribute to their writing skill in English.

THE STUDY

Research Setting and Participants

The study was conducted in the English Language Teaching Department of a Faculty of Education with 59 prospective teachers of English. All the participants were of similar features in terms of background in English as they came to the department through a central university exam and also they were given a departmental screening exam that focused on testing all language skills including writing in English. Those students who failed in the English proficiency exam administered at the beginning of the academic year had to attend a two-semester (28 weeks) compulsory English language programme, including teaching grammar and also four language skills; namely reading, speaking, listening and writing. After the screening exam, student teachers were put into two different classes. The course instructor, author of this particular study, assigned the class with 29 students as blog writing class and the other with 30 students as portfolio writing class for research purposes. In the study there were 18 males and 41 females. Portfolio group had 30 students (21 females and 9 males) and the blog group had 29 participants (20 females and 9 males). In the programme writing courses lasted four hours a week and aimed at teaching expository writing. In this 28 weeks’ study, both groups received the same kind of instruction on basic elements of writing skill such as organisation, process, unity, coherence, word choice, language use, grammar, and mechanics (Harmer, 2004) and also on types of paragraphs and essays such as narrative, descriptive, expository, cause and effect, comparison and contrast, classification, and argumentative (Smalley, Ruetten, & Kozyrev, 2001). While the blog group did all writing including giving and receiving feedback through personal blogs, the portfolio group did it through pen-paper assignments to be collected in their personal portfolios. After each assignment they were asked to hand in their work in portfolios or to post

them on their blogs. The course instructor gave feedback to each assignment and also each participant was paired to give and get feedback from another peer.

Nature of the Study

The study is of quasi-experimental design. With a purpose to determine whether blog-based or portfolio writing instruction and feedback had proven more useful contributions to participant student teachers' writing skill, data were collected through a pre and post questionnaire, through assessment of participants' essays at the beginning and end of the year, and also through continual feedback given to written work. Before and also at the end of the study, having been briefed about the assessment criteria two experienced writing instructors from the Foreign Languages Department evaluated participants' first and final essays through an analytic assessment scale developed from the studies of Jacobs, Zinkgraf, Wormuth, Hartfiel, and Hughey (1981), Tribble (1996), and Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (2011) (see Table 1).

Table 1. Analytic Assessment Scale for Written Work: Adapted from Jacobs et al. (1981), Tribble (1996), and Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (2011)

Area	Criteria	Score
Content/Ideas	EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD: Excellent to very good treatment of the subject or topic; topic narrow enough; considerable variety of ideas; independent and thorough interpretation of the topic; content relevant to the topic; accurate details; original ideas; clear purpose for writing.	30-24
	GOOD TO AVERAGE: Adequate treatment of topic; some variety of ideas or argument; some independence of interpretation of the topic; most content relevant to the topic; reasonably accurate detail.	23-18
	FAIR TO POOR: Treatment of the topic is hardly adequate; little variety of ideas; some irrelevant content; lacking detail.	17-10
	VERY POOR: Inadequate treatment of the topic; very broad topic; no purpose for writing; no variety of ideas or argument; content irrelevant; almost no useful detail.	9-6
	INADEQUATE: Fails to address the task with any effectiveness. NOT ENOUGH FOR ASSESSMENT	5-0
Organization	EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD: Fluent expression, ideas clearly stated and supported; appropriately organized paragraph(s) or sections; effective introduction, strong support and effective conclusion; logically sequenced (coherence); connectives appropriately used (cohesion).	20-17
	GOOD TO AVERAGE: Uneven expression, but main ideas stand out; paragraphing or section organization evident; logically sequenced (coherence); some connectives used (cohesion).	16-12
	FAIR TO POOR: Very uneven expression, ideas difficult to follow; organization does not help reader; logical sequence difficult to follow (coherence); connectives largely absent (cohesion).	11-8
	VERY POOR: Lacks fluent expression; ideas very difficult to follow; little sense of organization; ineffective introduction, weak support and poor conclusion; no sense of logical sequence (coherence); connectives not used (cohesion).	7-5
	INADEQUATE: Fails to address this aspect of the task with any effectiveness. NOT ENOUGH FOR ASSESSMENT	4-0
Vocabulary/ Word Choice	EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD: Wide range of vocabulary; accurate word/idiom choice and usage; appropriate selection to match register.	20-17
	GOOD TO AVERAGE: Adequate range of vocabulary; occasional mistakes in word/idiom choice and usage; register not always appropriate.	16-12
	FAIR TO POOR: Limited range of vocabulary; a noticeable number of mistakes in word/idiom choice and usage; register not always appropriate.	11-8
	VERY POOR: No range of vocabulary; uncomfortably frequent word/idiom choice and usage; no apparent sense of register.	7-5
	INADEQUATE: Fails to address this aspect of the task with any effectiveness. NOT ENOUGH FOR ASSESSMENT	4-0
Language Use	EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD: Confident handling of appropriate structures, sentences well-built and structures strong and varied; hardly any errors of agreement, tense, number, word order, articles, pronouns, prepositions; meaning never obscured.	20-17
	GOOD TO AVERAGE: Acceptable grammar- but problems with more complex structures; mostly appropriate structures; some errors on agreement, tense, number,	16-12

	word order, articles.
	FAIR TO POOR: Insufficient range of structures with control only shown in simple 11-8 constructions; frequent errors on agreement, tense, number, word order, articles, pronouns, prepositions; meaning sometimes obscured.
	VERY POOR: Major problems with structures- even simple ones; sentences and 7-5 structures poor, incomplete or awkward; frequent errors of negation, agreement, tense, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns, prepositions; meaning often obscured.
	INADEQUATE: Fails to address this aspect of the task with any effectiveness. NOT 4-0 ENOUGH FOR ASSESSMENT
Mechanics/ Conventions	EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD: Demonstrates full command of writing conventions 10-8 such as spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and layout.
	GOOD TO AVERAGE: Occasional errors in spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and 7-5 layout.
	FAIR TO POOR: Frequent errors in spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and layout. 4-2
	VERY POOR: Very poor mastery of conventions; full of errors of spelling, 1-0 punctuation, and capitalization; layout is distracting. Fails to address this aspect of the task with any effectiveness. NOT ENOUGH FOR ASSESSMENT

In addition a holistic assessment rubric was developed based upon general categories of the analytic assessment criteria and used in order to provide explicit feedback to participants' written assignments throughout the writing programme by the course instructor and also by peers (see Table 2).

Table 2. Holistic Assessment Guide for Essay Evaluation

1. Underline the Thesis Statement (TS)!
<i>Is TS clear with a focus?</i>
<i>Or does thesis statement need improvement?</i>
2. Is the essay organized clearly?
<i>Does the essay have an introductory paragraph, support paragraphs with a topic sentence and a concluding paragraph?</i>
<i>Or does the essay need improvement in terms of organisation?</i>
3. Is the content consistent and rich enough?
<i>Does content in each paragraph support the thesis statement?</i>
<i>Indicate if there are any unrelated sentences in the paragraphs?</i>
4. Are transitions and reminders used effectively throughout the essay?
<i>Are there strong ties between sentences and paragraphs?</i>
<i>Or does the author need to make stronger ties in the essay?</i>
5. How is the language used?
<i>Is the essay free from grammatical errors?</i>
<i>In the essay if there are some grammatical errors, indicate them.</i>
6. Is there sentence variety?
<i>Are there simple, compound, and complex sentences in the essay?</i>
<i>Or do sentences need rewriting?</i>
7. Is vocabulary choice accurate, appropriate, powerful, rich, and meaningful?
<i>Or does the author need to use more effective words?</i>
8. Is mechanics such as spelling and punctuation used correctly?
<i>If not, indicate them.</i>
<i>Write your overall comment on the essay.</i>
1. What are the strengths of the essay?
2. What are the weaknesses of the essay?
3. Make suggestions for revision of the essay.

While assessing their peer work, participants were asked to consider these basic elements included in the holistic assessment guide. The participants were also reminded that their written work was also assessed in terms of the same criteria by the course instructor as the course instructor throughout the term gave feedback to each participant's assignments posted in their personal blogs or submitted to the instructor in their personal portfolios according to this holistic assessment guide. Peers also gave and received feedback weekly in line with the same guide. Each participant was paired with another peer by the instructor or they were asked to pair with another peer to get and give feedback on a voluntary basis. Prior to peer feedback and teacher feedback sessions, both groups received training on how to give feedback. Peer reviewers needed to be well trained in order to better

understand what teacher and peer feedback given to their work meant and also to provide fruitful feedback to each other because such training was essential to enhance collaboration and interaction between the instructor and peers and between peers (Stanley, 1992; Min, 2006; Zhu, 2001; Hyland & Hyland, 2006) in order to help reach positive outcomes (Jacobs, Curtis, Braine, & Huang, 1998; Paulus, 1999). It was also of high importance to maintain student motivation and commitment while giving feedback “at the right time and in the proper context” (Gue’nette, 2007, p.52). The portfolio group met in the classroom four times a week. They put all their assignments in their personal portfolios. For the study “collection portfolios” were used in order for the students to keep all their written work draft and final throughout the course (Apple & Shimo, 2004, p.54) whereas the blog group received all the courses in a computer lab. The course instructor guided each student as to how to set up their own blogs using www.blogger.com as a free site for the bloggers (see Table 3 for study procedure).

Table 3. Study Procedure

Pre-study	Both blog and portfolio groups wrote a five paragraph essay as part of screening examination Each participant completed a pre-study self-assessment questionnaire.
The study	In the fall term (14 weeks), all participants studied basic components of writing such as unity, coherence, parallelism, dangling expressions, cohesive devices, mechanics, word choice, grammar, language use, etc. All participants examined and produced paragraphs of different types; namely, description, classification, process, comparison and contrast, cause and effect, and narration. Both blog and portfolio groups received training on holistic assessment guide. Blog group participants set up their own blogs and learned how to use Google Docs. Portfolio group participants learned how to keep personal portfolios. In the spring term (14 weeks) all participants examined and produced five paragraph essays of different types such as description, classification, process, comparison and contrast, cause and effect, narration, and argumentation. Blog group participants posted their assignments on personal blogs. Portfolio group participants put their assignments in their personal portfolios. Course instructor gave feedback to participants’ writing through blogs or portfolios. Blog group participants gave and received feedback through blogs. Portfolio group participants gave and received feedback through portfolios.
Post-study	Each participant wrote a final five paragraph essays and completed a post-study self-assessment questionnaire.

The course instructor and also each participant in the blog group set up their personal blog accounts. The course instructor posted a number of study pages as to instructions for assignments and writing paragraphs and essays on the tutor blog (see Figure1 for a sample tutor blog).

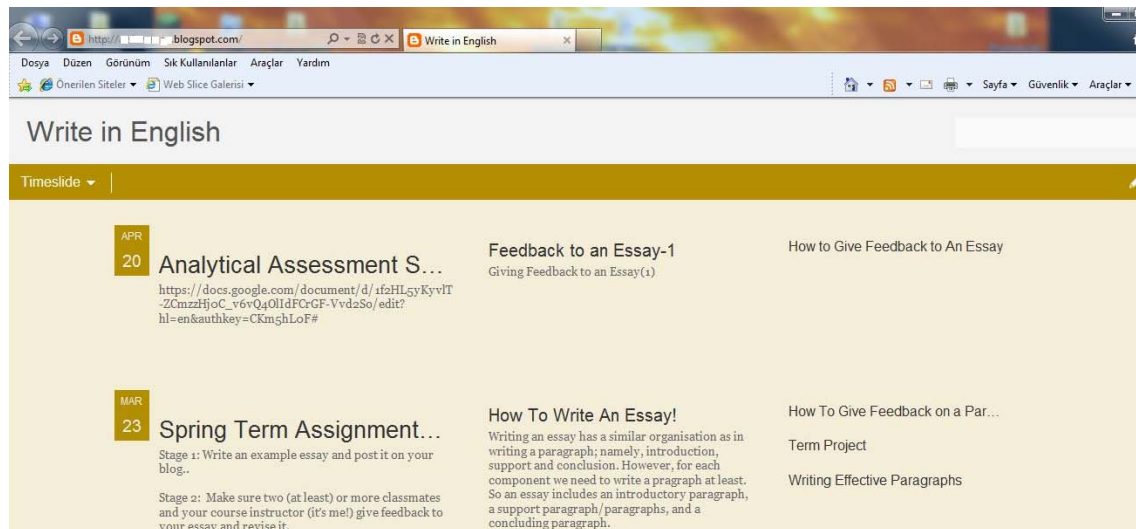


Figure 1. Sample Tutor Blog

Moreover, the participants posted all their written work on their individual blogs which were accessible to the course instructor, to other class members, and also to any follower (see Figure 2 for a sample peer blog).

öyküperk
University English
Language Teaching
Department
Profilimin tamamını
görüntüle

TYPES OF LIES (Classification Essay)

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1kEaP3LbILDIsza_1ylgzeLcQtrGt_9cvWZydvyUagE/edit?hl=en&authkey=Cllbc-egl#

Gönderen öyküperk zaman: 07:35 1 yorum:

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COMPARISON OF DENİZLİ AND İZMİR

THE COMPARISON OF DENİZLİ AND İZMİR

Having come to Denizli for university, I started to observe this city, and I compared Denizli and my hometown, İzmir willy-nilly. I realized that there are several differences and one similarity between two cities.

One of the main differences is that places in İzmir that you can ramble and have a good time are more than Denizli. There are lots of cafes, shops, cinemas, theatres, and museums. You can not manage to ramble every place for weeks. Moreover, you find many places which addresses to different tastes; but there are a few places in Denizli. I finished every place that could be wandered only in two days. What's more, all the places but Pamukkale are ordinary and boring.

Other difference is environment. Admittedly, the Mayor of Denizli is working hard to beautify the city by bringing the city in green areas, and opening new places; however, I don't feel myself good, inasmuch as Denizli's air is rather dusty. While I am breathing, I am feeling as if I was inhaling all the dust. On the other hand, breathing balmy breeze of İzmir relieves you.

İzmir, by contrast with Denizli have a transportation problem. There emerges a traffic jam, since it is metropolitan city. Besides, in my opinion, Denizli's drivers are more considerate than İzmir's. The risk of having an accident is higher in İzmir, because drivers drive fastly and inattentively.

As for another difference, İzmir and Denizli differ in terms of liveliness and activity. Denizli is a serene city. People of Denizli are placid. On the contrary, sophisticated and crowded though it is, İzmir is

Figure 2. Real Peer Blog Reproduced with the Permission of Blog Writer

As participants had access to all other peer blogs, each participant had to give weekly feedback to peers' written work on peer blogs (www.blogger.com) using www.docs.google.com which enabled reviewers to offer feedback and writers to trace feedback given and also to make necessary changes with ease (see Figure 3 for a sample peer blog with feedback given using google doc.).

The screenshot shows a Google Docs interface with a document titled "My city Streets". The document content is an essay about city street problems. The text is as follows:

My City Streets

As **being** in a lot of **city**, my city **street** are in terrible condition. It's hard to go from **a place to a place**. Some **of** streets have **superstition** **infrastructure** problems.

Firstly, I want to mention **about** problems which I have experienced in my city. It was last week, I was on **my** way to **to** **to** Cinar and I **to** **surprised** when I realized that the minibus went **to** by a different way. One of the main streets in my city was closed to traffic and cabbled. The following day, I asked **a friend of mine** friend that why they **are** doing **things like this to this road**. He replied that 'I don't know but I know that they laid asphalt on this way three years ago. I was surprised once again. This is only one example but there are many street problems in my city.'

I can say this, secondly, two days ago, it was **snow** and I was going to go to school. After going out from house, I surprised. **Because** all the falling snow **is** still on streets. Municipality didn't sprinkle salt on streets. This **is** very surprising. **I think this would be done already**. **Nobody could walk not only** on sidewalks but also on streets.

Finally, I want to add something to my writing. In market days, a lot of people come to market places and everywhere is crowded. As if this is not enough, sellers put their **bench** on sidewalks. Nobody can walk on sidewalks. Everybody walks on streets. And this leads to confusion in traffic. It's required that these problems must be fixed and the public should be returned to peace.

SINAN: First, You used the thesis statement wrongly. There are a lot of grammatical and spelling mistakes at your essay. I found your essay weak. You can write it very effective.

On the right side of the document, there is a comment section with the following feedback:

- ayse beier** (09:21 23 Mar): it should be 'streets'.
- meriem.kayki** (10:40 23 Mar): you should use 'be surprised'
- meriem.kayki** (10:43 23 Mar): I think you should remove 'to'
- ayse beier** (09:54 23 Mar): I think you mean 'cobbled'.
- ayse beier** (10:04 23 Mar): surprise's mean is to amaze, but it should be 'was surprised' because you are one who does that action.
- 17:44 7 Mar**: Rewrite the essay by correcting all the errors shown in different colours and also enriching its content.

Figure 3. Real Peer Blog with Feedback Given: Reproduced with the Permission of Blog Writer

On the other hand, the portfolio group participants were also paired each week to offer and receive feedback to their paragraphs and essays (See Figure 4 for sample peer portfolio with feedback given).

④ The Expository Paragraph ^{find a more suitable}
LOVE (fringe for this paragraph!)

When you first hear it, you may ~~come~~ ^{weak} human love in your mind ^{unclear}
You are all right we think that love term / which is two
people who fall in love each other. Actually love term ^{we clear}
separate nature, human, divine of God love. This term may be most
of door's key. Human see, however ^{flow} want to see and whatever
I want to think in this world and human live this thinking?
We can understand ^{what} from Elif Safak's book. Firstly when you
hear this book's name, we can say that most of people
think like human love. When the book is read, we meet
with completely different world and we want to learn
many more much things about ^{the} world. Given ideas and examples
affect us. You wonder that Neviana and Saus's real lives
where they live. You want to go ^{to} these place. You want to
see there. You hear ^{of} some things everyday but you ignore it but
You see everything in this book because writer explains logical
examples and you ^{pay} much more ^{of} attention than in the
past. This is fascinating. Neviana's vision, contacting with people,
his advice are magnificent. You say that we wished ^{to} live in
his age. Despit ~~of~~ society's morally corrupt and other presses,
You can see Neviana's patient. We learn that Human love is
vehicle for divine of God and we try to apply ~~in~~ in our
life. Finally this books ^{are} prepared towards life. This is
much more important than others.

very read attempt to write an expository paragraph, but you need to
→ ^{consider} Some points: a clear topic sentence, ^{supporting} ^{examples} and
a suitable conclusion ^{and coherence} would provide better organization.
- Your subject place is wrong in the first sentences. And your sentence
beginning with "We think ----" is dangling one. You should have
added a verb to complete this sentence. You should be careful
about using of "However". Apart from these, you should have used
punctuations so we could have understood your sentences much better.
- You gave examples related with content, it is good. You explained
content of book and this is good for our understanding. I liked your
vocabulary but you haven't got topic sentences and controlling idea.

Revised by Tugba DEĞİRMENCI
[Signature]

Figure 4. Sample Portfolio with Feedback Given: Reproduced with the Permission of Portfolio Writer

Instrument and Data Analysis

Each student completed a pre-questionnaire prior to the courses and also a post-questionnaire at the end of the courses, which were designed to elicit information about participants' background knowledge in writing in English, to identify their development in writing and also to assess the effect of teacher and peer feedback on their writing. The main categories of the questionnaire included: a) Demographic information; b) Evaluation of Writing Competence; and c) Views about Feedback (included in the post questionnaire). Since all pre-questionnaire items exist in the post-questionnaire, only the post-questionnaire is put in the appendices (see Appendix 1). Participants' consent to be included in the study for research purposes was also received through the post-questionnaire. All the blog and portfolio samples in this article were taken from the participants who gave their written consents. The pre-questionnaire included 49 items of elements of writing under the basic constituents of writing as process, organisation, content, vocabulary use, language use, grammar and vocabulary. Items included in the questionnaire were designed in line with the holistic assessment guide and analytic assessment scale which consisted of all the basic elements of writing such as 'Organisation, Content/Ideas, Vocabulary/Word choice, Language Use (Style-Syntax), Grammar, and Conventions (Mechanics) which were included in the questionnaire as well. To validate the items in the questionnaire expert help was taken from five instructors in the ELT department. The questionnaire was piloted with 19 freshman students who were exempt from the compulsory writing programme. The Cronbach's Alpha co-efficiency of the pilot questionnaire was .968 (N of Items 46). The number of items increased from 46 to 49 in the main study. The post-questionnaire was also distributed to the same 59 students, 30 of whom were in Paper Based Writing Group and 29 were in the Blog Writing Group. Alpha reliability test showed that the questionnaire distributed pre and post study was highly reliable as the pre-questionnaire had Cronbach's Alpha value of .945 (N of Items 49) and the post-questionnaire had Cronbach's Alpha co-efficiency of .946 (N of Items 49). Moreover, the post questionnaire included feedback items and it had Cronbach's Alpha value of .946 (N of Items 73).

Questionnaire data were evaluated descriptively in order to evaluate participants' views of the effect of blog-based writing and portfolio writing and feedback on their writing skills. Student teachers were also asked to write a five paragraph essay at the beginning and also one at the end of the courses which were assessed using the analytic rubric. All quantitative data were compared and contrasted using statistical analyses. As there was no normal distribution for any of the items (<0.005), paper-based group and blog group were compared descriptively using 2 independent Mann-Whitney-U test and also Wilcoxon sign test (two related samples) as non-parametric tests.

FINDINGS

The participants evaluated their writing performance before and after the study. Before the study the majority of blog and portfolio group participants reported poor, very poor, or average writing competence while nobody reported very good writing competence (see Table 4).

Table 4. Pre-Study Self- Evaluation of Writing Competence

	Blog		Portfolio	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Very poor	4	13,8	6	20,0
Poor	9	31,0	12	40,0
Average	12	41,4	10	33,3
Good	4	13,8	2	6,7
Very Good	0	0	0	0
Total	29	100,0	30	100,0

In addition, Mann-Whitney U Test results of blog group and portfolio group self-reports might show that the blog group and portfolio group participants did not have any significant differences in terms of their writing skill before ($U=358,00$; $p=.218$; $p>0,05$) and after the programme ($U=345,000$; $p=.115$; $p>0,05$) (see Table 5).

Table 5. Mann-Whitney U Test Results for Writing Competence Based on Blog & Portfolio Groups' Self-Assessment

		<i>Pre-study</i>				
	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	U	Z	P
Portfolio	30	27,43	823,00	358,000	-1,232	,218
Blog	29	32,66	947,00			
		<i>Post-study</i>				
	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	U	Z	P
Portfolio	30	33,00	990,00	345,000	-1,578	,115

Blog	29	26,90	780,00
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Similarly, an assessment of essays did not show any significant differences between the groups in terms of their writing skill before the programme ($U=374,500$; $p=,359$; $p>0,05$) and also at the end of the programme ($U=369,000$; $p=,316$; $p>0,05$) (see Table 6).

Table 6. Mann-Whitney U Test Results for Writing Competence Based on Essay Evaluation: Comparison of Blog & Portfolio Groups

		<i>Pre-study</i>				
	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	U	Z	P
Portfolio	30	27,98	839,50	374,500	-,918	,359
Blog	29	32,09	930,50			
		<i>Post-study</i>				
Portfolio	30	27,80	834,00	369,000	-1,002	,316
Blog	29	32,28	936,00			

Statistics as to both self-assessment and essay evaluations indicated that both groups had poor writing competence in English prior to the writing courses. However they improved their writing skill by the end of the programme. As seen in Table 4, before the study the majority had reported poor writing competence; however, at the end of the study, it can be seen that both groups significantly improved their writing skill as 55.2 % of blog group participants and 66.7% of portfolio group participants reported “good” and 6.9% and 13.3 % “very good” competence, respectively after the study while no participant reported ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’ writing skill (see Table 7).

Table 7. Post Study Self- Evaluation of Writing Competence

	Blog		Portfolio	
	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
	<i>post</i>	<i>post</i>	<i>post</i>	<i>post</i>
Very poor	0	0	0	0
Poor	0	0	0	0
Average	11	37,9	6	20,0
Good	16	55,2	20	66,7
Very Good	2	6,9	4	13,3
Total	29	100,0	30	100,0

The results of self-reports might suggest that both groups improved their writing skill significantly at the end of the programme. Moreover, when each group was analysed specifically as to pre and post study results, it can also be seen that each group had a significant development in their writing after the study as shown in Table 8. A Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test therefore shows that a 28 week writing program elicited a statistically significant change in their writing skill.

Table 8: Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test Results for Pre and Post Study Writing Competence: Self-Assessment

	Z Asymp.Sig. (2-tailed)	
	(P)	
Portfolio	-4,700 ^a	,000
Blog	-3,736 ^a	,000

Pre and post-study essay evaluation also verifies such results as when their pre essays were analysed, the participants had low level grades at the beginning of the programme and this significantly increased from an average of 47.6 to 76.5 for the blog group and from 46.0 to 75.1 out of 100 for the portfolio group while the blog group achieved higher grades than the portfolio group (see Table 9).

Table 9. Essay Evaluation: Pre and Post Grades

	Portfolio		Blog	
	<i>Pre</i>	<i>Post</i>	<i>Pre</i>	<i>Post</i>
Mean	46,0	75,1	49,2	78,1

In addition a Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test supports this fact as both portfolio group and blog group participants improved their writing competence significantly (see Table 10).

Table 10. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test Results for Pre and Post Study Essay Evaluation

Portfolio	Blog
Z Asymp.Sig. (2-tailed)	Z Asymp.Sig. (2-tailed)
(P)	(P)
-4,784 ^a ,000	-4,628 ^a ,000

An analysis of participants' essays using an analytical assessment scale also shows that they all improved their writing skill in terms of content, organisation, vocabulary, grammar and mechanics (Table 11).

Table 11. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test Results for Pre-Post Essay Evaluation: Writing Components

	Portfolio	Blog
	Z Asymp.Sig. (2-tailed)	Z Asymp.Sig. (2-tailed)
	(P)	(P)
Content	-3,808 ^a ,000	-4,296 ^a ,000
Organization	-4,140 ^a ,000	-3,497 ^a ,000
Vocabulary	-4,632 ^a ,000	-4,589 ^a ,000
Grammar	-4,573 ^a ,000	-4,344 ^a ,000
Mechanics	-4,632 ^a ,000	-4,315 ^a ,000
Total Grade	-4,784 ^a ,000	-4,628 ^a ,000

Thus a Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test used to analyse participants' essays in relation to basic constituents of writing before and after the study also shows significant improvement for both groups, which may also show that a 28 week writing program elicited a statistically significant change in their writing skill in all components of writing.

Qualitative research findings might also indicate positive contribution of blogging and also portfolio keeping to most components of writing skill. When the participants were asked about their views of these applications, both groups had positive opinions with very few participants cautious about such practices. As some sample self-reports may indicate that the portfolio group participants were able to improve their writing skill considerably. One of these reports may indicate the positive contribution of portfolio keeping: *"When I look at my first paragraph, I see the difference with my last essays. My writing skills have developed since the first day of my writing courses (P22)."* Most of them reported that they learnt how to write according to the basic conventions of writing. One participant highlighted improvement in vocabulary choice and sentence structures: *"The strong points of the writing courses are improving our vocabulary choice, giving and receiving feedback and improving our ideas more willingly. Moreover, we have been much better than at the beginning about sentence structure (fragment, run on, dangling (P6)."* Another participant stressed development in writing organised essays: *"It provided us to develop our writing skill according to writing rules (organisation, coherence, word choice ...). For example, before that I couldn't write an organised essay but now I'm writing an essay by following the rules, at least partly (P1)."*

Blog group participants also reported positive views about the effect of blogging. Some of them expressed their appreciation of using blogs as one report may show: *"Using blogs is very useful for us. We put our writing there, and we received and gave feedbacks, and we noticed that we should work hard. One of the most developing things us is blog (B1)."* Some others reported its effects in terms of sharing their work with others and getting feedback from them. Views of one blog participant may reflect this: *"Using blogger is really good thing at the aim of showing our writing to our classmates easily. Anyone also around the world can see what I write. Furthermore he/she can give feedback to me. Thanks to blogger we don't have to occupy with papers any more (B2)."* Blogging also gave them chances to see their peers' written work as one sample report may show: *"Writing blog is beneficial for me. I can read my friends' essays or other people's essays. I can improve myself by analysing other essays. When I read them, I compare them with my essays and I can see lack of my essays (B14)."* However, very few blog group participants highlighted the possible problems related to blogging, one of which being related to having access to the Internet *"I didn't like the blog because it has many problems. Sometimes we couldn't have put our homework on blogger. Moreover some of us don't have internet so it is a problem (B16)"* and the other some participants' lack of interest in using computers *"I think using blog for us is not very important. Instead of it we should do this by writing in hand because I am not interested in computer a lot (B21)."* Despite these negative remarks, the whole process of writing involving getting and giving feedback through blogs changed participants' negative views at the end of the study: *"I hadn't a blog before writing courses and I thought that it wasn't necessary for us first. But now I understand that we have learned a lot of new techniques of writing by receiving and giving feedback in using blog for writing purposes (B6)."*

Receiving and giving feedback the participants improved their writing skill considerably. At the outset of the study, the participants were trained to give and receive feedback, and for a period of 28 weeks they all gave and received feedback. As it can be seen in Table 12, the participants considered all types of feedback important while teacher feedback was the most favourite one at the end of the study. The participants reported that receiving teacher feedback was ‘very important’ (98.3%) when compared with receiving peer feedback (33.9%) and giving feedback (39%).

Table 12. Participants’ Views of Different Types of Feedback

	<i>Receiving Teacher Feedback</i>		<i>Receiving Peer Feedback</i>		<i>Giving Peer Feedback</i>	
	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
Very Important	58	98,3	20	33,9	23	39,0
Important	1	1,7	33	55,9	30	50,8
Unsure	0	0	3	5,1	4	6,8
Not Important	0	0	3	5,1	2	3,4
Not Important at All	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	59	100	59	100	59	100

Moreover, an analysis of receiving teacher feedback in relation to basic components of writing shows that teacher feedback was again very important or important in terms of all elements of writing such as process, content, organisation, vocabulary, language use, grammar and mechanics while feedback on content and organisation were deemed the most important (see Table 13).

Table 13. Views of Receiving Teacher Feedback

	<i>Very Important</i>		<i>Important</i>		<i>Unsure</i>		<i>Not Important</i>		<i>Not Important at All</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
Process	49	83,1	9	15,3	1	1,7	0	0	0	0	59	100
Content	54	91,5	4	6,8	1	1,7	0	0	0	0	59	100
Organisation	54	91,5	5	8,5	0	0	0	0	0	0	59	100
Vocabulary	47	79,7	9	15,3	2	3,4	0	0	1	1,7	59	100
Language Use	47	79,7	10	16,9	1	1,7	0	0	1	1,7	59	100
Grammar	53	89,8	5	8,5	0	0	0	0	1	1,7	59	100
Mechanics	44	74,6	14	23,7	0	0	0	0	1	1,7	59	100

An analysis of receiving peer feedback also shows that the participants were of different views of such a practice. While the majority of the participants considered it very important or important for the items such as process, content, organisation, vocabulary, language use, grammar, and mechanics, few were unsure about its application or regarded it as not important (see Table 14).

Table 14. Views of Receiving Peer Feedback

	<i>Very Important</i>		<i>Important</i>		<i>Unsure</i>		<i>Not Important</i>		<i>Not Important at All</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
Process	17	28,8	29	49,2	9	15,3	4	6,8	0	0	59	100
Content	22	37,3	30	50,8	3	5,1	4	6,8	2	3,4	59	100
Organisation	18	30,5	35	59,3	3	5,1	3	5,1	0	0	59	100
Vocabulary	16	27,1	30	50,8	4	6,8	7	11,9	0	0	59	100
Language Use	15	25,4	32	54,2	8	13,6	3	5,1	1	1,7	59	100
Grammar	20	33,9	31	52,5	3	5,1	4	6,8	1	1,7	59	100
Mechanics	16	27,1	29	49,2	7	11,9	6	10,2	1	1,7	59	100

As to receiving peer feedback the majority of the participants reported similar views to receiving feedback. To the majority giving peer feedback was either a very important or important practice while very few participants were either unsure about its application or found it unimportant or not important concerning such items as process, content, organisation, vocabulary, language use, grammar, and mechanics (see Table 15).

Table 15. Views of Giving Peer Feedback

	Very Important		Important		Unsure		Not Important		Not Important at All		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Process	19	32,2	30	50,8	8	13,6	2	3,4	0	0	59	100
Content	27	45,8	27	45,8	2	3,4	3	5,1	0	0	59	100
Organisation	28	47,5	25	42,4	4	6,8	2	3,4	0	0	59	100
Vocabulary	17	28,8	33	55,9	5	8,5	3	5,1	1	1,7	59	100
Language Use	18	30,5	31	52,5	7	11,9	2	3,4	1	1,7	59	100
Grammar	25	42,4	28	47,5	2	3,4	3	5,1	1	1,7	59	100
Mechanics	16	27,1	33	55,9	7	11,9	2	3,4	1	1,7	59	100

The study findings may indicate that all feedback sessions were very useful to some extent. Moreover, an analysis of participants' views of feedback may show peers found all sorts of feedback useful: *"Receiving-giving feedback is very important for me because it helps me revise my mistake and improve myself. I saw where I made mistakes B1."* A similar view was shared by another participant:

"I hadn't thought that giving and getting feedback was really important for me, but later I recognised that it was important, too in many respects. For example, I can revise my writings and correct my faults more than before thanks to feedback. Ideas of my instructor and my peers are very important for me. That's why I can evaluate myself and my works (B19)."

However, among all types of feedback, receiving teacher feedback through blogs or portfolios was of high importance for the participants to improve their writing skill when compared with getting or giving peer feedback. Most participants in the portfolio group indicated strong views about the contribution of receiving teacher feedback to their writing skill as can be seen in some sample reports: *"Receiving feedback from teacher is very crucial since all the students know that the critics given by the teacher are for their own good, and he has great knowledge to give detailed feedback (P7)."* Similarly almost all the participants in the blog group reported highly positive views about receiving teacher feedback through blogs: *"Receiving teacher feedback is important for me because he knows everything about writing. So, he gives information to me accurately. B11."* One reason for preferring teacher feedback was confidence the participants had in their writing instructor: *"When we write something we don't know what kind of mistakes we make but when a teacher looks at our paper he can see these mistakes easily, therefore we don't make these mistakes anymore P23."* Teacher feedback was therefore useful in making the participants realise their mistakes: *"I saw my mistakes such as punctuation, spelling, etc. when the teacher gave to my paper the feedback (P5)."* Teacher feedback therefore meant improvement: *"Receiving feedback from my instructor, of course, is very important. That means improving P13."*

On the other hand, most of these participants were a bit cautious about the possible effects of feedback given by their peers. They were of high opinions of feedback provided by their instructor; however, mostly they held negative views as regards peer feedback: *"I think receiving feedback from my instructor is very beneficial but peer feedback is not good. Because our friend may not be good in giving feedback or she/he may ignore some things. So it is not believable and beneficial B4."*

One possible reason was lack of confidence in peers' writing knowledge or peers' taking feedback practice unserious. One participant indicated that peers lacked knowledge needed to offer feedback: *"The teacher's feedback is very important to me but I don't think so for peers. Because any students are advanced and need to learn more so I don't trust peers except teachers (P2)."*

Some participants did not trust their friends in giving feedback: *"I don't care my friends' feedback much because they are the same status with me. Their feedback is important of course, but the feedback which is given by teacher is the most important feedback I think (P20)."* Another peer highlighted this: *"Feedback is the most important thing about writing. When an instructor gives us feedback we understand where we do our mistakes. But peer feedback is less important for me because someone gives less importance than they have to. Another reason is our levels which are not same (P12)."* A similar view supports such an idea: *"I think friend feedback isn't important for me because my friends don't write their real comments and they don't correct my grammatical mistakes P10."*

Similarly, *"When I take feedback from my instructor, I like it so much because I can see my mistakes and faults. I trust him and his knowledge. But in peer feedback it changes. Some of the students may do mistakes"*

in feedback and they may check the writings to their own opinions I don't think that they are fair while making feedback (P29)."

Some participants had the common belief that giving peer feedback offered more benefits than receiving peer feedback: *"I think giving feedback is very useful. Because when we give feedback we are learning that if we can see our friend's mistakes (P24)."* Similarly, *"While analysing my friends' paper, I learned a lot of things which I did the same wrong in my paper. It is very useful and good for use. I compared my own paper with my friends and it shows my degree in class (P25)."* Whereas giving feedback was seen problematic by some participants as they lacked necessary competence in giving feedback to peers' writing: *"I can't give very good feedback for my friends' essays because I can't find various words and ideas while I am writing. They also write the same things. So these feedbacks aren't very beneficial for me (P9)."*

Such a process of receiving and giving feedback contributed to participants' improvement of writing skills as well as building in self-confidence: *"When I was recommended that we receive and give feedback, I was surprised. It was hard for me but it is very easy now. I can give feedback to anyone else (B6)."*

Almost all participants had very positive views of the writing instruction as they were able to produce more effective paragraphs and essays according to basic conventions of writing at the end of the programme. The participants were also of high opinions of portfolio keeping and blogging through which they shared their written work with their course instructor and also class peers by getting and giving feedback. Feedback given to written work by their course instructor was more appreciated than that of peers since almost all participants had confidence in their course instructor's constructive feedback while peer feedback being found doubtful. Suffice to say that such intensive writing practice through blogs and portfolios and also offering feedback to written work immensely contributed to student teachers' writing competence prior to their professional lives.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Blog and portfolio integrated writing instruction may offer positive contributions to the development of writing skill in English language contexts. Having been actively engaged in blogs and portfolios in and out of writing classes without time restrictions and classroom boundaries almost all participants in the study were able to develop their writing competency. Prospective teachers of English held positive views of portfolio keeping and blogging as effective tools in this particular writing course. The practice of portfolio keeping helped student teachers overcome their writing anxiety (Öztürk & Çeçen, 2007) as Ok (2012) reports that in a reading-writing course, keeping portfolio resulted in more student motivation towards writing in English. In addition, keeping portfolio meant development in basic components of writing. Aydin (2010) came up with similar results to this study as giving and receiving feedback to paragraphs and essays through portfolio keeping in EFL resulted in writing more organised paragraphs and compositions with better punctuation and capitalization. On the other hand, blog-based writing instruction had big impact on the development of English language students' writing performance (Arslan & Şahin-Kızıl, 2010); namely, blogging led to autonomous learning and increased students' motivation in writing courses (Blackstone, Spiri, & Naganuma, 2007). Study results of Drexler, Dawson, and Ferdig (2007) also indicate that blogs help develop expository writing skills as well as increasing students' motivation in writing. Lan, Hung, and Hsu (2011, p.148) also studied the effect of rich media guided writing strategy and also pen-and-paper guided writing strategy and concluded that "a web-based learning environment with high richness media could guide students to write and achieve more positive writing attitudes in terms of motivation, enjoyment and anxiety." In her study, Çiftçi (2009) reported that both the control (in-class process approach integrated writing classes) and experimental (blog) group students showed a major improvement on such elements of writing as content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics, having been involved in peer feedback sessions.

As for the effect of feedback on students' writing, teacher feedback offered more positive contributions to learners' English (Connor & Asenavage, 1994) while research on the effect of peer feedback has been controversial. To some authors peer feedback fails to serve linguistic development of the learners (Wu, 2006). Wu (2006, p. 125) also acknowledges the contribution of teacher feedback while most peer review only "...serve[s] a pragmatic function to give complimentary praise or blessings." These results are of similar nature to this particular study as most students were sceptical about the effect of peer feedback when their qualitative views were taken. Teacher feedback emerged as the most favoured one in both qualitative and quantitative analyses. Similar to Zhang's (1995) study most participants in our study preferred teacher feedback to peer feedback since they did not trust in their peers' writing competence and they thought their peers were not as qualified as their writing instructor. Almost all participants in this study highlighted that they had confidence in their course instructor and such confidence led to positive gains from the courses as teacher feedback was more likely to lead to greater improvements in students' writing (Fathman & Whalley, 1990; Miaoa, Badger, & Zhen,

2006). Similarly, Nelson, and Carson (1998) state that Chinese and Spanish-speaking students liked to see teacher comments and also correction of words and negative comments on their sentential problems rather than peers' comments because teacher feedback led to greater improvement for the students once they received feedback. On the other hand, some studies indicate positive contribution of peer feedback to help students identify their weaknesses and strengths (Tsui & Ng, 2000). In Matsuno's (2009) and Hu's (2005) studies, EFL students welcomed peer feedback (Miaoa, Badger, & Zhen, 2006). While teacher feedback was really essential in improving students' writing, our study also shows that peer feedback contributed to prospective teachers' writing skills to some extent as they were actively involved in giving and receiving feedback continually. Berg (1999) also confirmed that peer feedback encouraged "critical reasoning." In Storch's study (2005, p.153), through collaborative writing and providing feedback to each other's work, students produced better texts in relation to "task fulfilment, grammatical accuracy, and complexity." In Blackstone, Spiri, and Naganuma's (2007, p.1) study an application of a "blogging buddy" system also facilitated "greater learner interaction and reflection on skills development." In their study Tsui and Ng (2000) confirmed the role of peer comments and they identified four roles of peer comments; namely, "[p]eer comments enhance a sense of audience, raise learners' awareness of their own strengths and weaknesses, encourage collaborative learning, and foster the ownership of text." In this study participants similarly reported that they became aware of their writing competency and collaborated with each other by giving and receiving feedback; they did not trust peer feedback, though. The findings of this particular study may also indicate the importance of giving feedback rather than receiving feedback (Lundstrom & Baker, 2008). Participants of the study were able to improve their writing skill while giving peer feedback rather than receiving peer feedback.

Feedback is likely to lead to better writing in English (Storch & Tapper, 1997; Reid, 1994); however, effective feedback is closely linked to a number of factors such as students' attitudes towards feedback (Leki, 1990), the nature of the feedback (Fathman & Whalley, 1990; Sheppard, 1992), and the timing of feedback (Ferris, 1995). In this study most participants developed positive attitudes towards feedback (Ferris, 1995) as they were not limited to fixed class hours for writing and for receiving or giving feedback. For an effective feedback establishing a trusting relationship between the course instructor and students and between students is really important in order to benefit positive gains from feedback sessions (Lee & Schallert, 2008) regardless of blogging or portfolio keeping. This study proves that course instructor and peers achieved such an interactive and collaborative writing atmosphere.

Receiving feedback of any sort is therefore of high importance in order to improve writing skills in English. In Fathman and Whalley (1990) feedback given on form and content contributed to the writing skill of experimental group more than that of control group which received no feedback. Concerning the type of feedback whether L2 writing teachers need to focus on local or global issues (Ferris, 2004; Goldstein, 2004; Truscott, 2004) the focus, in this particular study, was mostly on global issues using holistic assessment scale while the course instructor and peers also highlighted local issues while giving feedback unlike Montgomery and Baker (2007) as they state in their study teachers offered more feedback on local issues such as spelling, grammar, and punctuation than those of global ones such as ideas, content, and organization. In this particular study, participants received feedback on all global and local components of writing either through blogs or portfolios and all were of positive opinions of such a practice. However, some other researchers may indicate that feedback to local issues does not lead to avoidance of local errors (Sheppard, 1992; Truscott, 1996), and local errors may emerge in later drafts (Truscott, 1996) and feedback given to form may lead to ignorance of writing as a process (Hamp-Lyons, 2006). Nevertheless, provided that it is constructive and done properly feedback is of paramount importance to improving non-native learners' writing skill in English. Corrective feedback may contribute to students' learning of some local issues (Bitchener, Young, & Cameron, 2005). Feedback on both local and global issues along the writing process may offer more benefits (Ashwell, 2000) as Straub (1997, p. 91) states that students favour "getting responses on global matters of content, purpose, and organization as on local matters of sentence structure, wording, and correctness." In the study Bitchener (2008) conducted, students who received written corrective feedback outperformed the other students in the post-test administered immediately.

Once prospective teachers of English acquire basic writing skills and learn how to give and receive feedback to writing in English, they can transfer such skills to their potential learners when they commence teaching in actual classes. Therefore, receiving teacher or peer feedback and also giving feedback prepare them for their professional lives. Application of blogs and portfolios, therefore, enhances students' active participation in the writing practice, avoiding monotony in traditional writing classes.

Limitations of the Study

This particular study may indicate very positive implications for writing instruction in EFL contexts; however, it is not devoid of limitations. Some blog group participants might have had difficulty accessing computers and the Internet out of class hours, so the added difficulty of trying to get a computer with Internet connection might have affected their attitudes towards blogging and feedback negatively.

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Appendix 1. Post-Study Self-Assessment Questionnaire

POST STUDY SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE ON WRITING IN ENGLISH

Dear Student,

The purpose of this questionnaire is to evaluate the effect of writing instruction you received and also your views of giving and receiving feedback on writing after the writing courses this academic year. Would you please complete the questionnaire by either providing information or by checking the suitable option for each item?

Would you please tick (✓) the best option that fits you for each item below?

1. Gender:

☐ Male ☐ Female

2. After the preparatory programme how would you evaluate your writing skill in English?

	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor
Writing skill	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

1. How would you evaluate your personal competence in writing in English in the following components of writing skill after you attended the writing courses at the ELT department?

	Very Good	Good	Unsure	Poor	Very Poor
Brainstorming	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Narrowing a topic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Making an outline/plan of writing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Drafting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Getting feedback	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Revising	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Preparing the final draft	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Editing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Organizing writing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Writing effective titles	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Writing an effective paragraph topic sentence	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Writing effective paragraph supporting sentences	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Writing effective paragraph concluding sentences	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Writing an effective essay thesis statement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Writing an effective essay introduction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Writing an effective essay conclusion	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Having a clear purpose for writing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Writing with an awareness of the reader	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Focusing on the main idea throughout writing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Presenting unified ideas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Presenting ideas creatively	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Presenting ideas logically connected	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Enhancing the topic with relevant details	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Presenting ideas coherently	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Using transitions effectively	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Using reminders effectively	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Using relevant language style (e.g. formal, informal)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Using correct word forms	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Making accurate word choice	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Making powerful word choice	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Using a variety of sentence types	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Writing simple sentences	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Writing compound sentences	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Writing complex sentences	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Using parallel structures	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Avoiding sentence fragments	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Avoiding run on sentences	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Avoiding dangling expressions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Avoiding comma splices	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Using verbs correctly	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Using articles correctly	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Using prepositions correctly	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Using pronouns correctly	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Using tenses correctly	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Using simple grammatical structures correctly	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Using complex grammatical structures correctly	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Using spelling correctly	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Using punctuation correctly	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Using capitalisation correctly	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

4. In writing courses how important do you think feedback was?

	Very Important	Important	Unsure	Not Important	Not Very Important at All
Receiving teacher feedback	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Receiving peer feedback	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Giving peer feedback	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

5. In receiving teacher feedback what points do you think was important?

	Very Important	Important	Unsure	Not Important	Not Very Important at All
PROCESS	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ORGANISATION	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
CONTENT-IDEAS	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
VOCABULARY	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
STYLE-SYNTAX	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
GRAMMAR	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
MECHANICS	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

6. In receiving peer feedback what points do you think was important?

	Very Important	Important	Unsure	Not Important	Not Very Important at All
PROCESS	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ORGANISATION	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
CONTENT-IDEAS	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
VOCABULARY	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
STYLE-SYNTAX	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
GRAMMAR	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
MECHANICS	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

1. In giving peer feedback what points do you think was important?

	Very Important	Important	Unsure	Not Important	Not Very Important at All
PROCESS	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ORGANISATION	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
CONTENT-IDEAS	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
VOCABULARY	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
STYLE-SYNTAX	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
GRAMMAR	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
MECHANICS	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- Can you write down the strong and weak points of the writing courses you received at the preparatory programme?
- Can you comment on your experience in receiving feedback from your writing instructor and peers on your writing and also giving feedback to peers' writing?