

## Research Articles

# An Investigation of Online Peer Feedback in Improving Students' English Writing Skills during Covid-19 Pandemic in Southern Border Provinces, Yala Rajabhat University, Thailand

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### Abstract

The purpose of the study was to look into how online peer feedback affected students' English writing skills in L2 writing classes. A writing pretest, posttest, and self-written reflection were used in the experiment as part of a mixed-methods study using an integrated experimental design. A dependent simple t-test was used to assess the data quantitatively, while content was thematically analyzed for the qualitative data. The subjects were 46 undergraduate students majoring in English in the three southernmost border provinces of Thailand. The results showed that the students had improved significantly in their writing skills based on the mean scores of the pretest and post-test. Students also noted that receiving online peer feedback helped them understand the writing process, develop affective strategies, support their critical thinking abilities, and grow socially and intellectually through teamwork. Online peer feedback was seen as a valuable experience for social interaction by students. Additionally, it gave them practice in becoming more independent learners. Online peer feedback should therefore be used in L2 writing classes.

**Keywords:** Online Peer Feedback, L2 Writing, English Writing Skills, Covid-19 Pandemic

## Background and Rational

The spread of the coronavirus, or COVID-19 pandemic, has impacted millions of students globally, and educators are working to keep teaching and learning going despite the severe interruption. In order to provide remote classroom instruction during the outbreak, educators and students, experienced and less experienced in an online or distance learning environment, are adjusting to new hurdles.

Thailand experienced the rapidly growing outbreak during the second semester of the 2019 academic year, just like every other country in the world since then. The Thai government has released guidelines for colleges and schools throughout the nation to implement as soon as possible in response to the shift to online courses. The efforts to stop COVID-19 from spreading to students and local communities have culminated in this. It has been suggested that a quick transition to online teaching and learning begin in less than a month. These unquestionably present a problem and a disturbance for Thai education (Petchprasert, 2021).

The majority of Thai universities continue to offer classes. However, some colleges are prepared to begin a summer session as early as April. There are several things that faculties and students will do in an emergency to prepare well before the semester even begins. The preparation of students for online writing is one of the main concerns. Numerous elements are taken into consideration and given top priority when conducting online education.

It appears that English language instructors in Thailand frequently use the word challenging. Each student has a different degree of expertise; therefore, teachers must develop effective and efficient techniques to help students understand the content. The teacher must use engaging

lesson materials to keep the students from getting bored. In order to support and make the teaching and learning process entertaining, the teacher must use a variety of tactics that is “easier, quicker, more fun, more self-directed, more efficient, and more adaptable to different scenarios” as mentioned by Huzaimah, Inggris and Bangkalan (2021). As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, everyone was forced to conduct their business from home and universities and schools. The government has provided options for students to continue the learning process through online courses.

Peer feedback has also been found to be more popular in L2 writing classrooms, where it has been shown to be an excellent pedagogical technique for enhancing students' writing abilities (Corbin, 2012). However, the Thai educational context has strongly focused on a teacher-centered method, which pointed to the crucial role dominated by teachers as noted by Keyuravong & Maneekhao, (2006). Nevertheless, to increase students' learning motivation, peer feedback helped teachers alter the learning practice in the way of emphasis on the roles of students.

The use of learner-centered instruction is encouraged by Thai government educational policies. Students studying in English at Yala Rajabhat University still struggle with writing in the language. Thus, initiatives are carried out by the English Department to improve students' English writing abilities. The curriculum mandates that the learning activity that places a strong emphasis on students' roles is essential if the learner-centered approach is to achieve its objectives. Online peer feedback is thus a helpful alternative in writing classes during the Covid-19 epidemic.

Most notably, the researcher used an

eight-question questionnaire of peer feedback to conduct a pilot study with 43 first-year English majors at Yala Rajabhat University in an effort to better understand how students learn to write and particularly how they give peer critique. The findings demonstrate that English students continue to lack the motivation to learn and write, and that teachers continue to grade students' written work using both direct and indirect feedback. Unexpectedly, peer feedback has never before been used systematically with students. Online peer feedback is thus a brand-new writing exercise in the writing course.

### Learning in L2 Writing during Covid-19

Due to the present pandemic situation with COVID-19, teaching and learning are done with the reliance on technology. In contrast to a typical classroom, students do not get as much feedback on their work when class is conducted online. The students can receive feedback from the teachers or peers but the teacher's feedback is particularly crucial (Hyland & Hyland, 2006). Nonetheless, because there are so many students, the teacher's feedback on the students' work is generally acknowledged towards the final stage of learning. Students may only concentrate on the final writing piece as per the teacher's instructions, which could prevent them from producing quality writing (Seow, 2002).

Peer feedback may be a way to bridge the gap in this situation. Peer feedback is a technique for involving students in the process of exchanging ideas and giving and receiving helpful criticism to enhance their writing abilities (Farrah, 2012). Additionally, it has been proven to be a successful strategy for improving students' writing abilities from a pedagogical perspective. Peer feedback on students' writing can be given in the areas of content, organization, grammar, vocabulary,

and writing style (Abeywickrama & Brown, 2010) as cited in Nurviyani & Purnawarman (2020). Peer feedback also helps students become more aware of their audience and develop social skills including offering and accepting criticism, defending one's own opinions, and turning down unhelpful suggestions (Topping, 2009). Peer feedback is advised as a high leverage technique for writing education due to these benefits (S. Graham & Perin, 2007a; Topping, 2009).

With respect to the ESL/EFL writing contexts, two types of non-native English writing are different. The principal difference is that ESL occurs in a daily context within regular activities in the local community, while EFL does not arise in these daily life settings. This difference has a direct impact on how L2 writers are taught by writing teachers (Chuenchaichon, 2015).

The process of learning to write in English is different for ESL learners and EFL learners those who are studying it as a second from foreign language. Many authors have found that there are significant disparities between L1 and L2 teaching environments (Zhang, 1995; Hinkel, 2004; Ferris & Hedgcock, 2005). The variances can be attributed to the social and educational features of various environments, as well as to variations in the learners' linguistic prowess and literacy levels. It has been stated that the writing process differs significantly for L1 authors and ESL writers (Leki & Carson, 1997). Significantly, NNS of English confront numerous obstacles, and even when their proficiency in the language reaches an advanced level, their writing may still be an area of concern (Hinkel, 2004).

According to Ferris's findings (2002), L2 authors are more concerned about minor inaccuracies than larger issues that affect ideas,

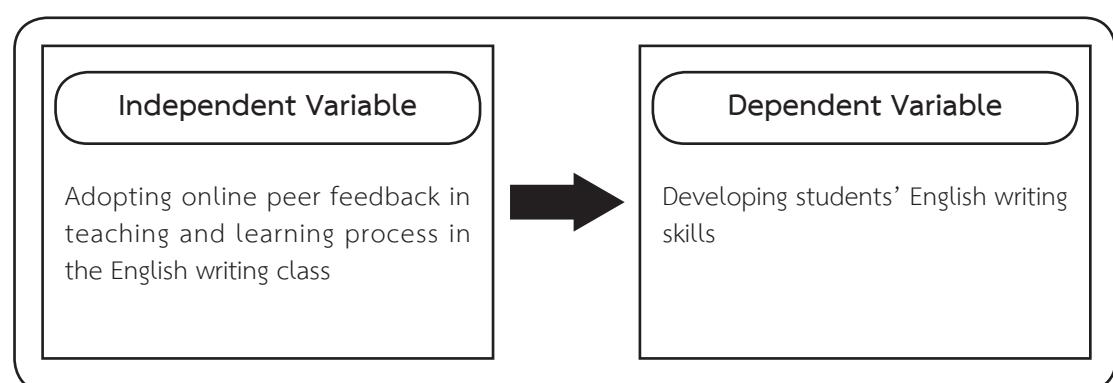
logic, and organization. The results from Ferris support the commonly held belief that in order to teach writing effectively, teachers must respond to the student's work. Hinkel (2004) explained that non-native students frequently lack specific features at the sentence level, with issues including the use of pronouns, modal verbs, active and passive verb forms, and the ability to hedge effectively. This explanation helped non-native students to understand why they pay closer attention to local issues.

Thus, it may be inferred that ESL teachers believe that writing mistakes must be fixed and that feedback must be given in a way that is engaging and helpful for students. L1 students typically have far less linguistic constraint while writing, which makes them better at communicating complex abstract or theoretical concepts. While this is going on, NNS must overcome the linguistic obstacle, which includes their own linguistic

anxiety. In order to meet the goals of the course, it is crucial to have a writing process model that offers a structure for both students and teachers. Advantages of giving and getting input on how to make the documents better. Furthermore, when the impacts are explicitly compared, the advantage of giving versus getting seems to be about equal (Huisman et al., 2018). Thus, peer feedback is paid attention to the writing class in order to develop students' writing skills. Numerous empirical research have also confirmed the benefits of peer response in L2/FL writing classes at the secondary and postsecondary levels (Min, 2006; Paulus, 1999; Tsui & Ng, 2000; Villamil & de Guerrero, 1996; Yu & Lee, 2016) as cited in Nguyen, (2019). It is able to enhance student motivation and aid in the growth of learning (Hyland & Hyland, 2006). In this study, research conceptional framework was shown below.

## Research Conceptional Framework

**Figure 1**  
*Research Conceptional Framework*



In the English writing class, online peer feedback was used in order to improve students' writing skills in one semester during Covid-19.

### **1.2 Research Question**

1. What are the effects of online peer feedback on students' English writing skills?

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

1. To examine the effects of online peer feedback on students' English writing skills

### **1.4 Research Hypothesis**

1. Students' writing skills will be significantly raised after the treatment ( $p= 0.05$ ).

### **1.5 Definitions of Terms**

**1. Online peer feedback** refers to written/ oral feedback given by peers in the group. Online peer group feedback is conducted on the first, second, and third written drafts via online activity during Covid-19 pandemic.

**2. Peer Feedback Training** was defined as a peer group activity about the process of online peer feedback including the peer feedback materials such as the checklists, the 5 types of errors as well as written reflections to assess peers' tasks.

**3. Thai in English Writing Class** is referred to learning English in a writing class. According to government policy, Thai language is used as a mediator in classroom instruction. As a result, peer feedback sessions were conducted using Thai language in the teaching and learning process; however, students are permitted to use dialects in their place if they are unable to explain the intended meaning of specific words, phrases, or sentences.

**4. English Writing skills** refers to students' writing ability on the pre-test and the post-test of writing. The evaluation criteria consist of five major writing components in terms of mechanics, vocabulary, language use, content, and organization based on Jacobs et al.'s (1981, as cited in Haswell,

2005) scoring profile in the narrative paragraph writing.

**5. Writing process** is a term used to describe a method of writing in which students adhere to certain interconnected processes that they must take. This method enables students to advance gradually until they produce the final draft. Preparation, drafting, evaluation, interactive-back feedback, reviewing, and revising were the six steps in this study's peer feedback activity for writing a descriptive and a narrative paragraph

**6. Written-Reflection** refers to students' opinions towards the usefulness and the practices of peer feedback as measured by 9 guiding questions. In so doing, the last time of doing the written reflections were adopted in order to understand what they have learnt about peer feedback use, whereas the questionnaires of peer feedback were employed after a completion of peer feedback to elicit their reflection towards utilizing online peer feedback in terms of the writing process, effective strategy, critical thinking skills and social interaction abilities.

**7. Students** refers to the 46 first-year students majoring in English at Yala Rajabhat University. The 46 students were divided into groups of three students with mixed-proficiency levels. They were also asked to do online peer review discussion as a whole class throughout the semester.

## **Literature Review**

Review of the Literature Peer review has been frequently used by first-language writing instructors since the 1970s. Bruffee (1984); Nystrand (1986); Spear (1988); Elbow (1973, 1981, Gere (1987). Additionally, classes teaching second languages employed this kind of updated early childhood education (Bell, 1991; Hafernic, 1983;

Hvitfeldt, 1986) as cited in Grace, H & Paul, S (2009). According to the aforementioned studies, peer feedback was promoted and used forty years ago in both first and second languages.

Even though these teaching methods have been discussed and used for a long time, Thailand has rarely seen comparable research done to examine and assess their efficacy. As a result, this study on peer revision in second language acquisition, carried out at a Thai university, may be able to serve as a noteworthy model that would depict the traits and reactions of Thai students when they learn through peer corrections.

Numerous research studies have been conducted to examine the efficacy of peer feedback. According to the majority of them (Nelson & Murphy, 1993, Yu & Lee, 2016), peer readers can offer insightful criticism. Moreover, the remarks can be partially or fully accepted. Therefore, the study's researchers hypothesized that students in this advanced writing course would likewise have a favorable outlook on learning from peers' collaboration and interactions.

Peer feedback's advantages and disadvantages for teaching and learning Peer feedback has been shown by numerous researchers to be a valuable, hands-on learning experience because it helps students become more proficient writers by allowing them to assume the roles of authors and reviewers, whose job it is to provide feedback to their peers' assignments (Hansen & Liu, 2005; Lam, 2010). Peer feedback is also generally accepted to help students improve their writing because it is more timely and informative, both of which are essential for their active participation in providing feedback and giving them a voice in building and scaffolding their own abilities before sharing their ideas.

Furthermore, peer feedback has been

highlighted as having the ability to help students learn from different scholars when it comes to L2 writing (Hu, 2005; Lam, 2010; Min, 2016). Peer feedback, for instance, offers students a variety of constructive feedback sources. The recursive process of peer feedback also advances students' critical thinking abilities, motivation, self-awareness, confidence, and social skills (Farrah, 2012; Hirose, 2008; Orsmond et al., 2013). Furthermore, peer feedback allows students to take the lead in their own learning process and act as a model for others. This helps students become more autonomous learners and think critically at a higher level. It also helps students reflect critically, learn to listen, evaluate using specific criteria, and provide high-quality feedback

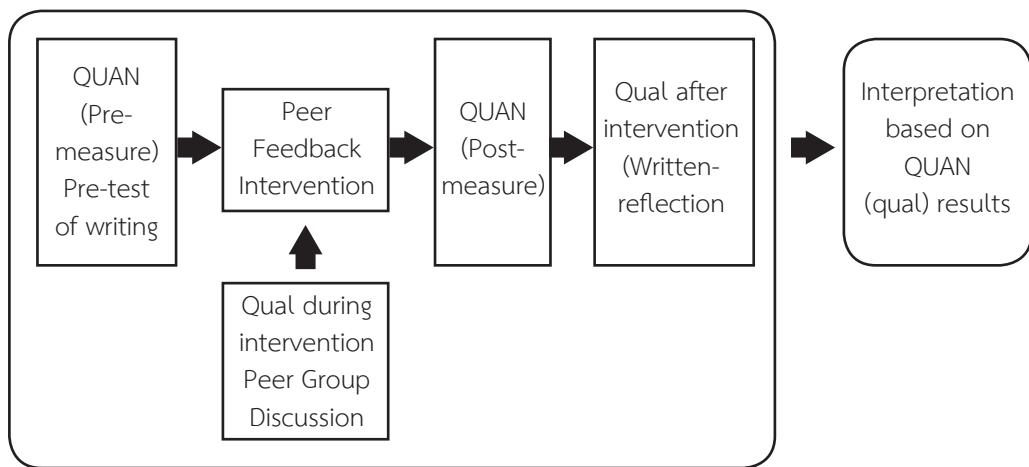
As the assessees, students also gain knowledge through metacognitive processes like introspection, the capacity to defend their work, and the acceptance or rejection of recommendations based on their own arguments (Liu & Carless, 2006, cited in Brusa & Harutyunyan, 2019).

## Context of the Study

To conduct online peer group discussion, the study was divided into three periods in the experiment. Before intervention, the data were gathered through a pre-test of writing to measure students' writing ability. During the intervention, online peer feedback was adopted in teaching and learning throughout the semester. After intervention, a post-test of writing was employed to measure students' writing, and the overall written self-reflection was gathered to explore more insight into their reflections towards the peer-engaged activity. The embedded experimental model of this study is illustrated in

**Figure 2**

*The embedded experimental model of this study is illustrated*



**Figure 3.1: Embedded Design: Embedded Experimental Model**

This research was carried out at Yala Rajabhat University, where 46 second-year English majors consented to engage in a writing course. All of the participants are Muslim and have graduated from Islamic schools. They also speak Pattani – Malay, a dialect used as a mother tongue by Thai-Muslims in Thailand's three southernmost border provinces. It should also be mentioned that the Thai Ministry of Education mandates the use of central Thai as the primary language of teaching in all public institutions.

In the present study, the mandatory course, “2108144 English Grammar” was used as the subject. This 3-credit course covers the topics of ‘English grammar sentence patterns, basic sentences, compound sentences, complex sentences, sentence expansion, interpretation of sentences, elements and characteristics, writing the main sentence, supporting sentences, main themes, and concluding sentences, writing different types of paragraphs’, and the course is worth three credits. This course are to focus on students’ organization of paragraph writing

in different genres through the writing and peer feedback processes. In the study, narrative paragraph writing was adopted to elicit the data to be analyzed.

They should be able to undertake peer group discussions with enough basic English knowledge. Due to the time constraints of doing online peer feedback, one genre was deemed sufficient for students at this level to learn about online peer feedback strategies and enhance their writing skills.

The class met once a week for 16 weeks. Each class lasted three hours, 48 hours in total. Conducting online peer feedback did not affect any students’ grades; however, all of the students were willing to participate in the peer-involved activity in a writing course. This was a new activity learning for them in developing their writing skills.

In this research, two major research instruments were submitted to Prof. Dr. Steve Walsh, Asst. Prof. Dr. Ratchaporn Rattanaphumma, and Dr. Nida Boonma, three English language

teaching experts with doctoral degrees and many years of English teaching experience, to judge the question guidelines for consistency with the content validity objectives. The rated statements are calculated for the Item-Objective-Congruence (IOC) index as identified by Rovinelli and Hambleton, (1977).

### **1) Test of the Writing**

In this study, the pretest and posttest used narrative paragraph writing to assess the students' competency in English writing. The evaluation criteria are broken down into five main categories: mechanics, language use, vocabulary, organization, and content. These categories are based on the scoring profile developed by Jacobs et al. (1981; as cited by Haswell, 2005), and each writing category has four levels of evaluation: "Very poor, Fair to poor, Good to average, and Very good to excellent." In the assessments, the students were required to write a narrative paragraph about 180- 200 words on the subject of "My First Day at YRU" During the exam, dictionaries could be used, and there was a 90-minute time limit. In this study, the written drafts were obviously shown to compare students' writing improvement.

Two raters assigned writing scores, which were then compared and analyzed using a normal distribution, correlation coefficient, and t-test. The data analysis indicated correlations between the two raters' evaluations of the students' writing quality for the pre- and post-test results. Pearson correlation coefficient calculations produced results of 0.80 and 0.84, respectively.

### **2) Written Self-Reflections**

Self-reflections were produced to assess the lessons that participants in the peer group conversations had acquired in order to get

insight into the use of online peer feedback in the improvement of students' writing skills. Due to its value in the professional development of teachers as a key component of the reflective method in language education, the use of reflective thinking as a critical expression is increasing (Mann & Walsh, 2017). In order for the researcher to improve the performance of teachers through this research, this concept was used with the students who serve as teachers by giving feedback to peers. In order for the students to reflect on their use of online peer feedback, worksheets for written self-reflection were given to them. Nine questions were also provided in three additional primary sections. Students were asked to write about the six stages of peer criticism and to concentrate on each one's specifics in order to complete Section I's investigation of their comprehension of the writing process. While Section III focused on any additional suggestions from the students about peer feedback, Section II explored the benefits and drawbacks of peer feedback for the students. The reflection was written over the course of 20 to 30 minutes.

Thematic content analysis was conducted for the written self-reflections, and the content validity was found to be 1.0. After measuring the reliability and inter-rater reliability, the Pearson's correlation coefficient was calculated and found to be 0.84.

### **3) Instructional Procedures**

In a writing course, students had studied in the descriptive and narrative writing approximately 11 weeks. More information is described in details in Table 1, which shows the lesson plans of the main study.

**Table 1***Lesson Plan in Main Study*

<b>Lesson Plan in Main Study</b>		
<b>Once a week on the first month (3 hrs /class)</b>		
Phase I Peer Training Weeks 1-3  Students have to learn about 6 stages of peer feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The researcher discussed the research's goals in relation to peer input and the writing process.</li> <li>- Explaining the goals of peer feedback, including Min's four peer group discussion steps.</li> <li>- With the topic used in a peer group discussion, explain the roles of the assessors and the assessee.</li> <li>- Providing students with content and mechanics language checklists, as well as error code worksheets with explanations.</li> <li>- Showing one group of students who participated in a peer-to-peer feedback conversation during the pilot project as an example.</li> <li>- Dividing 46 students into 15 groups/ a group of three students.</li> <li>- Having students complete extra peer feedback worksheets and checklists using the five sorts of mistake codes as homework.</li> <li>- Students are expected to write a reflection at the conclusion of class to ensure that they understand the peer feedback process.</li> </ul>	28 December 2021
	<b>Continued Peer Feedback Training</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In order to produce their first written drafts, they had to go through the steps of the peer feedback process.</li> <li>- Finally, the researcher gave the students the same video to ensure that they understand how to conduct peer group discussions.</li> <li>- In the first, second, and third written drafts, all groups of students are requested to perform online peer feedback activities with limited time.</li> <li>- Students are prompted to revise their work based on the suggestions of their peers.</li> </ul>	11 January 2022

**Table 1***Lesson Plan in Main Study***Lesson Plan in Main Study****Once a week on the first month (3 hrs /class)**

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- At the end of class, students shared their thoughts on the six steps of the peer feedback process by completing self-reflection worksheets.</li> <li>- Utilizing the peer feedback procedure to discuss a topic from "My Bad Dream"</li> <li>- Students were requested to conduct peer feedback discussions using the peer feedback checklists.</li> <li>- This peer feedback procedure took about 1.30 hours and included the five categories of error codes. Then, they revised them as their second draft.</li> <li>- At the end of class, students were invited to write self-reflections on each step of the peer feedback process.</li> <li>- Students were prompted to revise their work based on the suggestions of their peers.</li> <li>- Students used written reflection to convey their thoughts after the peer training.</li> </ul>	
Phase II Focusing on narrative and descriptive writing peer group activity Weeks 4-10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Students practiced grammar tasks and the use of the five sorts of error codes before class began.</li> <li>- Each group was asked to write a draft about 120 words on the topic of "My interesting experience,"</li> <li>- The teacher emphasized grammar issues where most students made mistakes.</li> <li>- Then, the teacher introduced a new topic, "My Good Dream."</li> <li>- Students began their written compositions by following the six-step peer-review procedure.</li> <li>- Students participated in an online peer feedback discussion as homework</li> </ul>	18 January 2022
Stages 1-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Each group of the students presented their written tasks and compared their works on the peer feedback checklists among three drafts. Afterwards, students were asked to write self-reflections</li> </ul>	25 January 2022
Stages 5-6		

**Table 1***Lesson Plan in Main Study*

<b>Lesson Plan in Main Study</b>		
<b>Once a week on the first month (3 hrs /class)</b>		
Stages 5-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Students were asked to practice grammar exercises and the use of the five sorts of error codes.</li> <li>- Students was requested to write "My Last Summer" and "My Wonderful Birthday as homework.</li> </ul>	1 February 2022
Stages 1-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- They were then asked to complete the six phases of the peer feedback exercise.</li> <li>- The teacher wrapped off the lesson on how to compose a narrative paragraph. Students were asked to think about what they had learned from their peers.</li> </ul>	
	<p><b>Descriptive writing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Students were required to complete grammar activities that mostly focused on complex and simple sentences.</li> <li>- A total of 30 compound sentences was thoroughly explained by the teacher.</li> <li>- The instructor demonstrated how to compose a descriptive paragraph with transitions and connectors.</li> <li>- More examples of the five types of error repairs were provided, with a focus on peer feedback checklists.</li> <li>- The teacher provided students with an example of a descriptive paragraph and asked them to use the five forms of error repair to detect grammatical errors.</li> <li>- There were two examples of descriptive paragraph writing concerning animals, people, and locations.</li> <li>- As a group activity, students were requested to produce a written work to ensure that they understood the picture in terms of describing individuals.</li> </ul>	8 February 2022 (10.00 – 14.00)
Stages 1-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- They were then asked to participate in a peer feedback exercise.</li> </ul>	

**Table 1***Lesson Plan in Main Study*

<b>Lesson Plan in Main Study</b>		
<b>Once a week on the first month (3 hrs /class)</b>		
Stages 1-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Students were asked to practice grammar exercises and the use of the five sorts of error codes before the lesson began.</li> <li>- Each student was required to write a piece of writing about "My Family" and participated in a peer feedback exercise.</li> <li>- Self-reflections were required of students.</li> </ul>	15 February 2022
Stages 3-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Students were asked to complete grammatical tasks focusing on the compound and difficult phrases, as well as the application of the five types of error repairs, before class started</li> <li>- All groups presented their written assignments.</li> <li>- The teacher chose certain students' written drafts at random to explain the occurring grammatical errors.</li> </ul>	22 February 2022
Stages 1-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- From the photographs, each group had to write a descriptive paragraph.</li> <li>- Each student was assigned the task of writing "My Interesting Tourist Place" and leading a peer group discussion.</li> <li>- Written self-reflections were employed at the end of class to allow students to articulate the six steps of the peer feedback exercise.</li> </ul>	
Stages 3-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All groups showed their tasks and compared the first draft and the third draft.</li> <li>- The teacher wrapped off the lesson on writing descriptive and narrative paragraphs.</li> </ul>	1 March 2022
Phase III Assessing after incorporating peer feedback Weeks 11	<b>Evaluation of Learner Training</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Post-test of Narrative writing</li> </ul>	8 March 2022
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The peer feedback questionnaire</li> <li>- The eight open-ended questions of peer feedback</li> <li>- Written reflection of online peer feedback</li> </ul>	15 March 2022

Remark: in the procedure of conducting online peer feedback, most students always confront the obstacles in giving and receiving comments due to the internet problem, time constraints, relationship of peer group members and being confused with peer's language use. Therefore, in conducting online peer feedback in each time took very long time.

#### 4) The Results of Students' Writing Test

Following the conclusion of the online peer feedback session, the results showed that the students' writing post-test scores were considerably higher than those of the pre-test ( $t = 5.96$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), as shown in Table 4.1. Thus, the hypothesis was accepted.

**Table 2**

*Statistical testing of the means of the pre-test and post-test of writing*

Writing Test	N	Mean	SD	Level	Mean Gain	t	df	Sig. (One-tailed)
Pre-test	46	67.24	5.07	Fair to Poor	5.34	5.96	45	.00
Post-test	46	72.59	3.62					

According to the analysis of the statistically significant differences between the average scores that the students received on the writing pre-and post-tests and the dependent samples t-test results, it was shown that the students' mean score on the post-test of writing was 72.59 ( $SD = 3.62$ ), which is regarded as a "Good to average" level. The pre-test mean score was 67.24 ( $SD = 5.07$ ), which showed a "Fair to poor" level with a significant difference at  $p = 0.00$ .

This was a considerable improvement over those mean values.

By using the dependent samples t-test for the computation of each of the mean scores, as shown in Table 4.2, it was possible to examine the students' English writing with regard to the five categories of errors and compare their performance in the pre-test and post-test of writing.

**Table 3**

*Statistical comparison of the writing scores based on each writing rubric category*

Aspects	Writing Test	N	Mean	SD	Assessment	Mean Gain	t	df	Sig. (one-tailed)
Mechanics	Pre	46	3.02	.39	Fair to Poor	1.19	12.40	45	.000
	Post	46	4.22	.55	Good to Average				
Language Use	Pre	46	14.61	1.43	Fair to Poor	4.02	10.91	45	.000
	Post	46	18.63	2.13	Good to Average				
Vocabulary	Pre	46	12.50	1.18	Fair to Poor	2.54	13.89	45	.000
	Post	46	15.04	1.22	Good to Average				
Organization	Pre	46	12.76	1.28	Fair to Poor	2.84	10.80	45	.000
	Post	46	15.61	1.46	Good to Average				
Content	Pre	46	18.72	1.97	Fair to Poor	4.65	10.15	45	.000
	Post	46	23.37	2.24	Good to Average				

Table 3 displays the findings, which demonstrate that statistically significant differences at  $p = 0.00$  were discovered in the five aspects of error types.

The mean scores of the students for each of the pre-test and post-test of writing aspects were as follows: The following are the students' means for each of the pre- and post-test writing aspects: 'Mechanics' ( $M = 3.02$ ,  $SD = 0.39$ :  $M = 4.22$ ,  $SD = 0.55$ ), 'Language use' ( $M = 14.61$ ,  $SD = 1.43$ :  $M = 18.63$ ,  $SD = 2.13$ ), 'Vocabulary' ( $M = 12.50$ ,  $SD = 1.18$ :  $M = 15.04$ ,  $SD = 1.22$ ), 'Organization' ( $M = 12.76$ ,  $SD = 1.28$ :  $M = 15.61$ ,  $SD = 1.46$ ), and 'Content' ( $M = 18.72$ ,  $SD = 1.97$ :  $M = 23.37$ ,  $SD = 2.24$ ).

The students' writing efficiency in the writing pre-test was "Fair to poor" in terms of mechanics, language use, vocabulary, organization and content, and their writing abilities increased in the post-test to reach the "Good to average" level after the online peer feedback sessions. In summary, subsequent to the peer feedback sessions, there was significant improvement in each of the aspects of the students' English writing in the post-test of writing.

### The Results of Written-Reflection

Each week after a peer group exercise, the worksheets for the written reflections were distributed to the students. For the current study, the participants' most recent written reflections were gathered in order to conduct data analysis.

The students were instructed to reflect on the writing process and peer feedback in relation to the stages of development based on the nine guided questions of written reflections: 1) preparation, 2) drafting, 3) evaluation, 4) interactive feedback, 5) review, 6) revision, 7) the advantages of online peer feedback, 8) the disadvantages of online peer feedback, and 9) the suggestions they felt were necessary or unnecessary in the comments from their writing class peers.

Four main themes emerged through coding, categorization, and data reduction. The four themes were drawn from the obtained data and presented in this section to explain how students' writing improved through online peer feedback.

Four themes emerged from the students' written reflection, namely, 1) The writing and online peer feedback process, 2) Reinforcing

students' affective strategy, 3) Increasing students' critical thinking skills, and 4) Students' beliefs and improvement in students' writing.

Regarding theme 1, the students obtained a deeper comprehension of the writing and peer-review processes. This shows that the majority of students considered their understanding of the writing process by applying the six stages-preparation, drafting, evaluation, interactive back-feedback, reviewing, and revising-in order to produce more precise and effective writing.

The most significant outcome was that the students' perceptions of their roles as feedback providers, or assessors, and as feedback recipients, or assessees, were realized. Additionally, they learned how to organize peer group activities in a systematic manner and are now able to adopt the peer feedback's materials and references more correctly and effectively.

Peer-engaged activities that were related to Theme 2 helped students refine their affective strategy. The online peer feedback encouraged them to become progressively motivated to study; the majority of students reported that online peer feedback is vital to the process of teaching and learning for L2 writing.

As shown above, motivation was deemed to be the most beneficial critical element that assisted students learning. Additionally, students were motivated by their interest in the materials they were taught while experiencing positive emotions like enjoying conversation, growing more motivated, boosting their confidence, finding it challenging to work with peers, and experiencing less anxiety and embarrassment when giving feedback in groups.

Peer feedback enhanced students' capacity of critical thought when they offered and received comments regarding Theme 3. The majority of students also supported that by exchanging

ideas, trading perspectives, and expressing themselves in class, they were able to strengthen their critical thinking skills. As was already mentioned, all of these helped students become more adept at critical thinking and ultimately gave them the chance to polish their critical thinking abilities.

The process of peer feedback, which helped shape the students' beliefs and modifications and improved their writing, is the focus of theme 4. Obviously, the majority of students expressed that they could improve their writing skills by adopting the writing process methodically. Additionally, they thought that peer feedback offered an opportunity for social interaction because it effectively reinforces social skills through group work collaboration, particularly in regards to the roles of the students when providing peer feedback with an emphasis on student-centered approaches and the encouragement of learner autonomy.

## 1) Discussion on Quantitative Results

Based on the quantitative data, it was evident from the outcomes that after the online peer sessions, the students' mean scores on the writing post-test dramatically climbed from the level of "Fair to Poor" to the level of "Good to Average." Additionally, the overall results for the writing rubric aspects showed that there was a significant difference between the pretest and post-test writing scores in terms of the mean value for the scores of Mechanics, Language use, Vocabulary, Organization, and Content, with the significance level at  $p = < 0.05$ .

## 2) Discussion on Qualitative Results

This indicates that the students improved in their ability to write by making fewer mistakes which is consistent with Nurviyani & Purnawarman's (2020) study, which found that students could improve their writing skills by using peer corrections.

This finding also accords with that of Nguyen (2022) who reported statistically significant differences between the mean writing test scores on the pre- and post-test. This demonstrates how giving and receiving comments from peers helps students write better. This may be owing to the following reasons:

### 2.1 Peer Feedback Training

The first explanation for why the students improved their writing skills is peer feedback training, which is important for writing teachers to consider when developing lesson plans for their classes. Students valued the peer feedback process and the use of peer feedback materials, and this was also in line with studies by Rollinson (2005), Westwood (2008), Lam, (2010), Kunwongse (2013), Yu & Lee (2016) and Khalil (2018), highlighted the importance of the peer training. In order to do this, it is essential that the teachers coach the students on how to conduct peer feedback successfully and teach them how to give constructive feedback by requesting clarifications from peers and making suggestions on their written assignments. As a result, the students need to be thoroughly instructed and trained in the procedure. The findings show that the students had a positive perception of the writing and peer review processes. They also showed improved utilization of the references and other materials provided for peer review as well as increased role responsibility. Additionally, it was discovered that the peer feedback training, which enables students to enjoy the practice of writing and peer feedback in the context of process-based writing, is the major aspect that enables them to grow their writing. Furthermore, peer feedback instruction has the potential to help students' writing, according to earlier studies (e.g., Hansen & Liu, 2005, Min, 2005, Lam, 2010). Additionally, this was consistent with Nguyen's

(2016) study, which found that peer training improved the writers' writing quality and had an impact on how they used peer criticism while revising their compositions. It is clear that adequate training in how to provide constructive criticism to peers is essential for students. As a result, delivering well-managed training has an impact on the success of peer feedback. In addition, a student stated

*"Peer feedback was new to me, and it would be challenging because I had never given or received online peer feedback before. I was able to do it well. Effective peer feedback is especially important after peer training because it allows participants to learn about the strategies for the entire writing and peer feedback process, the roles of the students, the use of checklists for peer feedback, and the correction of peers' work using correction symbols. Because of the peer training, I could understand the writing process and peer feedback.*

### Student 9

Student 9 emphasized that the peer training is a crucial element that teaches her how to conduct peer feedback more effectively, despite her initial concerns due to her lack of prior experience with the writing technique and peer feedback process. She finally learnt how to properly use the peer checklists and perceived the peer training, which helps her view peer feedback as the entire process from the beginning.

### 2.2 Practicing Online Peer Feedback Regularly

After a peer feedback session, the students' writing scores improved as a result of a consistent peer feedback practice.

This was consistent with Lee's (1997) findings, which were highlighted in Kunwongse's (2013) study and stated that include peer feedback in a lesson as a regular practice helped students

get comfortable participating in peer groups and effectively apply the peer feedback materials. As a result, it is extremely likely that students will become more proficient in the peer feedback technique and the use of the peer feedback materials with continued practice.

Importantly, this result suggests that regular practice of giving peer feedback reduces their obstacles: 1) The roles that the students play in the online peer activities establish their own responsibilities when it comes to the best approaches to practice peer feedback. 2) Students' learning techniques were enhanced by weekly participation in peer group activities, and they got more accustomed to using the materials for peer feedback in the correction of writing mistakes. 3) Giving feedback in groups helps establish stronger connections between group participants, which gives them the confidence to offer honest criticism on their own peers' work. 4) A collaborative environment for practicing peer discussion can be created through appropriate language and voice use. Positive feelings and facial expressions were also used when giving and receiving feedback, which improved the effectiveness of the experiment among peers.

It is important to emphasize that, as the qualitative findings show, the students were able to overcome these challenges by regularly practicing peer feedback. Students' writing scores improved on the post-test as a result.

*"Practicing peer feedback each week has given me a better understanding of how to conduct it and has taught me how to use the peer feedback resources efficiently. The more I study, the more I enjoy speaking with other people.*

#### **Student 10**

*"I had never received online peer evaluation before, and I enjoyed interacting with my peers.*

*I learned how to work together more effectively. Nevertheless, it was difficult for me because I had never given or received peer feedback before, but participating in peer group activities on a regular basis enabled me to do so.*

#### **Student 19**

Students 10 and 19 stated that they were concerned at the beginning, since they had never received peer feedback before. However, their familiarity with the peer feedback process and the application of peer feedback materials came mostly from a consistent practice of giving and receiving peer feedback. They then gained a better knowledge of the peer feedback process that they engaged in.

### **2.3 Developing Students' Affective Strategies**

Peer group discussions can help students build affective strategies. Peer feedback stimulated peer group feedback, increased self-confidence in task evaluation, and made interactions more enjoyable. This is noteworthy because it supports Khalil's (2018) study, which discovered that peer feedback had advantages in terms of boosting self-confidence and enhancing self-motivation as a result of peer criticism of assignments.

Additionally, the findings are consistent with that of Nguyen (2016) which found that peer feedback encouraged students to engage in the activity, enhanced self-confidence, helped them learn independently without depending on the teacher, and helped them become better writers. Furthermore, this reduced their writing anxiety while challenging their writing abilities by comparing with peers in an effort to improve their work. However, even though they first had some negative emotions about participating in a peer group activity, giving and receiving peer comments every week helped them to feel less negative.

Additionally, it shows how peer feedback increased the learners' confidence and decreased their worry and tension. Additionally, the majority of students indicated that having positive views towards conducting online peer feedback was a crucial factor in commenting on peers' work more effectively.

Their confidence in revising the compositions was boosted by the peer feedback practice. They also appreciated the feedback from the interactions. However, when disagreements arose during the dialogues, they were able to control their emotions, learn how to accept criticism and debate opposing points of view, and pay more attention to giving peers advice. Additionally, the students' responsibilities in the events encouraged them to take part. As previously said, the students were actively driven to participate in the activity because of their positive experiences with peer group comments. This increased their self-awareness, self-confidence, and self-motivation.

#### **2.4 Reinforcing Students' Critical Thinking Ability**

It is well acknowledged that peer group conversations among students' peers helped them develop their critical thinking abilities. Students reportedly have the opportunity to practice critical thinking, discussing ideas, and reaching consensus with peers through the process of peer feedback. Additionally, the students have learned how to reflect on their own actions. Peer critique helps students develop ideas and concepts, and it also involves them in learning about the different ways people think and debate different issues. This was also in line with Brusa and Harutyunyan's (2019) research, which claimed that peer feedback helped students develop as effective independent learners and better critical thinkers and that

they could identify their own strong and weak points from the correction from peers in an improved writing performance.

Furthermore, as mentioned by Rollinson (2005), the students develop as readers, critics, and eventually evaluators as a result of their considerable reading and critical thinking during peer conversations. As a result, getting comments from peers gives them rational and helpful suggestions for how to enhance their future work, and over time, the habit of peer review will develop students' critical thinking skills and help them become more responsible learners. This is consistent with the findings from the critical thinking abilities questionnaire (Domain 3), which showed that using writing comments on peers' work can help students develop their critical thinking abilities. To give an example, students practiced critiquing their peers' compositions and received interactive evaluation and feedback, which helped them develop their critical and analytical thinking skills. When student readers offer their explanations and clarifications, for instance, peer feedback enables student writers to practice thinking analytically and critically. Reading their peers' works also helps peers become more conscious of their own weaknesses. Additionally, this allows the students additional chances to voice their thoughts, work together and discuss problematic issues in an attempt to find solutions. As a result, practicing peer conversation can help students improve their critical thinking skills.

#### **2.5 Reinforcing Students' Social Interaction Abilities**

Peer interaction is said to be a form of cooperative and collaborative learning technique that helps students strengthen their social interaction abilities. Following the instruction, the group work, online peer feedback exercises

helped the students become more conscious of the variations in their personal English writing abilities. Additionally, it is believed that how words and body language are used plays a key role in both communicating the intended message and fostering a casual and comfortable environment among peer. They were able to effectively manage their emotions in particular by learning how to compromise and bargain during exchanges. The answers from the questionnaire on social interaction skills (Domain 4) confirmed this conclusion and showed that the students' social interaction abilities were strengthened by peer feedback, as seen by the rating's overall high level. This demonstrated that the students' participation in peer interaction helped them develop their social skills, but more importantly, it helped them assume greater responsibility for their roles as both feedback providers and recipients.

Furthermore, acceptance of peers' differing points of view contributed to the preservation of group harmony and cohesion. Peer criticism also aids students in enhancing their skills and learning about the written products of their classmates. This is in line with Vygotsky's (1978) theory, which stressed the importance of social interaction as "the Zone of Proximal Development" and suggests that the development of learning methods can be accomplished with the help and direction of others.

Moreover, peer feedback emphasizes social interactions and context to help students better understand learning strategies through problem-solving activities. It also helps students improve their language studies, particularly writing and grammar, with the students' role being to both give and receive feedback.

This shows that they are capable of handling the majority of peer group duties related

to giving encouraging feedback (Kunwongse, 2013; Min, 2016; Nguyen, 2016). Because peer group members accepted substantial responsibility for working cooperatively, it is therefore guaranteed that peer feedback gives students meaningful experiences within the social dimension.

Regarding the challenges that students have when conducting peer feedback, it is evident that there are still a number of issues that arise during group feedback: 1) When doing online peer feedback, the internet signal was quite weak. 2) The students' lack of experience with the peer feedback process, including using the materials for peer feedback, resulted in poor time management while offering helpful feedback. In addition, they lacked the abilities necessary to remedy errors by utilizing the five aspects of errors.

The peer group members' interactions with one another affected how the students gave and received comments on one another's writing. A few students said that it could be challenging to be objective while evaluating classmates out of concern that their peers would not appreciate the feedback, and that they preferred to avoid conflict or disagreements with their peers. 4) Students can comment on their peers' work in Malay-Pattani by employing language and voice in online peer feedback. Students benefit from peers' clarifications because of this.

However, by regularly doing peer feedback, these challenges can be lessened; 1) Participating in online peer talks helps students develop their roles as good peer feedback givers. 2) The practice of peer feedback encourages their learning processes, so they will become more familiar with the adoption of the materials for peer feedback connected to error correction. 3) Participating in peer group work deepens the

relationships among the participants, making it easier for them to be open and critical of their writing peers. 4) By using language and voice in the right context, peers can interact in a safe and cooperative setting. Through this study, the students learned how to compromise and negotiate effectively in order to reach an agreement and preserve group cohesiveness. Similar to this, their speech improved, especially when it came to loudness that was appropriate for the audience.

Because of the group members' positive connections and openness to give and receive feedback, talks among the participants went more smoothly and effectively.

It is significant that students are able to handle these issues in an effort to carry out peer feedback more successfully. The findings of Grabe & Kaplan (1996, p. 379), who claimed that peer group activities improve students' "learning together," and the process of peer feedback helps students learn strategies for using language in response to texts, are also in support of this.

Additionally, peer feedback is a cooperative and collaborative teaching method that helps students develop intrinsic motivation for learning through information sharing, collaborative efforts to complete tasks, the growth of peer trust, and taking ownership of their participation roles in the learning activity (Olsen & Kagan, 1992; Oxford, 1997; Frey & Fisher, 2010; Williams & Williams, 2012, as cited in Kunwongse, 2013). Therefore, learning motivation from conducting online peer feedback can alter students' behavior.

## 2.6 Students' Beliefs and Improvement in their Writing

According to the overall findings, students believe that receiving peer evaluation has enhanced their writing performance, which relates to their beliefs and shifts of improvement in

writing. Additionally, it was mentioned that they improved their social interaction abilities, which led to group collaborative learning, and that they developed their writing skills based on the writing process. Peer feedback, in particular, fostered learner autonomy and student-centered classrooms.

## Recommendations for Research Users

### For the English Teachers

1) According to the results of the research objective, online peer feedback can help students become more proficient writers by enhancing their communication skills, attitudes toward the writing process, affective strategies, critical thinking abilities, social skills, as well as other abilities like inter- and intrapersonal skills, attentive listening, and constructive participation. They specifically emphasized the connection between increased grammar use in their writing performance and having a well-managed online peer feedback procedure. Obviously, other classroom teaching which needs a collaborative activity in developing students' writing abilities ought to be taught by using online peer feedback as evidenced by the findings of the research.

2) To assign students to a group of three in the current study, the researcher used the grades they received in their prior writing. However, even though Parris' (1989) study states that a group of three students is unacceptable because one student may be isolated, the results of the pilot study's student written reflections offered positive perspectives as group responsibilities increased and the peer activities could be completed in the allotted amount of time. The future study, however, deemed the optimal group size of four to five students to be unworkable. Working in a group of three allowed for higher performance and increased productivity, which

was appropriate to make the peer feedback process more realistic to the real-world setting. More significantly, it is advised that writing teachers group students into groups with a balance of high and low skill levels during the practice of the peer activity in order to maximize the benefits to the students. This recommendation is based on the research findings.

3) The poor internet signal, time restraints, relationships among group members, and using language and voice all have an impact on the idea from a writing analysis. These variables, as previously said, make it difficult to learn the writing process. Before the peer feedback session begins, it is crucial that the teachers understand how to deal with these issues.

4) In order to enhance students' writing abilities and other language skills, an online peer feedback process should be incorporated into the writing course. Peer assessment is a writing practice that, unsurprisingly, promotes cooperative and collaborative learning by fostering a socially engaging atmosphere where L2 students can receive social support and a development framework from their peers.

5) The results showed that the participants had a positive opinion of the writing and peer-review processes; hence, taking an outside writing class and providing peer criticism may help students use the peer-review materials more effectively. Peer review has been identified as an urgent issue that must be included in curriculum creation, which is significant.

#### **For the Education Administrators**

Due to its potential for extraordinary fulfillment in writing programs, which emphasize student-centered approaches that encourage lifelong learning and the promotion of learner autonomy, peer feedback strategy training and reflective thinking should be included in the curriculum.

#### **For Material Developers**

1) Peer feedback is regarded as one type of motivational teaching materials that are well-matched to the needs of the students to improve their writing abilities and is suitable for the student-centered approach. It is advised that providing a well-managed training on peer feedback will result in the more effective conduct of peer feedback. Nevertheless, it is essential that the design of the lesson plans take the students who lack experience with conducting online peer feedback into consideration. Additionally, this will help teachers create materials and activities that motivate students to engage in the learning process. Peer feedback materials, language components, and politeness techniques for giving both oral and written feedback should all be thoroughly taught throughout peer training.

2) Peer criticism based on teachers' comments and students' written responses will help students learn to write more effectively. The outcomes also show that the implementation of well-structured collaborative activities within the framework of efficient peer feedback will promote the development of their written work. In order to effectively provide peer feedback, it is crucial to pay close attention to the students' linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

#### **Recommendations for Future Studies**

1) In order to improve the results of future research, online peer feedback should be used for a longer length of time or for an entire semester of a tertiary EFL writing course. Additionally, the sample size should be considered.

2) It is crucial that teachers focus on the potential for reflection and experience sharing to highlight the benefits of reflective thinking in the context of classroom teaching because it enables them to consider the extent to which reflective practice is both accessible and feasible

in the classroom. It's significant that students' written reflections support teachers' ideas that choosing what is acceptable in each setting and aiming for right approach are inextricably linked with context-sensitive reflective practice. In the context of EFL learners, it should be taken into consideration to incorporate reflections into the peer-involved activity. The aim is also to use peer feedback to correlate the results with students' pre-post writing tests. To learn more about how the written reflection was used as a strategy in this research, English teachers can read Mann & Walsh's (2017) study, "Reflective Practice in English Language Teaching: Research-Based Principles and Practices."

3) To confirm the validity of the study, it should be replicated; however, while generalizing the results, a cluster sampling should be carefully considered.

4) To gain a better understanding of the findings, additional research should examine the interference of the L1 and L2 in writing classrooms, interactional patterns, collaborative learning, student stances and motivations, vocabulary acquisition, observations in the classroom, discourse analysis, discussions, interviews, and the drafts created by the students.

5) The study's conclusions point out that taking part in peer group conversations can be advantageous for students with varying levels of English ability. As a result, it is also possible to design comparable strategies for other rhetorical styles of writing, such as comparison and contrast, cause and effect, and argumentative writing.

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